



The University of Tennessee
Knoxville

The AMAze GroupTM

iSustain

Marketing Strategy

Spring 2024

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Introduction

The AMAze Group was tasked with conducting research on how to increase the awareness and customer base of iSustain's stretch film material—specifically targeting food manufacturers and large distribution centers. The AMAze Group began by compiling competitor research to better understand the recycling industry and offer marketing suggestions based on what major competitors are doing well. The AMAze Group then split into three additional teams, each focused on creating strategic marketing materials, including LinkedIn posts, Google Ads, and eNewsletter templates.

Industry Research

Research Focus

To make informed marketing decisions, the AMAze Group conducted industry research to better understand a variety of important topics with regards to stretch film. This included researching competitors, pop-up ads, demographics, partnerships, and sustainable market regulations. The AMAze Group provided detailed research on each topic in order to offer suggestions on how iSustain can improve their marketing currently and reach the company's long-term goals. This research section contains both data and mock-ups in order to understand the target audience and market.

Competitor Websites

Many competitors have websites that are clear and easy to navigate. All of the links on the website lead exactly where they say they're going and give the consumer all of the information they may need. Most map out the entirety of the stretch-film recycling process in a way that is very easy to understand. An example of this is shown on Bewi's website (see figure 1), where the company talks about how they make a plan tailored to each client and offer them a desired outcome.

How it works

By visiting you on-site, we can work out the best waste management solution for your needs.

The solution might depend on the quality of your waste (like how contaminated it is), how much waste you have, and if it's all the same kind of waste, or a mixed batch.

In some cases, our proposed solution will include a compactor that you can easily use on-site. This will make the waste more cost-efficient to transport. Also, we will pay good money for any clean, compacted natural plastic film.

Figure 1 (BEWI, 2024)

Correspondingly, NexTrex is one of the largest LDPE film recyclers in the United States. Their website has a lot of specific information about their entire process, as well as a list of all the materials they take and then recycle. Including all of this information on their website is important because it helps reach their preferred audience. It shows them what other options they have instead of landfills.

Additionally, the websites of many competitors include portions under stretch-film recycling. Many of the other competitors give exact numbers for the different recyclable materials that they have collected, while also including the percentage of recycled materials. Something that is common across websites having to do with stretch film is a simple, easy-to-understand contact form.

Pop-Up Ads

To educate future companies on plastic film waste, competitors have placed pop-up ads that appear when a consumer clicks on stretch film on Google. When entering the website, the consumer automatically sees a pop-up. A big part of iSustain's goal is to make it clear how companies can save money and be more sustainable by recycling their stretch film. This is included in other companies' pop-up ads. In addition, the pop-ups collect information for people and companies who are specifically interested in stretch film recycling. This is a great way to centralize the contact information for people who are interested.

As seen in Figure 2, AAAPolymer has this ad on its website. One option says, “Yes, I want to earn more,” and the other says, “No, my business has enough money.” This makes the company think more about their current recycling methods and how they could always use more money. Businesses never “have enough money,” so they might be enticed by this option. It is also educating the potential customer on how they are losing money and that it is due to their recycling plan. Overall, pop-up advertisements such as these are an easy way to grab a client's attention immediately and direct them to desired services.



Figure 2 (AAAPolymer, 2024)

In addition, offering a clear page that provides a form for contact outreach could improve interest in the product. Recycling overall is a large business that iSustain caters to. When looking specifically at stretch film, certain clients could benefit from filling out a form specifically for stretch film.

Mock-Ups

The first mock-up of a pop-up advertisement below focuses on how to compete with the competitors' pop-up ads that are focused on the money aspect. This version makes companies think quickly about whether they want to click “Yes” or “No” to save money.



The second mock-up pop-up advertisement highlights a focus on sustainability. The statement, “Need to improve your recycling practices?” could be replaced with similar statements, such as “Want to make your company more sustainable?”. This advertisement will focus on companies that are looking to

improve their sustainability goals. With this, people and companies who enter the website can put their information in. This way, they will be able to be on email lists and get in contact with iSustain for their company's needs.



LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene)

Looking at iSustain's challenges presented at the initial meeting, there is a lack of knowledge on cost-saving measures and what LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene) film consists of. Due to iSustain's business-to-business model, marketing stretch-film recycling should focus on reaching an audience of manufacturers, distributors, and other supply chain professionals that utilize the LDPE film. Figure 3 gives a better idea of the type of plastic used in the consumer and manufacturing industries. It also helps clarify what can be recycled through the LDPE program. While this group is a niche, hyper-focused market, utilizing informational techniques that primarily target the regular population could apply to the core audience. Figure 3 is simple, but it shows the differences from Citadel Packaging. While this specific image may not be used, something similar could be utilized to spread awareness about what iSustain recycles and what stretch film

materials consist of. This concept could be utilized on LinkedIn to inform manufacturers or at trade shows when talking to potential customers.



Figure 3 (Citadel Packaging, 2024)

Demographics

Figures 4 and 5 present the demographic information of manufacturing managers relative to iSustain desired customer base. Manufacturing managers make large-scale functional decisions for their plants, including how they dispose of LDPE film used for packaging. As previously mentioned, iSustain is focused on the accumulation of non-virgin plastics. By understanding the demographic profiles, marketing decisions can be tailored to meet the interests of different groups. Also, using this information can help reach the maximum effectiveness to engage with these different businesses. Targeting these different demographics can also help build stronger relationships with partnered companies or future customers.

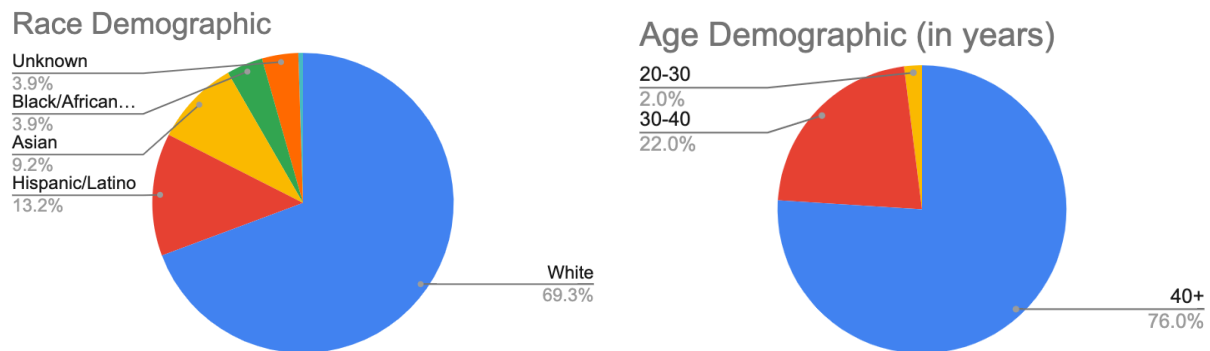


Figure 4 & 5 (Zippia, 2023)

Partnerships

There are thousands of partnerships in the business world with many different companies. The AMAze Group found that partnerships are most successful when they are advertised more. For example, in 2011, the company Timberland partnered with Omni United, a tire manufacturer and distributor (see Figure 6). Timberland would take old and unusable tires from discarded cars and recycle them into rubber soles for their boots. This partnership was talked about on many different websites and in many different magazines within both the shoe and tire industries.



Figure 6 (LumberJac, 2015)

This was a great partnership because both of the companies shared the same values and wanted to work towards the same goal, creating a “more sustainable life cycle for rubber” (Omni United 2014). Together, these companies were able to create a sustainable way to recycle old rubber instead of discarding it and hurting the environment. Additionally, it wasn't a partnership that many people would have seen coming. They wouldn't think that a shoe and tire company would collaborate. Because of this, the partnership ended up helping both companies in different ways.

Partnerships are very important to invest in in the business world. There are many different types of partnerships, but they generally do similar things to improve business. Many companies across the globe are part of partnerships because they can help the business in different ways. One of the biggest positives of partnerships is that they create new opportunities for businesses. Investing in a partnership allows a business to get integrated with a different part of the business world. Additionally, partnerships are a great way for companies' goals to be completed faster. The partnership between iSustain and Sigma Stretch Film will help improve sustainability much faster.

