

Industry Expansion Solutions



3C Store Fixtures Excels with a Marketing Systems Revamp through the NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions Marketing Launchpad Program

Marketing plays a pivotal role in the success of any business, serving as the bridge between a company and its target audience. It is a multifaceted discipline beyond simply promoting products or services; it encompasses a strategic approach to understanding customer needs, creating value and building lasting relationships. Effective marketing increases brand visibility, drives customer engagement, fosters brand loyalty, and ultimately contributes to business growth. In today's competitive landscape, where consumers are inundated with choices, marketing is a powerful tool to differentiate a brand, communicate its unique value proposition and influence purchasing decisions. Whether through traditional channels or digital platforms, an articulate marketing strategy is essential for businesses to thrive and adapt to evolving market dynamics.

In an industry like manufacturing where every allocated dollar matters, many small and medium-sized organizations hesitate to spend money on marketing. Michael Jones, President of **3C Store Fixtures** in Wilson, North Carolina, related to that feeling. "When I was 17, I answered an ad in the Wilson paper for a summer job at 3C. It's been a long summer because that was 40 years ago." Jones continued, "Before 2020, we'd never done any marketing besides an ad in a magazine for a tradeshow - that's it. We didn't have aspirations to grow into a large corporation; we were satisfied with where we were in the market."

3C Store Fixtures, once known as Carolina Cabinet Company, is renowned for providing high-quality store fixtures and display solutions. With a commitment to enhancing the shopping experience, 3C Store Fixtures offers a comprehensive range of products designed to meet the diverse needs of retailers like European Wax, Orange Theory, UPS, Ikea and more. Their fixtures, including shelving units, display racks and signage solutions, are crafted with precision and attention to detail. Contrary to the assumption, 3C Store Fixtures no longer just supply countertops. "We supply a custom 'store in a box' to small franchises. We provide flooring, lighting, plumbing and construction management," stated Jones





When **NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions** (IES) regional manager, Anna Mangum, approached them in 2020 with the opportunity to participate in the marketing support program with the assistance of the Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) grant, Jones reluctantly accepted. "I was willing to check the program out with the help of a grant but was wholly opposed to spending our money on it." Jones continued, "I didn't think marketing was necessary and you're going to have a hard time convincing any company meeting their

goals with no marketing why they need it. Now, you'll have a hard time convincing me to stop."

3C Store Fixtures created an extensive marketing strategy through the Industry Expansion Solutions Marketing Launchpad program. This initiative consistently enhances marketing strategies to assist North Carolina manufacturers in advertising, promotions, social media and reputation building, providing a proven process for businesses to continually improve their marketing

programs. They repurposed their website as a well-crafted and functional digital space encompassing the depth of their services and organizational culture. 3C redesigned its collateral materials to reposition its brand. They now launch regular social media ad campaigns, creating marketing pushes that bolster customer relations and build brand awareness. Return on investment (ROI) engagement data is collected on each campaign to validate the time and expense.



Jones says his perspective on marketing did a complete 180° with the Marketing Launchpad program, especially after seeing the benefits in client loyalty. “Our focus is on brand recognition and customer loyalty. Marketing is more than just getting new customers; it’s about maintaining and nurturing your relationships and cultivating customer loyalty.” The strategic optimization of algorithms and targeted advertising campaigns amplified their exposure and generated direct feedback. “We receive feedback on our messaging strategy, from new and current customers. It’s imperative that we keep communicating with them, then they’ll remember us when they have a need,” Jones clarified.

“Marketing matters because people see it.”

Jones remarked, “Marketing matters because people see it. The exposure we’ve achieved has increased exponentially. We have fine-tuned the algorithm and the ads are hitting the exact people we want to be our customers. I get phone calls saying they saw an ad or a video. If we stopped marketing today, we would lose all the momentum we’d built.”

As they work through the program, their sales team meets with the marketing support group once every other week to map out their next steps. “Our marketing effort supports our sales group. In the beginning, it was a lot of work for about three or four months because we had to redo our website, but the time we put in was worth it,” Jones acknowledged.

Jones says they’re executing plans they’ve never thought of before including kicking it up a notch for tradeshow. Jones said, “We’re learning to maximize our trade show presence before, during and after to get as much as possible from those experiences. We plan who the target market is, what message we want to send, how to get folks to our booth, and how to follow up. Those are things



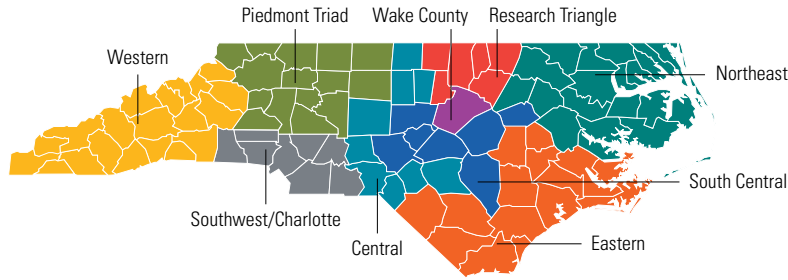
we would have never done before.”

Mangum, who has been in lockstep with 3C throughout the journey with the Marketing Launchpad program said, “We tested the strategy on their employee base before we started it as a program. With an organization the size of 3C, marketing is a component of business that makes you current and modern. 3C is now focusing on the type of sales and brand awareness that will leave a legacy.”

While reminiscing on how far 3C has come, Jones commented, “It’s hard to imagine where we are today versus where we came from; it’s an entirely different company. My advice to other companies with the opportunity to participate in the Industry Expansion Solutions Marketing Launchpad program is to listen. You don’t know what you don’t know. I advocate for this marketing program because I’ve seen our success from it.”

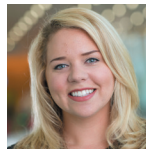
For more information about the Marketing Launchpad program, [**contact the Industry Expansion Solutions Regional Manager**](#) in your community.

NC State University Industry Expansion Solutions (IES) Regional Managers Serve All 100 Counties in North Carolina.



Western

Chris McGraw
828.329.3119
chris_mcgraw@ncsu.edu



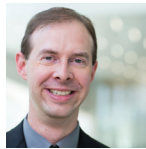
South Central

Anna Mangum
919.210.6050
anna_mangum@ncsu.edu



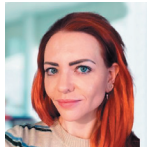
Piedmont Triad

Kami Baggett
919.830.7292
kami_baggett@ncsu.edu



Research Triangle

Mitch Poteat
919.607.0684
mitch_poteat@ncsu.edu



Southwest

Jennifer Fielder
704.380.0063
jennifer_fielder@ncsu.edu



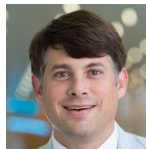
Northeast

Lori Benn
919.988.7475
lori_benn@ncsu.edu



Central

Mary Tillery
910.622.5849
mary_tillery@ncsu.edu



Eastern

Alex Easley
910.617.5650
alex_easley@ncsu.edu



Wake County

Robert Crew
919.830.2941
robert_crew@ncsu.edu



Contact the IES Regional
Manager in your area.
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