

COSMOSPHERE MARKETING

Planning for Growth

September 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Opportunity: The Cosmosphere is poised for a new chapter of growth, driven by its “Ad Astra per Aspera” capital campaign, participation in the Hutchinson STAR Bond partnership, and its commitment to expanding regional and national visibility.

While the organization already attracts visitors from all 50 states and more than 30 international locations, **there is significant opportunity to grow visitation from out-of-state families, travelers, and STEAM/space enthusiasts.**

Marketing Strategy (Phase 1): The Cosmosphere's growth-focused marketing plan emphasizes **channel diversification, smarter targeting, and stronger integration of tools and partnerships.**

Path Forward:

1. Develop a Marketing Action Plan (Phase 2).
2. Secure resources to execute the plan.



The Cosmosphere's growth vision centers on three distinct pillars.

Space Exploration Storytelling

Position the Cosmosphere as the elite destination for space exploration—past, present, and future.

STEAM Education Excellence

Serve as a Leader in STEAM education programming and talent pipeline development, ensuring the Cosmosphere serves as a catalyst for regional workforce development and academic achievement.

Leadership and Innovation Training Hub

Establish the Cosmosphere as Kansas's recognized leader in providing leadership and innovation training programs, utilizing space exploration narratives to inspire and educate participants across business sectors.

As the Cosmosphere pursues its growth goals, it will pair physical and programmatic enhancements with an equally **ambitious vision for marketing.**

BUILDING A DESTINATION TOGETHER



The Cosmosphere and Hutchinson

Cosmosphere marketing is only as strong as the experience it promotes.

The most powerful driver of reputation and visits is a compelling, enjoyable, and engaging guest experience at the Cosmosphere.

Equally important is the broader destination experience.

The success of the Cosmosphere's growth strategy is not only about the museum's ability to refine and elevate its visitor journey, **but also on the Hutchinson community's commitment to strengthening the overall tourism and hospitality experience.**

CURRENT VISITORSHIP: 2024 & 2025 TO DATE

A SNAPSHOT

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EXPANDING TARGETED GEOGRAPHIES

Priority Feeder Markets



Kansas City Metro (MO)

Drive time: Approx. 3 hours

Population: ~2.3 million

Strong base of families, education organizations and cultural tourists.

Oklahoma City Metro (OK)

Drive time: Approx. 3.5 hours

Population: ~1.4 million

Growing family and youth demographics; a professional base that could be interesting to the leadership development program.

Tulsa Metro (OK)

Drive time: ~4 hours

Population: ~1 million

Strong base of families, education organizations, and STEAM enthusiasts; potential to complement Tulsa Air & Space Museum.

Secondary Drive Markets

- Dallas-Fort Worth, TX
- Denver, CO
- Omaha, NE
- St. Louis, MO

While “drive markets” generally have the strongest return on investment, target marketing opportunities exist in Houston, TX, particularly for space enthusiasts and in consideration of a new leadership development program.



DIVERSIFYING COSMOSPHERE MARKETING

Growth-Focused Marketing Tactics

A FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH-FOCUSED MARKETING

<p>Brand & Positioning: Mission, Identity, Value Proposition</p>						
<p>Audience Segmentation: Youth/students, educators, families, adult professionals, aerospace enthusiasts, location-focused, et al.</p>						
<p>Messaging: The Cosmosphere’s brand narrative, tailored for each audience.</p>						
<p>Paid Media Pay to reach audiences.</p>	<p>Digital Marketing Search engines, email, website, online content (blogs, videos, etc.)</p>	<p>Social Media & Influencer Marketing Platform-specific content, influencer partnerships, community-building, etc.</p>	<p>Relationship & Reputation Marketing Partner advocacy, Board engagement, reviews and testimony strategy, tourism industry positioning, etc.</p>	<p>Earned Media & Thought Leadership Media relations, story pitching, speaking engagements, podcasts, expert commentary, contributed articles, etc.</p>	<p>Event & Experience Marketing Signature events, community pop-ups, brand activations, visit packages, conferences, etc.</p>	<p>Partnership & Co-Marketing Dual promotions, audience share, cross-advocacy, co-hosted experiences and events</p>
<p>Owned Media Controlled channels and content.</p>						
<p>Earned Media Earn attention from 3rd parties.</p>						
<p>Shared Media Co-create and share content with audiences.</p>						
<p>Creative Design & Content Development Graphics and messaging, developed for each strategic objective (digital, print, video, et al).</p>						
<p>Measurement, Analysis, Adjustments</p>						

