Marketing Plan for International Soft Skills Standards and Testing (IITTI) through Product and Promotion Strategies for the World Civility Index (WCI)

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Executive Summary

International Soft Skills Standards & Testing (IITTI) operates as a non-profit organization from Vancouver, Canada, to establish worldwide civility standards through World Civility Index (WCI), which aids both organizations and individuals to enhance their productivity while developing career success.

Based on research and its current status, IITTI does not have enough digital presence and strong brand awareness that can attract more potential users and clients. It has been solely relying on partnerships and collaborations with businesses and organizations, which may have been affecting their visibility as a market leader for civility. Hence, the marketing plan proposes to enhance WCI's value proposition, visibility, and engagement through product and promotion strategies as IITTI enters a new market segment – *university students*. Product development involves adopting subscription-based models for learning, industry-specific packages, and a product innovation of gamification that will improve its flexibility of catering to the specific needs of their clients and adapt to marketing trends. WCI can be promoted through the proposed promotion strategies of improving the IITTI website, leveraging digital marketing, strategic partnerships, and collaborations with business professionals and influencers. These strategies will better position WCI and help IITTI reach a higher engagement that will align with its vision and mission.

I. Situational Analysis

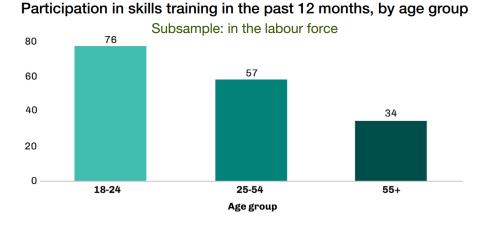
1. Industry Analysis

IITTI is involved in the Soft Skills Training and Professional Development industry, which mainly focuses on workplace civility to help individuals and businesses foster respectful environments and positive relationships.

According to the Canadian Government (2024), this industry is categorized under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Since 77% of Canadian businesses value the interpersonal skills of employees rather than job-related knowledge and hard skills (The Canadian Press, 2022), the demand for participating in soft skills programs has been expanding recently, as it became popular among young people and adults (Environics Institute, 2023). Therefore, about 3,821 establishments offer training programs to individuals and businesses in 2023 (Government of Canada, 2024). Based on Figure 1, 78% of participants from the age of 18-24 took part in skills training, whether the programs were provided by their employers or outsourcing.

Figure 1.

Participation in skills training in the past 12 months, by age group



Note. Answer from the question Q35. In the past 12 months, have you participated in any of the following forms of work-related training to improve your skills? From *Participation in Skills Training: A Report from the Survey on Employment and Skills* by Environics Institute, 2023 (https://fsc-ccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Participation-in-Skills-Training-Report_EN_FSC_DI_ENV_2023.pdf). Copyright 2023 by Environics Institute.

With the high demand for learning soft skills, some organizations were established to provide civility assessments and programs that are quite like IITTI, such as Civility Experts, Civility Partners, and Civility at Work, which will be detailed in the Competitor Analysis. The identification of competitor advantages, weaknesses and strategic plans will enable IITTI to develop unique market positions that distinguish their product from others in the industry.

1.1 Market Size and Growth

Figure 2.

Soft skills training market statistics



Note. Statistics about soft skills training market share by region in 2023 and its market size. From Soft Skills Training Market – Global Industry Analysis and Forecast (2024-2030) by Maximize Market Research, 2024 (https://www.maximizemarketresearch.com/market-report/global-soft-skills-training-market/41336/). Copyright 2024 by Maximize Market Research

The global Soft Skills Training Market held a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.9%, approximately 25.29 billion US dollars in 2023 (Maximize Market Research, 2024). Additionally, North America (United States, Canada and Mexico) occupied the largest market share in 2023 compared to other regions (Figure 2). This sector is anticipated to reach the value of 37.78 billion US dollars in 2030 due to some key growth motivations, such as modern workplace priority, technological advancements and regulatory change adaptability. Companies also prioritize Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in their report and initiatives, where civility and professionalism in the workplace play an essential role. Therefore, more companies are in high demand and are driving to adopt soft skills training, inspiring jobseekers to learn more and expand their career growth and opportunities.

