

Team:

We are team 601 in section 006 with Matthew Bernath. Our team name is Boredom Buster and our slogan is “The Box of All Trades”. Our team is made up of Andrew Quinn, Jason Kemp, Nikita Mehendale, and Michael MacKenzie.

Description:

For our project we are creating a subscription box service to offer consumers new hobbies or skills on a regular basis. We are addressing the needs of people who are looking for new and creative ways to spend their time. Since so many people are still quarantining due to the COVID pandemic, we believe this is a strategic time to launch this venture. Our boxes will include instructions on how to do the activity, along with any materials needed to start. Some of the activities we are planning to offer include painting, lock picking, and knitting. We are currently focusing our efforts on the University of Michigan campus, and the greater Ann Arbor area, but are open to expanding.

Team Structure:

Andrew Quinn is going to be serving as our team's leader as well as managing the team's website. Jason Kemp will handle all networking and communication, as well as researching all community and university resources for funding. Nikita Mehendale will oversee product design and is also our marketing lead. Michael MacKenzie is going to document our team's progress and also will oversee the financial side of the project. Other roles may also be assigned during the course of the project as a need arises. The team dynamic throughout the semester was very successful as everyone communicated well and listened to each others ideas. Each team member

was assigned goals to work towards each week. These goals are set during our weekly Tuesday meetings and check upon during our discussion work time. All team members have worked diligently to complete their goals for the week and our POA&M shows what each member has accomplished and worked towards thus far in the semester.

Plan of Actions & Milestones:

Throughout the semester we must finish certain tasks in order to reach our intended end-state. We have surveyed our class and additional University of Michigan students in order to develop a list of products we would like to have in our subscription boxes. From the survey we have decided we are going to be focusing on the areas of painting, baking, drinking/board games and yoga. These had the most positive results, with each category having at least 50% of survey participants expressing interest. We also plan on marketing through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. These pages have been created but we are going to be officially launching them to the public once we have a more tangible product to show. In addition to our social media accounts, we have developed a website where customers can find product information as well as order a box. Following this we hope to have customers and be making deliveries to students across the campus by March 20th.

We broke down our milestones into different phases as a way of keeping us on track with the goal of meeting our end-state. As of now our POA&M has 43 unique items on it and will be continuously updated to reflect our most current goals. Each task has an assigned owner, completion date as well as a description bar if needed. Most tasks are assigned to an individual, with the expectation of assembling box themes, product design, and delivery of boxes, which

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have been assigned to teams of two. This is because we wanted the tasks to be done in a setting that encourages collaboration, or it is manual labor and there is no need to focus a single team member to complete it alone. The full Plan of Actions and Milestones can be found below.

In the most current version of our POA&M we decided to restructure it so that items were classified based on type rather than time. This was done in hopes that it is now easier to see if we are lacking in a certain area and need to put more resources into anything. It also allows for more efficient tracking for when we want to revisit or expand an item within the POA&M.

Milestones	Sub-categories	Status	Owner	Completion Date	Notes
Start-up	Develop and brainstorm ideas		Andrew	Mid January	Each person worked alone on ideas then we came together to talk about these ideas
	Decide on idea to pursue		Andrew	Mid January	We came together after the meeting and decided on which idea to pursue
	Create brand name		Nikita	Late January	
	Design brand logo		Jason	Late January	
	Poll class		Andrew	ASAP	This needs to be done before we can do anything
	Identify target audience		Nikita	Late January	
	Identify competitors		Jason	Late January	
Marketing					
	Create instagram and Tik Tok accounts		Nikita	Early February	
	Market research		Nikita	Late January	
	Create instagram highlights		Michael	Early February	
	Put posters around Ann Arbor		Michael/ Andrew	Late Feb/ Early March	
	Product release countdown		Nikita	Late/ Mid March	
	Promotional giveaway		Andrew	March 27th	
	Research costs/ effectiveness of boosting posts		Michael	Mid March	
	Release + promote "venmo discount"		Nikita	Late March	
	Increase social media presence before product launch		Nikita	Late March	
	Graphic design training		Nikita	Early March	
	Release first product visuals		Andrew	Mid March	
Outreach					
	Contact local businesses		Jason	ASAP	
	Contact charley's about gift card giveaway		Nikita	Mid March	
	Landscaping business donation		Jason	March 19th	
	Collect advice from established brands		Jason	Early February	
Research	Research/ contact student orgs to partner with		Jason	Early February	
	In depth analysis of industry		Jason	ASAP	We want to be able to note why these ideas either worked or didn't work
	Research on similar successful/ failed ideas		Michael	ASAP	
	Research competitors and check for infringement		Michael	ASAP	