Sustainability Details

California:

According to Governor Newsom, the SB 54 legislation requires all plastic packaging in California to be 30% recycled after January 1, 2028, 40% recycled after January 1, 2030, and 65% recycled after January 1, 2032. This comes after a

global study stating that only 9% of all plastics get recycled. The European Union had passed similar legislation, but this is a trailblazing bill for the United States.

California is the largest manufacturing economy in the United States, employing roughly 1,200,000 individuals at 35,000 firms. The initiatives within the state also make it a desirable market for sustainability consultants and circulatory firms.

Throughout the United States:

Only seven out of the fifty states do not have legislation regarding LDPE (specifically plastic grocery bags) in accordance with certain state-wide or localized laws. More states are adopting green initiatives, but progress is slow. California has been a front-runner, and other states are sure to follow suit.

General LDPE Market Information:

Looking at the overall market for LDPE film, there was a virgin production of 3,460,000 tons in 2019. Additionally, LDPE film is the dominant plastic used in food packaging at 65.5%, general packaging at 54.9%, and other packaging at 75%.

The prevalent portion of the LDPE market indicates a high growth opportunity in many locations within the United States. iSustain can utilize effective marketing strategies to further its position within the business-to-business third-party recycling industry.

Google Ads

Ad Variation

Google ads are an essential part of increasing company awareness and accessibility. It is a product iSustain can purchase to promote, increase traffic, or raise awareness for products or services the company offers. There are five types of Google ads, including Search, Display, Video, Shopping, and App ads. Each type of ad benefits different companies for different reasons.

- “Search” ads are keyword-driven digital ads. Based on a specific keyword a user enters, will determine which ads will appear on the Google results page. Display ads are digital “displays” that aim to visually engage and hook users into clicking on the ad and visiting their site.
- Display ads are composed of visual elements and graphics, such as text or images. Display ads are found on third-party websites and are meant to be interactive and engaging with users.
- Video ads are visual display campaigns intended to engage customers on platforms that run with Google Video Partners, such as YouTube. This type of ad is available in different formats, like skippable and non-skippable in-stream ads.
- Shopping ads. Shopping ads serve to display the product or service the company provides in the form of a photo of the item along with a price, the name of the store, etc. Google Shopping ads are a smart and essential way to promote a business, although they cannot *guarantee* the sale of a product or service.
- The final type of Google Ad is called an App ad. This type of ad essentially runs a campaign to install an app. This ad has a feature that enables the user

to automate bidding and targeting for desired potential customers. But in simple terms, App ads aim to promote an app. Along with the types of Google Ads, certain search elements are essential to keep in mind when creating an ad. These search elements include “keywords,” “ads,” “extensions,” and “images.” Keywords are one of the most important, if not the most important, aspects of a successful ad.

Targeting

Growing a business with Google Ads comes with many benefits and is the way to reach marketing goals. Benefits include increased brand visibility and awareness, targeting ads to specific demographics, increased traffic flow to iSustain’s website, and improved performance measures. Online advertising is an extremely effective strategy to utilize to target the business’s intended customers while filtering out the unwanted ones. With Google Ads, complete customization of the type of ad and the way the ad is released is entirely up to the business. Using Google Ads is a crucial part of reaching marketing goals and is completely customizable through different features and ad formats. Google Ads is the place to reach the specific goals of iSustain. With this, the business can select keywords to advertise on the Google Search Network and therefore target the ads to related terms consumers are already researching.

Strategy

When creating a Google Ad, some key aspects must be included to optimize the success of the ad. To begin, craft genuine and intriguing copy that focuses on customer benefits. Avoid using generic language and use specific keywords,

phrases, and the call to action for the company's services. Potential customers respond to ads that speak to their needs. Second, adding visuals makes it easier for people to learn more about iSustain in a quick amount of time and even take action directly from the Search Ad. From this, relevant images and visuals of iSustain's products/services will pop up. Tie the ad together by connecting the headline and main body to selected keywords, making sure to include a logo and business name. Based on research, advertisers that include both a logo and name within their Search Ads will see 8% more conversions on average. Create messaging that properly reflects the services offered. Ad text should directly appeal to potential customers and be compelling.