2. Competitor Analysis

This section will analyze the *indirect** competitors (training institutions) of the World Civility Index (WCI) through a comparative table with five key elements that will feature specific areas where IITTI can focus and remain continuously adaptive in the market.

Figure 3. *Key Element 1: Product/Services*

Key Elements	HTTI [1]	Civility Experts [2]	Civility Partners [3]	Civility at Work [4]
1. Products /	a. World Civility Index	a. Civility Culture	a. Civility Culture	a. Competency
Services	Assessment	Compass Assessment	Assessment	Assessment
	Reading Program & Activities: - Micro-learning: Daily 5-minute lessons w/ pointing system Online Written Exam: - Lecture-style learning w/ tier-type assessment b. Market Segmentation (Business, Citizens of the World, and Youth) c. Global Reach & Applicability d. Real-time Civility Score Tracking e. Benchmarking & comparison f. Cultural Sensitivity	b. Civility Training Workshops c. Civility Train-the- Trainer Certification d. Other Civility-related Online Courses e. Maverick Masterclass (for business professionals and leaders) f. Civility Books, Toolkits & Materials g. Industry-tailored programs h. Global Reach & Applicability	b. Civility & Self-Awareness Training c. Flexible Online Courses and Webinars d. Consulting Services e. Industry-tailored programs	b. Personalized and Self-paced Workplace Civility Training Courses (E-learning Modules) c. Face-to-Face or Virtual Training Workshops

^{*}Training institutions are not considered direct competitors by IITTI, which will be discussed further in 3. Company Analysis.

Figure 4. *Key Element 2: Pricing Strategies*

Key Elements	IITTI [1]	Civility Experts [2]	Civility Partners [3]	Civility at Work [4]
2. Pricing	a. For Business:	a. Civility Culture	(Prices are available	a. E-learning Modules:
Strategies	 Reading Program 	Compass Assessment	upon request only)	US \$49
	& Activities:	(Available upon request		
	US \$1/lesson	only)	Civility Partners	b. Face-to-Face or
	Business Level 1: US \$150		customizes pricing	Virtual Training
	Business Level 2:	b. Civility Training	based on their client's	Workshops
	US \$350	<u>Workshops</u>	specific needs.	(Prices are available
	Business Level 3:	(Available upon request		upon request only)
	US \$2,500	only)		
				Civility at Work
	b. For Citizens of the	c. Civility Train-the-		customizes pricing
	World (for tourists):	Trainer Certification:		based on their client's
	 Reading Program 	US \$1,600		specific needs.
	& Activities:			
	• Citizens of the	d. Online Courses:		
	World: US \$50	US \$2,799/10 courses		
	c. For Youth:	e. Maverick		
	Reading Program	Masterclass:		
	& Activities:	US \$499 for CE		
	US \$1/lesson	affiliates and \$899 for		
	• Youth: US \$80	non-affiliates		
	d. For Personal Health	f. Civility Books &		
	Index:	Materials:		
	Reading Program	(Price varies)		
	& Activities:			
	US \$1/lesson	g. Available Industry-		
	Personal Health	tailored Programs		
	Index: US \$150	(Depending on client's		
	08 \$150	needs)		

Figure 5.

Key Element 3: Brand Reputation

Key Elements	IITTI [1]	Civility Experts [2]	Civility Partners [3]	Civility at Work [4]
3. Brand Reputation	Recognized by and part of the United Nations Sustainable Development, and in partnership with other known organizations (ISSTA, Orange Consortium, etc.) Widely used in various organizations, governments, and institutes in Asia, North America, and South America	With over 398 affiliates in 46 countries and 7 subsidiaries Although not directly recognized by any major institution like UN, Civility Experts is aligned with the global standards accepted worldwide	Trusted by over 250 organizations and institutions, and thousands of employees worldwide Recognized and awarded by Manage HR Magazine and Corporate Vision Trusted by over 250 organizations.	Approved by Conseillers en Resources Humaines Agrees (CHRA)

Figure 6. *Key Element 4: Marketing & Advertising*

Key Elements	IITTI [1]	Civility Experts [2]	Civility Partners [3]	Civility at Work [4]
4. Marketing & Advertising	Collaborations and Partnerships Publications & Research	 Civility Experts Worldwide Website Collaboration and Partnerships Social Media Engagement (LinkedIn, Facebook, & YouTube) Publications & Research Speaking Engagements & Media Appearances 	 Civility Partners Website Collaboration and Partnerships Social Media Engagement (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, X, & YouTube) Speaking Engagements and Media Appearances Content Marketing (Blogging & Free Resources) 	 Civility at Work Website Collaboration and Partnerships

Figure 7.

