Marketing Plan Outline

* Smarta Personality, Brand Identity, and Voice
  + What is the mission of Smarta?
    - For students
      * Make their lives easier and stress-free (already stressed with school and work so they shouldn’t have to worry about dealing with something so fundamental as finding a home)
    - For property managers
      * Simplify the housing rental process that’s so fundamental to our daily lives
    - Overall mission statement
      * Our lives are stressful already and we deserve one process in our daily lives that’s guaranteed to be stress-free.
  + How is the Smarta brand perceived by users?
    - Open, transparent, helpful, friendly, fresh/innovative, approachable, intuitive
  + What are some emotions we want users to feel when they see Smarta and why?
    - Supported/that someone’s got their back (there’s “someone” out there that’s helping them through the off-campus housing process & providing help/advice when they need it)
    - Relieved (less stressed because Smarta’s making things easier for them)
    - Welcomed (that there’s a community of people who they could room with/are helping them with the housing process)
  + How is our brand, through multiple channels, speaking to our potential and current users?
    - Blog: provide information & interesting student perspectives that make Smarta’s product relatable to users by showing them existing problems that they can identify with & how Smarta is trying to fix those problems
    - Social Media (Instagram): start off informational to align with blog posts and raise awareness of the typical issues in the off-campusing housing process & how Smarta is helping address it… then transition to more engaging content to tap into the younger generation of student renters & maintain followers/users
  + What are some taglines or slogans that represent Smarta’s mission statement?
    - Find friends. Find a house. Find a home.
    - Save your worries. Rent Smarta.
* Student Housing Rental Listing Market Competitors
  + Who is competing directly in this market?
    - Direct competitors: ForRentUniversity, Places4Students.com, College Rentals.com, players that aren’t businesses: internal college off-campus housing platforms/resources (UPenn, West Chester, Penn State, etc.)
    - How much revenue do they make annually?
      * ForRentUniversity: [$711M](https://www.zoominfo.com/c/forrentuniversity/368850674) (sister site ForRent.com is subsidiary of Apartments.com)
      * Places4Students: [$600,000](https://www.zoominfo.com/c/places4students-inc-llc/372486506)
      * College Rentals: [$260,000](https://www.zoominfo.com/c/college-rentals/15600329)
    - Do they have a web and mobile app?
      * ForRentUniversity: no
      * Places4Students: no (also website looks really outdated/tacky?)
      * College Rentals: yes
    - What are their most prominent features?
      * ForRentUniversity: allows individual listings, can search by cities
      * Places4Students: partners with colleges to directly refer students to them, extensive college campus network (160+ Campuses partnered across North America)
      * College Rentals: offer mobile apartment searching, integrated with ULoop & College Student Apartments (new listings automatically get added on all platforms) (College Student Apartments has mobile app)
  + Who is competing loosely in this market? (Meaning not directly advertising to students, but students still use them as an option when searching for homes)
    - Rent.com, Apartments.com, Zillow, StreetEasy, RentHop, Trulia
    - How much revenue do they make annually?
      * Rent.com: $7M
      * Apartments.com: uncertain BUT parent company CoStar had $392M in Q1 2020 revenue
      * Zillow: $2.7B (2019)
      * StreetEasy: $36M
      * RentHop: $1M
      * Trulia: $500M
    - Do they have a web and mobile app?
      * Rent.com: yes
      * Apartments.com: yes
      * Zillow: yes
      * StreetEasy: yes
      * RentHop: yes
      * Trulia: yes
    - What are their most prominent features?
