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Romaine Halstead

University of Technology

GATEWAY DENTAL

STRATEGY PLAN

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# Executive Summary

The dental sector within Jamaica is seeing reasonable growth. Every year there are thousands of graduates leaving university with their qualifications in order to start their practice. Tied with the fact that Jamaica’s population is growing and citizens are trending to a healthier lifestyle adds to the overall growth of the sector. With all these potential new entrants to the market, the managers at Gateway Dental have decided to implement a strategic plan. This plan will outline the organizations vision to strategize on differentiation by offering unique attributes that are valued by customers. These attributes will be along the lines of offering great in office entertainment, quality service and online engagement. The organizations focus on customer service will facilitate the quicker and more efficient flow of patients in the day to day operations of the dental office as well as to facilitate customer acquisition and retention. The managers see the high prices of dental care which in some cases bars some potential customers for a dental examination. With the use of information technology, customers will see more benefits to pay Gateway Dental a visit.

Using Information technology to achieve these strategic goals is a necessity. IT offers a wide range of tools to engage and empower customers. The internet and social media to acquire and retain customers, database systems to store patient data and more advanced and high quality dental tools for quicker and more precise dental checkups.

This IT project will see the implementation of 3 Information systems. Firstly, a Patient Data System which will store patient data on a database for quick retrieval by dentists and the patients themselves. Secondly, A transaction Processing system that calculate costs and offers different payment options. Finally, an automated appointment system where customers can choose an appointment time to their liking on a web interface.

In conclusion, the implementation of these systems will maintain customer satisfaction and will allow Gateway Dental to have a decent competitive advantage against any rivals or potential rivals for years to come.

# Organizational Description

Gateway Dental is located at shop 23, Gateway Plaza, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. The dental office is owned by Dr. Ellen Child and started business in 2005 with one dentist, an assistant and a receptionist. Since then, it has grown to employ 4 dentists 4 assistants and 2 receptionists. Office hours are usually 9 am to 5 pm Mondays to Saturdays. In some cases, unusual hours may be accommodated. Gateway Dental has seen reasonable growth throughout the years partly due to the lack of competitors in the town as well as its growing population. Its currently the longest standing dental clinic in Old Harbour and as such there is a positive relationship between the community and the business.

# Organizational Tenets

**Mission:** To offer patients the finest dental care available in St. Catherine and to provide the best customer experience by relying on our well trained staff and proven technologies.

**Vision:** To exceed the expectations of our patients in every way possible, continue to provide quality dental services and maintain a modern, safe environment where our dentist will collaborate more effectively.

**Strategic Goals:**

Improve customer service by:

* Engaging through social media
* Providing quicker services
* Offer waiting room entertainment
* Facilitating after-sales service

Improve clinic operations by:

* Making appointments much easier
* Creating easier payment options
* Making an effective schedule between dentists

# PESTEL Analysis

In the PESTLE analysis, there are 5 factors that can have impacts on the business.

For the political aspect, change of governments wouldn’t affect the business in any major way. Dental clinics are however instructed to hire qualified dentists, have the business certified by the Dental Council of Jamaica and have taxes be paid. This factor is tied in also with the legal factor where laws and policies are enacted for the business to follow.

The economy of Old Harbour is rising due to the growth of the town’s population. It was stated that the town is one of the fastest growing towns in the Caribbean. More population equals more patients; more patients equals more profitability. This was one of the reasons why the employee staff grew from three personnel to ten. On the downside, the costs of taxes, interest rates and inflation causes the price of dental healthcare to be a bit high.

The social factor shows that due to the high price of dental healthcare, individuals sometimes see it as a luxury. They would only make an appointment when it is absolutely necessity. While this factor may seem as wholly negative, Jamaicans are now trending to a healthier lifestyle. Though its mostly to do with healthy eating and exercise, eventually it will trend to better oral health care.

Technology provides many gateways and solutions to business profitability and problems. Using technologies wisely can see the costs, speed and efficiency of dental operations improve greatly. Changes in technology wouldn’t necessarily pose negative impacts on the business. The main point to keep in mind is how agile the clinic is when reacting to changes. Technology improves every day and in order to remain at a competitive advantage, Gateway Dental’s technology infrastructure must be able to adapt to emerging technologies that would be of benefit to the business.

Finally, for the environmental factor, it has no real impact to the dental clinic. The only attribute is proper waste disposal which the business follows as guided by the policies stated by the Ministry of Health.

# SWOT Analysis

Gateway Dental’s have many strengths. It has a positive and healthy relationship with the community. As stated before, they are the longest running dental clinic in Old Harbour. Practically everyone in the town has Gateway Dental as their go to dentists. Another strength is their customer service and highly trained and qualified staff. The culture of the business, the organization’s strategy and the mission and vision statements points to customer service. Gateway Dental is heavily invested in this.

Weaknesses are the office location. The office is located upstairs Gateway Plaza. This poses a challenge to individuals who cannot go upstairs for example people in wheelchairs and older people. This will pose a negative impact to business as it reduces the number of potential patients. There is also the high cost of the service to consider. Without health insurance, the cost is quite high and many individuals are without a health card.

Opportunities are mainly due to technology. Technology can provide tools for customer acquisition and retention. Patients data can be stored and appointments can be made online and so on.

There are many threats to consider. They are many dental graduates every year and the entry to market is fairly easy. New competition can enter the market with new ideas. The cost of labour is also quite high and is of high value. Apart from dentists, receptionists and assistants that are up the standards of Gateway Dental are hard to find. Also, there can be changes in health insurance plans and policies that would cause problems with customers.

