

Nonprofit Organization Grants:

Coast Guard Office of Auxiliary and Boating Safety
Recreational Boating Safety

Federal Grant Title: National Non-Profit Organization Grant Program
Federal Agency: United States Coast Guard
Funding Opportunity Number: DHS-USCG-2021-001
Type of Funding: Cooperative Agreement
CFDA Numbers: 97.012
CFDA Descriptions: Boating Safety Financial Assistance

Grantee: American Canoe Association (ACA)

Grant Number: 3321FAN201103

Grant Title: New Marketing and Measurement for an Established Paddling Education Program

Period of Performance: 1 year grant

Award Amount: \$125,000.00

Summary:

The proposed project, New Marketing and Measurement for an Established Paddling Education Program, is a unique endeavor which will leverage a blend of web-based education technology alongside an active and innovative marketing strategy. Through the creation of an online educational platform which will showcase and expand the ACA's Paddlesport Safety Facilitator (PSF) curriculum and credentialing program, a focused advertising campaign will bring accessible paddling education opportunities directly to the phone, tablet, or desktop computer of thousands of new, novice, and intermediate paddlers from all over the country.

Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (PSF) Program The PSF program teaches basic safety and paddling knowledge as well as simple rescue skills for canoeing, kayaking, and stand up paddleboarding (SUP). The training for this program includes a base paddling knowledge module (non-craft specific) plus three complementary modules that focus specifically on canoeing, kayaking, and SUP.

YouTube Marketing Strategy: Strategic Partnership for Meaningful Measurements. The implementation of a YouTube marketing campaign will deliver key paddling safety messages to thousands of highly targeted paddlers, while at the same time driving viewers to complete the online PSF course. The campaign will be released through the PaddleTV YouTube channel, which is one of the most popular paddling YouTube channels in the world, with 64,000 subscribers and 14 million views.

<https://americancanoe.org/>

Final Report

The following illustrates the results of USCG funded project, *New Marketing and Measurement for an Established Paddling Education Program*, a unique endeavor which leveraged a blend of web-based education technology alongside an active and innovative marketing strategy. Through the creation of an online educational platform which will showcased and expanded the Paddlesport Safety Facilitator (PSF) curriculum and credentialing program, a focused advertising campaign brought accessible paddling education opportunities directly to the phone, tablet, or desktop computer of thousands of new, novice, and intermediate paddlers from all over the country.

Paddlesports Safety Facilitator (PSF) Program

The PSF curriculum teaches basic safety and paddling knowledge as well as simple rescue skills for canoeing, kayaking, and stand up paddleboarding (SUP). The training for this program includes a base paddling knowledge module (non-craft specific) plus three complementary modules that focus specifically on canoeing, kayaking, and SUP. Completion of this course allows the facilitator to introduce paddlecraft safety and knowledge to the beginner paddler in a land-based setting. This course is appropriate for the staff of liveries, outfitters, parks and recreation sites, rental companies, guide services, and related recreational boating safety agencies such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. The course can also be used for any member of the general public that wants to have a comprehensive knowledge base of on-water safety and best practices for enjoyable paddling.

YouTube Marketing Strategy: Strategic Partnership for Meaningful Measurements

The implementation of a YouTube marketing campaign delivered key paddling safety messages to thousands of highly targeted paddlers, while at the same time drove viewers to complete the online PSF course. The campaign was released through a marketing partner's YouTube channel, which is one of the most popular paddling YouTube channels in the world, with 64,000 subscribers and 14 million views. A secondary benefit of utilizing YouTube as a marketing platform was the ability to apply combinations of videos, photography, animation, and illustrations to catch the attention of viewers who will then be provided a direct link to the advertised online course. A particular benefit of this project was the opportunity to directly measure the effectiveness of the proposed YouTube marketing campaign; the project not only gathered data which illustrated the number of people who consumed the safety messaging on YouTube, but it also went one step further and gathered in depth data about the use of the PSF online course platform. The online course platform analyzed and reported upon how many people completed some or all of the course, trends in curriculum content areas in which course students failed or excelled, and ultimately how many more participants met national best practices for paddling knowledge and skills standards.

