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Deliverable 02

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In collaboration with @leens_touch on Instagram

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Executive Overview

The project being presented is a prototype eCommerce web application for Leens_touch on Instagram. Our client, Leen Antoun, is a small business owner located in Montreal. She offers handmade and personalized items through embroidery.

In this deliverable we discovered a lot about our client and her business, we had a meeting with her and got to know her better whilst asking questions about how everything in her domain operated, what problems she was having, a bit about her and her business. This allowed us to not only learn about these things but also how businesses of her size work and the complications that come with them. This interview was used to document all our findings for our deliverable.

Essentially we learned that the large customized jewelry base in Montreal is not direct competition for our client due to her items being unique enough to stand out. We discovered that the main issues lie within the fact that our client cannot post all of her product personalizations on Instagram due to restrictions, she cannot take proper payments and has every product and inventory put on an excel sheet which is functional now but might not be for long if her small business continues to grow. We have also learned a bit more what our client wants in terms of functionality for the website: customers ability to login and personalize items in the comments section of their orders and her, as an admin, with her own login, having the ability to edit and upload items as well as take proper payments through paypal.

Our client's small business is not perfect, but most of her issues may be fixed with our help and the build of a good website for her transactions.

About

Description Of The Business Domain

As a Customized accessories shop, this domain has a lot of competitors and globalization has a significant impact on the fashion industry on a local level. Also there are a lot of accessory sellers in the Montreal Area that make it even more challenging to stand out with something unique. Despite all those obstacles in the way, no one makes products with such unique character and feel to it like Leen Antoun's small shop does due to the fact that Mrs Antoun personalizes handmade items.

Another key factor of the fashion industry is the fact that *nearly half of Canada's manufacturing jobs in the fashion industry are in Québec. Montreal ranks 3rd in clothing manufacturing in North America after New York and Los Angeles.* And the fact that this is a *\$8 billion industry in total sales for the manufactured goods, and wholesale distribution in Québec, excluding retail sales* which proves it again that Leen's touch accessories shop has great chances of becoming a flourishing business. ([Montréal International, 2020](#))

Description Of The Business Environment

Currently our client fully operates on Instagram which limits its capabilities for growth and is giving her a hard time to sell multiple variations of the same product since it takes a lot of effort and it takes a lot of space to make multiple posts on Instagram. Therefore, not all product variations are necessarily displayed. Our client relies on either cash or e-transfers payments due to the lack of an automatic platform of her own. That also influences the way she is doing business. Another negative impact from this method is that she sometimes receives the payment after the product is done or only receives 50% of the payment and gets ignored. This model puts her business at great risk of not getting the payment for a custom product that would have no use for someone else.

In the past 6 months our client's sales have slightly increased and it motivated her to focus more on this side gig. From our observations the reason her business is still in its infancy is the lack of marketing and obviously the lack of a platform that could facilitate or even solve the above stated problems.

Description Of Our Client

Leen Antoun is a University student who has a part time job and owns leens_touch on instagram as a side income. She created this business due to her friends encouraging her and wanting to buy her handmade accessories.

Our client is growth oriented and she values the effects of digital marketing and clearly understands that platforms such as Instagram can provide her good leverage but have their limitations when it comes to selling a product.

Her computer knowledge is limited to basic skills such as browsing, MS Office, and other average user applications and capabilities. Given her experience with MS Office suite and her desire to learn, she will be able to manage her web application with the proper guidance and documentation.

Currently our client uses excel sheets to keep track and organize her incomes and expenses for a proper functioning of her business.

The Business Problem

This project will solve our client's biggest business problems, which have their roots from the lack of a proper platform.

- The challenging way of displaying her products on Instagram.
 - This entails that Mrs Antoun cannot create and post every single variation of every product she can make, especially when it comes to posting.
 - She cannot post every single variation in the comments either, as it is extremely time consuming.
- The possibility of not getting a full payment and having a custom product with no use
 - Our client needs a secure payment method that does not include cash as an option and that requires the customer to pay upfront, while placing the order.
- Having the ability to gather leads for marketing with proper consent.
 - Example of this may be requesting an email for promotions at checkout.

