

Response to Dan - Market Analysis & Pavement Evaluation

Date: November 3, 2025

Re: Hamilton's Chocolate, Market Projections, and E-commerce Platform Evaluation

Hi Dan,

Thanks for the update! Really good to hear about everything you've got going on. Let me dig into your questions and give you what you need for the Pavement evaluation.

1. Hamilton's Chocolate - Love It!

This is awesome! The fact that this has been your vision from day one makes it even better - it's real, not something we're making up for marketing. "Chocolat on James - Hamilton's Chocolate" is exactly the positioning you want.

Here's why this is so powerful: - You OWN "Hamilton chocolate" - nobody else can claim this - Corporate clients love it ("Here's Hamilton's finest chocolate for your team") - Tourists eat this up ("The chocolate OF Hamilton") - Google searches - when people search "Hamilton chocolate," YOU show up

Everything we do should push this angle. I'm really excited about it!

2. Market Size & Growth - Let Me Fix Something

You asked a good question about the market share numbers, and I need to correct something I said before. Let me explain what's actually going on with the numbers.

The Confusion (My Bad):

In my earlier email, I said "Hamilton's chocolate market is around \$2.1M and you've got a shot at 15-20% market share" which would be \$315-420K.

The problem: You're already doing \$537K a year with just the store! So that made no sense.

What the Numbers Actually Show:

I went back through the research. Here's what's really happening:

Hamilton's Premium Chocolate Market: - **Market Size:** \$2-2.7M a year (depending on the source) - **What You're Doing Now:** \$537K (just walk-in traffic)

- **Your Current Share:** Already 20-27%!

Important Realization: You're ALREADY a significant player in Hamilton's premium chocolate market with just walk-in traffic. The real opportunity isn't just about "grabbing market share"—it's about actively outperforming the competition to win new customers, deliver an experience that keeps them coming back, and growing beyond what competitors can reach.

1. **Adding NEW channels** (e-commerce, corporate) that don't hurt your store sales
2. **Going beyond Hamilton** (sell online to Niagara, Halton Region, GTA...all of Ontario)
3. **Growing the whole market** (more marketing = more people buying premium chocolate)

Here's What Growth Actually Looks Like:

Let me show you what's realistic based on your current \$537K:

Where You Are Now:

- **Revenue:** \$537K
- **Source:** Just walk-in traffic at the store
- **Channels:** 100% in-store

Year 1: Add E-commerce + Corporate AT THE SAME TIME

Important: You launch BOTH e-commerce and corporate channels together from the start.

- **In-Store:** \$540-560K (stays about the same, maybe grows a bit)
- **E-commerce:** \$100-150K (new online customers - GTA, Ontario)
- **Corporate Gifting:** \$80-120K (B2B accounts, big orders, December push)

- **Total Revenue:** \$720-830K
- **Growth:** +34-54% from now

Why this works: - Online doesn't hurt store sales (different customers - people who can't visit, late-night orders, GTA folks) - Corporate doesn't hurt either (totally different - B2B vs regular customers) - Corporate can start FAST - you already have the templates and strategy ready - December 2025 you're hitting corporate AND e-commerce at the same time

What Year 1 Looks Like Month by Month: - **Months 1-2:** Get website up (whatever platform you pick) - **Month 1:** Start corporate outreach NOW (don't wait for perfect website) - **Months 1-3:** E-commerce starts slow, then ramps up - **Months 2-4:** Close your first corporate accounts - **Month 4 (December):** Big corporate holiday orders + online Christmas sales - **Months 5-12:** Keep growing both, figure out what works

Year 2: Everything Starts Working Together

- **In-Store:** \$580-620K (keeps growing)
- **E-commerce:** \$250-350K (way better - more Google traffic, bigger email list)
- **Corporate Gifting:** \$180-250K (20-40 accounts now, people referring you)
- **Total Revenue:** \$1.01-1.22M
- **Growth:** +88-127% from where you are now

Why this works: Year 1 you figured everything out, Year 2 you're just doing more of what already works.