Key Element 5: Technology & Innovation

Key Elements	IITTI [1]	Civility Experts [2]	Civility Partners [3]	Civility at Work [4]
5. Technology & Innovation	Online and Virtual Assessment Programs Mobile-access learning	Online and Virtual Training Programs E-learning Platforms (Thinkific) Digital Resources Search Engine Optimization	Online and Virtual Training Programs Real-time Employee Feedback Tools Digital Resources Data Analytics integration	Online and Virtual Training Programs Digital Resources Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
		(SEO)	(demographics)	

2.1 Analysis of Key Elements

One of the disadvantages of WCI is that it provides a generic approach to measuring civility skills. Since it does not provide customized training, assessments, and consultancy services that can supplement and cater to specific industries or organizational needs, this gives more competitive advantage to its competitors. Hence, this could also affect IITTI's pricing strategies as it may not be perceived as great value to those who prefer tailored programs. Apart from this, the marketing efforts for WCI are heavily concentrated on partnerships with corporate businesses. It lacks the social engagement factor on digital platforms that will establish stronger visibility, recognition, and trust. IITTI may also find it challenging to continuously adapt without considering

technological advancements and data analytics that can be utilized for their product and service improvements.

3. Company Analysis

IITTI is a non-profit organization – co-founded by Mr. Patrick Chun, with several certified image consultants in Asia, Europe, North America, and South America – that aims to provide a global standard measurement in civility skills through the World Civility Index (WCI), with a vision of supporting organizations to have lower risk of miscommunication and harassment, and cultivate more empathy (IITTI, n.d.). Not only do they help businesses, but they also enable individuals to have higher chances of getting hired with a WCI credential. As an assessment and certification provider within the professional development sector, IITTI does not consider training institutions as their competitors. Instead, they supplement training providers and human resources by providing a recognized benchmark in assessing civility and soft skills. However, these training providers also offer civility assessments like WCI, which creates a competitive overlap.

Although their current marketing efforts on partnering with corporations and targeting business professionals help expand their connections and market reach in the business setting, the lack of a more personalized engagement with individual users – such as students, job seekers, and community leaders – can be a potential drawback, as civility skills are valuable for people across all backgrounds.

4. Customer Analysis

The marketing strategy of IITTI emerges from a comprehensive study of its clients. The main customer base consists of corporate employees with managerial positions in engineering, marketing, accounting, and human resources – with 60% female originating from Southeast Asia, China, North and South America, seeking a one-time certification. IITTI serves its clients through electronic enrollment and business affiliations, earning a reputation through assessments conducted by its renowned imaging consultants and partner training institutions.

With the interest in expanding its current market, IITTI now directs its efforts toward acquiring university students. The implementation of its Reading Program & Activities (*microlearning*), along with the traditional single-exam testing, provides a continuous learning

experience for its users while improving its operational affordability. The retention of its current and future clients and the maintenance of market leadership in soft skills certification will likely depend on IITTI's initiatives on digital marketing and social media engagement that will help in comprehending various customer contact points. Although IITTI is recognized for its legitimacy and quality, potential customers may evaluate and hold competing options, such as Coursera and LinkedIn Learning, which provide more options for flexibility and customization.

5. SWOT Analysis

5.1 Strengths

- a. Strong Client Relationships IITTI mostly built its client relationships through partnerships with corporate clients, resulting in a strong professional network.
- b. Customer Loyalty and Retention IITTI prides itself on a high client return rate that may indicate the effectiveness of WCI. However, the satisfaction of these clients is often influenced by the performance of the trainers, and not by WCI.

5.2 Weaknesses

- a. Volunteering and Limited Manpower IITTI does not have any employees but operates solely through volunteers and associates, which can restrict organizational capacity for implementing its product and promotion initiatives
- b. Low Product Visibility IITTI currently lacks initiatives to partner with universities despite having students as its future target market, which limits potential exposure and engagement.
- Lack of Digital Marketing Presence IITTI currently does only minimal digital
 marketing campaigns that may be inefficient in improving its visibility and social
 media engagement

5.3 Opportunities

- a. Subscription-based Models IITTI can consider adopting this type of learning that provides its users with more flexibility while maintaining the efficiency of WCI.
- b. Industry-tailored Programs Catering to the specific needs of its clients and users will give more value to WCI.

