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Strategic Marketing Plan and Client Pitch

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Strategic Marketing Plan

Students will create a marketing plan for a real-life client. The client will likely have some existing pieces for the plan, but students will help with making decisions on strategy. The client will be available at least twice during the semester to kick off the project/provide background and check in on strategy along the way. Students will pitch key implementable ideas to the client at the end of the semester. Final document is due during final exam time. Students should refer to the APPENDIX

Marketing Plan Worksheets for content areas for this plan outline.

Marketing Plan (100 points total)

Executive Summary 5 points

NorthStar's marketing strategy centers on expanding its SCORE branch's impact by recruiting diverse mentors and increasing awareness in the NorthStar region. Through an email marketing campaign measuring website engagement and mentor sign-ups, along with local business partnerships and a dynamic social media presence, the plan aligns with current community engagement trends. The strategy addresses weaknesses in online presence and website navigation, emphasizing mentor recruitment, community engagement, and brand awareness. The timeline spans three to twelve months, with estimated budgets for email and social media campaigns.

A. Internal Environment

Identify the firm's current marketing goals and objectives.

The goal of recruiting more mentors from diverse backgrounds.

Spread awareness of SCORE to reach Mentors in our NorthStar Region.

Explain how these goals and objectives are being achieved.

- Email Marketing Campaign targeted towards SCORE clients measured by the number of clicks made on SCORE's website and mentors signing up to volunteer
- Partnership with local businesses in NorthStar's Geography for advertising and possibly even mentorships
- Social Media Campaign to increase awareness of the new NorthStar Branch

Explain how these goals and objectives are consistent or inconsistent with the firm's mission, recent trends in the external environment, and recent trends in the customer environment.

Email Marketing Campaign:

Mission: Consistent with connecting mentees to the mentorship program

Ext. Environment: Consistent, because email marketing is an effective tool in today's digital age

Cust. Environment: Consistent, given that email marketing campaigns can reach a targeted audience

Local Partnerships:

Mission: Consistent, as collaborating with local businesses aligns with fostering community engagement and support for entrepreneurship

Ext. Environment: Consistent, as partnerships with local businesses align with current trends in promoting community relationships and mutually beneficial collaborations

Cust. Environment: Consistent, as customers often appreciate businesses that actively engage with and support their local communities.

Social Media Campaign:

Mission: Consistent, as increasing awareness aligns with the mission of connecting aspiring and current business owners with mentors.

Ext. Environment: Consistent, as social media remains a key platform for brand awareness and engagement, reflecting the current trend of digital communication

Cust. Environment: Consistent, given the widespread use of social media among the target audience and the trend of seeking information and connections through these channels.

Review of current marketing strategy and performance

Describe the firm's current marketing strategy with respect to products, pricing, distribution, and promotion. Which elements of the strategy are working well? Which elements are not?

Services are being marketed on their website and social media. The price is completely free. Distributing SCORE's services is done online through zoom/google meet and having a physical meeting as well. Elements of the marketing strategy working well would be the pricing, being free, the distribution through zoom was a good adaption with current events. Elements not working well would be the promotion of SCORE's services in the midwest area

Describe the firm's current performance (sales volume, market share, profitability, awareness, brand preference) compared to other firms in the industry. Is the performance of the industry as a whole improving or declining? Why?

Everything is free or done by donations so there isn't any sales or profitability to have. As for awareness, SCORE being a nationally recognized company is very good for the brand reputation.

If the firm's performance is declining, what is the most likely cause (e.g., environmental changes, flawed strategy, poor implementation)?

The firm's performance would be declining from poor implementation, for example, all mentors are volunteers and there aren't a lot of mentors compared to mentees. So without a surplus of mentors, SCORE can't properly distribute their services.

Review of current and anticipated organizational resources

If resource levels are expected to change, how can the firm leverage additional resources to meet customer needs better than competitors?

Additional resources should be distributed towards hiring interns to help spread awareness of SCORE and marketing material to help recruit mentors/clients/volunteers

If additional resources are not available, how can the firm compensate for future resource constraints (lack of resources)?

You could hire unpaid interns in exchange for academic credit. With this intern you could put them in charge of social media campaigns and media relations to help organically grow

B. Customer Environment

Who are the firm's current and potential customers?