      * Rent.com: With this app, users can take and upload pictures of any units they’ve looked at. **Look at 3D floor plans, maps and other details within the app. With the press of a button, you can call properties. Get ratings and reviews from others who have actually lived in that apartment** ([source](https://www.thestandardboone.com/apps-for-college-apartment-hunting/))
      * Apartments.com: comprehensive search (can use filters for price range, # rooms, etc. BUT also more specific things like types of apartments (ex: military, income restricted, student, etc.)... site also features neighborhood guides to each city ([source](https://archive.curbed.com/2017/6/22/15854516/best-rental-apps-sites-services))
      * Zillow: most extensive database of listings, ease of use, brand name/first-mover advantage, lots of guides provided
      * StreetEasy: advanced search tools offer very specific search (like commute time, custom locations, specific price, etc.) & consumer-favored perks like allowing users to see past listing prices AND recorded *sales* prices ([source](https://www.brickunderground.com/blog/2011/12/insiders_guide_tricks_and_tools_for_making_the_most_out_of_streeteasy))
      * RentHop: bit more credible/secure… It ranks apartments in comparison to others & gives scores for listing manager’s performance and how accurate the apartment listing is ([source](https://www.thestandardboone.com/apps-for-college-apartment-hunting/))
      * Trulia: bit more “personalized”/interesting... good amount of “local info” available on website and app, feature for sharing listings and details with future roommates (sources [1](https://www.investopedia.com/best-real-estate-websites-5069964) & [2](https://www.thestandardboone.com/apps-for-college-apartment-hunting/))
* Student Housing Market Overview
  + Student Housing Market Intro
  + How many students in the US?
    - 19.9M college students ([source](https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/how-many-college-students-in-the-us/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20National%20Center,choose%20to%20enroll%20in%20college.))
  + How many of them live off-campus and away from their parents?
  + What is the average national rent off off-campus housing per student?
    - Average rent w/in one mile of campus for top 100 universities in US: $1,110 - $4,463 ([source](https://www.rentcafe.com/blog/rental-market/rent-around-universities/)) THIS MUST BE INFLATED THOUGH CUZ NUMBERS LOOK OFF
  + What are some recent trends in this market?
  + How can Smarta capitalize on these trends both now and in the future?
* Target Market Evaluation
  + Students
    - Who is our target market?
    - What appeals to our target market?
    - What media platforms do our target customers use most?
    - Where is this customer typically located (in reference to a college campus)?
  + Property Managers
    - Who is our target market?
    - What appeals to our target market?
    - What media platforms do our target customers use most?
    - Where is this customer typically located (in reference to a college campus)?
* Campus Rep Program
  + What is the Campus Rep Program?
    - A paid opportunity for college students to gain experience in business, event planning, operations, or marketing while raising awareness of a fun & innovative brand.
  + Who is our ideal Campus Rep?
    - Friendly
    - Engaging
    - Honest/sincere
    - Approachable
    - Trustworthy
    - (Innovative)
  + What are the responsibilities of the Campus Rep?
    - Create (YouTube), Instagram, & TikTok content
    - Brainstorm & host on-campus events
    - Brainstorm & run in-person marketing campaigns
  + How much are Campus Reps paid? How many hours do they work? For what length of time are they hired for?
    - $12-15/hr
    - Work 8-10 hrs/week (based on VS Pink campus ambassador program)
    - Hired on semester basis (lets people try out the program without pushing away students who are more hesitant/unsure if they can commit a full year)
  + How are we welcoming and communicating with our Campus Reps?
    - Could consider virtual “social” events (like games night, or virtual cooking session) to immerse Campus Reps into the community & feel welcomed through fun events
    - Add them to the slack channel for faster/more efficient communication & also feels more personal than email
  + What benefits come along with being a Campus Rep?
    - Merch, pay, experience w/ marketing/branding/event planning & working at a startup, community of hardworking & fun people, first access to giveaway/rewards prizes/benefits?
* Student Advertising Campaigns
  + Physical
    - What is the goal of physical campaigns?
      * Raise awareness & excitement about Smarta, communicate our message & brand
    - What are some ideas of campaigns we can run with the Campus Reps to achieve a goal?
      * Hmm still thinking about these
    - What resources are necessary to run these campaigns?
