

A Social Media Campaign Strategy and Execution Plan for Guernsey Farms Dairy

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Introduction

Guernsey Farms Dairy (GFD), located in Northville, Michigan, is a dairy processor that has been owned and operated by the McGuire family for three generations since its founding in 1940 (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d.1). GFD is best known for its ice cream, but also sells milk and other assorted dairy products at its facility and via local groceries. The company's three-acre facility includes a milk processing plant and a small diner featuring an ice cream shop. Following a 6-month renovation project, the restaurant recently re-opened, with a full bar and additional seating (Veselenak, 2020). GFD employs approximately 70 individuals, and partners exclusively with Walnutdale Farms, located in Wayland, Michigan, for its milk supply (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d.1). Because GFD products can be purchased at a grocery store or at the company's full-service diner, GFD is part of both the dairy and hospitality industries. In keeping with its local, family focus, GFD partners with The Rainbow Connection, a non-profit that grants wishes to Michigan children facing life-threatening illnesses (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d. 2).

The company maintains a website (n.d. 1), and is active on Instagram (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d. 3) and Facebook (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d. 4). GFD has an audience of 3,700 on Instagram, where its followers are encouraged to share their own content via the hashtag #HowIGuernsey (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d. 3). The company has an audience of 21,000 on Facebook (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d. 4). GFD's content is consistent on both channels, featuring photographs of its products, ice cream cartons, delivery trucks, and diner, all of which feature a signature shade of teal. The brand's voice is casual and comforting, and content often celebrates families and simplicity (Guernsey Farms Dairy, n.d. 3; n.d. 4). Activity on both platforms suggests that although both audiences are small and most engagement comes in the

form of favorable rhetorical comments, GFD has fostered a positive social community by expressing appreciation for its audience and providing customer service (Freberg, 2019).

Situational Analysis

To develop a strategic social media campaign, it is important to first conduct an honest SWOT analysis of the company (Smith, 2019; Freberg 2019). GFD is suffering from a recent and severe decline in sales, in part due to a slump in business caused by delays during its renovation project. GFD's diner closed in January 2020 for renovation (Bromley, 2019), and while the company planned to re-open in April, they were delayed until June (Veselenak, 2020).

When considering internal strengths and weaknesses, GFD is known for its high-quality products and respected within the local community, although its product range lacks variety, its overall brand is weak, and the delayed renovation project has created a poor customer service experience. Externally, the company could benefit from an influx of middle-class families moving to the Northville area, and from a recent consumer emphasis on supporting local, family businesses in the Midwest. However, GFD remains threatened by local competitors within the hospitality industry, particularly the new "barlor" Browndog Creamery (n.d.). Additionally, GFD cannot compete with the scale, speed, and prices of national dairy industry competitors on the grocery store shelves, including Nestle, Dean Foods, and Dairy Farmers of America.

The most significant strategic implication for GFD is the potential for existing customers to have developed a brand loyalty to one of its competitors during the company's recent closure.

Additionally, GFD is in a unique position at this time to attract new customers with a renovated diner and new bar. While GFD suffered from declines in sales and customer service during its renovation, the diner has re-opened at the start of summer just in time for the dairy industry's

busiest ice cream production and sales months (International Dairy Foods Association, 2017).

This positions the company well to re-engage its customers – and acquire new ones – at a time when ice cream is top of mind. GFD would benefit from a social media campaign that highlights its new facility and recent diversification of high-quality products to supplement its re-opening and help boost sales.

Table 1

Guernsey Farms Dairy - SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality core product/service • Respect within the local community 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product/service range lacks variety • Poor customer service • Weak brand
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth of middle-class families moving to the area • Category is growing and becoming more popular in the Midwest 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New, but untested, competitor has opened nearby • Can't rival the scale and speed of big corporations

Audience Research

Using Smith's (2019) model, GFD's categories of public and their unique relationships with the company are outlined in Table 2 to help inform the social media campaign strategy.

The proposed strategy would target potential, current, and former customers. As outlined in the SWOT analysis, GFD has experienced a decrease in sales and a period of poor customer service during its recent closure. Strategically, this social media campaign would accompany GFD's re-opening, and provide an opportunity for the company to introduce — or re-introduce — itself as a leader in local, high-quality products.