ADDRESSING THE
IMPACT OF
**ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE**
ON MARKETING



AI platforms such as Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude and Copilot are rapidly emerging as alternatives to traditional search engines.

This is of particular importance to the Cosmosphere given current investments in search engine marketing and paid media.

Going forward, the Cosmosphere will prioritize AI content optimization as part of its marketing strategy development. It will focus on:

1. Understanding and defining target audiences to ensure the organization generates content that is relevant and engaging for targeted demographics.
2. Diversifying marketing tactics and platforms to remain discoverable and relevant in AI-generated content.

GROWTH-FOCUSED EVENTS & EXPERIENCE MARKETING



By creating memorable events and experiences in collaboration with STAR Bond Partners and other stakeholders in the region, the Cosmosphere can elevate its visibility and help enhance the broader community's tourism appeal.

Signature Events

Develop and/or expand programs - rocket launch parties, stargazing, World Space Week, Apollo 11 Anniversary - that position the Cosmosphere as a "must-attend" destination.

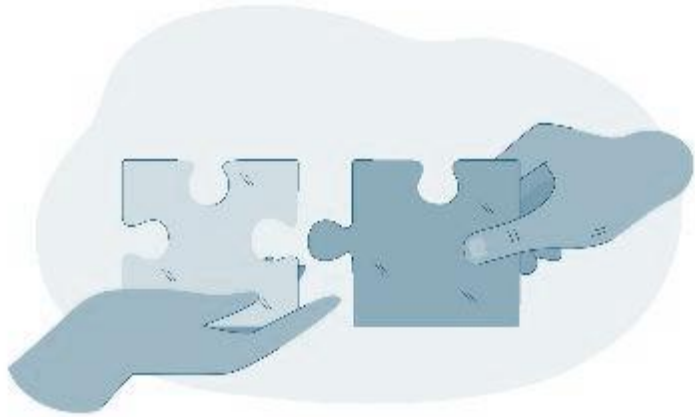
Community Collaboration & Destination Packages

Partner with Hutchinson visitor and tourism attractions, restaurants, hotels, and STAR Bond Partners to design end-to-end trip itineraries. Create packaged experiences (e.g., "A Weekend of Space and Science"), combining Cosmosphere visits with lodging, dining, and other local attractions that can deliver a themed experience.

Immersive Onsite Experiences

Expand exclusive or immersive offerings, such as behind-the-scenes tours, after hours artifact viewings, or special access to guest speakers to create truly unique visitor experiences.

GROWTH-FOCUSED
**PARTNERSHIPS &
CO-MARKETING**



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GROWTH-FOCUSED **DIGITAL MARKETING**



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GROWTH-FOCUSED **SOCIAL MEDIA & INFLUENCER MARKETING**



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GROWTH-FOCUSED **RELATIONSHIP & REPUTATION MARKETING**



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GROWTH-FOCUSED
**EARNED MEDIA &
THOUGHT
LEADERSHIP**



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DIGITAL MARKETING INFRASTRUCTURE



MAXIMIZING INVESTMENT IN SALESFORCE CRM & MARKETING CLOUD

Salesforce CRM and Marketing Cloud are not just administrative tools. **They are the operational hub of an integrated marketing strategy.**

Together, Salesforce CRM and Marketing Cloud will enable the Cosmosphere to better understand its audiences, segment communications, track engagement, and measure return on investment across nearly every tactic outlined.