Year 3: Full Speed

- **In-Store:** \$620-670K (solid, optimized)
- **E-commerce:** \$400-550K (dominating Hamilton searches, strong brand)
- **Corporate Gifting:** \$280-380K (50-75 corporate accounts)
- **Partnerships/Wholesale:** \$80-150K (hotels, events, gift shops)
- **Total Revenue:** \$1.38-1.75M
- **Growth:** +157-226% from now

The Bigger Picture:

Hamilton isn't your limit. Here's what you can actually reach:

- 1. Hamilton Walk-ins:** \$2-2.7M (you've got 20-27% of this already)
- 2. Hamilton + Nearby Online:** \$15-20M (Burlington, Oakville, GTA, etc.)
- 3. All of Ontario Online:** \$50M+ (you can ship anywhere)
- 4. Corporate (Hamilton + GTA):** \$500K-2M (B2B is huge)

Bottom Line: You can totally go from \$537K to \$1M+ in 2-3 years WITHOUT having to "steal" customers from competitors. You're just adding NEW ways for people to buy from you.

3. How You Actually Get This Growth - The Real Strategy

Okay, so those numbers aren't just guesses - they're based on stuff that actually works. Here's exactly HOW you make this happen:

A. Free Ways to Grow (Organic = No Ad Spend)

1. Google Search (SEO) - Being Found When People Search

What this is: When someone Googles "Hamilton chocolate" or "chocolate shop Hamilton" - YOU show up first.

What you actually do: - Own these searches: - "Hamilton's Chocolate" (literally nobody else can claim this) - "Hamilton chocolate shop" - "artisan chocolate Hamilton" - "best chocolate Hamilton" - "corporate chocolate gifts Hamilton" - "chocolate delivery Hamilton" - **Fix your Google Business Profile:** Add good photos, keep hours updated, get reviews, post updates -

Write some blog posts: "Best chocolate gifts for Hamilton businesses," "Hamilton chocolate guide," etc. - **Get listed everywhere:** Hamilton Chamber, Tourism Hamilton, local directories

What you get: - Months 1-3: 100-200 people finding you through Google - Months 4-6: 300-500 people - Months 7-12: 500-1,000+ people - **About 2-3% buy** = 10-30 new online customers every month - **Money from this Year 1:** \$15-30K just from Google searches

2. Social Media - Building Your Following

What this is: Get people following you on Instagram and Facebook so they come to the store and buy online.

What you actually do: - Instagram: Post your chocolate, show behind-the-scenes, talk about Hamilton - Post 3-5 times a week - Daily Stories (keeps you top of mind) - Reels showing how

you make chocolate - **Facebook:** Engage with the community, share local events - Post about ArtCrawl - Tag other Hamilton businesses - Join Hamilton community groups - **Google Reviews:** Ask every customer to leave a review - Goal: 50+ reviews at 4.8 stars or better by end of year - Always respond to reviews (shows you care)

What you get: - Months 1-3: 200-300 new followers - Months 4-12: 800-1,500 new followers - More people walking in + more online orders + more people talking about you - **Money from this Year 1:** \$20-40K from social media

3. Customer Retention & Repeat Business

What This Means: Turn one-time buyers into loyal repeat customers.

Activities: - **Email Marketing:** Build list from day 1 - Welcome series (3 emails after first purchase) - Monthly newsletter with new products, events - Birthday/anniversary offers (if you collect dates) - Holiday reminders ("Order your Christmas gifts now!") - **Loyalty Program:** Simple points system - "\$1 spent = 1 point, 100 points = \$10 off" - Encourages repeat visits - **Post-Purchase Follow-up:** - Thank you email within 24 hours - "How was your chocolate?" email 1 week later - Ask for review - Offer discount on next order

Expected Impact: - First-time customer: \$45 average order - Repeat customer: 3-5 purchases/year at \$50+ average (higher trust = higher spend) - **Goal:** 35-40% of revenue from repeat customers by end of Year 1 - **Revenue Impact Year 1:** \$100-150K from repeat customer business

4. Word of Mouth & Referrals

What This Means: Happy customers tell friends, family, coworkers - free marketing.