From a demographic standpoint, the primary audience for this campaign includes middle- to upper-class families in the Metro Detroit region, ranging in age from 25-64. From a

psychographic standpoint, the primary audience values quality, and is not particularly price sensitive. Members of the primary audience also value family and community, and are inclined to support local ventures over national chains. Additionally, the primary audience is not health-conscious to the point of limiting dietary indulgences. Members of the primary audience view staple food items (such as GFD's dairy products) as an essential physiological need, but non-staple food items consumed with family and friends (such as GFD's ice cream) can meet their need to feel loved and create a sense of belonging. This primary audience, who may have forgotten about GFD while it was closed for renovation, has values that align with the company's, and they are geographically and financially the most likely to patronize the diner, or to purchase GFD products at the grocery store. This audience is most active on Facebook, with 84% of adults ages 25-30, 79% of adults ages 30-49, and 68% of adults ages 50-64 using the platform at least once daily, but often more (Chen, 2020). The younger segment of this audience is also active on Instagram, with 67% of adults ages 25-29 and 47% of adults ages 30-49 participating on the platform (Chen, 2020).

The secondary audience for this campaign includes individuals who are demographically middle- to upper-class singles or couples without children in Oakland and Wayne counties, ranging in age from 21-34. From a psychographic standpoint, the secondary audience values social interactions, but dislikes the traditional bar scene. They are inclined to support local businesses, and they value quality without being particularly price sensitive. The secondary audience enjoys occasional dietary indulgences and alcoholic beverages, and such indulgences are often consumed as part of a social interaction to meet their basic need for love and belonging. This secondary audience, who may not yet be aware of GFD, are likely to be interested in the

company's new bar, and are geographically and financially able to visit the diner. On social media, this audience is also most active on Facebook, followed by Instagram (Chen, 2020).

Table 2

Guernsey Farms Dairy - Categories of Publics

Categories of Publics	
Customers	
Current	Customers who are current patrons of GFD, either at its diner or through the purchase of its dairy products at grocery stores.
Former	Customers who have previously been patrons of GFD, either at its diner, or through the purchase of its dairy products at grocery stores.
Secondary customers	Bakeries, restaurants, and professional chefs who use GFD products in their kitchens.
Shadow constituencies	The Northville and surrounding community, as well as advocates for Michigan-based and family-owned businesses.
Potential	Customers who have not yet patronized or established a relationship with GFD.
Producers	
Personnel	GFD's employees
Producers	Walnutdale Farms
Financiers	The McGuire family, any investors
Limiters	
Competitors	Local restaurants and ice cream shops, as well as national dairy suppliers with a presence at local groceries, including Nestle, Dean Foods, and Dairy Farmers of America
Opponents	Individuals who oppose animal product in food, either by choice (e.g. vegans) or by necessity (e.g. lactose intolerant).
Hostile forces	
Enablers	
Regulators	The United States Department of Agriculture, the Food and Drug Administration, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Opinion leaders	Local politicians and business leaders, members of The Rainbow Connection board of directors
Media	Local news media seeking to profile businesses, media focused on building and development seeking to profile new construction
Allies	Supporters of local and family businesses

Campaign Strategy

The campaign will be informed by the following positioning statement: Family-owned and operated for three generations, Guernsey Farms Dairy is committed to providing customers with small moments of joy, comfort, and connection via its premium ice cream, milk, and dairy products. Guernsey Farms Dairy welcomes customers to join the family — at the diner or in the grocery store.

The proposed social media campaign addresses both a reputational and task management goal (Smith, 2019), with objectives following Freberg's (2019) SMART criteria and Smith's (2019) awareness/acceptance/action concept.

Goal 1: To regain confidence and increase brand loyalty following GFD's recent closure, during which they may have forgotten about GFD or tried a competitor.

