



BLACKBIRD POST

Sonically
different,
Innovative
audio post.

SERVICES

- ADR
- Sound Effects
- Foley
- Orchestral Recording
- 5.1 Surround Mixing
- Advanced data transferring

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1. Executive Summary

Blackbird Post is an audio post facility in San Diego, CA offering quality services in ADR, sound effects, foley, orchestral recording, 5.1 surround mixing, and advanced data transferring. Blackbird Post offers services at a competitive price to mid sized Independent Film Companies along the West Coast. We will inform our target market by utilizing well crafted marketing strategies which include advertising, sales promotions, word of mouth, and viral marketing. Our total marketing budget cost for the first year of operations will be \$14,890. Our marketing strategy will be measured through our customer acquisition and satisfaction, sales for services, brand recognition.

2. Situation Analysis

2.1 Industry Analysis

2.1.1 Industry Summary

Our company exists within the Sound Recording Studios industry sector. The Sound Recording Studio sector contains audio post production facilities, recording studios, live sound recording, and mastering services. Companies within this sector work on music production, audio post production for TV, animation, and film, along with audio for commercials, trailers and video games. Potential customers who utilize the Sound Recording sector are Independent Film companies (Gottlieb, 2006). There are 282 of these Independent Film Companies in the market (Independent Production Companies, 2007). The market value of the Sound Recording Studios is currently a \$3 billion sector.

2.1.2 Industry Trends

One trend impacting the sound recording sector is consolidation. Reasons for this is due to production companies need for less risk when it comes to audio post services (Gottlieb, 2006). Another trend is outsourcing of post production services to international companies. Production companies are taking advantage of exchange rates that make it favorable for outsourcing. "Between 1990 and 1998 outsourcing cost the U.S. economy \$10 billion" (Gottlieb, 2006). In the independent film industry the production companies and audio post facilities follow an economic trend. Production companies base the income of the audio post facilities on the success of the films. One final trend in the film industry is the success of animated films. These movies are able to reach a wide audience. Finding Nemo grossed \$339 million, Monsters, Inc grossed \$255 million, and Cars grossed at \$244 million (Henderson, 2008).

2.1.3 Industry Growth

Growth of the Sound Recording Studios industry sector is in decline (Audio Production Studios, 2009). Companies are trying to consolidate the production companies to reduce prices and simplify bidding between multiple post houses. This will speed up the production time for the films (Gottlieb, 2006). The recession will make spending tight

within the industry. Unlike the previous two recessions the film industry must compete with movie rentals and movie piracy (Parisi, 1991). The future market value of our industry sector is falling due to consolidation and economic recession.

2.2 SWOT Analysis

2.2.1 Strengths

- Provide a wide range of tools and knowledge to tackle any aspect of audio for movies, websites, advertisements and other means of multimedia
- Our staff are industry veterans with careers that have spanned for decades
- Superb customer satisfaction constantly reviewed by client feedback
- Operations of our post production house are very efficient to bring costs down

2.2.2 Weaknesses

- Being a new company, our reputation is low
- Financially, we still have very low revenues
- Our business is still developing and finding our niche
- Client base is very little and will take awhile to expand

2.2.3 Opportunities

- Our digital workstation tools are always becoming more advanced with better quality
- Partnering with an independent film company

2.2.4 Threats

- California is a major entertainment hub with lots of studio competition
- Many other surrounding studios have high technology
- Independent production companies already have post production facilities they work with and may not switch

2.3 Competitive Analysis

2.3.1 Nature of Competition

In the audio post-production market the nature of competition is based off of ability and price. All post houses are able to record, edit, and mix audio. The difference is that some have more technical abilities than others. While some studios will only be able to record dialogue, others will be able to do foley and orchestral recording. Price also has a factor in our market. Not every production company can afford or need to pay for their project to be mixed in a movie theater size dub room. Most will only need their project to be worked on in a small living room sized dub stage.

2.3.2 Position in Market

Our audio post-production company is based in San Diego, California. As a mid-level company we are known for our efficiency. Clients expect speed and quality from us, and we make sure to deliver.

Being in the audio post market, we are market followers. We feel that our market is already set and does not need to change. So instead of focusing on innovation we are focusing on the mastery of what is already expected of post houses. We want to be a profitable business that is steady, strong and constantly providing quality products. As an audio post house we have a operational advantage over our competitors. We operate our facility with speed and efficiency that cannot be matched. Our studio is very close niched and organized which allows us to complete projects to the highest quality and with efficiency. We are focused on keeping this advantage over our competition because it is something that we can excel at. The competition will try to beat us technologically, but our efficiency will give us the better advantage.

We also value customer intimacy above all else. The customer has chosen us because of our qualities. So the delivering of the most unique and highest quality product for our client is our primary focus. We want them to be able to get exactly what they need and want.