Activities: - **Referral Program:** "Refer a friend, you both get 15% off" - **Social Sharing Incentive:** "Share your chocolate on Instagram, tag us, get 10% off next order" - **Exceptional Experience:** - Beautiful packaging (Instagram-worthy unboxing) - Personal thank you notes - Samples/surprises in orders - Go above and beyond (builds raving fans) - **Corporate Referrals:** Ask corporate clients to refer other businesses

Expected Impact: - 15-20% of new customers from word of mouth - Each satisfied customer refers 1-2 people/year - **Revenue Impact Year 1:** \$30-50K from referrals and word of mouth

B. Paid Growth Drivers (Accelerated Results)

5. Paid Advertising (Google Ads, Facebook/Instagram Ads)

What This Means: Pay to show up first on Google and social media - faster results than organic.

Budget Recommendation: \$1,500-2,500/month (\$18-30K/year)

Activities: - **Google Ads:** - Target: "chocolate gifts Hamilton," "corporate gifts Hamilton,"

"Hamilton chocolate shop" - Geo-target: Hamilton, Burlington, Ancaster, Oakville, GTA -

Facebook/Instagram Ads: - Target: Hamilton residents, 25-65, household income \$75K+ -

Custom audiences: Website visitors (retargeting) - Lookalike audiences: People similar to current customers - **Holiday Campaigns:** 2x budget during November-December

Expected Impact: - Month 1-3: Test and optimize (break-even or small loss) - Month 4-12: 3-5x ROI (\$1 spent = \$3-5 revenue) - **Revenue Impact Year 1:** \$50-100K from paid advertising

C. Competitive Intelligence & Tactics

6. Learn from What's Working (Competitor Analysis)

What Your Competitors Are Doing Well:

Coati (Hamilton Farmers Market): - **Strength:** Bean-to-bar story, ethical sourcing - **What You Can Learn:** Tell YOUR story (Hamilton's Chocolate, local craft) - **Your Advantage:** You have a storefront with regular hours + ice cream bar

The DSRT Company: - **Strength:** Creative filled bars, online ordering - **What You Can Learn:** Unique flavor combinations drive interest - **Your Advantage:** You're local Hamilton (they're Toronto), faster delivery

SOMA Chocolatemaker (Toronto): - **Strength:** Premium positioning, multiple locations, strong e-commerce - **What You Can Learn:** Their website UX, product presentation, gift packaging - **Your Advantage:** Hamilton positioning (local pride), price point below them

Walker's Chocolates (Burlington): - **Strength:** Local heritage (since 1983), signature products - **What You Can Learn:** Build signature products (your own "Mint Meltaways") - **Your Advantage:** James Street arts district location, younger brand energy

Key Takeaway: You don't need to compete on every front. You compete on: 1. **Local Hamilton identity** (no one else owns this) 2. **Accessibility** (regular hours, central location) 3. **Community connection** (arts district, local events) 4. **Multi-channel** (retail + online + corporate)

D. Market Expansion Strategies

7. Geographic Expansion (Beyond Hamilton)

Year 1 Focus: Hamilton + nearby cities (low-hanging fruit) - **Hamilton:** Primary market (in-store + online) - **Burlington/Ancaster/Dundas:** 10-minute drive, local delivery - **Oakville/Milton:** 20-30 minute drive, delivery or shipping - **Stoney Creek/Grimsby:** East expansion

Year 2 Expansion: Greater Toronto Area (GTA) - **GTA Online Orders:** Leverage "Hamilton's Chocolate" story for Toronto customers - **Corporate GTA:** Many Toronto companies have Hamilton connections (McMaster alumni, etc.) - **Shipping:** 1-2 day delivery across Southern Ontario

Year 3 Expansion: Provincial & National - **Ontario-wide:** E-commerce shipping anywhere in province - **National:** Corporate gifting can ship Canada-wide - **Tourism:** Market to Niagara tourists (15M+ visitors/year)

Expected Impact: - Year 1: 75% Hamilton, 25% regional - Year 2: 60% Hamilton, 40% regional/GTA - Year 3: 50% Hamilton, 35% Ontario, 15% beyond

8. Multi-Platform Presence (Beyond Your Website)

Why This Matters: Be where your customers already are.

Platforms to Consider (not all at once - phase it):

Year 1: - **Your Website:** Primary e-commerce (Pavement or Shopify) - **Google Shopping:** Show up when people search products - **Instagram Shop:** Buy directly from Instagram - **Facebook Marketplace/Shop:** Local selling

Year 2: - **Uber Eats/DoorDash:** Local delivery (limited menu) - **Amazon Handmade:** Reach Amazon customers (if you want broader reach) - **Etsy:** Artisan marketplace (gift-focused) - **Corporate Gifting Platforms:** 1-800-Baskets, Giftagram, etc.