Describe the important identifying characteristics of the firm's current and potential customers with respect to demographics, geographic location, psychographic profiles, values/lifestyles, and product usage characteristics (heavy vs. light users)

Customers are basically anyone that is looking to start a business or run their current business better

Age: 25-45

Education: High school diploma/GED to any advanced degree

Region: Nationally recognized company

Identify the important players in the purchase process for the firm's products. These might include purchasers (actual act of purchase), users (actual product user), purchase influencers (influence the decision, make recommendations), and the bearer of financial responsibility (who pays the bill?).

Past mentees that have had success after consulting with SCORE.

What do customers do with the firm's products?

SCORE customers use their services to advance their business either from the ground up or to grow an existing business. Their customers utilize their volunteer mentorship to excel in their market.

How are the firm's products connected to customer needs? What are the basic benefits provided by the firm's products?

SCORE's product is mentorship, which connects to the customer's (mentee) needs. The basic benefit is business growth mentorship, which is individualized mentorship for success planning.

How are the firm's products purchased (quantities and combinations)? Is the product purchased as a part of a solution or alongside complementary products?

SCORE offers a free service, therefore products/services aren't valued at a price for the customer. The services SCORE offers are all-inclusive, meaning there aren't any add-on purchases along the way. Their services are 100% free of charge, all of which are provided through volunteers.

How are the firm's products consumed or used? Are there special consumption situations that influence purchase behavior?

SCORE's services are used as an aid to business growth. Their volunteer mentorship offers help as well as answers to any questions an entrepreneur needs. Because their services are free, purchase behavior isn't a factor.

Why (and how) do customers select the firm's products?

Describe the advantages of the firm's products relative to competing products. How well do the firm's products fulfill customers' needs relative to competing products?

The advantage of SCORE's services is they are 100% free.

Describe how credit or financing is used in purchasing the firm's products. Also, do customers seek long-term relationships with the firm, or do they buy in a transactional fashion (based primarily on price)?

Customers of SCORE's services tend to use their services until they're no longer needed. It is a free service, therefore price has no factor in the customer's decision.

C. External Environment (Ties to Research Project #2)

Competition

Identify the firm's major competitors (brand, product, generic, and total budget). Identify the characteristics of the firm's major competitors with respect to size, growth, profitability, target markets, products, and marketing capabilities (production, distribution, promotion, pricing). What other major strengths and weaknesses do these competitors possess?

The first competitor on the list is called Micro Mentors. One thing I noticed right away is that they have a 'Find Entrepreneur' and 'Find Mentor' tabs. In these tabs, you can find your mentors/clients by picking the industry they are in, where they are located, and what their expertise is. This is also a free program, just like SCORE, but a major strength they have is they have a better user-friendly website and more insights on mentors. Since they are also a not-for-profit organization, they likely have little to zero budget.

The second major competitor is called the Small Business Administration (SBA). Right off the bat, they do a great job of telling the customer how to go about getting an SBA loan which is essentially a loan that is backed by the SBA, helping make small businesses more credible in getting their loan. Loans typically range from about 500 dollars to 5.5 million dollars depending on the business needs. One thing that is a little different is that the SBA isn't about pairing mentors with mentees, but more so into pairing them with startup loans. There is a mentor-protege program, but it's not a huge part of their organization.

A third major competitor would be TiE Global, also a non-profit that was founded in Silicon Valley. One major weakness of TiE is that they do not have many partnerships. They only have 7 partnership organizations, which is not very good considering they have chapters all over the world. TiE Global is a nonprofit organization that has little to zero budget; not having many partners probably makes it closer to zero. One major strength they do have is they have a program that targets youth in high school, exposing them to their knowledge, and almost having a pipeline of clients/mentors, coming directly from high school.

List any potential future competitors not identified above.

Future competitors not listed above could be MentorCity, TechStars, Mogul, Girlboss NYC, Founder Institute, and One Million By One Million.

Economic Growth and Stability

Identify the general economic conditions of the country, region, state, or local area where the firm's target customers are located. How are these economic conditions related to customers' ability to purchase the firm's products?

SCORE offers a free service, and Duluth is a growing city with many small businesses. This is ideal for them and would not be impacted by any purchase price

Describe the economics of the industry within which the firm operates. These issues might include the cost of raw materials, patents, merger/acquisition trends, sales trends, supply/demand issues, marketing challenges, and industry growth/decline.

They offer a free service, volunteer mentoring. Given this, no raw materials, patents, or sales trends are of interest. SCORE deals with low costs such as email marketing, paying what few employees they have, and assuming a domain fee to keep their website up and running.

