Wisehart Cutting Horses Business and Customer Portfolio

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By:
Tawni Stoneburner

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Introduction and Background

The cutting horse industry has been around for many years with the first competition being held in 1898, as a way for people to prove their own horses’ ranch talents and has now grown to an industry based on trainers and clients (NCHA, 2018). The main goal of the trainer is to get a horse prepared to show at its best ability and to win the most earnings (Wisehart, E., 2017). According to the American Quarter Horse Handbook, “Judges score the horses on their ability to keep the cow from returning to the herd, cow sense, attentiveness and courage.” (AQHA 2018). Cutting horse trainers normally have multiple clients that own horses and pay to have their horses in training with a professional trainer with the intent of developing a superb horse (Wisehart, E., 2017). To do so, trainers need a portfolio to demonstrate to the potential clients, where and how their money is being used, in order to encourage clients keep their horses in training and add horses to the training program. In addition to clients’ understanding of the training program, the team of hired help behind a cutting horse trainer will also need nutrition and equipment guidelines to keep the horses in excellent condition, including nutrition regiments (Wisehart, E., 2017).

The business plan created through this project will be implemented into Wisehart Cutting Horses to increase clientele, improve business operations and training team communication. Eric Wisehart of Santa Ynez, California, is the owner and operator of Wisehart Cutting Horses and has been professionally training cutting horses since 2010. Wisehart originally grew up in the northern parts of Colorado where he enjoyed competing in rodeos. He later found his passion in training and showing cutting horses. Wisehart has a goal to bring in ten, two-year-old horses each year to start in training and show in later years. To do so, he will need an appealing portfolio to present to the buyers of these horses (Wisehart, E. 2017).

Methodology

The study is both qualitative and quantitative, the research includes thoughts and general ideas about perspective cutting horses and closely focuses on the monies spent on a horse in training. The study took place within Wisehart Cutting Horses in Santa Ynez, California. At the end of the study there will be both a portfolio available for Wisehart’s training team and clients. The participants include, Eric Wisehart as the owner, multiple customers, along with assistant trainer, Blaze Cress of Wisehart Cutting Horses. The participating clients answered multiple questions pertaining to their horses including what they would like to see in future horses. Wisehart and Cress were more qualitative based, sharing thoughts on equipment, feeding practices for particular client needs. For example, the two trainers preferred Beautiful Tail Slinkies opposed to other brands. Clients were also asked qualitative questions such as if their training investment was worth the expense.

The next area of study compared current client horses to their earnings show data from NCHA. Analyzing quantitative data added to the project’s qualitative interviewing in the prior step. Several instruments and recording processes were used in the data collection process including, surveys, questionnaires and personal interviews. The interviews included prepared questions along with follow up questions. The prepared questions were developed by an accumulation of questions Wisehart had been asked in the past by customers along and approved by respected cutting horse trainer, Morgan Cromer.

To complete the research, the author met with the participants and communicated over email, along with using past data bases found online. By accessing the National Cutting Horse Association database online, records were obtained for horse, owner and rider. The data was analyzed and approved by Eric Wisehart, along with his assistant Blaze Cress. Wisehart’s training team and the author went through the data and decided which items were crucial to include in the portfolio and which items may be optional. For example, based on some customers responses it was decided heavy blankets are required, but the customer may supply their own rather than being required to use one Wisehart Cutting Horses provides
and include in monthly bills. All collected data from equipment costs to nutrition programs were placed into Microsoft Excel sheets; one for the business portfolio and one for the training team’s equipment and nutrition guidelines.

**Results**

The data correlations reflected Wisehart clients with horses that followed the training program closely were scoring higher in eye appeal versus the same horses one year prior. Over all, the participants within the study were very pleased with the outcome. The data and thoughts from Wisehart’s team was collected and reviewed for a year span to produce a customer and business portfolio for both the clients and members of the Wisehart team.

Wisehart Cutting Horses now has a portfolio to hand to each client of what to expect as a participant in the cutting horse training program provided. This portfolio includes a baseline cost of items for a horse in training ($495 mandatory items), ($1,429 including extra items), an explanation of the time spent with the horses and the ability to educate themselves further on their knowledge of cutting. Wisehart’s training team will benefit by having access to Microsoft Excel sheets with built-in formulas to create a guideline for a feed list, trailer loading list and show list.

The feed list includes supplements, grains and any other medications. The trailer loading list includes all of the items the team needed to travel down the road along with the same feed list and an added formula that calculates the days, horses and quantities of each supplement and medication. Lastly, the show list includes what each horse needs at a show such as saddle, bridle and other tack. The equipment and nutrition guidelines will aid Wisehart’s team in keeping the horses in excellent condition and the client portfolio will help expand the training business. Since the author’s analysis of the collected data, Wisehart’s two-year-old program improved dramatically. In 2017, Wisehart’s team trained two, two-year-old horses and in 2018, the team has eight, two-year-old horses in training. This is a 400% increase in the two-year-old training program.

**Recommendations**

After the study was completed some recommendations surfaced. In order to improve the portfolio more, finding an online and mobile app to access or edit the spreadsheets would be ideal seeing that the Wisehart team is on the road a lot and do not normally have access to a computer or printer. Throughout time, more columns may need to be added to have sufficient information on the horses. With the ability to change and mold these portfolios with ease of the spread sheets, Wisehart’s team should be able to utilize no matter how large his business grows pertaining to horse number.
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