The primary goal of stretch film recycling is to reduce waste while minimizing the environmental impact of thrown-away packaging materials. While many people know what the term "recycling" generally means, not as many consumers, or even more importantly, businesses, are aware of this method. This is what makes effective advertising so crucial to increasing traffic and business. Utilizing the online media that is accessible to almost everyone today is going to be the best way to achieve this goal. By advertising using Google Ads, people will have direct access to iSustain's services if they type in keywords [selected by iSustain] into the Google search engine. It is important to utilize a feature, such as Google Ads when creating informational and engaging content that will catch the attention of people or businesses to not only save money but save the planet as well.

Mockups

The AMAze Group researched to find the top three performing Google ad sizes. The group found the top three were: “Leaderboard” (728 x 90 px), “Medium Rectangle” (300 x 250 px), and “Half Page” (300 x 600 px).

1. “Leaderboard”:



The leaderboard ad is presented at the very top of the page it is being advertised on. This means it is one of the first things an individual will see when they click on a webpage. When the advertisement is at the top of the page, a viewer will likely spend more time viewing the ad before moving on to the page's content.

2. “Medium Rectangle”:



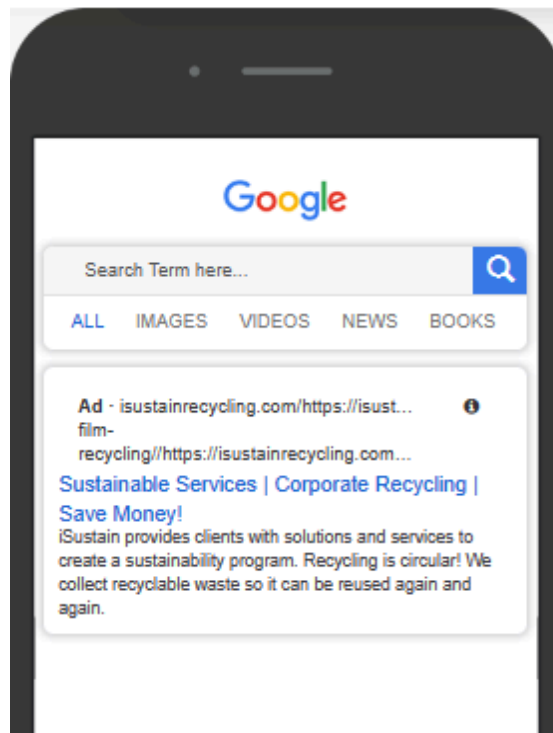
The medium rectangle ad is the most popular of the Google Ad sizes. This ad works for mobile, text, and display. These ads are also often embedded into text content, which draws the viewer's attention away from what they are reading and onto the ad. They can also be found at the end of text articles, which gives readers more focus on the ad than the article they are reading.

3. "Half Page":



The half-page Google Ad format gives a large amount of room to communicate the message. These are typically found along the sidebar of a website and are great for capturing the audience's attention. With its large size, iSustain can create a higher-quality ad.

4. “Search”:



Here is an example of a search ad. The AMAze Group briefly described what iSustain does, and focused the headings to what businesses may be in need of.

LinkedIn

This section will highlight all things LinkedIn, including research, materials, content, and recommendations that iSustain can utilize to market and promote their sustainable initiatives regarding stretch film and recycling practices. Included in this deliverable will be visual graphics, e.g., LinkedIn templates, videos, and polls, that the AMAze Group created via Canva. However, the responsibility for editing and developing these designs will be on those employed by iSustain.

Research Topics

Understanding how people interact on LinkedIn is important for creating effective content and boosting engagement. By conducting research, the AMAze Group has found what aspects affect how people interact on the platform, which will be discussed below.

Profile Optimization

To generate leads on LinkedIn, it is important to build a strong foundation first. According to an article, readers not only look at what is posted but also who is posting it. The first step to creating a high-quality profile is to show users that the business is credible and skilled. This can be done by making certain that the business's profile and background pictures are powerful, the profile's about section is clear, and the overview section is concise (Fisher, 2021).