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	Research available university funding for entrepreneurship		Jason	Late January	Univeristy funding for a drinking games didnt go over too well
	Research most effective way to sell product		Andrew	Early March	Venmo? Website? Facebook?
Development					
	Build a release schedule for box themes		Andrew	Late January	
	Research and group together places for supply chain		Michael	Late January	
	Order supplies for second box		Andrew	ASAP	They have much longer shipping times so we need to be proactive here
	Order supplies for first box		Andrew	Early March/ Late Feb	
	Aesthetic product design		Nikita	Late March	
	Assemble box		Andrew	March 19th	
	Test box in focus group		Nikita	March 20th	
Financial					
	Create a budget		Michael	ASAP	
	Build a finance document		Andrew	ASAP	
	Allocate money for promotional giveaway		Michael	Late March	
	Set up online store		Andrew	Early March	
Sales/ Product Launch					
	Set up initial website and link to social medias		Andrew	Early March	
	Build informational backend of website		Andrew	Early March	
	Build online shop		Andrew	Early March	
	Purchase /or get boxes to use for non-local delivery		Jason	Early March	
	Research logistics of delivery		Michael	Mid March	
	Prepare all boxes of delivery/ final quality check		Andrew	March 25th	
	Local delivery of boxes		Michael/ Andrew	March 27th	
	Collect feedback		Andrew	Early April	
	Post customers "results" on social media		Nikita	Late March	
	Calculate current financial standing		Michael	End of semester	
Long Term					
	Create a long term business model		TBD	TBD	
	Revisit what is working and what is not		TBD	TBD	
	Research expansion (if interested or feasible)		TBD	TBD	

Surveying:

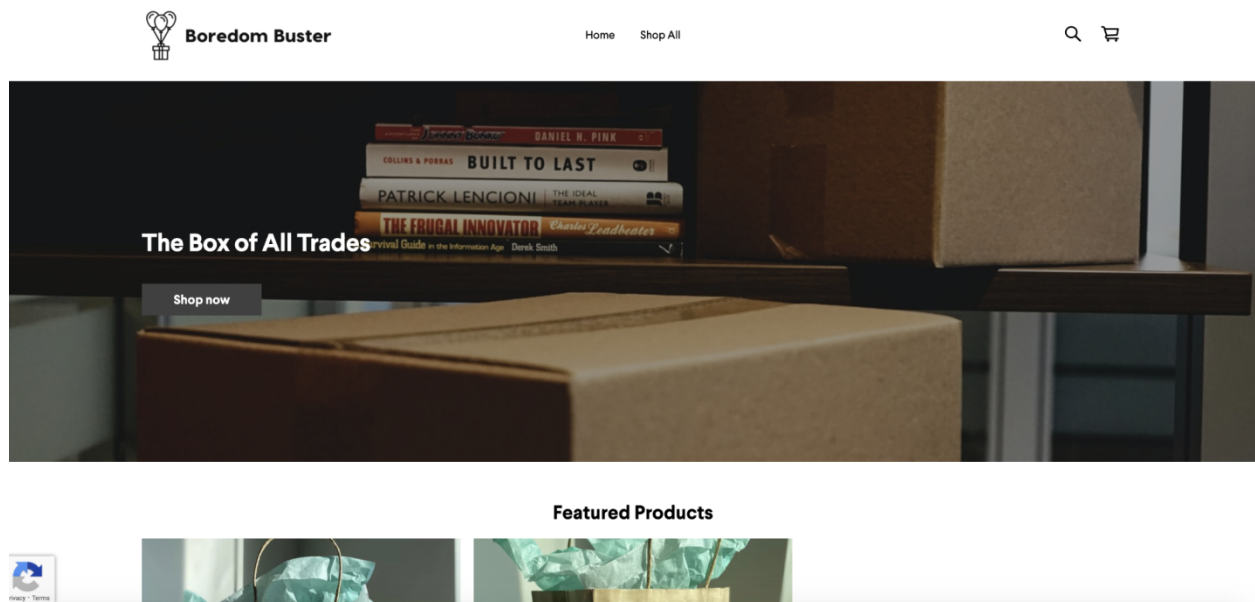
Through the use of google forms we were able to survey 38 students. The students surveyed came mostly from our Psych 223 class. They were from the ages of 18-25 and we had a split of 55% male and 45% respondents. The questions asked in the survey were relating to the respondents interest in the idea, the price point they would be willing to pay, and the hobbies people would like to learn through the box. Through our survey we found that 95% of respondents would consider subscribing to our hobby box with 78% willing to pay \$15-25. The top hobbies that people would be interested in trying out through the hobby box were baking/cooking, drinking games, card/board games, and painting. These hobbies had 76%, 73%,

68%, and 54% of respondents were interested in these hobbies respectively. After reviewing the survey we decided that our first two boxes will be a game theme and a painting theme.

Website:

In addition to completing our survey we have created a fully functional website. Through the website we are able to market and sell our product. The online shop we created was directed to the local sale of the product with shipping or delivery options. The delivery will be carried out by team members that are living in Ann Arbor. A screenshot of the website is located below for your convenience and if you would like to look at it further please feel free to go to

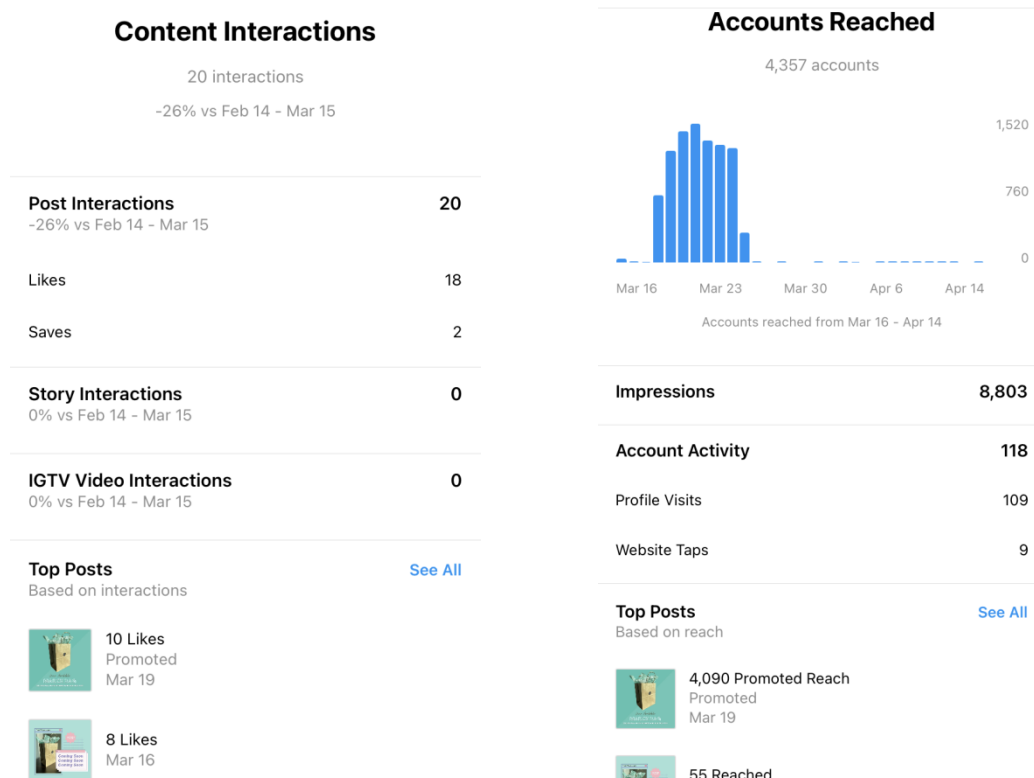
<https://boredom-buster-umich.square.site/>.



