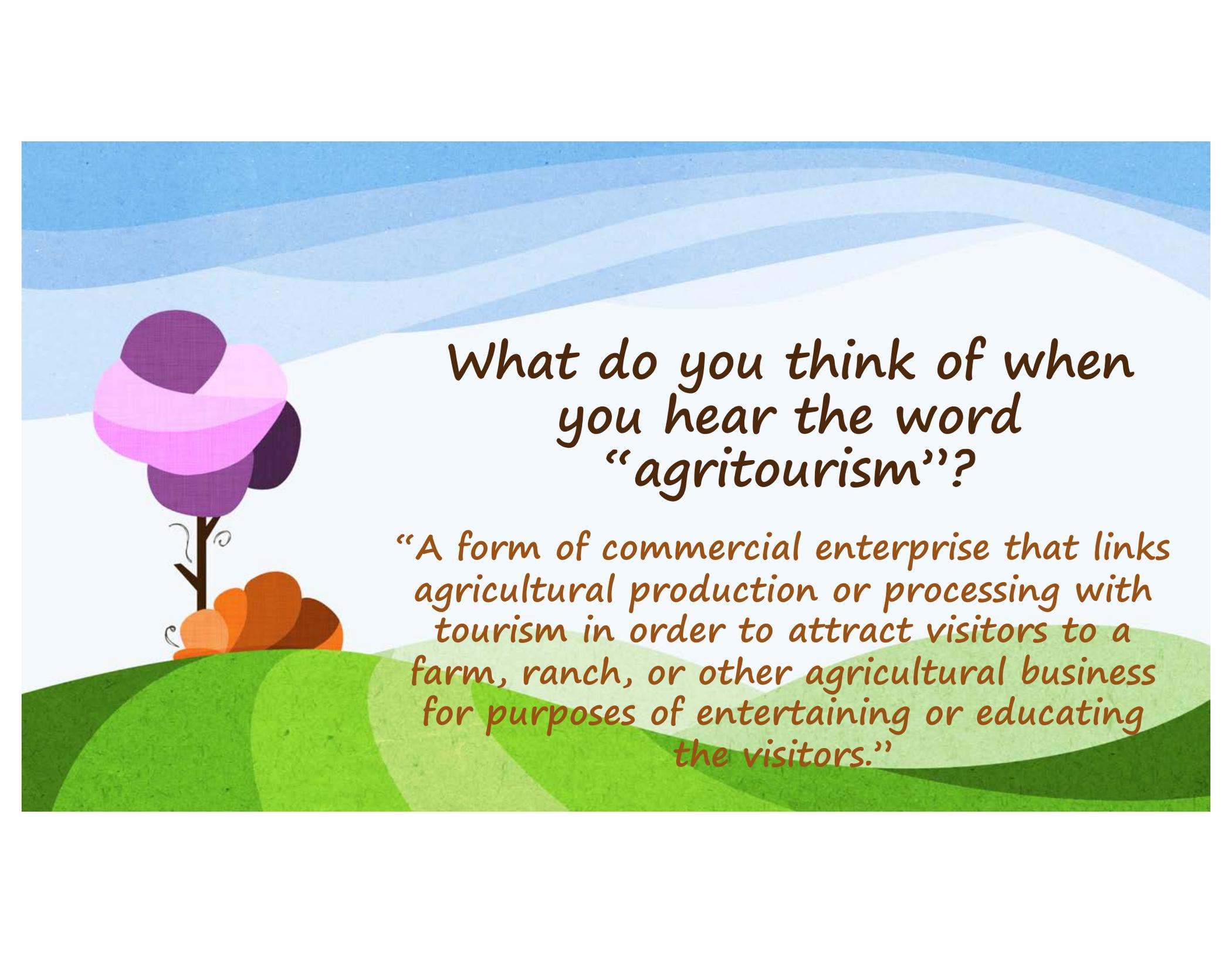




An Innovative Approach to Developing an Educational Communications Campaign in Agritourism

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What do you think of when
you hear the word
“agritourism”?