Political Trends

Identify any political activities affecting the firm or the industry with respect to changes in elected officials (domestic or foreign), potential regulations favored by elected officials, industry (lobbying) groups or political action committees, and consumer advocacy groups.

While Trump was president, he supported small businesses by releasing pro-business policies, corporate tax cuts, and the Jobs Act of 2017. But on a more recent point of news, the Inflation Reduction Act is an effort by the Biden administration trying to make things more beneficial for the average American worker and small business owner. According to the Carlson College of Business, this is what this act entails: Using domestic incentives to create clean energy jobs that pay well and are pro-union with built-in labor protections, Providing clean energy tax credits for solar, wind, clean hydrogen, and other renewable energy sources to encourage companies making products in America to use clean energy, A revised tax code that shifts the tax burden to the wealthiest taxpayers (households making less than \$400,000 per year will not see a tax increase) and requires businesses to pay (at minimum) 15% in corporate tax, and Lower health care costs to protect Medicare recipients and capping insulin costs at \$35 per month. The Chips and Science act is also another way the government is trying to help all businesses. This is about the shortage of semiconductor chips which are crucial in electronics. In the same article by Carlson College of business this act consists of: Adding thousands of domestic chip manufacturing jobs, Repairing supply chain issues, Funding chip manufacturing, and Investing in semiconductor chip research and development. This won't be an instant fix but this is a step in the right direction for supply chain and manufacturing issues.

Technological Advancements

How have recent technological advances affected the firm's customers with respect to needs/wants/preferences, access to information, the timing and location of purchase decisions, the ability to compare competing product offerings, or the ability to conduct transactions more effectively and efficiently? Have customers embraced or rejected these technological advances? How is this issue related to customers' concerns over privacy and security? How have recent technological advances affected the firm or the industry with respect to manufacturing, process efficiency, distribution, supply chain effectiveness, promotion, cost-reduction, or customer relationship management? What future technologies offer important opportunities for the firm? Identify any future technologies that may threaten the firm's viability or its marketing efforts.

Technological advancements that have affected SCORE in a good way would have to be the use of zoom. When Covid hit in 2020 this resulted in everyone having to go to work, school, or any meeting on zoom. This helped SCORE because they can have mentor-mentee meetings over zoom additionally helping mentors help a wider range of mentees geographically speaking. Future technology that SCORE could utilize is artificial intelligence. Customers and mentors have gone both ways on using platforms like zoom, and are embracing it quite well. Although if these platforms get hacked, clients/mentors accounts could be at risk and have some serious information stolen. This could help clients have access to a AI bot on SCORE's website that could answer maybe simple questions that come up in between meetings with their mentor(s). Some possibilities of threats may be data breaches which could distribute SCORE's intellectual property and methodologies that mentors use stolen by competitors to use for their own gain.

Sociocultural Trends

With respect to the firm's target customers, identify changes in society's demographics, values, and lifestyles that affect the firm or the industry.

SCORE looks to mentor people through starting and growing their business. This can be affected if Duluth begins to lose local residents or if businesses leave or can't afford to stay, which would push away potential mentors and mentees. Duluth is currently a town that cherishes its small businesses and the family lifestyle makes SCORE thrive

Explain how these changes are affecting (or may affect) the firm's products (features, benefits, branding), pricing (value), distribution and supply chain (convenience, efficiency), promotion (message content, delivery, feedback), and people (human resource issues).

If Duluth lacked people, due to leaving or financial downfall, then SCORE would suffer due to not having mentors or mentees. This is the only way SCORE would be invaluable in the eyes of the local community. Otherwise, Duluth is a great spot for growth and the help of that.

Identify the ethical and social responsibility issues that the firm or industry faces. How do these issues affect the firm's customers? How are these issues expected to change in the future?

SCORE is very ethical and does not have a diverse group of mentors and mentees. SCORE doesn't face many ethical and social responsibility issues, and with further expansion of members, more diversity is sure to be added.

SWOT Analysis 10 points (Ties to Research Project #3)

Include SWOT Matrix here and discuss ways to develop a competitive advantage.

