

ACSC

Ground inspiration for air excellence. 

Branding Guidelines by Agency 424.

Welcome

Brand guidelines. What are they? Brand guidelines, often called ‘brand standards’ or ‘brand book’, are essentially a set of rules and guidelines that describe how the brand functions internally. These often include elements such as:

- An overview of the brands history, vision, personality, and values
- The Brand’s Belief and its mission statement
- Language - how to speak about the brand in communications
- Logos, their usage, and their meanings
- Style guide including color palette and typography for branding and web design

The goal of these brand guidelines is to provide a foundation for future branding efforts of the ACSC per the recommendation and guidance of Agency 424.

In these guidelines will be information on ACSC’s brand beliefs, its values, and supplementary communication information such as language, logos, colors, and social media channels. While this should not, and does not reflect the complete identity of the brand [we’ll leave that up to ACSC to determine themselves], it does provide a foundation for what ACSC is, what it should be, and how to get there.

It was a pleasure working with everyone involved, and we wish you good luck with the future campaigns!

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Importance of Branding

The Air Command and Staff College, previously known as The Air Corps Tactical School, has rooted itself in USAF history as a prestigious graduate college to further individual's careers in the military. The ACTS was guided by the principal of Proficimus More Irretenti – “We make progress unhindered by custom”. This principal, alongside several inspirational individuals, guided the foundation of this innovative school. The ACTS, now ACSC, provided a prestigious education to the most forward-thinking service members. The school was put on a pedestal above all others within the Air Force community.

Unfortunately, ACSC is no longer perceived in this way. What was once seen as a privilege is now considered a mandated chore. **The goal is to reverse this perception and restore ACSC to the distinguished position it once held.** We will push toward this goal through a social media campaign designed to influence the perceptions of the Air Force Community through rebranding.

Branding, by definition, is the creation of a name, symbol or design that is easily identifiable as belonging to a company. This helps to identify a product or service and distinguish it from others. In this case, branding will consist of promoting the ACSC

..... So why is this important, and why does it matter?

Branding is important because not only does it make a memorable impression on consumers (in this case, service members) but it also allows your customers and clients to know what to expect from your company (ACSC). It is a way of distinguishing yourself from competitors and clarifying what it is you offer that makes you the better choice. Your brand is built to be a true representation of who you are as a business, and how you wish to be perceived.

Marketing and branding are used to help businesses tap into their target audience, influence those people, and push them to move or take actions that reflect and help reach the overall goals of the company. Marketers frequently use a marketing pyramid to illustrate this.

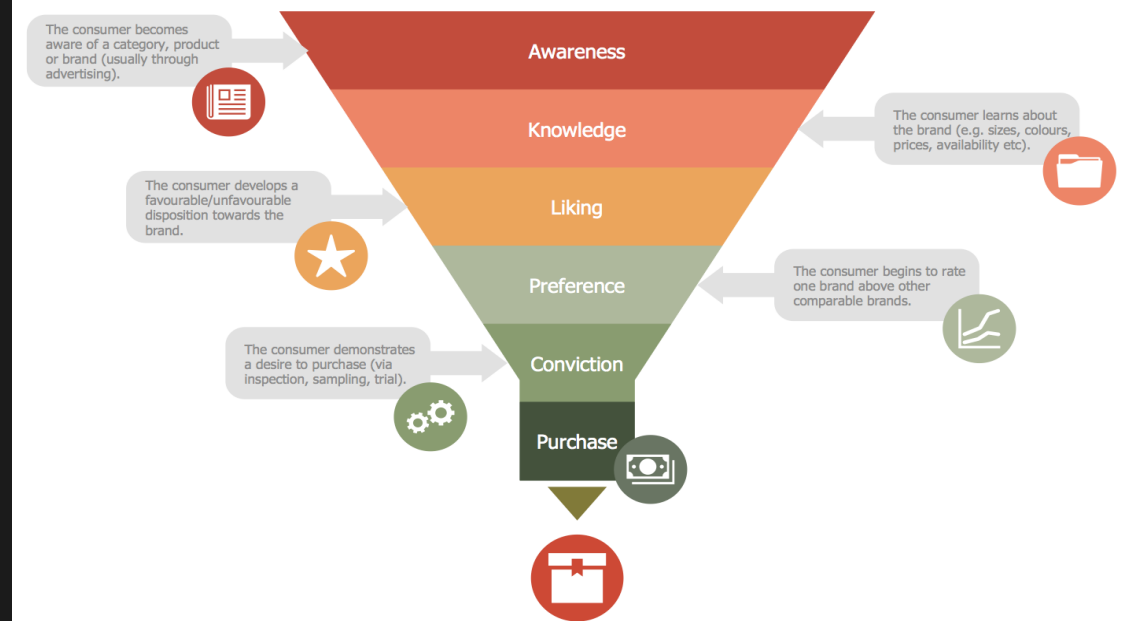
What businesses want to do first is create awareness about their brand, so that they can then increase knowledge and preference for the brand to ultimately lead to purchase or acquisition.