Hashtags

Research shows that using three or fewer hashtags per LinkedIn post is essential for reaching a wider audience. If the company plans on utilizing hashtags,

it is important to choose them selectively so that they will position iSustain well on LinkedIn and be seen by the target audience. It is also important to note that using too many hashtags on a single post gives the perception that the company is desperate for engagement and lessens the company's credibility (Heath, 2022). Lastly, using a mix of two broad hashtags and one niche hashtag will strike a balance between competition and search volume (Shah, 2022).

Visual Content

Studies have shown that posts that include images produce 650 percent higher engagement than text-only posts, and those with videos attract three times more links than text-only posts (Kim, 2016). To generate leads, visuals are needed that are unique, authentic, and high-quality. It is important to note that people appreciate messages that they can receive quickly, so the message will be most effective if it is clear and concise (Fisher, 2021). If iSustain chooses to pursue video content, the AMAze Group recommends adding subtitles if need be to accommodate users who watch the videos without sound. Another recommendation is to post videos on Tuesdays or Thursdays between 10 a.m. and noon, since this is the optimal posting time that aligns with peak user activity (Prominence Global, 2023). One last suggestion is to incorporate emojis in posts to add a human touch to your content that will attract attention and improve communication effectiveness (Todorovic, 2023).

Content Diversity

Studies confirm that LinkedIn's algorithms favor a variety of content, such as polls, images, videos, articles, text-only, and many more. Out of these different

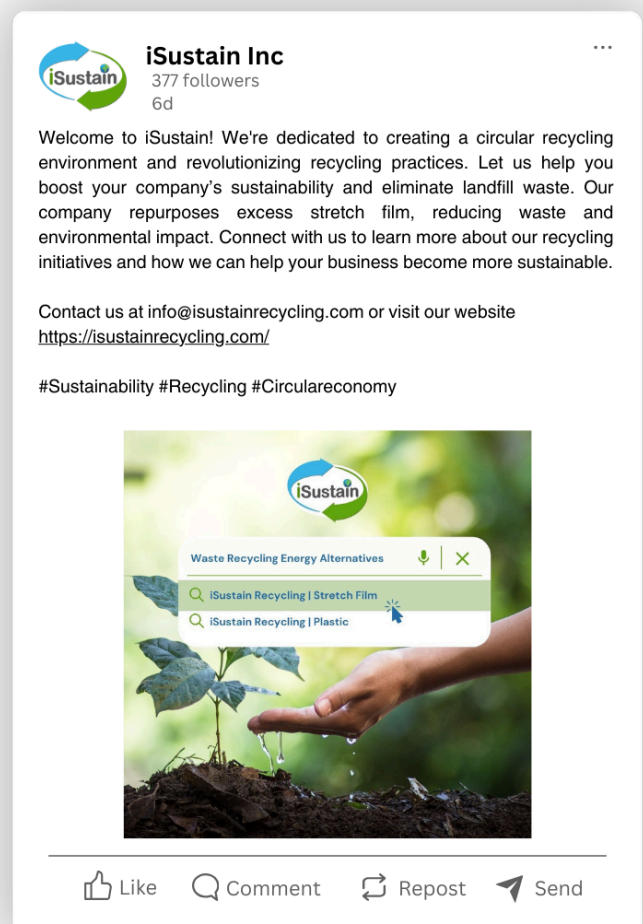
content options, polls and videos tend to attract higher engagement, but remember that content diversity is key to sustaining audience interest and interaction (Heath, 2022). Using different forms of content on LinkedIn can attract users' attention and even spark conversations.

Content Posts

Having a high-quality profile and diverse content are extremely important. iSustain's LinkedIn page should include a strong foundation so the company can pursue different forms of content that include anything from photos, graphics, videos, polls, and many more. This section will provide 3 examples of content-based posts on LinkedIn.