This report outlines grant project data and results including:

1. Marketing campaign impressions, engagement, and reach data
2. Online course participation, completion, and user data
3. Online course quiz questions and answer trends
4. Online course review and feedback
5. Revisions/further work to be completed
6. Advertising Campaign Notes & Lessons Learned

	3 rd Quarter	4 th Quarter	% Increase
Total Impressions: Facebook Instagram	1,141,625	1,152,205	0.92%
Total Reach: Facebook Instagram	1,523,748	1,534,210	0.68%
Total Posts: Facebook Instagram	13	17	30.77%
Total Engagement: Facebook Instagram	54,019	57,766	6.40%
Total YouTube Views - Past Content	355,102	626,916	76.55%
YouTube 2022 Pre-Roll Views	431,686	722,748	67.42%
YouTube 2022 Pinned Comments Views	501,622	885,208	76.47%
Blog Articles Featuring Online Course	6	10	66.67%

- **Impressions:** The online paddling safety course campaign received 1,152,205 impressions on Facebook and Instagram from the start of the campaign through September 30th, 2022.
- **Reach:** The online paddling safety course campaign reached 1,524,210 Facebook and Instagram users.
- **Total posts:** 17 posts on Facebook and Instagram mentioning the online course have been made to date.
- **Engagement:** 57,766 people were engaged with online course posts on Facebook and Instagram.
- **Pre-Roll Views (YouTube):** there have been 626,916 YouTube views from the pre-roll commercial. Note: this is bonus/re-use and exposure from prior USCG video projects
- **Pinned Comments Views (YouTube):** there have been 722,748 YouTube views (by paddlers) of an online safe boating pre-roll commercial as part of the 2022 campaign to date. All videos link to the online paddling safety course. There have been 885,208 YouTube views to paddling videos that have an online safe boating course link prominently displayed in the YouTube description and pinned comment section. All videos link to the online course.
- **Blog Articles:** 10 articles linking to the online safe boating course have been posted on a related website. This website is an additional source of relevant paddling information, which features related publications (including this project's online paddling safety course), and hosts an increased 111,535 Facebook followers, 22,792 Instagram followers, and 109,000 YouTube subscribers.

Online course participation, completion, and user data (as of 9/30/2022):

- **Online course participants:** 2,650 (184.33% increase from Q3)
- **Number of course completions:** 1,327 (207.89% increase from Q3)
- **Number of partial course completions:** 1,125
- **Average course completion rate:** 59.1% (5% increase from Q3)
- **Average course score:**
 - Course completions: 92.81%
 - Partial course completions: 42.16%

Online course quiz questions:

Q1	You should leave a kayak on the roof of your car unsecured as long as you plan to come back.
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Q2	How do you test that your boat is securely strapped / tied down to your car?
Q3	Planning the paddling route for a trip involves:
Q4	What information should NOT be included in a float plan?
Q5	Prior to each paddling trip, a float plan should be:
Q6	All group members should be wearing life jackets. A life jacket should fit _____.
Q7	The lead boat should:
Q8	When the group's ability to talk is compromised, alternative ways to effectively communicate include:
Q9	It is safe to paddle _____.
Q10	Which of the following is most likely to occur during the initial shock of falling into very cold water?
Q11	When should a paddler dress for immersion?
Q12	In a rescue scenario, which do you rescue first?
Q13	If you capsize while paddling, you should do all of the following except:
Q14	When preparing for or debriefing after a paddling trip, it is important to:
Q15	After the conclusion of a paddling trip, you should do all of the following except:

Quiz questions – answer trends (as of 9/30/2022):

	Percent Correct	Percent Incorrect
Q1	99.3%	0.7%
Q2	94.7%	5.3%
Q3	99.3%	0.7%
Q4	98.7%	1.3%
Q5	86.2%	13.8%
Q6	99.5%	0.5%
Q7	98.3%	1.7%
Q8	98.8%	1.2%
Q9	98.6%	1.4%
Q10	80.6%	19.4%
Q11	92.4%	7.6%
Q12	97.2%	2.8%
Q13	71.5%	28.5%
Q14	85.4%	14.6%
Q15	93.8%	6.2%

The questions highlighted above had the highest percentages of incorrect answers. Each of those questions is outlined below, with the correct answer in **bold** and the percentages of each answer that was selected. *Note: some participants did not answer every question and/or abandoned the course prior to answering.*

Q5: Prior to each paddling trip, a float plan should be:

- A. Filed with the U.S. Coast Guard (12.3%)
- B. Mailed to the state police (0%)
- C. Given to a local marine patrol officer (1.1%)

- D. Left with a relative or friend (86.1%)**
- E. Kept only in the trip leader's pocket (0.36%)

Q10: Which of the following is most likely to occur during the initial shock of falling into very cold water?

- A. Immediate, sudden gasping (80.4%)**
- B. Loss of feeling in the legs and arms (7.1%)
- C. Fainting or loss of consciousness (2.6%)
- D. None of the above (9.4%)

Q13: If you capsize while paddling, you should do all of the following *except*:

- A. Hold onto your craft and your paddle (5.5%)
- B. Stay calm and listen to instructions given by the rescuer (8.6%)
- C. Tie a rope around your waist and attach yourself to the rescuer's boat (71.21%)**
- D. Be an active participant in your rescue (3.3%)
- E. None of the above (10.9%)

Q14: When preparing for or debriefing after a paddling trip, it is important to:

- A. Understand your limits (0%)
- B. Seek training from a certified instructor (0.07%)
- C. Learn from your shared experiences and make informed decisions (14.4%)
- D. All of the above (85.1%)**

Online course review and feedback:

At the conclusion of the online course, participants were asked to rank the course according the following questions; 412 participants completed the course review/ranking. The ranking mechanism consisted of a sliding scale of 1 to 5.