In the case of ACSC, awareness for the program is there. **What we want to then change is people's knowledge and liking/preference for the brand, which we will do by (re)informing the target audience about what it means to be a graduate of ACSC and the pride and honor that comes from that.**

This will drive people to develop a preference for the school, which can ultimately lead to a "purchase" (or greater enrollment in the program). In addition, by changing the meaning behind what an ACSC graduate signifies, it will help alter the perceptions of those already in the school and encourage them to feel proud of their program, pushing them to want to do more (innovate).

Because we are informing people who may be interested in the program in the future, we will target young, current Air Force members. This will give time to imprint the brand beliefs before they are ever making a decision on a graduate degree. In line with this thinking, it's helpful to observe that long-standing brands often have cult followings.

Lavidge et al's hierarchy of effects



For example, a Coca-Cola enthusiast would never think about drinking a Pepsi, and a Ford loyalist would laugh at the idea of buying a Camaro even though rationally, these decisions make little sense. Using this pattern, an Air Force loyalist should (ideally) see ACSC as the most prestigious and innovative school that exists for members of the USAF to a point where they won't even consider other schools for a graduate education.

This idea of loyalty is not based on rational decision making. Service members know that an ivy league education is going to likely be more prestigious. What we are trying to do, however, is cultivate a collective mindset within the Air Force community that believes in ACSC as the top choice for accelerating your AF career despite there being a number of other schools and colleges. Air Force loyalists should have a strong desire to be a part of the school because of its mark of honor and success.

Using ACSC's Core Belief to Create a Brand

ACSC believes in never being satisfied with the status quo — to use innovation as a means of breaking down barriers and challenging Air Force leaders to push for more.

ACSC has strong ties to Billy Mitchell — the man considered to be “The Father of the United States Air Force.” Mitchell believed that the military needed to create a branch for aviation, something he preached and rebelled against the status quo for. We used this to inform the above brand belief. From this brand belief we extract the following qualities:

INNOVATION • ASPIRATION • EXCELLENCE • INTELLIGENCE • LEADERSHIP

These are the guiding qualities that should inform all communications, verbal or visual, for ACSC. They embody what Billy Mitchell stood for and collectively form an essential identity to all members of the ACSC program. Remember, ACSC is THE premier graduate program for individuals in the Air Force and should be spoken and written about accordingly.

Brand Language

I. Tone

ACSC is a powerful name. In any sort of marketing communications, it should be spoken about as if it sits on top of a pedestal relative to its competitors. The tone of the language reflects the qualities of the brand belief. The tone should be:

INSPIRATIONAL • ASPIRATIONAL • POSITIVE • KNOWLEDGEABLE

Using these tones within speech and communications will go to show that no matter the obstacles, ACSC strives for more. They give students the tools to reach impressive goals and have the knowledge needed to accelerate a service member's career.

Additionally, we brainstormed some taglines to convey specific messages about ACSC. Taglines are used because they are succinct and speak to the heart and purpose of a brand.

Ground inspiration for air excellence.

Build the best.

Reach for more.

Bypass the status quo.

Plan for a better tomorrow.

Accelerate to the top.

Takeoff towards success.

Taglines are meant to be memorable and recognizable. By using a tagline such as one above, we are hoping to establish a phrase connected to the identity and values of ACSC. When people see and hear the tagline, the goal is that they instantly recognize ACSC and understand its mission and values.

III. Words

Language is a powerful tool. It enables you to connect with your audience and can be the trigger to compel them to take action. As mentioned earlier, the tone used to communicate any messages about ACSC should reflect the ACSC brand. Trying to find the right words to express a brand's tone can be tricky, which is why we ran an analysis on Brand 24. Brand 24 is a web and social media monitoring tool with a word association feature. We used the terms "innovation," "the Air Force," "ACSC," and "Air University" to fuel our search. Brand 24 takes those key words and analyzes them on multiple levels to find out what other words are typically used in a discussion involving the inputted words.