Marketing:

Most of our marketing has been done online under the handle @boredombuster_ and we have been placing an increased emphasis on marketing as the semester continues. We launched marketing campaigns on Instagram as well as Tik Tok; we chose these over Facebook because of

the large volume of college students that traffic the sites. On Instagram we created specialized highlights which show people our product, how to buy it, and who we are as a company. We also made professional posts with Canva using our color scheme to create an aesthetic feed. We've also decided to pay to have one of our posts boosted to students around Ann Arbor. Here are our analytics from Instagram:



On Tik Tok we have used a more casual approach, with videos that mimic current trends on the app. We used insights we found online about the best times and days to post. We also tried posting once every day since that is supposed to help with building a following. We started getting a decent amount of views on our videos (500+) and even got multiple comments saying they wished we shipped. It was evident that as we started posting on Tik Tok, the visits to our website were going up. Unfortunately, since we did not have shipping set up yet, those visits did

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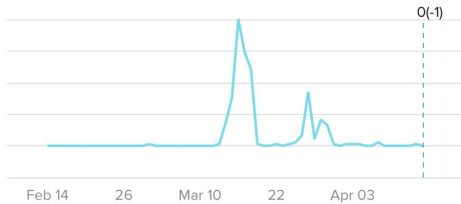
not translate to sales. Here are some of the analytics from our Tik Tok account:

Profile views ⓘ

294

+294 (>999%) ↑

Feb 14 — Apr 14



Video views ⓘ

4,274

+4,274 (>999%) ↑

Feb 14 — Apr 14



Followers ⓘ

50

+50 (vs. Dec 16, 2020 — Feb 13, 2021) ↑

Feb 14 — Apr 14



There are also posters that were placed around campus and in the union on March 9th.

Product Development:

During our ideation phase, we polled the classroom as previously mentioned in the above survey section. Through the use of these survey results and our team discussions we decided to theme our first two boxes as a painting box and a drinking game box. These were decided because we wanted to make boxes that were interesting to our target audience, which is college students in the Ann Arbor area. We have already purchased the supplies for 12 of the painting boxes. The

painting box will include 1 paint by number piece, 1 small easel, 2 blank mini canvases and 18 acrylic paints. Our goal was to allow individuals to have an introductory experience and gain confidence through the paint by number and then allow them to use their creative side on the blank canvases. Our second box, the drinking game box, is still being planned but will likely include a shot roulette game, cards, cups, and multiple rules for the people to play all types of drinking games. We have created our first product for marketing purposes and with the goal of very professional packaging. A picture of this first product can be found below.



Partnerships:

Gaining a partnership with a local business or company has been one of our long term goals throughout this process. During Phase 3 we not only began to reach out to companies, but we were also able to receive \$500 from a local business. We plan on using this company's funding to be able to fund social media paid promotions and to be able to pay for some of the materials we are using in our boxes. Furthermore, we are currently in the process of reaching out to different

Clubs and Organizations to be able to further promote our product. We have reached out to several different business fraternities and entrepreneurship clubs in hopes to be able to promote our product. Although responses have been limited, the responses we did receive asked us to put together a presentation that can be shared with the members of the club/fraternity. During phase 4 as we continue to promote our product, continuing our conversation with different clubs and organizations is something that we are going to focus upon.