- c. Digitalization and Simulation A long-term plan for IITTI to modify WCI with simulations that will make learning more engaging and fun for its users, particularly for university students.
- d. LinkedIn Digital Badges IITTI can enhance its users' professional standing by showcasing their civility scores/certifications on LinkedIn

5.4 Threats

- a. Intellectual Property Risk A potential threat of new entrants that may adopt IITTI's framework and start offering similar services, which aligns with its value of learning by "taking it slow."
- b. Iterative Development IITTI uses iterative development as a model that moves forward in tiny steps through cautious processes. The quality-assurance method implemented through this approach potentially creates challenges for adaptation because of current fast-paced requirements.
- c. Slow Market Penetration Although IITTI prefers a minimalist approach in its operations, it may result in slowing down the market penetration process, giving its potential competitors a significant advantage.
- d. Existing Soft Skills Assessments: Software assessments adopted by IITTI perform civility evaluations; however, combined with their soft skills may generate gaps in focus, which lead to reduced distinctiveness of the WCI software design.

II. Consumer Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning, PLC, and Objectives

1. Product Life Cycle

Analyzing its current status, IITTI is moving forward from the Introduction to Growth Stage. At this stage, businesses are attempting to reach new market audiences by improving their products while considering the needs of their target customers (Grewal & Levy, 2023). Given that IITTI envisions expanding its market by acquiring university students, it shows that it also considers the possible increase of potential competitors in the industry. To successfully penetrate a new market, IITTI must be adaptive and strategic in gaining the attention of students. By leveraging digital platforms – such as social media that is widely used by this market segment – and simulating WCI, IITTI can establish stronger visibility and higher engagement. Partnering

with universities can also increase their exposure and enhance brand recognition, building relationships and trust among students.

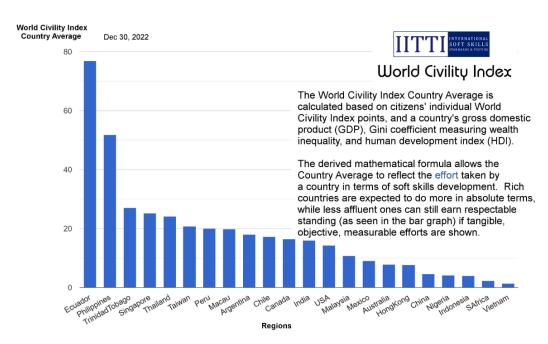
2. Market Segmentation

Market segmentation can help IITTI target a specific segment of customers with unique needs, wants, and characteristics, creating their unique profile, approaching them and addressing their needs to create value (Grehwal, 2023). Segmentation also helps them better understand their customer needs, opens growth opportunities, and better position their product and organization as a whole.

2.1 Geographic segmentation

The customers of WCI (IITTI) are mainly from Southeast Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan), mainland China, and South America (Ecuador, Peru, Argentina).

Figure 8.



Bar graph generated via rapidtables.com and forms part of the IITTI World Civility Index whitepaper

Note. World Civility Index Country Average. Adapted from *World Civility Index* by IITTI Team, 2022 (https://www.iitti.org/guru/whitepaper_World_Civility_Index_Dec30_2022.pdf). Copyright 2022 by Creative Commons.

2.2 Demographic segmentation

The customers of IITTI currently are corporate clients, mainly employees and managers from different sectors – engineering, marketing, accounting, and human resources. The average age of these customers is 35 years, which comprises of 60% female and 40% male. The income level of these customers ranges from middle to upper middle-income level.

2.3 Psychographic segmentation

Professionals seeking growth, job seekers, and students starting a career path are the existing and potential customers for IITTI. This customer base appreciates products that use efficient solutions to meet social development needs. Most are ambitious, goal-oriented, and early adopters of new technology.

