

Improvement Plan for the 2026 Hocking Hills Craft Show

Strategic Initiatives to Enhance Event Experience and Operations

Executive Summary

The Hocking Hills Craft Show, organized annually by Success University Inc., has established itself as a premier regional event celebrating artisanship, music, and community. As we prepare for the 2026 edition, this improvement plan outlines targeted initiatives designed to elevate attendee and vendor experiences, streamline operations, and support continued growth. The proposed upgrades focus on critical infrastructure enhancements, expanded amenities, and innovative solutions to address identified gaps. By implementing these measures, we aim to ensure the event remains competitive, welcoming, and memorable for all participants.

Wi-Fi Network Upgrade

Current Issues

Previous events have experienced intermittent connectivity, bandwidth bottlenecks, and limited coverage, impacting vendor transactions, attendee engagement, and operational communications. As digital payment and social media sharing become increasingly integral, reliable internet access is essential.

Mesh Network Benefits

Transitioning to a mesh Wi-Fi system will provide seamless, high-bandwidth connectivity across the entire event footprint. Mesh networks dynamically route data, reduce dead zones, and support simultaneous users without degradation, ensuring robust service for vendors, staff, and guests.

Implementation Steps

- Conduct a site survey to determine optimal node placement and coverage areas.
- Select commercial-grade mesh hardware suitable for outdoor environments.
- Partner with IT professionals for installation, testing, and maintenance.

- Establish a guest network for attendees and a secure network for vendors/operations.
- Schedule pre-event testing to validate performance under load.

Music Stage Expansion and Covering

Rationale

The music stage is a central attraction, but limited space and exposure to weather have constrained programming and audience comfort. Expanding and covering the stage will accommodate larger acts, improve acoustics, and shield performers and attendees from sun and rain.

Design Considerations

- Increase platform size to host larger ensembles and equipment.
- Install a durable, weather-resistant canopy or roof structure.
- Ensure ADA accessibility for performers and audience members.
- Integrate lighting and sound upgrades to enhance production value.

Timeline

- Design and approval: January–February 2026
- Construction: March–May 2026
- Testing and finalization: June 2026

Parking and Service Road Improvements

Stone Covering Benefits

Unpaved parking areas and service roads have led to muddy conditions and vehicle access issues during inclement weather. Adding stone covering will improve durability, drainage, and safety for guests and service vehicles.

Logistics

- Assess total area requiring coverage in parking and woods service road.
- Identify local suppliers for gravel and stone materials.
- Schedule delivery and installation to minimize disruption.
- Mark and maintain clear traffic flow and accessible routes.

Cost Estimate

Obtain competitive bids from contractors; factor in material, labor, and ongoing maintenance costs. Consider phased implementation if budget constraints arise.

ATM Services for Vendors

Vendor Needs

A significant portion of vendors are unable to process credit card transactions, limiting sales opportunities and attendee satisfaction. On-site ATM services will provide convenient cash access, supporting both vendors and buyers.

ATM Placement

- Identify high-traffic, secure locations near vendor clusters.
- Ensure ADA compliance and visibility.
- Coordinate with ATM providers for installation, servicing, and cash replenishment.

Operational Plan

- Negotiate service agreements with reputable ATM operators.
- Integrate ATM locations into event maps and signage.
- Monitor usage and address technical issues promptly.

Vendor Location Enhancements

Increasing Level Sites

Uneven ground has posed challenges for vendor setup and accessibility. Expanding the number of level vendor sites will improve safety, facilitate better booth presentation, and support vendors with mobility needs.

Implementation Steps

- Survey existing vendor areas and identify sites for grading and leveling.
- Engage landscaping contractors for earthwork and stabilization.
- Install accessible pathways and signage for improved navigation.
- Solicit vendor feedback to prioritize high-demand locations.

Vendor Satisfaction

Regularly assess vendor needs and satisfaction through post-event surveys, using feedback to inform future improvements.

Food Options Expansion

Identifying Unique Offerings

To enhance the culinary experience, diversify food options by recruiting vendors offering distinctive, regionally inspired, and specialty foods not currently represented.

Vendor Recruitment

- Conduct market research to identify trending foods and local specialties.
- Reach out to new food vendors and food trucks with unique concepts.
- Offer incentives for first-time and specialty vendors to participate.
- Curate a balanced mix of savory, sweet, and healthy options.

Attendee Experience

Promote new food offerings in event marketing and onsite signage to encourage exploration and increase sales.

Gate Credit Card Reader Installation

Need Analysis

Currently, same-day ticket purchases are limited to cash, creating inconvenience for attendees and potential lost revenue. Installing a credit card reader at the gate will streamline entry and expand payment options.

Equipment Selection

- Evaluate mobile and countertop credit card readers compatible with event operations.
- Ensure integration with wi-fi mesh network for secure transactions.
- Provide staff training on device use and troubleshooting.

Process Integration

- Update ticketing procedures to accept card payments at the gate.

- Communicate new payment options in pre-event materials and onsite signage.
- Monitor transaction volumes and address technical issues promptly.

Implementation Timeline

Initiative	Start Date	Completion Date	Milestones
Wi-Fi Mesh Upgrade	04/05/2026	06/12/2026	Site survey, installation, testing
Music Stage Expansion / Covering	03/15/2026	06/01/2026	Design approval, construction, final inspection
Stone Road Covering	05/01/2026	05/31/2026	Material delivery, installation
ATM Service Addition	01/01/2026	06/13/2026	Vendor selection, installation, signage
Level Vendor Locations	01/15/2026	06/10/2026	Site survey, grading, feedback collection
Food Options Expansion	01/20/2026	04/30/2026	Vendor recruitment, marketing
Gate Credit Card Reader	03/01/2026	03/31/2026	Equipment selection, staff training, process update

Conclusion

By strategically investing in these improvement initiatives, Success University Inc. will ensure the 2026 Hocking Hills Craft Show delivers a superior experience for attendees and vendors alike. Enhanced infrastructure, expanded amenities, and streamlined operations will foster greater satisfaction, increased participation, and a stronger reputation for the event. The outlined timeline and action steps provide a clear roadmap for successful implementation. Next steps include finalizing budget allocations, securing vendor agreements, and appointing project leads for each initiative. Regular progress reviews will ensure timely completion and continuous improvement.