End Goal:

Our goal is to sell 5-10 boxes to people that we do not know. Our website currently has options to subscribe for 1 month or 3 months. While we are expecting people to pick the shorter option, demand for the 3 month subscription would indicate to us if we can continue this business outside the scope of this class. Our stretch goal is either continuing the business or selling over 20 boxes to people that we do not know. We have not run into any roadblocks so far, but our biggest concern is time and profitability. We want to launch the first box as soon as possible: currently planning for March 19th. We are also trying to provide the best box possible, while being affordable for our target market of college students. This balancing act will likely leave us with very small margins. Because of the small profit margins, we will be hoping to receive some funding for the University of Michigan. These boxes will be an attempt to increase student well-being and happiness, so the University may feel inclined to help with funding or other logistical issues. Our goal is to receive between 500 and 1,000 dollars from the university in order to be able to fund the necessary items that will be within our first boxes.

Lessons Learned:

The biggest lesson that we learned from doing this project is the importance of successful marketing when trying to sell goods to a certain demographic. We created a product that targeted college students who were bored and stuck at home due to Covid. However, although this product was meant for that demographic, creating a marketing campaign that explained the “why” they should buy the product was very difficult. Although we used social media marketing and word of mouth, we still found it extremely difficult for our product to gain traction. Another lesson we learned throughout this process was the importance of a structured team. From the very beginning of this project, each team member had specific roles that they had to play in order to create a successful team. By defining these roles in the early stages, we were able to successfully complete assigned tasks and meet all deadlines for this class. We learned that having a team leader was extremely important because this individual set weekly expectations for all teammates, led group meetings, and played a critical role in coordinating and keeping the team on track. Furthermore, the roles played by all team members were equally important. Without the work of all team members on this project, the project would have failed. By having a strong leader and diligent team members, we were able to successfully create a tangible product that we were then able to sell. All in all, we believe that the two biggest lessons learned from this project was the importance of marketing and the need for strong leadership and role players.

Results:

As of this point, our project is less successful than we would have hoped. Although we were able to successfully create our product and market our product, we were able to sell 8 of our 12 bags, and these sales were made through professional and personal connections. This leaves us with a net profit of negative \$93 once product, labor and marketing costs are all accounted for. There

ended up being a general lack of interest within the college community for our product. After some research we discovered that one issue was our initial theme of painting; people claim they would have expressed more interest for a different theme such as drinking games that is more catered towards a college audience.

Things to Change:

Looking back, if there is one thing that we could change, it would be to start marketing earlier. Every week we were getting things done so we felt comfortable, and maybe that would have worked for a normal semester, but it did not leave us with enough time to market and sell our product. We made some preliminary instagram posts with our logo to introduce our concept, but without a picture of the actual product, it was a stretch to expect college students to pay \$20 for a mystery box from a company they have never heard of. We had to wait until we had a physical product to post on Tik Tok, and it would have gone well if we were able to keep up with consistent posting and worked out shipping logistics as soon as we saw that demand. Despite planning boxes for three months, we were only able to actually buy the first one. For our next month, we were planning on doing a drinking games box, and even were in the process of partnering with Charley's. However, we realized that by the time we would be able to get the supplies and market the April box, it would be finals season. This means students are busy studying and will be going home soon, so they would not be looking for drinking game sets. We think it would have been a better idea to start with the drinking game box for March instead; this also would have made it easier to get that initial following since drinking is easier to market to college students than painting is.

Looking Forward:

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Due to our team leader graduating and the lack of time and interest of the other members, we will not be continuing the Boredom Buster company. This was a really interesting project and an experience that none of us have ever had before. We are thankful to PSYCH 223 and Dr. Fretz for this amazing chance to do something really out of the ordinary and learn a lot along the way.