2.3.3 Competition

2.3.3.1 Direct Competitors

During market research we have identified two major competitors that pose an immediate threat to the success of our company. The first, Absolute Post in Burbank, CA, and the second, The Post Group in Hollywood, CA. Both of these companies are positioned in the market as being top of the line audio post facilities capable of handling any post need presented to them. In terms of their specific strategic position in the market, we believe that these two companies both utilize customer perception factors as well as competitive tactics to suppress competition. Both Absolute Post, and The Post Group boasts of having “the best quality at the lowest price”. The Post Group however surpasses Absolute Post when it comes to customer service and convenience. They provide a very large array of services that most post facilities aren’t capable of providing. Some of these services include; visual effects, data management and transfer services, duplication, DVD production, telecine, color correction, and off site editorial through outsourcing. Absolute Post provides unique services like equipment rentals and data encoding.

2.3.3.1.1 Position

In our market role analysis of these two companies we found that Absolute Post is a market follower based on the following qualities; they choose not to “rock the boat,” they learn from the experience of larger post houses and they experience strong profitability because of their services. The Post Group is a market leader. They aggressively try to expand their market share by staying at the top of technology. The facility was one of the first television post houses to install a Cineon Digital Film System, and are currently using outsourcing as a technique to expand their total market.

Absolute Post uses operational excellence as their value discipline. They provide superior value by leading the industry in price and convenience. The Post Group utilizes product leadership because of the value provided by offering a continuous stream of leading edge products.

2.3.3.1.2 Strengths

Absolute Post's strengths as a competitive post house includes their small size, intimate service, and equipment rental service as a sub-company. The Post Group's strengths includes, their outsourcing relations, wider range of services, size (largest post facility in the world) , and 30 year experience.

2.3.3.1.3 Weaknesses

Absolute Post lacks a functional web site, the links are misleading and the information is scattered. The company also seems to be smaller and a lot younger than other post studios in the area. In terms of technological advances at the company, they are a few steps behind on any new product innovations, which may be due to their smaller budget. We also found that their logo had nothing to do with their company name or service. Some weaknesses that The Post Group possesses, are their higher prices and intimidating appearance to smaller prospective customers. They also lack the necessary equipment to facilitate any type of orchestral recording.

2.3.3.2 Indirect Competitors

Our indirect competition refers to much of the music recording studios that lie in the San Diego area as well as the Los Angeles area. Sanctum Sound LA, located in Los Angeles is one of the indirect competitions of that area. They serve as indirect competition due to the fact that their technology can serve as multiple pieces in the post production realm as well as being located in the Los Angeles area. Being in the L.A. area provides them with the necessary clients if they choose to move into the direction of being a direct competitor. The next two studios labeled as indirect competitors are both located in San Diego. Both are dominantly music recording studios that in the future could both apply their services to music and post production. Golden Track Studio is a state of the art recording studio built from the ground up. They could single themselves out as potential indirect competition with their dynamically tuned rooms. With vaulted ceilings they would be a perfect studio for recording orchestral arrangements. The other studio in San Diego that poses as a near-future competitor is Signature Sound Studios. Signature Sound is an indirect competitor due to the fact that its facilities and equipment are capable of producing the sound and music for a film.

2.3.3.2.1 Position

Sanctum Sound LA's position in the market is as a music recording studio. Most of their clients perceive them as being specifically a music recording studio because their clients are well known artists in the music industry. Being located in such a large city

gives Sanctum Sound a geographic advantage. Customers of Golden Track Studios are lesser known artists in the San Diego area. Most of Golden Track's clientele are medium rated users to heavy rated users within the music industry. Golden Track's market position is all about being streamline and efficient in what they do. Signature Sound's clients include the names of those who are major artists in the music industry. Signature Sound offers great customer perception factors within quality, features, and customer service.

Sanctum Sound as far as a competitive position is considered a market leader. They specialize in multiple areas of the music industry. Sanctum Sound focuses most of its strategy on product leadership. They focus most of their attention on the quality of what is produced. Golden Track Studios is considered to be a market nicher. They specialize specifically in the recording of music with capabilities to move to post production. Golden Track views their strategy as specializing in customer intimacy. With their list of clientele being mainly artists not as well known to the media, they base their ethics on loyalty. Signature Sound is considered to be a market follower. They pride themselves in operational excellence, which is doing just what a music recording studio does, offering their clients what is needed everyday.

2.3.3.2.2 Strengths

Sanctum Sound's strengths are based on them being located in two areas of the country. They have a studio on the east coast as well as the west coast. With two studios on opposite ends of the country allows them to have marketing capabilities and clientele on both sides of the country giving them the best of both worlds. Sanctum Sound prides in its customer service. They offer an on-location recording deal as well as offering songwriting help, in which other studios don't offer. Their technology allows them to run through a Pro Tools HD3 system as well as having the necessities to do voice-overs if needed. Golden Track's strengths run through management and technology. Employees are highly skilled and have worked in their industry for multiple years. Golden Track was founded thirty years ago and has provided the same quality of service since then. The newest facility in which Golden Track is housed has been dynamically tuned by Tom Graefe of Sony Acoustic Design to give it the edge to stay ahead of its competitors. Signature Sound offers the comfortability and technology which comprises its strengths. Both of Signature's studios run off of a Pro Tools HD3 system with large amounts of outboard gear to accompany both.