Objectives:

- To have an effect on awareness of GFD among current, former, and potential customers; specifically to generate a 15% increase in attention for the company's renovated diner. To be measured by media impressions and social media reach during the 4-week campaign.
- To have an effect on acceptance among current, former, and potential customers; specifically to increase interest about GFD and its products by 10%. To be measured by the number of visitors to GFD's diner and website during the 4-week campaign.
- To have an effect on action among current, former, and potential customers; specifically to maximize brand loyalty by an increase of 500 followers on Facebook and 200 followers on Instagram, and a 10% increase in social media engagement on both

platforms during the 4-week campaign. To be measured via in-platform analytic tools and Sprout Social.

Goal 2: To recapture GFD's pre-closure sales rates at its diner.

Objectives:

- To have an effect on awareness among current, former, and potential customers; specifically to increase comprehension of the company's high-quality products by 10% following the 4-week campaign. To be measured via a post-campaign survey to customers, delivered via social media using SurveyMonkey.
- To have an effect on acceptance among current, former, and potential customers; specifically to increase interest in GFD as diner of choice by 5% during the 4-week campaign. To be measured by the number of visitors to the diner, social media metrics, and a post-campaign survey to customers, delivered via social media using SurveyMonkey.
- To have an effect on action among current, former, and potential customers; specifically to increase GFD's pre-closure traffic at the diner by 20% and sales by 10% during the 4-week campaign. To be measured by tracking the number of visitors and sales at the diner and comparing data to previously benchmarked data.

Creative Idea and Messaging

The campaign's key messages, which align with GFD's relationship and task management goals and objectives, include:

- GFD provides families with high-quality products, including premium ice cream.
- GFD's newly renovated diner is now open, with a full bar.

- For 80 years, GFD has been family-owned and operated, and is committed to providing a family-friendly environment.
- Customers can share their favorite products and experiences using #HowIGuernsey.

The overarching creative idea “Join the Guernsey Farms Dairy family” aligns with GFD’s positioning, captures the above key messages, and will anchor all campaign assets. The campaign will blend the information, persuasion, and dialogic communication models to increase awareness, influence opinions, and engage audience members via a positive emotional appeal based on love and family (Smith, 2019).

Social Media Execution

Social media can be used to address the awareness objectives within GFD’s relationship and task management goals. To express the creative idea and resonate with the primary audience, the concept of “family” will be conveyed via imagery of families enjoying GFD ice cream, a warm, friendly brand voice, and a writing style that is a blend of audience-focused and conversational (Freberg, 2019). To strategically align with GFD’s goals and objectives, content will include photographs, graphics, and brief videos highlighting GFD’s products, new diner, and family-friendly environment. This content will resonate with the primary audience, who have families and share a need for love and belonging that GFD can provide by bringing people together for ice cream and shared time.

The campaign will follow the PESO model (Freberg, 2019) and include a mix of paid content (via sponsored posts), earned content (via posts from local media, partners, and other influencers), shared content (via engagement within GFD’s social media community and user-generated content) and owned content. The campaign will utilize GFD’s established presence Facebook and Instagram (GFD, n.d. 3; n.d. 4), because both the primary and secondary audience are most active on these platforms (Chen, 2020). To ensure content has a maximum organic and

paid reach, posts will be geo-targeted and all content will include the existing hashtag #HowIGuernsey to ensure it is easily accessible by search and highly visible. A mix of curated and created content (Freberg, 2019) will be scheduled on Facebook and Instagram, with five posts per week on both platforms (roughly three created posts and two curated) over a 4-week period. Sprout Social will be used to schedule content, determine strategic posting times on each platform, and track metrics (Freberg, 2019). The campaign will be launched in mid-June, which strategically aligns with the re-opening of GFD's diner, and the start of the busiest month of sales among Michigan dairy producers as customers seek frozen treats in the summer (International Dairy Foods Association, 2017).

To quantify the campaign's impact, GFD should measure its number of social media followers, as well as engagement rates and post reach on both Facebook and Instagram. The conative outcomes and impact of any paid media should be measured using click-through rates, cost per click, and cost per engagement (Freberg, 2019). Beyond traditional quantitative social media metrics, GFD should also be aware of opportunities to measure success qualitatively by capturing customer feedback at its diner, via the proposed post-campaign survey, and through social monitoring and listening (Freberg, 2019). For a comprehensive assessment of the campaign, GFD should also track media impressions, the number of visitors to its diner and website, and sales figures.

Social Media Example: Instagram Post



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