It should be noted that we ran this analysis with a trial version of Brand 24, which has a cap on data storage. The words listed below are the results from this analysis.



The analysis shows these words are often associated with innovation, ACSC, Air University, and/or the Air Force, and therefore, should be when talking or writing about ACSC. Moreover, these words are powerful, inspiring, aspirational, positive, and knowledgeable words that fit the brand's tone.

Creative Execution

On the next page, we will present to you our big idea. This big idea is the main insight our team has made after hours of research and brainstorming about ACSC's past and current brand identities. It takes into account human behavior and psychology, ties it into ACSC's purpose, and is the key to making people take action. All marketing efforts on ACSC's behalf should align with the principles outlined in the idea — this ensures branding consistency and that all promotions work toward achieving a common goal.



BIG IDEA

No matter where you are in the services, ranking matters. That's why we plan to tap into an already existing cultural norm of competition among servicemen/women in the Air Force to harness and cultivate a drive to be better. This, in turn, will motivate people to want to be at ACSC in order to develop a more competitive self for the sake of planning and innovating for a better tomorrow; because to plan for a better tomorrow is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your country.

Channels to Leverage

I. Using Networks to Grow a Following

One of the quickest ways to grow an online following is by penetrating other networks. Online content will highlight alumni and current students. By sharing their stories on the ACSC pages, they will be incentivized to share ACSC's content with their own social networks. This will drive traffic and engagement to new sites. Furthermore, our campaign reaches our target audience efficiently (young people in the Air Force) because the social networks of current ACSC students will consist of peers in a similar age range.

II. Method

We will reach the target audience via Instagram and LinkedIn. Sharing content is more prominent on LinkedIn; however, younger users will still repost and share content in their Instagram stories. Thus, expect Instagram to have a younger following demographic than LinkedIn. LinkedIn provides a more favorable online environment for fostering the growth of an ACSC alumni network in which alumni can share their stories and accomplishments with others. It is through these two platforms that current ACSC students, as well as prospective students, can familiarize themselves and identify with the ACSC mission.

LinkedIn

We recommend using LinkedIn for two purposes: creating an ACSC company page and an LinkedIn alumni group. The LinkedIn Page will serve a similar purpose to Instagram, and the same posts should be populated to both. It will leverage ACSC student and alumni networks to grow and help establish the renewed ACSC brand. The LinkedIn group will allow an ACSC alumni network to be built, in which alumni can share their stories and accomplishments with others. Creating this group will strengthen the impact of ACSC on students, giving them a network of resources.