“A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors to a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors.”

Project Motivations

- Agriculture and Tourism are top 2 economic industries in Montana
- Increase in small farm operators, farmers' markets, specialty crops, and local foods: 2007-2012- 61% growth in fruit, vegetable, and horticultural operations
- Increased emphasis on growing specialty crops as an alternative enterprise to add value and increase producer revenue- SPCA
 - Specialty crops are high value, non-traditional crops- fruit, veggies, horticulture
- Education requests and training needs of younger producers interested in operating smaller agricultural businesses has also increased
 - Little educational resources exist for current and potential producers
- Montana Department of Ag Specialty Crop Block Grant- "Growing the Agritourism Business in Montana: Insight from Experts"
 - Combined interests in Agricultural Education and Agricultural Economics

Context of the Project

- *An integrative campaign of development of a website, podcast series, and informational resources*
- *The platform consists of a series of podcasts, with each episode focusing on a different facet of agritourism:*
 - *Production, management, marketing, and economics*
- *Each episode is a narrative that interweaves interviews Montana operators to discuss challenges and questions answered by experts from nearby states*
- *By tracking analytics, we will provide insight about which communications and marketing strategies are most effective*

Audio Tools and Setup

What do you need at a minimum?

Hardware:

- Microphones (USB or condenser)
- Computer

Software (free):

- Garageband (Mac)
- Audacity (PC)

Our setup High quality audio

- Condenser mics (Shure) \$\$\$\$
- Mic-to-PC interface (Tascam) \$\$\$
- Mic stands and p-filters \$\$
- Headphones (Sony) \$\$\$
- Cables \$
- Garageband (free)
- Skype (free)

Startup cost: ~\$850

Podcasting makes you happy!



Post-Edits, Transcription, and Analysis

Recording is the easy part! Now what?

Post-Editing and Transcribing

- On the cheap: Edit audio manually (Garageband/Audacity) and transcribe by hand
- The “soooo worth it” alternative: Descript
 - Machine learning transcription service: 1 hour podcast = 5 minutes to transcribe = 95% accuracy
 - \$199 year