Year 3: - **Wholesale Partners:** Select gift shops, hotel gift shops - **Tourism Platforms:** Niagara tourism networks - **Subscription Box Platforms:** Partner with local subscription services

Expected Impact: - Each platform: 5-15% of revenue - Diversification reduces risk - More touchpoints = more brand awareness

E. What Drives the MOST Growth? (Priority Ranking)

Based on 11 years of e-commerce experience, here's what will drive the most revenue growth for you:

Top 3 Growth Drivers (80% of results):

1. Corporate Gifting (Highest ROI, Fastest Growth) - **Why:** Large orders (\$200-2,000), recurring, B2B referrals - **Effort:** Medium-high (relationship building) - **Timeline:** 2-4 months to close first accounts - **Revenue Impact:** \$80-300K in first year alone - **Action:** START THIS WEEK (don't wait for website)

2. Email Marketing + Customer Retention (Highest Profit Margin) - **Why:** Repeat customers spend 3-5x more, 7x cheaper to retain than acquire - **Effort:** Medium (consistent execution required) - **Timeline:** Immediate (start building list day 1) - **Revenue Impact:** \$100-200K through repeat business - **Action:** Set up email platform this month, start capturing emails in-store

3. Local SEO + Google My Business (Most Cost-Effective) - **Why:** Free organic traffic, high intent (people searching actively) - **Effort:** Low-medium (ongoing optimization) - **Timeline:** 3-6 months to see results - **Revenue Impact:** \$50-100K from organic search - **Action:** Optimize Google Business Profile this week, start blog content

Next Tier Drivers (Solid ROI):

4. Social Media + Community Engagement (Brand Building) - **Revenue Impact:** \$40-80K Year 1 - **Action:** Consistent posting 3-5x/week, community engagement

5. Paid Advertising (Accelerated Growth) - **Revenue Impact:** \$50-100K Year 1 (with \$20-30K budget) - **Action:** Start small (\$500-1,000/month), scale what works

6. E-commerce Expansion (Long-term Growth) - **Revenue Impact:** \$100-150K Year 1, \$250-500K Year 2 - **Action:** Launch website in next 3-4 weeks

F. The Realistic Path to \$1M+ Revenue

Here's the breakdown of how you get from \$537K to \$1M:

Your \$537K Baseline → \$1M Goal = \$463K Growth Needed

Where That \$463K Comes From:

1. **In-Store Growth (Organic + Marketing):** +\$40-80K
2. Better SEO, social media, reviews, word of mouth
3. More walk-in traffic from awareness

4. E-commerce Launch: +\$100-200K

5. New online customers (GTA, regional)

6. 24/7 ordering convenience

7. Geographic expansion

8. Corporate Gifting: +\$80-180K

9. 15-30 corporate accounts

10. Recurring holiday + quarterly orders

11. B2B referrals

12. Customer Retention (Repeat Business): +\$100-150K

13. Email marketing driving repeat purchases

14. Loyalty program

15. Better customer experience

16. Partnerships & Wholesale: +\$30-80K

17. Hotel partnerships, tourism, events

18. Strategic collaborations

Total Growth Potential: \$350-690K additional revenue

Timeline to \$1M: 18-30 months if you execute consistently

G. Summary: Your Growth Roadmap

Immediate Actions (This Week): 1. Corporate outreach (don't wait) 2. Google Business Profile optimization 3. Start capturing emails in-store 4. Get basic business cards printed

Month 1-3 (Foundation): 1. Website launch (e-commerce enabled) 2. Email marketing setup and first campaigns 3. Social media consistency (3-5 posts/week) 4. First corporate accounts closed 5. SEO optimization begun

Month 4-12 (Scaling): 1. E-commerce fully ramped 2. Corporate gifting program established (10-15 accounts) 3. Email list 1,000-2,000 subscribers 4. Paid advertising optimized 5. Repeat customer rate 30-35%

Year 2 (Optimization & Expansion): 1. Multi-channel sales (in-store + online + corporate) 2. GTA expansion 3. 25-40 corporate accounts 4. Email list 3,000-5,000 subscribers 5. Regional brand recognition

The Bottom Line: Growth doesn't happen by accident. It happens through consistent execution of proven strategies across multiple channels. You've got the foundation (\$537K profitably), now it's about adding the right growth drivers systematically.