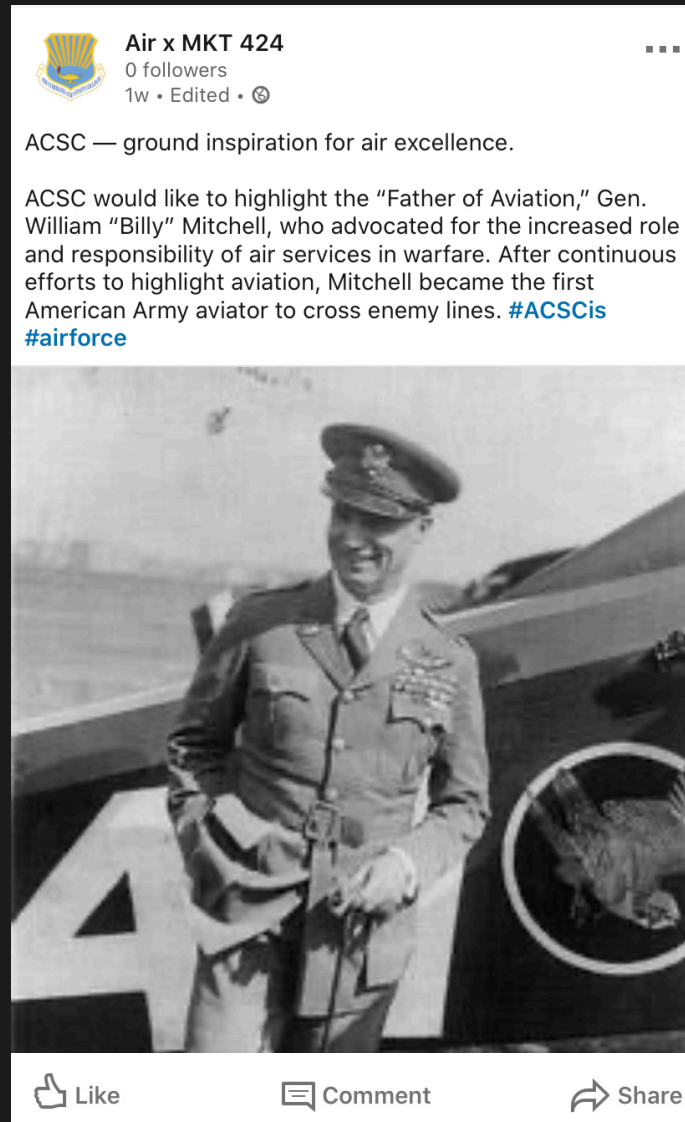
Instagram

We will run the campaign on Instagram as well, a platform on which current ACSC students, in addition to prospective students, can familiarize themselves with ACSC's missions and beliefs.

Social Media Post Examples

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The following are examples of the spotlight features campaign that will run on both LinkedIn and Instagram. Each post will feature an individual of history or current times that either embodies or represents some value of ACSC's brand. These stories must be easily "digested" (i.e. brief and easy to read) and shareable.



Format

ACSC — [tagline].

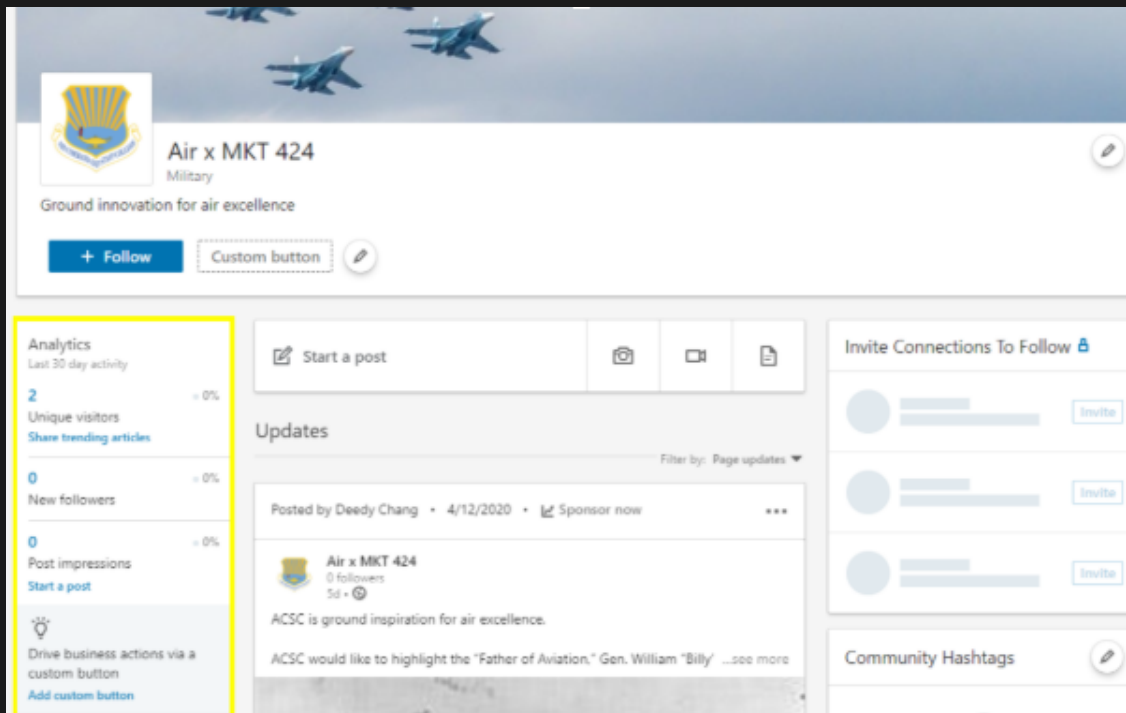
[Include a description of the featured individual. Copy should be written in a way that makes the connection between the person and the tagline obvious. In other words, by reading the description, we should be able to answer the question, how does this individual align with the values/mission put forth in the tagline?].