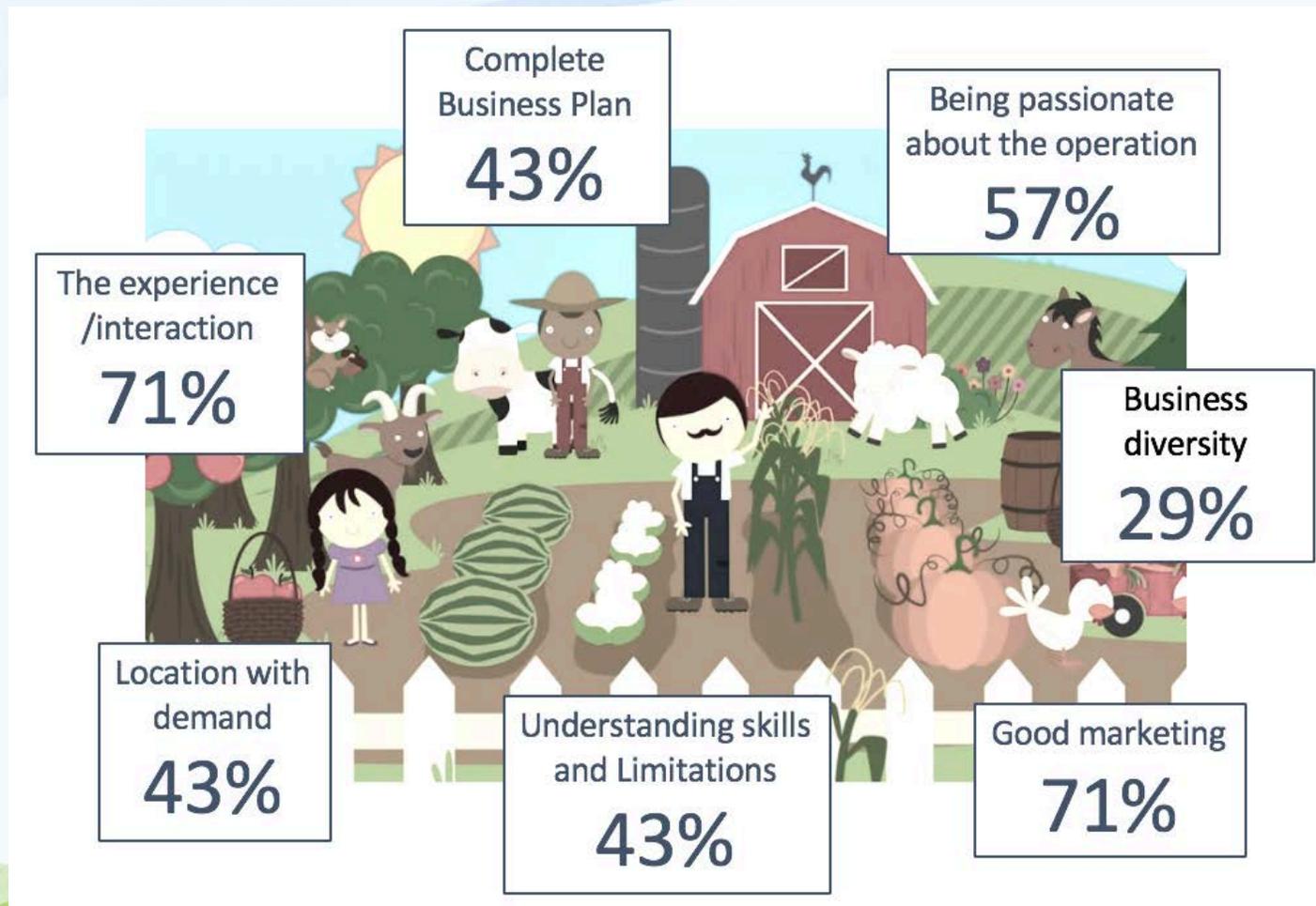
Text Analysis

- Nvivo- Qualitative Analysis Software

Video Production Plan- Homestead Organics

- Seven themes identified from interviews that contribute to a successful agritourism business. We will capture these ideas in a video story filmed at a farm to frame production plan.
 - Aligning places, interviews, and shots to capture themes
- Partnered with a professional student video production company using drone footage- \$1800
 - Pre-production: Project budgeting, verification of information, travel arrangements, logistics
 - Production to include shooting and recording operations on location for Project.
 - Post production to include editing, effects production, graphics production, and delivery of project.

Characteristics of an effective agritourism operation



Website design

What we wanted

- Modern, dynamic look and feel
- Podcasts are front and center
- Flexibility to serve as hub for external resources
- Ability to gather user-interaction data
 - A/B testing of webpage designs, keyword analysis of searches that lead users to the podcast series and webpage, engagement with educational materials, and voluntary surveys regarding users' experiences and learning outcomes.
- Might be able to accomplish this using your university's CMS...
We needed to seek an alternative: WordPress

Audio Podcast WordPress Theme: WP Cast

- *Built-in nonstop player*
 - *Audio player keeps playing even when going to a different page on the website (rare even on mainstream podcast sites).*
- *Host on WP server*
- *View counter on player*
- *Good blog page layout*
- *\$53 (+\$16 for 1 year support)*
- *Flexible options for design: Page builder that works with Wordpress podcast plugins to manage the episodes.*

Charms

- This is so fun!
- Stakeholders have direct involvement in research design, execution, and communication.
- Very accessible type of research to engage students in project tasks