4. Promo Materials Delay - Frustrating But Common

I totally understand the frustration with Centre 3. This is honestly a pretty standard issue in the industry - agencies and designers often have timelines that don't align with urgent business needs.

My Approach (After Years of Similar Issues):

1. **AI Sketch First:** Use AI tools (ChatGPT, Midjourney, etc.) to quickly visualize concepts
2. **Hire Project-Based Designers:** Work with freelance designers on Fiverr, Upwork, or local talent for specific projects (not retainer relationships)
3. **Subcontract to Printers:** Once design is done, use quick turnaround printers:
4. **Vistaprint:** 48-hour business cards, fast and reliable
5. **Local Print Shops:** Hamilton has several with 1-3 day turnaround
6. **Mann Print:** Quick turnaround for local businesses

Immediate Recommendation for You:

Don't let the promo materials delay your corporate outreach. Here's what you can do:

- **This Week:** Get basic business cards from Vistaprint (48-hour rush option) or a local Hamilton printer
- **Include:** Name, title, phone, email, website, and tagline like "Hamilton's Artisan Chocolate"
- **Keep It Simple:** Clean, professional design - doesn't need to be fancy for initial outreach
- **Meanwhile:** Let Centre 3 finish the premium version for long-term use

You want to hit corporate prospects **before December** for holiday gifting. Don't let perfect be the enemy of good - get SOMETHING in hand and start the conversations. The chocolate itself will sell them, the card is just the leave-behind.

5. Pavement E-commerce Evaluation Framework

I hear that you had a good conversation with Peter and that the "full access and rights" claim addresses some concerns. That's good to hear, but I want to make sure you have a comprehensive framework to evaluate Pavement properly during your demo next week.

Important: I'm not trying to talk you out of Pavement - I just want to make sure you know exactly what you're getting, what it costs, and what questions to ask. An informed decision is the best decision.

A. Annual Cost Calculator

Let's figure out what Pavement will actually cost you annually. Here's a template to fill out during your demo:

Setup Costs (Year 1 Only)

Onboarding/Setup Fee:	\$_____
Website Design/Build:	\$_____ (or included?)
Initial Photography:	\$_____ (you mentioned this is extra)
Domain Transfer/Setup:	\$_____ (or included?)
Product Upload/Setup:	\$_____ (or DIY?)
Square POS Integration Setup:	\$_____ (or included?)
Training/Onboarding Sessions:	\$_____ (or included?)

TOTAL SETUP COSTS:	\$_____

Recurring Monthly Costs

Monthly Service Fee (Base Plan):	\$_____/month
Transaction Fees (% per sale):	_____% of sales
Payment Processing (separate?):	_____% of sales
Email Marketing (included/extr@?):	\$_____/month
SMS Marketing (if available):	\$_____/month
Additional Product Listings (if limited):	\$_____/month
Premium Features/Add-ons:	\$_____/month
Support/Maintenance:	\$_____ (or included?)

TOTAL MONTHLY RECURRING: \$_____/month

Annual Costs (Recurring)

Photography Updates/New Products:	\$_____/year
Contract Price Increases:	_____% annually
Domain/Hosting (if separate):	\$_____/year
SSL Certificate (if separate):	\$_____/year
Other Annual Fees:	\$_____/year

TOTAL ANNUAL RECURRING:	\$_____/year

Total Cost Calculation

YEAR 1:

Setup Costs:	\$_____
Monthly Costs x 12:	\$_____ x 12 = \$_____
Annual Recurring:	\$_____
Transaction Fees (estimated):	Sales \$_____ x ___% = \$_____
 TOTAL YEAR 1:	\$_____

YEAR 2+ (Ongoing):

Monthly Costs x 12:	\$_____ x 12 = \$_____
Annual Recurring:	\$_____
Transaction Fees (estimated):	Sales \$_____ x ___% = \$_____
 TOTAL YEAR 2:	\$_____

Critical Question: What's your **total all-in cost** for Year 1 and Year 2 if you do \$150K in online sales?