Open Questions

Starting a new business-to-client gift shop is difficult, especially when in Montreal there are hundreds of handmade jewelry shops. Leen's Touch is a small business owned by Leen Antoun and, although she created her gift shop in August of 2021, the business seems to be on the right path to success. The story behind the creation lies behind people liking her accessories and wanting to know where they were bought. The idea behind her small business is that everything is handmade and anything her customers can imagine, she can make for them, therefore every piece is unique.

The way that her small business works is slightly defective as she is only able to take payments through interac e-transfers or cash; her inventory, sales and purchases for the business are all kept on an excel sheet; she is currently unable to find supplies, and in the past would take many supplies from different sellers in Syria based on her creative needs. Although these methods work for her now, as her business grows, it is starting to become more difficult to keep up. Another issue she is having is that, on social media, she is unable to post every single product, whereas she feels that if she had a website, she'd be able to post a product and add variations below the product where her customers can buy it.

The team has also learned that Mrs Antoun could potentially make a living out of this small business, but she does not currently have the time to do so as she has a job and is a full time university student. If she had more time to spend on her business, her sales would increase more than they already are.

From our understanding, her clutch purses are the highlight of her small business, and she has a couple of repeat customers. Her business peaks during the holidays due to gift giving being a highlight of the holidays and our client does not have much competition in her field since no one in Montreal makes items that are similar enough to hers to be considered as competition.

Essentially, Leen's Touch has great potential to become a successful business, and the first step towards that success relies mostly on getting a proper website running for our client so that she can better manage her sales and posts as well as have reviews to help skeptic customers trust her work.

The Questionnaire

About the Business Owner

Q: Do you have knowledge in the computer world? Would you be able to personalize and operate your website with guidance?

A: *With guidance, operating and personalizing the website would not be a problem: guidance is needed because the owner of the business does not have much knowledge or experience with computers.*

Q: What made you decide to start a business? Why was Leen's Touch created?

A: *Leen's Touch is based on a pastime that was already part of everyday life. People wanted similar accessories and a business was created from a small, known clientele to a slightly bigger, online platform.*

Q: Is the business your only job?

A: *Being a student and having a job in the study field of her choice is a big part of her life. The business is only a side job.*

About the Business

Q: How long has this business been up and running?

A: *Since mid August of 2021*

Q: What is your best description of the industry that you work in?

A: *The idea behind Leen's Touch is that everything is handmade. Anything a client may want can be created for them. All items are uniquely designed.*

Q: What is the best selling product?

A: *The clutch purse due to it being one of the more unique products in the store.*

Q: What are your sales statistics like?

A: *The business does not have many customers, but it does have a couple of regulars. With time, sales have increased, and sales tend to peak during holidays.*

Q: How and where are supplies bought?

A: *Supplies are usually imported from Syria through a partner. No specific supplier caters to the business, simply many materials from many suppliers.*

Q: Do you know of any businesses similar to yours?

A: *There are many accessory sellers, even many personalized accessory sellers, but none sell the same items as this business since they are all unique ideas from Mrs Antoun.*

Q: How can people find out about your business? Where do you operate?

A: *Everything is on Instagram.*

About the Issues

Q: What was the issue with the way you were operating before? What main reason made you consider working with us?

A: *Instagram is a very restrictive platform when it comes to posting products; there is no time to post each and every variation of each product that is offered. A website would allow for one general post and a section for personalization.*

Q: Is the business profitable to be your only source of income?

A: *As previously mentioned, studying and working take a large part of the owner's life. She does not have enough time to fully jump into her small business. She believes if she gave it her full time attention and dedication she would be able to make enough profit to live off of her business, but for the moment she does not have the required time.*

Q: How is the business operated?

A: *Payments are through interac e-transfers, inventory is tracked on excel sheet along with the price and quantity of what she buys and sells.*

Q: Are there any issues with suppliers?

A: *Currently it is difficult to find the proper supplies.*

Q: Have you done advertising? Would it be profitable?

A: *No advertising has been done yet. Adding some might bring in a few more sales, which is always profitable.*

About the Application

Q: What features would you like to have as an admin?

A: *Login feature, personalization of each item description, price, amount, optionally have the ability to edit the colour scheme of the website, update the images of the items, adding and removing items for sale.*

Q: What features would you like your customers to have?

A: *Login feature for them, add comments to their orders to personalize their order, optionally a french version of the website, a place to provide their email for promotions, paying through paypal, optionally have the ability to send a sketch of the product they want .*

Works Cited

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