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I101 Final Project Research

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Final Research Draft

We chose to focus our research on three key points in the development of a successful customer engagement/customer connection plan implementation. Our initial Idea was a proposed mobile app which mitigates the issues associated with variable location. We based our research on the hypothesis that an interconnected mobile app can be used as an all-encompassing solution to the food truck scenario. Research on the nuances of variable location, customer rewards, and social media strategy development are included.

In “Developing Your Food Truck Social Media Strategy, Richard Myrick provides a basic framework of questions that food truck owners should ask themselves when embarking on the journey to market via social media. He first explains the invaluable nature of social media marketing for food truck owners and proposes that a successful strategy requires more effort than simply having the social media accounts. The first question laid out by Myrick is “What do I want to accomplish through social media?” wherein the food truck owner is prodded to consider the gains they desire through such marketing. Determining to whom, about what, where and how your social media marketing relies on an overarching goal for the task. In our food truck scenario, we will utilize the framework laid out by Myrick to define focal points, outline answers, and provide direction to our solution.

In another question, Myric asks the user to consider who will be in charge of producing the social media marketing strategy and maintaining the efforts. He continues to describe the traits of a person who make an excellent marketing director for the food truck. This individual must understand the goals and consumers of the company. Because the food truck owners in our scenario do not have experience with technology or trends, answers to this question will play important considerations to our final solution.

Myrick continues by inquiring of the best platforms for the food truck’s social media. There are short descriptions of various social medias and their primary audience but fails to include instagram. In a final quandary, Myrick reasons any successful food truck company needs to check for the effectiveness of their social media strategy. By understanding the market metrics and checking numbers against goals, a food truck owner can determine if they have a successful social media strategy. Answers to this question will help us create a means of tracking effect and creating improvement parameters if it is unsatisfactory to meet goals. This article is very useful in helping the group to ask important questions and brainstorm effectively for our food truck scenario. By taking the information put forth in this article into consideration, many important pieces of the strategy to be used are shown.

In a second article titled “Food Truck Loyalty: Rewards that Benefit the Customer & the Business” produced by Restaurant MBA, the author explains that the basic functions of a loyalty program are to “thank, reward, and entice dedicated customers”. They should also provide the food truck owners with insights into consumer patterns in spending and frequency of visit. In this way, a well-made loyalty program benefits both customer and food truck owner. The article continues to describe the method of a punch-card loyalty program where customers are rewarded after a certain number of purchases or points. It also points out the need for a modern style so that users will not forget that they have the punch-card system. We will implement this punch card system in our app by coding an approachable and user-friendly app. By allowing users to have constant access to their loyalty system via their mobile phone, they are less likely to forget about its existence when looking for or visiting the food truck.

A second useful point made in the article is that many people only use “one or two” of the many loyalty programs that they are members of. This issue can be caused by providing a user-friendly customer focused design to a mobile loyalty system. If a customer can understand what they will receive, they are more likely to use the system to their benefit. The rewards also need to seem achievable for customers to desire them. In our scenario, one of the considerations is that the food truck owners are open to rewards systems. The article outlines important things to keep in mind while developing a reward system in the modern world.

In our solution, we will employ many of the ideas set forth by this article. One useful tip it provides is to differentiate the reward system from other similar ones to drive customer interest. By using creative brainstorming in the development of our reward system, we can make it fun and unique. Our idea to create a reward system for sharing the location/photos of the food truck is also considered good marketing by the ideas set forth in this article. By offering reward for sharing about the truck, current customers are kept engaged and new customers may be reached through posts. A meld of the reward system and technology will prove a potent solution for the food truck scenario.

The third article “Why Food Trucks Locate Where They Do” discusses the factors and effects to food truck location. It explains the power of Twitter, noting that often the popularity and location of food trucks is determined through social media and user postings. The power of technology in general is noted, explaining that those with access to technology have a easier time tracking food truck location and actually eating. With that, the article noted the importance of location, explaining that the majority of food truck sales occured in very few areas. This means that location is a huge factor in sales. The article also highlighted that presence of food trucks in general can increase the amount a family spends on eating out.

The article also identifies the tendency for technology and food trucks to connect more in larger cities with dense populations. In these cities, marketing is more vital because of the higher concentration of food trucks, allowing for a more competitive marketing space which requires savvy social media marketing to keep customers coming back. It continues to talk about the importance of variation of location. If a food truck revisits the same place each day, they face great losses whereas movement to multiple popular locations helps drive interest and sales. Because they are able to visit various locations, food trucks also provide service in spaces which lack traditional restaurants yet have high demand potential.

The part of the article that most applies to our project however are the portions on technology and location. The article noted that the location of food trucks can often be hard to determine, especially when one does not have access to technology. This is a problem we seek to solve in our project. We seek to create a mobile platform that food trucks and consumers can connect through. By creating a application we can allow food trucks to post their location and for users to receive instant feedback on location and even give them a chance to post their suggestions. As highlighted in the article we see the powerful relationship between technology and location.

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