    - Who will manage these resources?
    - Syracuse University
      * When will we run these campaigns?
        + Spring & Fall 2021 to take advantage of school terms when students are on campus & time leading up to launch
      * What will be the goal for each campaign?
      * How should each campaign be run and by who?
      * Who do we need to contact to table and present to students on and around campus?
      * What are local news sources we can contact for PR?
        + What press releases are we delivering?
        + What is the goal of the press release?
      * Cost of Campaigns
  + Digital
    - What is the goal of digital campaigns?
      * Raise awareness of smarta name, inform students of housing process/how Smarta fits in, & communicate smarta’s brand & purpose
    - What are some ideas of campaigns we can run through social media and digital advertising?
      * Instagram: informative posts on housing process/typical difficulties/maybe animated clips showing how Smarta works product wise (similar to some Google ads), Insta reels (maybe about decor/room decorating/housing tips/rental advice)
      * TikToks: similar strategy to Insta reels BUT maybe crazier/funnier/relatable angle to things
    - What platforms are we advertising on?
      * Primarily Instagram & TikTok because that’s what millennials & current college/high school students are using the most right now
      * How are we communicating to our audience through each platform and why? (Think: who is the user on each? A TikTok user expects a much different form of a message than a Facebook Post)
        + Instagram: more informative BUT also aesthetic/fun posts… a little bit more known for influencers/business promotions… “higher end” branding/image
        + TikTok: more approachable, native, fun/engaging, a little crazy even… typical everyday people vibe… humor is more relatable so maybe short clips/films about typical roommate problems or stories
    - What digital assets do we need for advertising?
      * Who will create these assets?
      * How are we scheduling posting these assets?
      * Who is writing the copy to go along with each post?
    - **Social Media Plan by Rafik Will Complete This Section**
* Smarta Rewards
  + What are Smarta Rewards?
    - Rewards system to incentivize new Smarta users & continue engaging current users that involves raffles & giveaways that are “unlocked”
  + How many rewards are we giving out each month?
    - 2 (every other weekend?)
    - Global prizes (stationary, tote bags, etc) that students can exchange Reward Tickets directly for… can be switched out every so often too
    - Monthly Smarta Raffle Prizes that are high ticket and change each month
  + What are examples of rewards for students to raffle on?
    - Stationary/Student things: nice notebooks (moleskin), tote bags, Muji gift cards, etc.
    - Special prizes: AirPods, Amazon gift cards, Amazon echo, bluetooth speakers, instant cameras/printers (Fujifilms/Polaroids), Tile (item tag/finder), etc.
    - Lots of ideas for student-oriented prizes here: <https://www.businessinsider.com/best-gifts-for-college-students#a-microwave-safe-ramen-cooker-for-the-most-stressful-or-time-crunched-nights-51>
  + What rewards are we giving out each month at Syracuse University? (Aug - May)
    - Aug:
  + How many Smarta Tickets should the average student expect to earn in an average month?
    - 5-7?
  + How are students earning these Smarta Tickets?
    - Good user behavior: paying rent on time 4-6 months in a row, keeping consistent interaction w/ property managers, etc.
    - Brand support: Sign up, referring friends, product reviews, product testing?, participating in social media challenges
  + Referral program at launch (money pending)
* Holiday Advertising
  + Why strong Holiday advertising is so important
    - capitalize on the more passionate emotions during the Holidays season & engage users by bringing them back to the brand
  + July
    - Light Up the Room?
  + Summer
    - Staycation ideas?
  + October
    - Don’t Get Left Out In the Dark
  + December
    - 25 Days of Renting
  + January
    - New Year, New Home?
    - New decor challenge, home-related resolutions (clean every weekend, don’t throw clothes on floor, keep living room neat, etc.)
  + Valentine’s Day
    - Next Valentine’s Day, bring them back to a home you’re proud of
* Opening on Any Campus: The Universal Elements of this Plan