<u>Strengths:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Current partnerships (building)•Offers great service/information at no cost•	<u>Opportunities:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen current partnerships• Broaden Partnerships• Add more resources in Duluth, only 5 things pop up on SCORE website when searching "Duluth, Minnesota"
<u>Weaknesses:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online presence (localize)• Strengthen website to enhance navigation ability. Could be easier to find what you are directly looking for	<u>Threats:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Over-demand without enough supply, turning potential clients away to other local competitors• Competition for funding

Describe ways that the firm can match its strengths to its opportunities to create capabilities in serving customers'

SCORE's strengths consist of a great service that is completely free and has a fair amount of partnerships. As for opportunities connected to SCORE's strengths, networking with current partnerships and expanding to local businesses in Northstars Geography.

Are these capabilities and competitive advantages grounded in the basic principles of operational excellence, product leadership, and/or customer intimacy? If so, how are these capabilities and advantages made apparent to customers?

In regards to operational excellence, SCORE's services outlines the principles of creating value for the customers by offering them great mentorship services at no cost. For customer intimacy, SCORE does not really make it tailored specifically towards any customer but could try to tailor their mentors towards specific types of business our clients own. For product leadership SCORE needs to continuously evolve their marketing and creatively target customers. The capabilities of SCORE are well made by offering a service with no cost and able to take on any clients wherever they are in the process of their business.

Can the firm convert its weaknesses into strengths or its threats into opportunities? If not, how can the firm minimize or avoid its weaknesses and threats?

SCORE can certainly convert their weaknesses into strengths. We believe that their online presence is lacking just a bit, and being more accessible and having more online promotional pieces would increase the number of future potential mentors. Also, given they face the threat of over-demand, it is certainly an opportunity for them because they have a large number of people in need of help, and now they should uphold the mentor supply to meet their current demand. Another way they could turn a weakness into a strength is by expanding their use of social media. If SCORE had more of a heavy online presence surrounding what they offer, what they need mentor or mentee-wise, and maybe some success stories, they could reach a broader audience. Many small businesses or start-ups looking for mentorship are online promoting themselves or looking for tips on how to improve. Creating an ad or a post that could reach new clients as well as those looking to provide mentorship.

Does the firm possess any major liabilities (unconverted weaknesses that match unconverted threats) or limitations (unconverted weaknesses or threats that match opportunities)? If so, are these liabilities and limitations apparent to customers?

The major limitation SCORE faces is that they are a non-profit organization. This is because they can only reach an audience that is willing to and looking for, volunteering opportunities. Because they are a not-for-profit organization, they are unable to pay people to volunteer and earn from that in exchange. With that being said, unless someone is able to volunteer their time to others, the mission of the company cannot be met.

Can the firm do anything about its liabilities or limitations, especially those that impact the firm's ability to serve customers' needs?

SCORE is more than capable of overcoming its liabilities and limitations. SCORE can use their successful clients as a starting point to recruit more mentors. Building off connections they have already established is a great way to engage former clients further. Turning a former mentee into a mentor can certainly be established even with limitations. SCORE has far more people looking

to be mentored rather than be a mentor, and that is a problem caused by the limitation of being unable to provide payment as an incentive. This can be overcome by being proactive on recruitment, reaching out to the small and or successful businesses in Duluth, and seeing who would be willing to provide their knowledge through mentoring.

Marketing Opportunity Analysis -

- Alternative demographics to current target: SCORE has been focusing on recruiting new mentors to the organization when we can pull mentors from our experienced client pool
- Physical shops: Having a physical location for SCORE to be can be a great way for people to know where you are and can also be good for exposure for partnerships

Social Media Audit -

Facebook - Very good consistency with posting webinars and highlighting clients/mentors, almost everyday.

67K likes and 74K Followers for decent exposure

Instagram - About the same post consistency as Facebook, so that is very good for exposure from SCORE. 1,600 posts, 14K Followers, and following 384 for a great follower ratio.

X (Twitter) - Leverages surveys very well on X, pins relevant content to followers can easily find upcoming events, and popular posts. Following 2,500 people and has 61K followers, with the best follow/follower ratio out of the three platforms. This is good for communicating with other businesses

Conclusion: These are all national-level social accounts, so NorthStar should mimic its predecessors in being consistent with posts, pinning relevant content, and utilizing surveys to get valuable information.