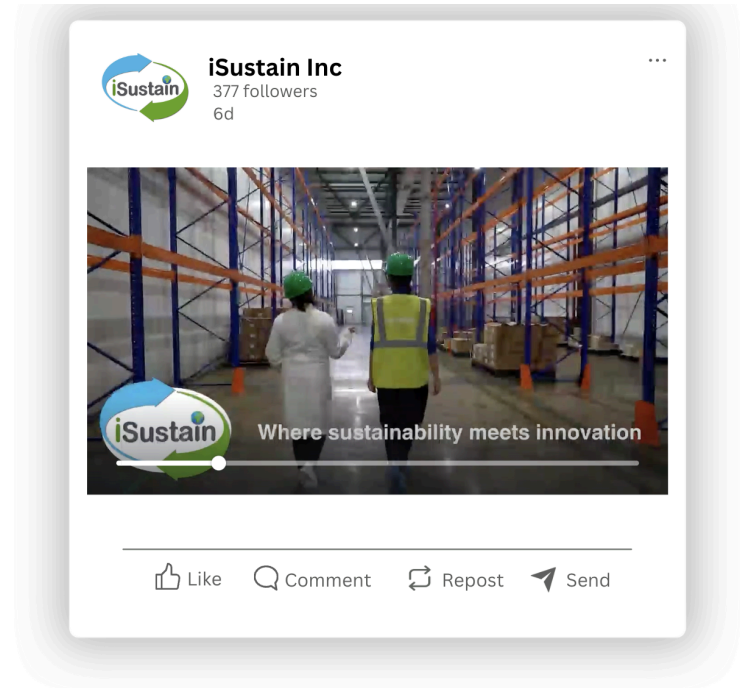
Image/Graphic Content Example

- Concise overview of iSustain that includes an external link
- Highlights the use of hashtags
- Created by AMAze Group via Canva
- Fonts used: DM Sans
- Font color: #256EAA



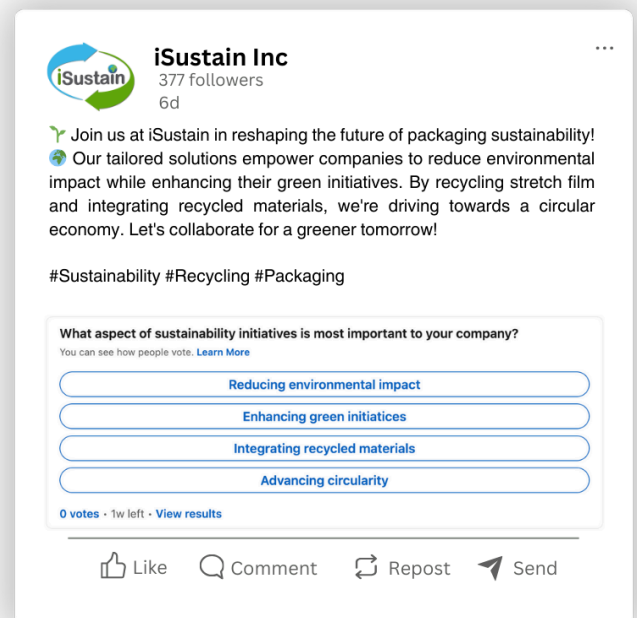
Video Content

- Highlights the use of videos as a form of content
- Generated using clips on Canva
- Fonts used: News Cycle
- Font colors: #61A611 and #175589



Utilization of Polls

- Poll generated through LinkedIn to increase interaction
- Highlights the use of hashtags and emojis in text



Newsletter

Design Choices

The AMAze Group decided to create several newsletter pages that aim to inform potential customers about iSustain and their services, as well as refresh existing customers about the benefits and importance of recycling with iSustain. The first newsletter page introduces iSustain and how businesses can benefit from the company. This choice was made because the AMAze Group felt that it would be a great starting point for any new business to learn about iSustain if they were searching to partner with a stretch film recycling company. The AMAze Group also included images of stretch film recycling to give the viewer insight into the process. The various text boxes include brief information about the company and concisely describe how customers can benefit from utilizing iSustain. The AMAze Group wanted essential information about iSustain's services in one organized document so as to act as a guide for potential customers without overwhelming them.