[Hashtags: It could be beneficial to create a campaign name that you can use as a consistent hashtag in every post published, such as #ACSCis. Include other relevant hashtags that people can use to search for your content online. It usually good practice to keep it simple and not exceed more than three hashtags per post].

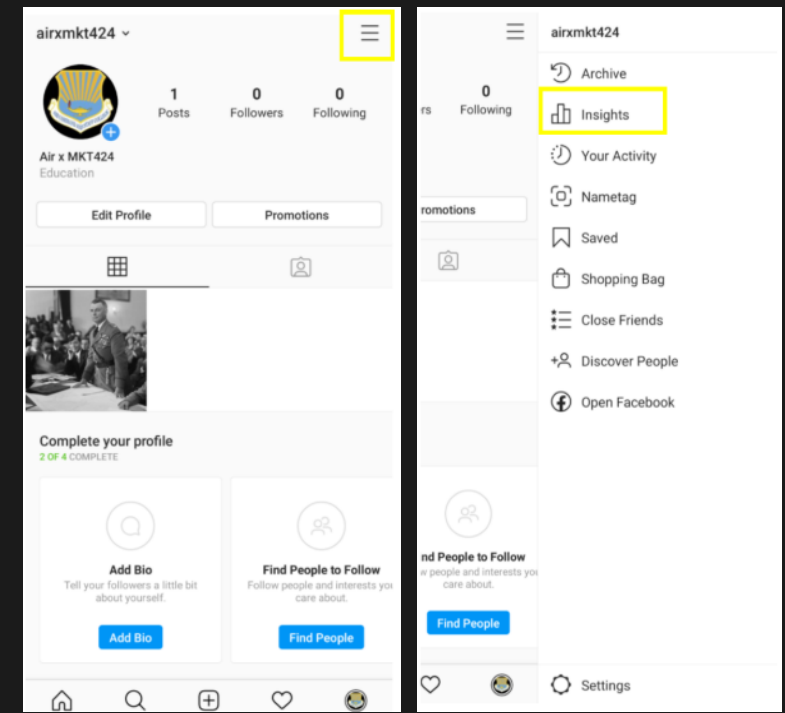
III. Analytics

Frequently keeping tabs on social media analytics are crucial to understanding what is and is not working in the campaign. Information on the demographics of your audiences, engagement rates, etc. is readily available in the analytics section of LinkedIn and Instagram.

LinkedIn Analytics



Instagram Analytics



IV. The Badge

Creating a badge for those who complete an ACSC degree will help distinguish these members of the Air Force. To add a tangible element to the campaign, ACSC can consider creating something to show for a student's success in the program (beyond degree certification), such as a graduate's badge. A badge establishes ACSC as a premiere group in the Air Force simply by leveraging the exclusivity of the honor.

We see the badge as another channel by which ACSC's brand message can be told. We utilized symbols that align with the brand belief established to create a badge mock-up. Having graduates walk around with the badge that serves as a symbol of innovation will encourage them to share their experience which will increase their pride and increase applications.



ACSC Brand Design Style Guide

typography

PROHIBITION REGULAR, ALL CAPS

elements



FIRE – SPARK



GENIE LAMP – INQUIRE



THUNDERBOLT – DISRUPT



BLOCK RAYS – INSPIRE



WORLD – CONNECT



COMPASS – LEAD



STARS – ACHIEVE



LAUREL WREATH – PREVAIL

main color palette



#6EA5DB



#ECB63D



#F5D33C



#2B54A3



#B3234D



Behind the Design

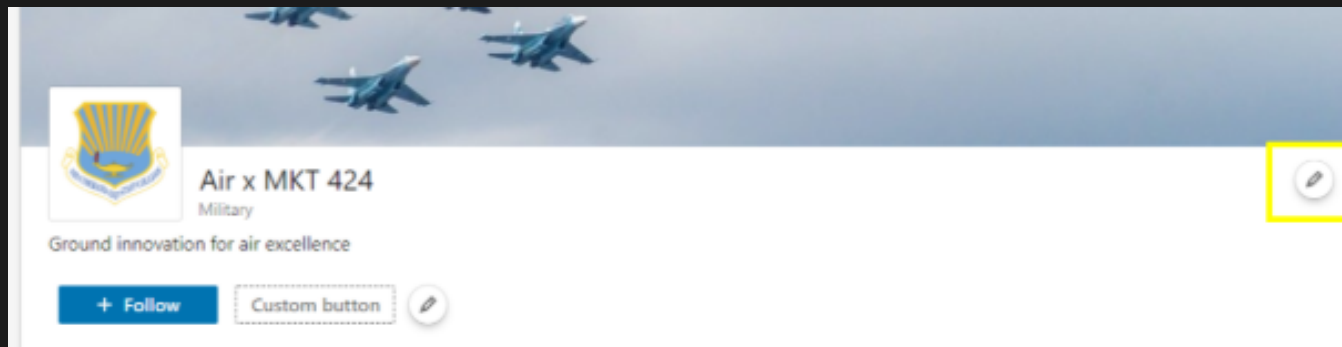
Consider the aesthetic of the entire booklet and then come back to this page. The new ACSC brand is sleek, powerful, and full of intrigue. Shining through the provoking mystery, though, is this badge. Visually striking in color with a minimalist design, this badge is a symbol of bold action and innovative thinking.