B. Comprehensive E-commerce Feature Questions

Here's everything you need to ask Peter during the demo. I've organized it by category so you don't miss anything important.

PLATFORM CAPABILITIES

Website Structure: 1. How is the website built? (Custom coded? Template-based? Proprietary CMS?) 2. Can I see the actual codebase or is it fully managed by Pavement? 3. What happens to the website if I leave Pavement? Can I take it with me? 4. Who owns the domain name? Who owns the website content?

Product Management: 5. How many product listings are allowed? Any limits or tiered pricing? 6. Can I add/edit/remove products myself or do I need to request changes? 7. How easy is it to update pricing, descriptions, and photos? 8. Can I create product variants (sizes, flavors, custom options)? 9. Gift box builder: Can customers create custom assortments?

Performance & Quality: 10. What's the typical page load speed? (Ask for real examples) 11. How is the site optimized for mobile? (Test it yourself during demo) 12. Can you show me 3-5 live examples of similar chocolate/food businesses? 13. Can you show me examples of larger shops doing \$500K+ in revenue?

MARKETING & GROWTH TOOLS

Email Marketing: 14. Is email marketing included or extra cost? 15. Which email platform do you use? (Mailchimp, Klaviyo, proprietary?) 16. Are there subscriber limits? Costs per subscriber? 17. Abandoned cart recovery: Is it included? How does it work? 18. Can I export my customer email list at any time? 19. Email automation: What's available? (welcome series, post-purchase, win-back?)

SMS Marketing: 20. Is SMS marketing available? 21. What are the costs? (per message? monthly fee?) 22. Can I build an SMS subscriber list?

SEO & Discoverability: 23. SEO: Who manages it? What's included in your service? 24. On-page SEO: Do you optimize titles, meta descriptions, alt tags, etc.? 25. Google ranking performance: Can you show me ranking examples for your clients? 26. Local SEO: How do you optimize for "Hamilton chocolate" searches? 27. LLM/AI optimization: Do you optimize for AI search engines (ChatGPT, Perplexity, Google AI)? 28. Blog/content: Can I publish blog content for SEO?

Social Media & Analytics: 29. Social media integration: Instagram shop? Facebook shop? 30. Social proof: Customer reviews and ratings included? 31. Analytics: Do I get Google Analytics access? Built-in dashboard? 32. Conversion tracking: Can I see where sales come from?

 **E-COMMERCE FUNCTIONALITY**

Ordering & Fulfillment: 33. Pre-orders and time-controlled ordering: How does this work? 34. Local delivery management: Zones, scheduling, pricing? 35. Shipping options: Can I offer multiple carriers? Real-time rates? 36. Square POS integration: **How exactly does it work?** Real-time inventory sync? 37. In-store pickup: Can customers order online and pick up in store? 38. Order management: How do I see/manage orders? Email notifications?

Corporate & Bulk Orders: 39. Corporate gifting features: Bulk order forms? Custom pricing? 40. Account management: Can corporate clients have accounts with custom pricing? 41. Invoicing: Can I send invoices for corporate accounts? 42. Tax exemption: Can corporate clients provide tax-exempt certificates?

Promotions & Subscriptions: 43. Discount codes and promotions: Full flexibility? Limits? 44. Subscription/recurring orders: Is this available? 45. Gift cards: Can I sell digital and physical gift cards? 46. Loyalty programs: Built-in or compatible with third-party?

 **CONTROL & FLEXIBILITY**

Content Management: 47. Can I edit website copy and photos myself? Or do I need to request changes from Pavement? 48. Response time: If I need a change, how long does it take? 49. Design customization: How much control do I have over look and feel? 50. Homepage: Can I change featured products, banners, messaging?

Data Ownership: 51. **Critical:** Do I own my customer data? Can I export it anytime? 52. What customer data do you collect? (names, emails, purchase history, etc.) 53. Data export: Can I get customer lists in standard CSV/Excel format? 54. Product data: Can I export my product catalog? 55. Order history: Can I export all order data?

Integration & Tools: 56. Accounting: Does it integrate with QuickBooks? Xero? 57. Email tools: Can I connect to external email tools (Mailchimp, etc.)? 58. Marketing pixels: Can I install Facebook Pixel, Google Ads tracking? 59. Custom code: Can I add custom JavaScript or tracking codes?