Challenges

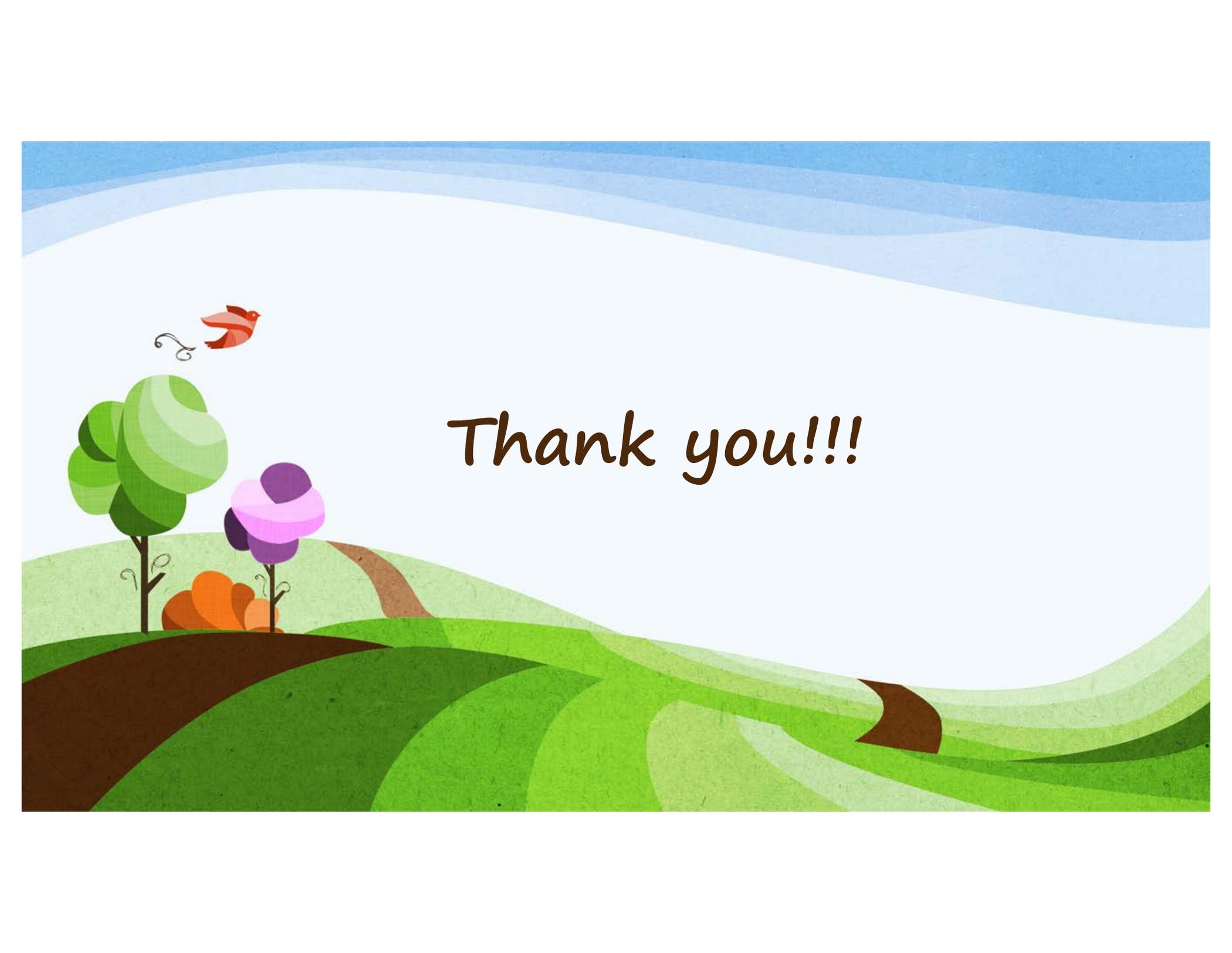
- Effective ways to engage in distance audio learning?
- Best practices for measuring engagement and impacts?
- Web and podcast analytics software
- Working with University web and communication office.
- Time intensive!