Marketing Strategy

Target Market: Individuals aged 35-55 that currently own a business and love to teach others how they can do it

Secondary Market: Individuals retired aged 60-90 that have had a successful business in the past and have a lot of time on their hands to give back to the community

Potential: 35-55 individuals from diverse backgrounds looking to mentor individuals from similar backgrounds

Product Strategy- For the Life of Your Business

Distribution: SCORE should consider how the process of recruiting mentors should be. They should be pulling mentors from the client pool and actively recruiting new mentors into their organization via their website and online presence.

Corporate Social Responsibility

- Give back to the community
- Entrepreneur Mentality
- Open-minded to anyone can succeed mindset

IMC Strategy-Include 2-3 creative deliverables



SCORE
FOR THE LIFE OF YOUR BUSINESS

Mentee to Mentor Pipeline



At SCORE, we recognize the invaluable role that mentors play in fostering professional growth and development. As part of our commitment to nurturing a supportive and collaborative environment, we are excited to launch a new initiative aimed at recruiting mentors from within our mentee program. We believe that the wealth of knowledge and experience our mentees have gained throughout their journey with SCORE can be channeled into guiding and inspiring others.

[Become a Mentor Today](#)

www.score.org

Mentee Survey Form



Name: _____	Age: _____
Date: _____	Phone # _____
Place: _____	Email _____

How did you find SCORE? _____

What is most helpful about our services? _____

How likely are you to recommend SCORE to others? _____

Is there anything SCORE could do better? _____

Would you be interested in becoming a mentor? _____

Rate Your Mentor 1-10 _____

[Submit](#)

Thank you for your valuable feedback!

www.score.org

MONTHLY CONTENT & EVENT CALENDAR						JUNE'23
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						01 TICKET TITLE
02 NEW CHAPTER LAUNCH POST	03	04 RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS & POST	05	06 RECRUITING MENTORSHIPMENTEES & POST	07	08
09 TEAM MEMBER HIGHLIGHT POST	10	11 SCORE CLIENT & POST	12 NETWORKING EVENT	13 HOW TO GET FUNDING FOR YOUR BUSINESS WEBINAR	14	15
16	17	18 COLLEGE CAREER FAIR	19	20 SCORE MENTOR HIGHLIGHT POST	21	22
23	24 HOW TO CREATE BRAND AWARENESS WORKSHOP	25	26	27 WORK/LIFE BALANCE & POST	28	29
30	31					
NOTES						

Implementation 20 points

A. Structural Issues

Describe the overall approach to implementing the marketing strategy.

NorthStar aims to enhance its impact through a multifaceted marketing strategy. The organization plans to increase engagement with SCORE clients via a targeted email marketing campaign, measuring success by the number of clicks on SCORE's website and the recruitment of mentors. Simultaneously, NorthStar seeks to forge partnerships with local businesses in its geography, fostering collaboration through advertising and potential mentorship opportunities. The organization aims to raise awareness of its new branch with a dynamic social media campaign, leveraging platforms, compelling content, and influencer collaborations to connect with the community. The implementation approach involves strategic segmentation, compelling content creation, active community engagement, and analytics-driven decision-making to ensure the achievement of measurable goals. Through these initiatives, NorthStar endeavors to strengthen its community presence, drive mentorship, and establish impactful partnerships, fostering a positive and lasting impact on its stakeholders.

Describe any changes to the firm's structure needed to implement the marketing strategy (e.g., add/delete positions, change lines of authority, change reporting relationships).

SCORE will need to hire someone or find a volunteer to be in charge of social media and media relations for the NorthStar Branch

B. Tactics, Timeline and Budget

What specific tactics will be used to achieve the overall strategy and communicate key messages to the defined audience? Examples may include brochures, signage, print ads, television spots, and online tools such as social marketing and online advertising,

changes or upgrades to the current website, as well as earned media/public relations Tactics.

Tactics - Tactics being used are going to be email marketing campaign tools such as MailChimp, Brevo, or constant contact. This will be effective in getting feedback for our mentee survey form. Secondly, we will be utilizing social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The social media campaign will be effective when used with the content calendar.

Timeline - The duration of time for our tactics to start and end would have to be around three to six months. This includes an email marketing campaign and social media campaign going on at the same time, but if you were to focus on one at a time this could be done around eight to twelve months.

Budget - This is done assuming that the person implementing these campaigns is a volunteer and not getting paid. For the social media campaign, it will be around zero to five hundred dollars depending if you boost posts and use your own content. The email marketing campaign is going to be estimated at around five hundred dollars, but this can vary depending on the software being used.

Evaluation and Control 20 points

A. Marketing audit