2.4 Behavioral segmentation:

Considering the number of the customer base who prefer traditional format, where trainers sit in front of the class and participants engage on a test to earn World Civility Index points, the frequency of usage is significantly low. While the introduction of mobile-based applications and reading programs helped in the product innovation, it may, however, cause disengagement as users need to complete daily activities to earn points. Thus, IITTI can use a focused marketing campaign for the chosen customer segments. It needs to refine the selection choices of its potential target segments followed by brand positioning to fulfill its requirements.

3. Differentiation and Positioning

To differentiate WCI from other civility assessments and position it effectively in its current and future target market, IITTI can maintain its universal applicability while also considering the flexibility of its programs. It means that it can be applicable to all sectors and be tailored at the same time, which will accommodate the general public while also catering to the specific needs of their clients. The use of self-paced e-learning modules can add flexibility for users and clients to accomplish the assessment at their convenience. IITTI can also utilize data-driven reports that can

be used for global benchmarking across industries and regions and provide measurable insights and actionable plans and recommendations for their users and clients.

4. Marketing Objectives

4.1 Short-term objectives

• Increase Engagement and Participation Rate

Target new followers on social media networks of at least 100, and 500 new users for the Reading Program per month through digital marketing campaigns and monitor the number of followers, reactions, comments, and sign-ups through IITTI's website and official social media accounts.

• Establish Partnerships with Corporations & Universities

Attract corporations and universities of at least 3-5 per quarter to encourage the use of WCI in their hiring process and training programs by participating in social and corporate events, securing signed agreements.

• Increase Website Traffic

Increase website visits by 10% per month by utilizing SEO and leveraging digital technologies that will drive website traffic and provide data analytics.

4.2 Long-term objectives

• Expand to a Wider Reach

To have at least 10,000 employees and students holding a WCI credential by the end of 2026 through program and market segment expansion

• Integrate WCI into the hiring system of employers

Influence at least 200 companies across the globe by the 2nd quarter of 2027 to include WCI as part of hiring and onboarding processes through strategic business partnerships – company culture training and awareness campaigns – promoting workplace civility

III. Marketing Program

1. Product Strategies:

1.1 Adopting Subscription-based Models for e-Learning

- a. Development:
 - Teaching programs through subscription-based services, with the flexibility of self-paced learning for users, using cost-effective platforms like Ispring and Chargebee
 - Co-developing modules and content for free by partnering with IITTI ambassadors and associates, universities, industry professionals, and HR organizations
 - Encourage imaging consultants and ambassadors to contribute case studies and real-world scenarios related to civility
- b. Delivery of Action Plan:
 - Tiered subscription model to achieve maximum reach
 - Freemium: Basic access to selected courses and community discussion
 - *Premium:* Full access to structured and advanced courses with a monthly subscription fee
 - *Bulk pricing:* Offered to organizations who pay for training their workforce

1.2 Integrate Industry-specific Programs

- a. Development:
 - Create learning modules and assessments that align with specific industry needs
 (e.g., hospitality, government, healthcare) apart from viewing civility as a
 general approach
 - Consider providing a consultancy service that will provide meaningful insights and recommendations from WCI results on which areas to improve or focus on
- b. Delivery of Action Plan:
 - IITTI trainers to collaborate with industry professionals to generate suitable lesson and assessment contents

- Learning materials and assessments can be accessible through the IITTI website or a subscription-based model (if considered in the future)
- Establish strategic partnerships with companies and universities to integrate it into company training workshops and university courses, or through webinars and conferences

1.3 Digitalization and Simulation of WCI (*Nice-to-have*)

- a. Development:
 - Engaging, eye-catching visual representations of the learning journey through gamification or simulation of WCI
 - Product Inclusions: Number of completed Modules, Ongoing Activities, and Upcoming Tasks
 - Real-time dashboard features that will sync with the existing programs
- b. Delivery of Action Plan:
 - Consider gamification software such as TalentLMS and GameLearn for WCI;
 or
 - Invest in own gamification software:
 - First Sprint: Implement the dashboard where all the progress will be visible with numbers and charts
 - Second Sprint: Launch interactive quizzes
 - Third Sprint: Introduce case study-based simulations, and real-life assessments

2. Promotion Strategies

2.1 Enhance IITTI Website

- a. Development:
 - Improve customer experience by creating a more appealing and user-friendly interface
 - Effectively rearrange and rename contents following appropriate sections and categories
 - Standardize formatting by using appropriate text fonts and sizes