	Course Review Question	Avg Score
Q1	The course content and presentation increased my knowledge about paddling.	4.0
Q2	The course was organized in a way that helped me understand paddling safety concepts.	4.3
Q3	The concept review quizzes measured my knowledge and reinforced the course content.	4.2
Q4	I believe the content being presented in this course is important.	4.6
Q5	I would recommend this course to others.	4.3
Q6	How did you hear about this course?	See Below
Q7	Please provide any additional comments or feedback about this course.	See Below

For question 6, "How did you hear about this course?" the results are as follows:

- From a friend of family member (13.4%)
- Email advertisement (6.2%)
- Facebook (11.2%)
- YouTube (40.9%)
- Other (28.8%)

For question 7, 307 participants submitted additional comments via an open textbox style data capture. Excerpts include:

- *The length of the course is just right. The graphics and inclusion of different kinds of people are a great highlight as well*
- *A great source of information for all paddlers*
- *As an experienced paddler, I appreciated the review. I have shared this with my nephew who is just getting started, thanks*
- *Excellent basic safety course. I really appreciated it talked about what a victim should do. I will be sending this course to my friends before our next paddle outing*
- *Excellent course, thank you very much for providing it for free. I found it very informative*
- *Excellent presentation, concise, and direct to the point*
- *Excellent resource for anyone getting into paddling to ensure the basics are covered*
- *Good basic instruction for beginning paddlers*
- *Good course; should be mandatory for all paddlers*
- *Great course presented well. Every paddler should take and would benefit from this. I appreciate this content*
- *Great course to reflect and stay aware of some basic safety concepts in a quick and easy fun way! Thanks!*
- *Great intro for new water sport enthusiasts with little or no prior trip experience. Thank you for offering this free course. I am taking away new information and tips. :)*
- *Great resource for introducing new paddlers to the concepts. Nice refresher for experienced paddlers*
- *Great short course. Loved it., very informative (and fun)*
- *Great Training course! I plan on taking additional training, and will be pursuing certifications*
- *As a moderately experienced outdoors person but a new kayaker, this was a helpful overview of things I needed to know--both the things that overlap with other outdoor experiences (filing a travel plan, safety gear) and the things unique to water safety (rescue protocols). It also gave me some clues to things to research and practice further*
- *I plan to require this for certification courses prior to attending. It will help students, who might know the content, learn to discuss it concisely*
- *I really liked it! Simple but helpful*
- *I really liked the interactive animation*
- *I was already familiar with most information, but I did learn a few new things and a refresher is ALWAYS good!!!*
- *I'm taking a flat-water boarding course at a university, and my professor linked this course to us in our syllabus. I really enjoyed this format for learning because the videos were easy to follow and got right to the point*
- *It is good to review safety courses. This was good and helped me see that I know how to be safe on the water*
- *It was informative & fun at the same time*
- *I really enjoyed the course and enhanced my knowledge of PFDs and messaging signals by whistle and paddle. Besides, I will now start preparing and sending a Float Plan when going paddling.*

Revisions/further work to be completed: Remove confusing question phrasing, such as those ending with *except*. Lengthen the time allotted to the “Cold Water Shock and Safety” graphic presentation. Research the source of the “other” users, as they were over a quarter of the participants.

Advertising Campaign Notes & Lessons Learned

Successes of the promotional campaign:

This project was able to generate a huge amount of reach and awareness among new and existing paddlers. The project marketing partner has an engaged paddler fan base on YouTube and social media. Featured videos garnered a number of comments from paddlers appreciative of information about the free online PSF course. The free online course ties into the marketing partner’s mission, vision and values about educating, inspiring and developing lifelong paddlers with the online PSF course, related content, and blog content. This clear overlap further enhanced the outreach impact of both organizations and the USCG’s Recreational Boating Safety messaging.

Changes and “lessons learned” for future campaigns of this type:

Despite logical connections between new paddlers seeking education through videos/YouTube and the offering of a free online course, this project did not produce the level of engagement we expected. The online PSF course advertising methods utilized by the project marketing partner could have been easier for viewers to find and utilize. Additional outreach methods should be implemented, such as:

- YouTube TrueView: Video messages presented to viewers based on geography and/or interest and demographic level targeting
- ConnectedTV: Targeting of households in proximity to recreational bodies of water and/or paddling interests
- Targeted display and Retargeting: Targeting users in proximity to recreational bodies of water and/or paddling interests. Once they visit a video/website/social post, they will be reminded of that content while using other online resources
- Targeted social: Targeted audience marketing on Facebook and Instagram