The second newsletter the AMAze Group created outlined the various successful partnerships that iSustain currently holds, including Dollywood and Sigma Stretch Film. This information was chosen to be highlighted because it would further reiterate the benefits of utilizing iSustain for a customer's recycling needs. Partners that are well-known were included by the AMAze Group in the newsletter to establish familiarity and connection with iSustain.

The third newsletter introduces iSustain360, which describes a few goals of the company and their benefits to the environment. The AMAze Group chose this

content to include because it describes iSustain's commitment to sustainability and showcases their performance. The page also includes a simplified graphic displaying their recycling process.

Coloring

The AMAze Group utilized iSustain's established brand book, including their primary color, #0AA6DB (Iris Blue) and #5FA344 (Apple), and secondary colors, #E9F6F5 (Clear Day) and #ACEAFF (Beyond the Clouds). Each of these colors contributes to the brand's voice. Iris Blue conveys security and dependability, a sentiment that iSustain promotes to establish trust with their customers. In addition, green is typically a color that is associated with recycling and expressing health and growth. Apple is a shade of green that is included in iSustain's branding, and using it in the company's newsletters is beneficial in calling back these positive feelings. #E9F6F5 (Clear Day) is included as the background color of the first newsletter, a neutral white color that communicates balance and calmness that ties together the information on the page with sophistication. The second newsletter includes #ACEAFF (Beyond the Clouds), a light blue shade that conveys strength and trust. These sentiments are useful when listing partnerships, as they communicate a healthy relationship between iSustain and their customers. The font used by the AMAze Group on the newsletters, Arial WGL Rounded Bold, conveys tranquility and professionalism with its rounded style and recognizable typeface, clearly displaying the information on the page. It was also provided by iSustain in their brand book.

Retention and Click Rates

According to HubSpot, 64% of recipients decide to open or delete emails based on subject lines, and personalized subject lines are 26% more likely to be opened, according to Paubox. Helpful tips for subject lines include using a question in the subject line. This is a great way to make a more personal connection with the people viewing the emails. It also pays off to be more direct with an audience to get them to take action. Furthermore, people love cliffhangers. If crafted correctly, the teaser tactic in the subject line will pique interest and entice subscribers to read on. Creating email lists makes it easier for people to consume the information being sent out. Lastly, subject lines do not have to be complicated, especially if the goal of the email is to announce something new. An emoji in an email subject line can increase click-through rates by 28%. The AMAze Group took all of this information into consideration while creating the subject lines for the newsletters, which resulted in eye-catching, click-worthy subject lines using emojis the AMAze Group felt tailored to iSustain, such as 🌍, ♻️, 🌿, and 🌱.

Subject: "🔍♻️ Explore Sustainable Solutions with Us! 🌱"



Recycle with iSustain

At iSustain, we are a full service recycling and waste company with one goal in mind, help our clients reduce costs and eliminate landfill.



Intro to Stretch Film

Stretch Film is a film commonly used for packing, wrapping, and shipping of many types of items. You know it as the "stretchy" clear film often used to secure items shipped on wooden pallets. Stretch film is made from low-density polyethylene and is known for its ability to stretch when pulled. You will commonly see it labeled as recycle code "4".

Our Process

At iSustain, we analyze facility equipment, waste disposal processes, and types. Then, we assess recycling processes and finances to boost landfill diversion and returns. Lastly, we develop proposals from waste audits to cut removal costs and boost landfill diversion, aligning with our sustainability goals.



Benefits to your Business

- Dispose of waste byproducts efficiently, in a way that benefits the planet and your business.
- Reduce the cost of waste disposal.
- Comply with local and federal regulations.
- Contribute to the circular economy, reusing more materials rather than pulling raw materials from the earth.

Customer Success Stories

"By implementing our programs, the facility reduces its environmental impact, contributes to their corporate sustainability goals, and generates an additional \$24k per year in profitability."

"By implementing our program they eliminated their \$700k per year expense of landfilling 350-400 tons of waste and now save more than \$600k per year."



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Recycle Me!



Subject: "🔍 Searching for Sustainability? We've Got You Covered! ♻️"



Sustainability Partnerships



"iSustain helped Dollywood source a specialized PET bottle baler to ensure the many collected beverage bottles were baled and ready to sell to companies able to recycle the polypropylene caps and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles. iSustain coordinates the logistics and the sale of cardboard and plastics on Dollywood's behalf to maximize recycling rates and create the best market value. The revenue generated from the cardboard and plastic sales is donated into Dollywood's Share It Forward, a program which helps employees during times of need."



