

Amicis

A close-up photograph of a white bowl filled with a fruit salad. The salad contains chunks of yellow pineapple, slices of green kiwi, and whole red strawberries. A fresh sprig of green basil leaves is placed on top of the fruit. The bowl is set against a plain white background.

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Background

Amicis was opened in Rexburg, Idaho on February 4, 2008 by BYU-Idaho student Eric Bartel. It serves Italian-based cuisines and boasts of Italian-imported ingredients as well as original recipes. The menu includes salads and appetizers at \$8 to pastas and steak at \$20. Eric has worked as a cook for a number of restaurants, the most recent being Stockman's Restaurant. Until that point, Eric had never wanted to own a restaurant because there is rarely good money in small, local restaurant ventures. Service is invariably lacking, much like its management.

However, working with Stockman's owner and head cook, Eric viewed restaurant ownership in a new light. Good management and treatment of employees increased productivity, and Eric is just the sort of person to understand the importance of both employees and customers.

During the fall 2008 semester at BYU-Idaho, in a Business Writing course, Eric was given the opportunity to work toward his business venture. The class was assigned a project that involved creating a business plan for either a prospective venture or a made-up one. As Eric was already planning on creating his own restaurant, he took this class project as an opportunity to solidify his ideas into a working plan, which he would present to the bank for a loan.

When the Lost Creek Steakhouse announced it would be closing, Eric saw his chance to establish a restaurant. For a brief while, things had not looked like he would be able to take a bank loan. After a conversation with Lost Creek's owner a week later, he was able to take the bank loan and create Amicis.

Eric had always been a cook, but had never cooked authentic Italian food; Rexburg was just the location to create such a restaurant. With the help of a good friend and now fellow-partner, Amicis foresees a great deal of future growth.

Now ending its second month of business, Amicis already boasts a reasonable customer base and plans to remodel its current dining area to separate it from Lost Creek's old image. Eric plans to have the bank loan paid off within the next year and already has plans to eventually open a second store location.

Amicis, however, still does not have a large audience drawn to its location as it is new and few people have heard of it yet. Amicis still relies on word-of-mouth to get out news of its existence, so there is plenty of room for growth.



Situation Analysis

Amicis is a new Italian-based cuisine restaurant, owned by BYU-Idaho student Eric Bartel. With the help of his fellow students and friends he was able to conceive Amicis, and through his hard work and diligence his ideas have become reality. Like any restaurant, a regular staff turnover occurs with the end of each semester due to the fact that Rexburg is a college town.

As Amicis' PR team, we intend to analyze the current situation using the SWOT chart. Through an examination of Amicis' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, we hope to effectively outline Amicis' state and possible areas for improvement.

Strengths

- Eric's method of approaching management and employee relations
- Amicis' menu items
- Original menu recipes
- Use of Italian-imported pasta and cheeses
- Superior food
- Locally-owned and operated
- Current word-of-mouth advertising

Weaknesses

- New establishment
- Loans to pay off
- Staff turnover
- Still seen as Lost Creek by general public and customers
- Slow hours during the week and days of the weekend
- No lunch menu
- No current marketing or advertising plans

Opportunities

- Building a lunch menu
- Advertising
- Sponsorships
- New atmosphere and restaurant design
- Remodeling
- Management-Customer interactions and activities
- Sponsorships
- Marketing and advertising plans

Threats

- Johnny Carino's
- Olive Garden
- Money constraints



Situation Analysis (continued...)

The main obstacle facing Amicis currently is the lack of awareness in target audiences. Amicis has been open for two months and receives an unusual audience size presently, but with efforts made in raising public awareness even the current audience size will dramatically increase. Amicis has an image, albeit one that is not widely-known. It caters to all age-groups, serving original Italian dishes and boasts food superior to that of Olive Garden and Johnny Carino's due to its Italian-imported pasta and cheeses.

Amicis has received a surprising turnout over the last two months simply by word-of-mouth. Through an analysis of possible advertisement media and marketing strategies, we intend to outline strategies and tactics to establish and improve Amicis' image and reputation as an authentic Italian food restaurant, and thereby boost customer turnout. By increasing advertising efforts, we know that a larger audience will be drawn to the restaurant. Few people are aware that there is an Italian food restaurant in Rexburg and still travel to Idaho Falls to go to Johnny Carino's or Olive Garden.



Target Audience

Amicis current atmosphere consists of quietly playing Italian music in a casual setting. The majority of the customer base consists of middle-class married couples ranging from age 30 to senior citizens. Amicis' setting will take a more upbeat atmosphere as of March 27, when the dining floor will go through an extensive remodeling to create a stronger Italian setting.

Primary Audience

College students attending BYU-Idaho

With the changes to Amicis' atmosphere and dining area, hopefully more of a college student-based audience will be drawn in. This audience will consist solely of students attending BYU-Idaho. Though Amicis does not have a menu with items as cheap as Craigos, the quality of food will be well worth the differences in price. Good food, along with an upbeat and enjoyable atmosphere will be the key forces attracting the secondary audience despite this audience's lack of high income.

Secondary Audience

Married adults of middle to high income

This consists of male and female audiences ranging from 30s in age to late-50s. Typically, this audience earns an average of \$30,000 a year and hold a college education. Amicis offers quality food and a restaurant-feel, which is appealing to adults wishing for a superior dining experience.

Tertiary Audience

Older adults and retired residents over 55 years in age

With the changes of atmosphere and establishment of a much more upbeat setting, Amicis believes that its older customer audience may withdraw. Loud music may create too active a setting for them and ultimately decrease their interest.



Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

Objectives

- Emphasize new image and atmosphere
 - Increase target audience awareness of Amicisto a 50% average by June 1
- Increase customer base and revenue
 - Establish customer base and revenue, increasing current numbers by 40% within the next year

Strategies & Tactics

- Increase Awareness
 - Conduct survey among BYU-Idaho students
 - Assess current awareness of Amicis
 - Evaluate current eating/spending habits
 - Conduct follow-up survey June 1 to evaluate increase
 - Broulim's taste-testing
 - Allow shoppers at Broulim's Restaurant to sample Amicis' food.
 - Offer coupon to eat at Amicis
- Create Customer Base
 - Place weekly running ad in the BYU-Idaho Scroll and Rexburg Standard Journal newspapers for 3 months
 - Offer coupon to eat at Amicis
 - Create Lunch Menu with \$5 small portion options
 - Friends & Family Night
 - Employees invite five people each to attend a special friends and family night
 - Serve samples of key dishes
 - Drawing for gift certificates (\$20 towards meal)