Changes

- Set up all interviews with producers before summer!
- Gain cooperation from communication services in advance-information delivery strategies
- Discuss contract services with grants office and legal counsel

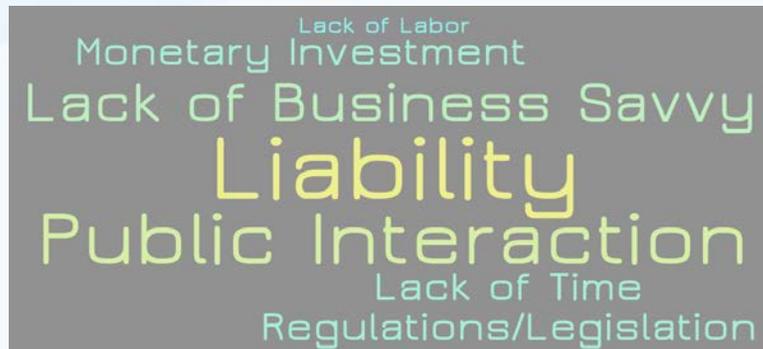
What are your thoughts?

- Applications to other projects?*
- Strategies for stakeholder engagement using podcasts?*
- Ideas for assessing outreach impact?*
- Analytics for assessing outreach?*



Thank you!!!

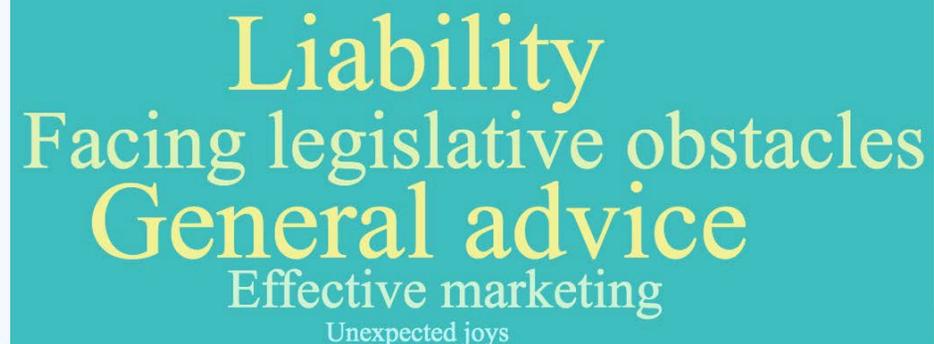
Perceived Challenges (ranked by word size in order of most commonly mentioned):



A word cloud on a dark grey background. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape. The word 'Liability' is the largest and is colored yellow. Other words are in shades of green and white. The words include: Lack of Labor, Monetary Investment, Lack of Business Savvy, Liability, Public Interaction, Lack of Time, and Regulations/Legislation.

Lack of Labor
Monetary Investment
Lack of Business Savvy
Liability
Public Interaction
Lack of Time
Regulations/Legislation

Operator's Questions (ranked by word size in order of most commonly mentioned)



A word cloud on a teal background. The words are arranged in a roughly rectangular shape. The word 'Liability' is the largest and is colored yellow. Other words are in shades of green and white. The words include: Liability, Facing legislative obstacles, General advice, Effective marketing, and Unexpected joys.

Liability
Facing legislative obstacles
General advice
Effective marketing
Unexpected joys

Theme	Quote explaining theme
The experience/ interaction	<p>“[visitors] want a certain experience...they want that farm with the scenic vista”.</p> <p>“A lot of what people are buying from us is not actually the food. It's the interaction.”</p>
Good marketing	<p>“It's about how you frame it.”</p> <p>“Successful operations do a good job with their marketing and have developed a way of reaching out to people.”</p>
Enjoying the operation/being passionate about it	<p>“If you're not following your heart, it's probably not going to be fun...if it's not fun, you're not going to be giving off that vibe and that's going to turn people away.”</p> <p>“If you're not passionate about it, you shouldn't be doing this.”</p>
Location with demand	<p>“I think you need to be near population centers.”</p>
Complete Business Plan	<p>“Successful operations have to be very well thought out, like a complete business plan.</p>
Understanding Skills and Limitations	<p>“The operation fits within the skill set of the folks who are running it or they hire folks...that have the skill set that meets those needs.”</p>
Creating diversity within business	<p>“Diversification is really important, so that if you have a failure in a crop...you'll still have fruit from others...you've got to make darn sure that you don't use up all of your spare cash in case you're going to have to buy a bunch of fruit the next year.”</p>