Sigma Stretch Film is a certified minority-owned business and a diversity supplier, committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace and the community.

Sigma Stretch Film has partnered with the sustainability experts at iSustain Recycling to provide recycling and waste diversion solutions for their customers.

Non-Profit Partnerships



iSustain host's an annual with Cleanup Weekend in Chattanooga, TN to support Keep the Tennessee River Beautiful




iSustain participates in The Tennessee Aquarium's microplastic research efforts.



iSustain has established a \$400,000 graduate fellowship endowment to support the Haslam College of Business's students. iSustain has committed \$200,000 to the university, which will receive a one-to-one match from a matching gift program within the Haslam College of Business for a total of \$400,000. The corpus will be placed into an endowed account, and a portion of the interest earned will be awarded annually to a Haslam graduate student. This endowment will support graduate students who have a passion for protecting and improving the health of the natural environment both in business and in their personal lives.

Subject: "📦✨ Give Your Waste a Second Life! ♻️"



Introducing Sustain360

At iSustain, we're leading the charge for sustainability in the stretch film industry with Sustain360, a pioneering collaboration with Sigma Stretch Film, exemplifying our commitment to an eco-conscious future.

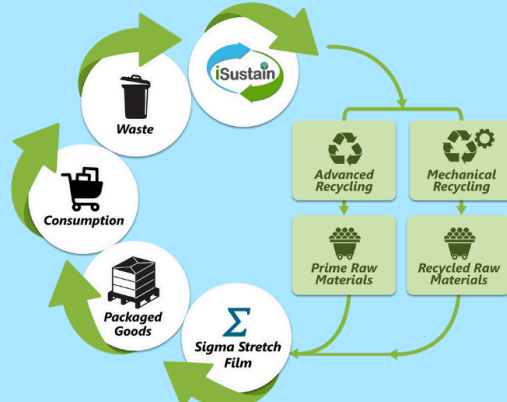
Reducing Virgin Resin Usage:
Sustain360 reduces reliance on virgin resin, cutting its carbon footprint and lessening depletion of natural resources.

Maximizing Containment Efficiency:
Sustain360 optimizes containment strength, reducing virgin material usage and waste while ensuring secure packaging, offering both environmental benefits and operational efficiency.

Enhancing Circular Economy Principles:
At iSustain, we're committed to closing the plastic waste loop with Sustain360, which incorporates post-consumer recycle (PCR) to minimize new plastic production and foster a circular economy.

Ensuring Product Performance:
Sustainability doesn't compromise performance. Sustain360 matches traditional stretch films in performance and reliability, enabling businesses to maintain packaging standards while reducing environmental impact.

Our Process



```

graph TD
    Waste((Waste)) --> iSustain((iSustain))
    iSustain --> AR[Advanced Recycling]
    iSustain --> MR[Mechanical Recycling]
    AR --> PRM[Prime Raw Materials]
    MR --> RRM[Recycled Raw Materials]
    PRM --> SSF((Sigma Stretch Film))
    RRM --> SSF
    SSF --> PG[Packaged Goods]
    PG --> C((Consumption))
    C --> Waste
  
```

Conclusion

In conclusion, the AMAze Group made recommendations on how to increase the awareness and customer base of iSustain's stretch film for recycling. The AMAze Group researched competitors, pop-up ads, demographics, partnerships, and sustainable market regulations. Additionally, the group researched techniques on how to make Google ads, LinkedIn posts, and newsletters stand out to potential customers. Lastly, the AMAze Group created mockups of the group's recommendations. The AMAze Group is grateful to have the opportunity to work with iSustain throughout this project, as the team of students wants to pursue a career in the marketing industry. The AMAze Group looks forward to seeing what iSustain accomplishes, and the group hopes the research and suggestions in the reports provide beneficial information. As always, in order to be circular, you must think outside the box!

In conclusion after dividing up into different groups

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