Regularly maximize and update testimonials and blogs, and utilize SEO through keywords

b. Delivery of Action Plan:

- Consider assigning a volunteer to manage and maintain the website
- Consider AI website builder apps for more efficiency
 - Jimdo and Framer (Guinness, 2024)
 - Square Space

2.2 Maximize Social Network Platforms

a. Development:

- LinkedIn: Showcase collaborations and partnerships with organizations, institutions, and corporations, and encourage testimonials
- Facebook: Create media contents and campaigns about WCI and conduct live streams to interact in a larger scope of audience
- YouTube: Revamp content strategies with success stories, interviews, studies, webinars, and other relevant topics that will showcase the benefits of WCI

b. Delivery of Action Plan:

- Assign a volunteer to handle digital marketing campaigns and social media network profiles
- Acquire LinkedIn Business Premium
- Release regular campaigns at least once a day to maintain social media engagement
- Utilize SEO through keywords/hashtags, engage in trending relevant topics, and do cross-promotion between platforms
- Collaborate with professionals and influencers on social media for peer reviews

IV. Budget

This section will give an overview of IITTI's marketing budget and the breakdown of the estimated costs for the marketing strategies for WCI.

Figure 9.

Current Budget	\$ 10,000.00	
Contingency Budget	\$ 20,000.00	
PARTICULARS	ESTIMATED COST (Monthly)	ESTIMATED COST (Annual)
1. Subscription-based model		
- iSpring (Pay per Learner) - up to 1000 users [5]	\$ 569.00	\$ 5,508.00
- Chargebee (Performance package) [6]	\$ 699.00	\$ 8,388.00
2. Industry-tailored Programs	-	-
3. Website Builder		
- Jimdo (Grow) [7]	\$ 22.00	\$ 264.00
- Framer (Startup) [8]	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,200.00
- Square Space (Business) [9]	\$ 32.00	\$ 384.00
4. Gamification Software		
- Talent LMS (Pro) - up to 100 users [10]	\$ 399.00	\$ 4,788.00
- GameLearn (Enterprise) – unlimited games [11]	\$ 149.00	\$ 1,788.00
5. Digital Marketing		
- LinkedIn Premium (Business)	\$ 59.99	\$ 719.88
- Social Media Content Creation (Facebook & YouTube)	\$ 200.00	\$ 2,400.00

IITTI proposed a budget of \$10,000, with a contingency budget of \$20,000, for its marketing initiatives. The breakdown shown is rough estimates of the potential costs that will be incurred on either a monthly or annual basis. The pricing for the recommended platforms for subscription-based models, website builders, and gamification software will depend on IITTI's goals and strategies. Industry-tailored programs can be done through partnerships with IITTI's imaging consultants and associates, corporations, industry professionals, and HR organizations – without spending too much – while ensuring a win-win approach to promote workplace civility that complements both their industry and the WCI tool. Lastly, acquiring a LinkedIn Business Premium for IITTI and generating their own media contents at a minimum cost while promoting WCI and civility skills will improve lead generation and brand visibility for potential partnerships.

V. Control / Monitor

To measure the effectiveness of these strategies, the following methods and key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used:

1. Product Strategies

1.1 Subscription-based Models

- Client feedback before and after the course through the form of surveys
- Number of users subscribing to the program
- Course completion rate of users
- User engagement through time spent on the course materials

1.2 Industry-specific Programs

- Participant engagement through attendance rate
- Post-evaluation from individuals regarding applicability in the industry
- Post-evaluation from partner businesses on workplace impact that may reflect in job performance evaluations of employees

1.3 Digitalization and Simulation (*Nice-to-have*)

 Monitor daily active users and visitors, time of each session, and the percentage of the returning users

2. Promotion Strategies

2.1 Enhance IITTI Website

- Use of Google Analytics that provide free use of basic web analytics (e.g., visitor numbers, demographics, traffic sources, and website interactions) (Jarvis, 2024)
- Gather customer feedback from surveys regarding customer experience

2.2 Maximize Social Media Platforms

- Utilize engagement metrics such as reacts, comments, and shares, and engagement rate by dividing these engagements by the total followers on each platform
- Monitor follower growth rate and extract data-driven reports (e.g., Facebook Insights, LinkedIn Analytics, and YouTube Studio)

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