 **EXIT STRATEGY**

Leaving Pavement: 60. **Critical:** What happens if I want to leave Pavement after 1-2 years? 61. Migration support: Will you help me migrate to another platform? 62. Data export: What data can

I take with me? In what format? 63. Domain ownership: If I leave, do I keep my domain? 64.

Website files: Can I get a copy of the website code/design?

Contract Terms: 65. Contract length: Am I locked in for a certain period? 66. Cancellation terms: How much notice? Any penalties? 67. Price increases: Can you raise prices during my contract? 68. What happens if Pavement goes out of business?

SUPPORT & RELIABILITY

Technical Support: 69. Customer support hours: When can I reach someone? 70. Response times: How quickly do you respond to issues? 71. Emergency support: What if the site goes down during Black Friday? 72. Training: Do you provide ongoing training and documentation?

Reliability & Security: 73. Uptime guarantee: What's your uptime percentage? SLA? 74. Backup and disaster recovery: How often are backups made? 75. Security: SSL included? PCI compliance? 76. DDoS protection: How do you handle traffic spikes or attacks?

Payment Processing: 77. Payment gateway: Which gateways do you support? (Stripe, Square, etc.) 78. Payment fees: Who pays the processing fees? (2.9% + \$0.30?) 79. Payout schedule: How quickly do funds reach my account? 80. Fraud protection: What tools are in place?

C. The "Full Access and Rights" Claim

Peter mentioned you'd have "full access and rights" just like his team. This is great, but make sure you understand exactly what that means:

Questions to Clarify "Full Access": - Does "full access" mean I can edit code? Or just use an admin panel? - Can I make changes myself without waiting for Pavement? - If I hire my own developer, can they access the codebase? - Does "full rights" mean I own the website? Or license it from Pavement? - If I leave, do those "rights" come with me?

Why This Matters: I've seen companies say "full access" when they really mean "full access to our admin panel" - which is very different from actually owning and controlling your website.

D. Comparison Context: What to Benchmark Against

To properly evaluate Pavement's value, here's what the alternatives typically cost:

Shopify (DIY or with agency): - Monthly: \$105-400/month (Shopify Advanced or Plus) - Setup: \$5,000-15,000 (agency build) - Photography: \$1,500-3,000 - Year 1 Total: \$6,500-20,000 - Year 2+: \$1,500-5,000/year - **You own it**, can customize, can migrate

Square Online (DIY): - Monthly: \$0-60/month - Setup: \$0-3,000 (if hiring help) - Photography: \$1,500-3,000 - Year 1 Total: \$1,500-6,000 - Year 2+: \$0-1,000/year - **You own it**, native Square integration, limited features

Pavement (Managed Service): - Year 1 Total: \$ (fill in from demo) - Year 2+: \$ (fill in from demo) - **They manage it**, you're dependent on their service

Key Question: Is the convenience of Pavement's managed service worth the price premium and loss of control compared to alternatives?

6. Square Access - Let's Coordinate

Thanks for offering access to Square! This will be super helpful for getting accurate product data, pricing, and understanding your current sales patterns.

How I'd Like to Proceed: - You can add me as a user with **read-only access** to start (I don't need to process payments or make changes) - This will let me see product catalog, pricing, sales data, and customer patterns - Helps me understand seasonality, best sellers, and opportunities - Useful for e-commerce setup (products, pricing, descriptions)

OR if you prefer: - Dale can export product lists, prices, and sales data from Square - Send over Excel/CSV files - Whatever makes you more comfortable

Let me know which approach you prefer and we'll get it set up.

7. Partnerships & December Push - Great Progress!

Ticats Connection: This is fantastic! Stadium partnerships can be really lucrative: - Game day sales (high foot traffic, captive audience) - Corporate suites (premium gifting opportunity) - Branded products ("Ticats chocolate bars" with team logo) - Season ticket holder gifts

McMaster Event (Nov 21-24): I remember you mentioning this. Given timing: - **Pros:** Great visibility, potential corporate connections, email capture - **Cons:** This is SOON (3 weeks), might stretch resources before Christmas - **Recommendation:** If you commit, make it a **testing**

ground for corporate outreach: - Bring business cards (even if not perfect) - Capture email addresses for corporate contacts - Offer samples with "Hamilton's Chocolate" messaging - Follow up immediately with corporate gifting proposals for December

December Corporate Push: You're absolutely right - this needs to happen NOW, not later.