# Porters 5 Forces Analysis

There are many different suppliers catering to Gateway Dental, whether its supplies for the dental operation or supplies for the technology infrastructure. In both these areas, because of the high number of suppliers, competitive rivalry is high and costs tend to be relatively low. Many suppliers to many dentists. This causes the power of suppliers to be quite low.

Buyer power is a bit higher. As stated before, customers see dental visits as a luxury and will not make an appointment unless it is absolutely necessary. Gateway Dental has to find ways and means to add benefit to their visit. Health insurance are however available to some and will keep the cost to them as the customer low. In summary, the business needs customers to make money to stay afloat. The buyer power is rated at medium.

Rival powers are low, there is only one other fully established dental office located in Old Harbour. This rival is relatively weaker compared with Gateway Dental as it is a much smaller business and less staff. Another rival is the public health clinic which offers dental services for free. This may seem as a very strong competitor but the quality of service of public clinics are very deplorable.

There isn’t any real substitution for dental healthcare. Adding braces, tooth removal, filing or filling requires the intervention of a trained dental practitioner. Brushing three times a day and flossing will still require you to go to the dentist as some point in time.

It is easy to enter the oral health sector. Once an individual gets qualified and certified, opens an office and register with the Ministry of Health they can start their dental practice. The market entrance power is set at medium.

# Business Requirements

By analyzing the strategic goals for Gateway Dental, the business will require a few attributes for it to achieve said goals.

In order to engage customers through social media and have an online presence, a social media page will have to be created. Facebook and Twitter are good options to choose from as many Jamaicans use those sites. Facilitating after sales service can also be done through these social media sites but a better system would be needed. A patient data system will be better as patients can be communicated with through telephone or email. For waiting room entertainment, the office can offer free Wi-Fi access to patients who are waiting as well as having a clean and spacious office space with air-conditioning for their benefit.

For Gateway Dental’s clinical operations, there are two requirements needed to achieve this goal. An automated appointment system would make appointments much easier for patients or receptionists for call-ins. Since this system would have a web interface the business would also need a website. To make payments easier, the office will need a POS outlet. This is to accommodate the many different credit card payments to reduce the hassle on customers and for quicker transactions. An online payment option could be implemented but it would be underutilized. Customers tend not to pay for a service before receiving it, especially with dental care.

# Architectural Requirements

Based on the business requirements, there are certain polices the architecture should follow. The social media sites must be active in order to gain traction and increase their online presence. If customers send messages through these outlets a response must be made within 24 hours. The patient data management system must be up and running 24/7. It should be in a web interface and be accessible by customers who opt in the service. It should be secured and accessed by logging in. It must also be able to remind patients through email about appointments and remind them to return for checkups. Finally, the system should be able to handle over 5000 patients. This is for scalability purposes and to ensure the system is future proof. The automated scheduling system has similar requirements. It should also be secure, in a web interface and up and running 24/7. Customers should be able to select the date and time of appointments and the nature of their appointments (braces, tooth removal, whitening). The costs based on the nature of the appointment should also be shown. The Wi-Fi should be able to connect no more than 20 devices. This is for 2 reasons. First, for security. The more devices that can connect the more likely the chance of an unwanted device. Second, for performance. Having too much devices taking up all the bandwidth will slow the internet speed down considerably.

# Infrastructure Requirements

There are 3 major factors in the business’s IT infrastructure, hardware, software and network. For hardware, the office will need 3 desktop computers for the receptionists, 2 POS units for electronic payments, a storage unit for storing patient data and a server to store and process data from the appointment system.

For software, there need to be a transaction processing system to record payments and display costs of services as well as to easily add discounts form transactions. There also need to be a customer relationship management software for the patient data system and a database management system for the appointment and scheduling system.

Finally, for the network infrastructure, the office will require a modem from the internet service provider for the internet. Also a wireless modem and a firewall for security.

# Metrics

Metrics play an important role in achieving excellence in any organization. To measure the overall benefit and justification of this IT project, one should look at 3 factors, operational metrics, organizational metrics and financial metrics.

Operational metrics can be viewed by website performance and availability, how quickly the patient data system and the appointment system renders and how quickly a payment is transacted. Also, system downtimes and recovery can be looked into.

Organizational metrics is viewed by user reviews. This is a benefit of social media sites. Customers and visitors can leave comments and rate the business on their pages for managers to review.

Financial metrics can be mainly seen as the return on investment. It can be calculated by factoring in the project costs, number of returning customers, budget variance and resource cost.

# Managerial Considerations

After the implementation of the system, a return on investment will not come immediately, there must be time given for both employees of the business and customers to learn on understand the system for it to reach its full capability. Also because the main reason this entire system has been put into place is for better customer service. Customer satisfaction rarely provide good return on investment but it retains customers allowing them to return.

These systems must undergo maintenance at least once every 4 months. This is for performance and security reason. In more detail, the security of these systems must be one of the business’s top priority. As more and more businesses use IT the more investment is needed in IT security. This is especially important for Gateway Dental as there are patient information being stored on these systems. There may be the need to hire an additional personnel to do these jobs.

Options are available within the IT infrastructure in case the business would like to expand to other towns. If this is the case, a decision will have to be made on where whether the same database and customer relationship system will be used for other offices. Using the different databases would cause some data redundancy if there is a case where a patient visits both offices.

A contingency plan must be available. If there is a disaster or loss of power, measures must be put into place so business can operate to an extent without the use of the system if such a time arrives. Possible risks must be identified and documented whether to be avoided or accepted so that recovery can be as quickly as possible.