The Cosmosphere's investment in Salesforce will enable:

- **Data Quality and Integration** – Ensuring accurate, complete, and centralized data from all relevant Cosmosphere systems.
- **Audience Segmentation** – Using Salesforce tools to create targeted campaigns based on strategic priority.
- **Personalized Engagement** – Leveraging automation to deliver the right messages to the right audiences at the right time.
- **Performance Measurement** – Tracking the effectiveness of digital campaigns, influencer partnerships, events, and earned media efforts to inform future marketing strategies.



MARKETING TALENT AND EXPERTISE

Identifying and Aligning Resources

BUILDING INTERNAL CAPACITY

To most effectively achieve its marketing and growth goals, while also ensuring strong financial stewardship, the Cosmosphere will build an internal marketing team focused on delivering all the objectives within the new growth-focused marketing strategy. **Priority roles considered include:**

MARKETING SPECIALIST

Digital, Social Media & Influencer Marketing

This role manages day-to-day content creation and scheduling across digital platforms, runs targeted advertising campaigns, and coordinates partnerships with influencers to extend reach.

MARKETING SPECIALIST

Development, Reputation & Partnership Marketing

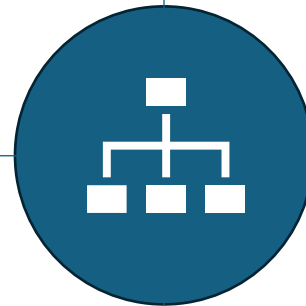
This role supports development communications, oversees partnership marketing with regional tourism and STEAM education and space exploration organizations, and builds visibility through awards, rankings and more.

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Working closely with the Marketing Specialists and the Marketing Director, this role provides creative support across all marketing initiatives, ensuring the Cosmosphere's brand is consistently represented across digital, print, and experiential platforms.

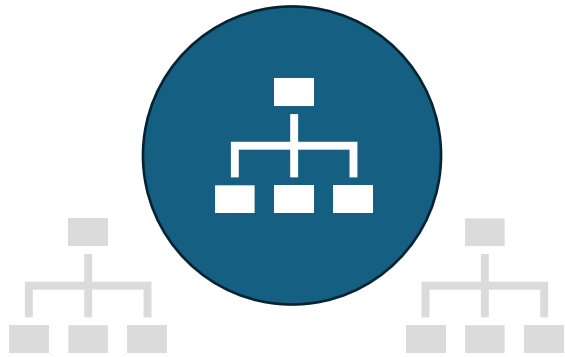
MARKETING ANALYST

This role serves as the team's subject matter expert on Salesforce marketing functionality, ensuring the Cosmosphere fully leverages its CRM and Marketing Cloud investment to support both development and marketing goals.



SUPPLEMENTAL STAFFING

Additional Considerations



Supplemental staffing may still be required during high-demand periods.

Strategic use of supplemental resources is a cost-effective way to ensure the Cosmosphere marketing team can meet all demands without overburdening current staff or sacrificing quality in ongoing projects.

As needed, the Cosmosphere should consider supplemental staffing for:

Graphic Design

Supplemental graphic design support can benefit the Cosmosphere during large campaigns, program start-up phases or ahead of major events.

Public Relations & Media

A skilled PR partner can proactively pitch stories, cultivate media relationships, and secure earned media placements that extend the Cosmosphere's visibility far beyond Kansas.

This flexible approach ensures the organization benefits from professional-level media engagement during key moments—such as major announcements, exhibit openings, or milestone events—without the ongoing cost of a dedicated, full-time position.



THE PATH FORWARD

Translating Strategy to Action



RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Develop a Marketing Action Plan.

Take the big ideas and build them into an actionable plan.

The Marketing Action Plan should clearly outline priority marketing tactics, budget allocations, accountable staff members and planned progress measures.

Secure Resources and Execute the Plan.

Build the team who can deliver the vision.

These dedicated, internal resources will be responsible for all tactics related to the Cosmosphere's growth-focused marketing plan, working toward clear objectives and within scoped budgets and priorities.