Corporate holiday gifting decisions are made in November.

Critical: Don't wait for: - Perfect website (you can take orders manually if needed) - Perfect promo materials (basic cards are fine) - Perfect anything (speed beats perfect right now)

Start This Week: - Get basic business cards printed (48-hour turnaround) - Make a list of 20-30 target corporate accounts (downtown Hamilton businesses, law firms, McMaster departments, health sciences) - Start calling and emailing this week - Offer December delivery, bulk pricing, custom options - Use the corporate gifting templates we created - Take orders via phone/email if website isn't ready yet

The Reality: Companies are planning December gifts RIGHT NOW. If you wait 2-3 weeks, many will have already placed orders elsewhere. Speed is more important than perfection for corporate gifting.

8. Shopify Marketing Course - Have You Had a Chance?

Quick question: Did you get a chance to look at that Shopify marketing course I sent about a week and a half ago?

Why I'm Asking: That course covers a LOT of what you're evaluating with Pavement - e-commerce functionality, marketing automation, customer lifecycle, corporate programs, etc. Even if you go with Pavement, the concepts in that course apply to ANY e-commerce platform.

Watching it would give you a much stronger foundation for asking the right questions during your Pavement demo. It's basically a crash course in "what a good e-commerce platform should do."

If you haven't had time yet, I totally get it - you're busy. But if you can carve out time before the Pavement demo, it'll be incredibly valuable.

9. Next Steps & Meeting

Given where things are, I think we should schedule a call to discuss:

- 1. Pavement Demo Debrief:** After you see the demo, let's talk through what you learned
- 2. Cost Analysis:** Work through the numbers together
- 3. WordPress Updates:** Go through what you want changed on the current site
- 4. Corporate Outreach Strategy:** Map out December push plan
- 5. Q1 2026 Planning:** Proper e-commerce launch timeline (if not Pavement)

Availability: I'm available for a call: - **This Weekend:** Saturday afternoon or Sunday - **Early Next Week:** Monday or Tuesday afternoon/evening

Meeting Length: Plan for 60-90 minutes so we can really dig into everything.

Sound good?

Bottom Line - Where We Are

Here's my honest take on everything:

Really Excited About:

- **Hamilton's Chocolate positioning** - this is your competitive advantage
- **Partnership momentum** - Ticats and McMaster connections are gold
- **December readiness** - staffing is handled, you're ready to scale
- **Strong baseline** - \$537K with in-store only means you're already successful

Need to Figure Out:

- **Pavement vs. Alternatives** - make sure you have all the info to decide
- **True costs** - know exactly what you're committing to
- **Promo materials** - don't let this block corporate outreach
- **Q4 timeline** - Christmas is 8 weeks away, what's realistic?

My Recommendation - MOVE FAST:

Critical Timeline: December corporate gifting is 8 weeks away. Corporate buying decisions happen in November. You need to move NOW.

1. This Week:

2. Get basic business cards printed (Vistaprint 48-hour or local)
3. **START corporate outreach** (don't wait for website - use phone, email, in-person)

4. Next Week:

5. Pavement demo with all questions answered
6. Continue corporate outreach momentum

7. Week 3-4:

8. Platform decision made
9. Website launch (Pavement or alternative)
10. Corporate outreach at FULL SPEED

11. E-commerce soft launch

12. December:

13. Corporate holiday gifting EXECUTION (orders flowing)
14. E-commerce holiday sales
15. Both channels generating revenue simultaneously

Remember: You're in a strong position already. You're profitable, you have demand, you have the right instincts (Hamilton's Chocolate!). The question isn't "Will you succeed?" - it's "How fast do you want to scale and what's the smartest way to do it?"

Let's talk this through and make sure you have everything you need to make the best decision.

Looking forward to chatting,

Greg

P.S. After the Pavement demo, feel free to text me if you want to discuss immediately. Sometimes it's helpful to debrief while everything is fresh in your mind. I'm here to help you think through it objectively.

P.P.S. Seriously though, watch that Shopify course if you get a chance. Even if you go with Pavement, it'll make you a smarter e-commerce business owner.