

B Sweet Social Media SHP

Clayton Broadway

Dr. Rowe

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For my Signature Honors Project I wanted to do something that would help me gain some experience in the field I want to work in, while also being able to help someone close to me. With that being said, I chose to help my mother expand the reach of her small business, B Sweet Bakery. She started the business in the Fall of 2018 as an alternate revenue stream to help pay for the Christmas season. It was so successful that it became a full time side project for her, with orders being filled throughout the year. She typically sold her bread by setting up a stall at the local farmers market, which led to a small but reliable customer base that would typically return weekly. Along the way, she found some other local business owners that agreed to sell her bread in their stores, creating a consistent demand for her products. The one thing she was lacking was a presence online. With social media growing at such an astonishing rate, it is an extremely important tool that must be utilized to help grow the business and boost sales. I chose to fix this by creating both an Instagram page and a Facebook page. The primary goal of this was to make community outreach easier, while giving her a centralized place to process orders. She currently takes orders and organizes deliveries through the messenger portion of Facebook directly on her personal page. I also reached out to Brooks Mill Farms, one of the local businesses that sell her products and asked them if they would be interested in doing a joint social media campaign and they said they would love to. This led to mutually beneficial posts on both of our social media pages that were essentially advertising our businesses. This was extremely beneficial for us, as we only had 15 followers at the time, while they had over 1,500. As of the writing of this paper we are approaching 50 followers, which does not sound like a lot but one of the hardest things about creating a presence on social media is getting your profile off the ground. Once you have a decent following it is easier to build it up further because you have a larger audience to push it for you. I am content with what I was able to accomplish because my goal was to increase her

notoriety in our community, I never intended for her to be recognized on a global scale. This also does not mean I intend to stop pushing it either. I will continue to push her page until I am content with the amount of people in the community it has reached. At that point I will relinquish control to her so that she can use it as she sees fit.

For this project I had to choose a mentor to oversee everything and supervise my credit hours. I chose Dr. William Rowe, a marketing expert and professor in the College of Business here at East Carolina. He was great about meeting with me and offering suggestions and insight into my situation. His marketing expertise made him the perfect person to bounce ideas off of regarding the ideas I had about the social media pages. I also did some research into how other small businesses market themselves on social media and found that it came down to three main components. They use targeted hashtags to help them appear to people who browse similar topics. Their profiles have a certain aesthetic that they maintain by using similar colors and subjects in their posts. They also post people using their product on their story to help boost interaction with their customers. The best small businesses to study for things like this are typically local boutiques. This is because the employees are typically women, usually in their twenties or thirties. This demographic is the most savvy when it comes to forming an attractive social media profile. They are also typically very fashion forward, making it easy for them to visualize what products would look the best if featured on the page. This is less important with food, though it still has to look visually appealing to provoke interest from potential customers.

For my data collection, I chose to compare the sales numbers for both our weekly orders and the number of units sold at Brooks Mill Farms. I scaled this with our number of followers on Instagram to get a sense of the correlation between the two. The following table is comprised of my findings:

Date	Brooks Mill	Personal	Followers (IG)
7/3/21	30	50	10
7/10/21	26	38	13
7/17/21	28	40	14
7/24/21	30	44	16
7/31/21	30	44	20
8/7/21	34	46	17
8/14/21	0	0	22
8/21/21	32	40	26
8/28/21	32	42	29
9/4/21	35	45	31
9/11/21	34	44	34
9/18/21	33	45	36
9/25/21	36	45	39
10/2/21	35	40	41
10/9/21	36	50	44
10/16/21	38	48	47

As you can see, the results of this project were promising, as we saw a small boost in both sales and notoriety at the local market and in local businesses. At the market, before it closed for the winter, we got some good exposure for Instagram. The problem with that is that the majority of our customer base is old enough that they do not have Instagram. This was before the Facebook page was created so it was our only platform at the time. Next year I am confident that we can grow our profile by advertising to our customers. While there was not enormous

growth, the store that partnered with us on social media has increased the number of loaves they order per week by approximately 15. This is extremely significant because they are supposed to open a new location at some point next year that would be in the center of town as opposed to on the outskirts like their current location. As our reputation continues to grow I will try to negotiate a permanent designated display for B Sweet products in their store, providing us with a consistent and profitable sales channel.

Going forward, I have a lot of ideas to continue to further our brand in the community. One of the ideas we are implementing this holiday season is a special Christmas package that comes with a bread dish alongside the loaf, as well as homemade strawberry jam. This package is then wrapped in plastic and tied with a big bow. I have also created a label template with our social media profiles on them to put on the holiday orders, of which there are currently over 300. Once our follower count gets higher I can start using the Instagram story to interact with our customers. In the future I hope to do giveaways and feature customers on our story who have bought our products and tagged us in posts. My mother comes from a finance background so I am excited to share my marketing knowledge with her so that she can grow as a business owner.

The reason I wanted to take on this project is to test the knowledge I have gained over my academic career, all while doing something for my family that I can be proud of. I hope that it will also sharpen my professional skills and serve as an experience builder that I can look back on in the future.