Appendix A — LinkedIn Credentials

LinkedIn Page: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/air-x-mkt-424>

[You will need to be added as an admin. Please connect with Connor Tullis for access.]

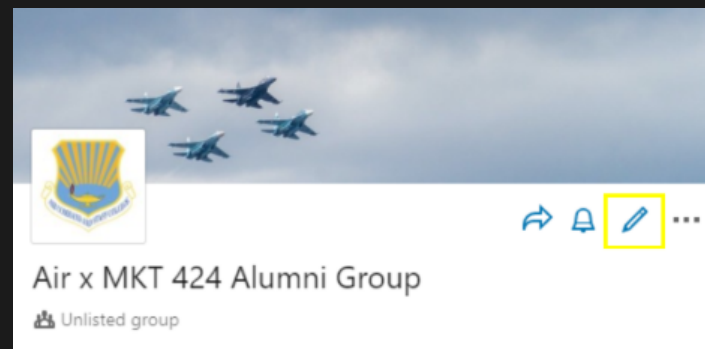
Select the edit pencil to change the page name and bio:



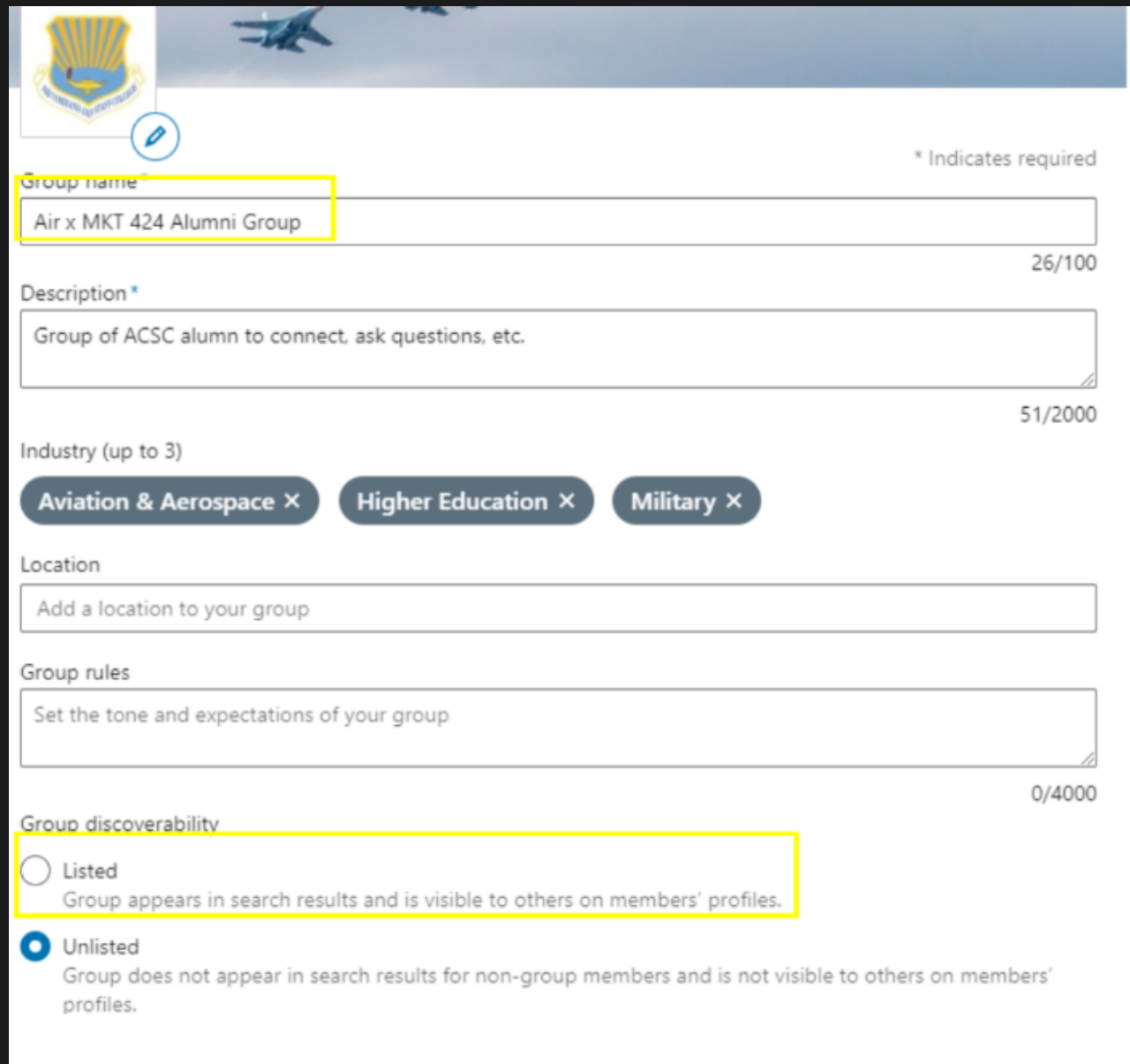
LinkedIn Alumni Group: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12391354/>

[You will need to be added as an admin. Please connect with Connor Tullis for access.]

Select the edit pencil to change the group name and bio:



Currently, the page is unlisted. When you are ready to launch the page publicly, you will need to list it so that people can find it.



The screenshot shows a group creation form with the following fields and options:

- Group name:** A text input field containing "Air x MKT 424 Alumni Group". A yellow highlight is around the text.
- Description:** A text input field containing "Group of ACSC alumni to connect, ask questions, etc.". A yellow highlight is around the text.
- Industry (up to 3):** Three buttons are visible: "Aviation & Aerospace X", "Higher Education X", and "Military X".
- Location:** A text input field containing "Add a location to your group".
- Group rules:** A text input field containing "Set the tone and expectations of your group".
- Group discoverability:** Two radio button options are shown:
 - ☐ **Listed**
Group appears in search results and is visible to others on members' profiles. (This option is highlighted with a yellow box)
 - ☒ **Unlisted**
Group does not appear in search results for non-group members and is not visible to others on members' profiles.

* Indicates required

Appendix B — Instagram Credentials

Email (use for login to Instagram): acscmkting@gmail.com

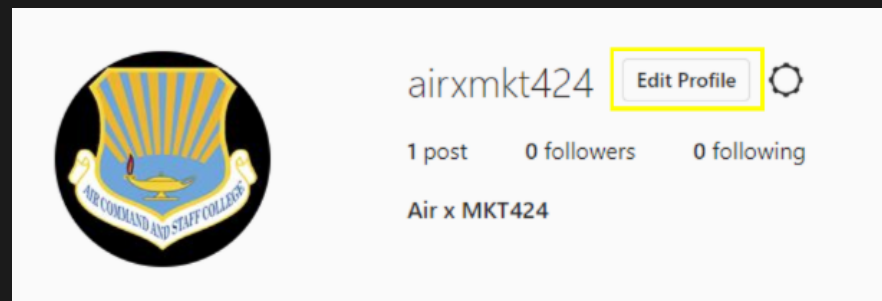
Instagram Password: JonathanxMkting424

Email Credentials:

PASS: JonathanxMkting424

BDAY for Security: 04/05/1931 (1931 was the year ACTS relocated to Maxwell Field).

Select “edit profile” to change the name of the profile:



The username is the Instagram account’s “handle.” This is what people enter into the search bar to find the page:

A screenshot of the 'Edit Profile' form in Instagram. At the top left is a small circular profile picture icon. To its right is the current username 'airxmkt424' and a link 'Change Profile Photo'. Below this are four input fields. The first field is labeled 'Name' and contains the text 'Air x MKT424'. The second field is labeled 'Username' and contains the text 'airxmkt424'. The third field is labeled 'Website' and is currently empty. The fourth field is labeled 'Bio' and is also empty.