2.3.3.2.3 Weaknesses

Sanctum Sound's one problem is not only its greatest strength but its greatest weakness. Being in two locations means it has to accommodate for two target audiences and have the capability to finance both locations with separate economies. Its other weakness is its second location being in Los Angeles. Being a studio in an already competitive business, Sanctum is located in a highly competitive area and must have just the right edge to attract customers. Golden Track's largest weakness is their newly designed facility. In the past thirty years that Golden Track has existed, they have

relocated several times. This relocating can cause confusion within its clientele. Signature Sound's major weakness is the likeness its name has with other studios, production companies, and manufactures around the country. This likeness in name causes confusion in clientele.

3. Target Market

We will be entering in a business-to-business market mainly dealing with a business market. The businesses that will be interested in our service are mid-sized production companies that are established and have success in the film, television, and visual industry. Potential customers who are interested in Blackbird Post will be film producers, animators, web site developers, multimedia companies, advertisement agencies, and marketing communication companies.

The environmental characteristics of the potential clientele are economically stable and constantly evolving with new technologies and formats. Being that the entertainment industry is very competitive, customers are very creative, artistic, and strive for quality. Environmental factors such as supply conditions tend to not affect our flow of customers, as entertainment continues to thrive in economic downfalls. Many labor unions exist throughout the entertainment industry and play large roles in the creation of our work. Clients, first and foremost, desire quality products that meet their given deadlines. They all follow proper protocol when it comes to establishing new business deals and have special emphasis on precise business documentation. However, these potential customers are relatively open in terms of authorities like directors, producers, and general staff who promote professional status. Our potential clients all share likenesses when it comes to media habits. They are all individual moviegoers who are constantly immersed in popular culture, influenced by current technologies, and need entertainment.

Our target market will geographically range from Seattle, Washington, to San Diego, California. Primarily, our focus clientele will be based in Los Angeles, California, which is one of the largest entertainment hubs. Our customer demographics include independent film, animation, television, and web development companies that are well established. These independent production companies are not in direct competition with major production companies but make an impact on the industry. These independent production companies are mid-sized programs with a portfolio of a large conglomerate. These companies have built their portfolios by being in the industry for ten plus years. When it comes to technological capabilities, our target market meets the industry standards, which coincides with our standards. Working with projects, both our target market and our business have common goals and focus on organization and the overall outlook of the individual project. With risk being a large factor in our industry, our clientele are willing to take the necessary risks involved to turn out a good project. With those risks being take, a certain bond and loyalty is formed with the quality of service that our business creates.

4. Marketing Strategy Overview

Our company's target market strategy is defined as a concentrated/niche market. Through traditional marketing we plan on implementing advertising and sales promotion techniques. Our company plans on using word of mouth and viral marketing in our non-traditional marketing approach.

4.1 Marketing Objectives

- Increase customer base
- Deploy company image into market
- Satisfy customer expectation
- Proliferate the size of our company
- Establish industry connections

4.2 Marketing Financial Objectives

- Minimize spending in advertising
- Increase sales of orchestral recording through promotion
- Estimate year-end profits through previous sales

4.3 Marketing Positioning

To independent film production companies along the West Coast, Blackbird Post is a practical audio post house that specializes in professional audio production for film, assuring clientele quality work that soars beyond expectations.

4.4 Marketing Tactics

Through traditional marketing we will be implementing paid advertising and sales promotions. Our paid advertising we will persuade and remind independent film companies of our first rate service. We plan on purchasing ads on Google, which will provide a customizable and easily assessable form of advertising. Our company will place ads in trade magazines, which will reach subscribers and enthusiasts in the film industry by providing a tangible, long lasting impression. We also plan on placing posters inside of independent film theaters. This is possibly the best way to advertise because it reaches the independent filmmakers. Through sales promotion we plan on offering a limited time discount. The discount is 10% off the total cost for our services and will take place for the first four months of our company. This is a great incentive for potential clients to discover our company.

For non-traditional marketing we will be utilizing word of mouth marketing and viral marketing. Through word of mouth marketing we plan to deliver a product to our clientele that exceeds their expectations. By doing this, Blackbird Post will achieve word of mouth marketing through our clients reviews of our services. In viral marketing, Blackbird Post will arrange emails on a quarterly basis to

production companies in our target market, detailing our services. By sending out the quarterly email, our services will be easily accessible.

Our main partnership is Ware Wolfe Media located in San Diego, CA. They provide field media services for broadcast television and video production. Their services include camera operations, sound mixer, editing, and production assistant. We plan on benefiting each other by being able to take on whole projects as partners. They will film and produce the project and we will do the final audio post work. By being able for each of our companies to say that we can take on projects from start to finish will give us an advantage over our competition and giving us both more projects.

Another company that we can benefit from having as a partner is Groovy Like A Movie. They are a production company that specializes in corporate video, television commercial, live events, and entertainment. After they finish a video project we will do all of their audio work. By offering them a priority service agreement that will give them a guarantee on audio work and allow them to take on more projects. Also the agreement will give us steady work.

4.5 PR Plan

4.5.1 PR Overview

Through our public relations and publicity plan we will target employee and investor publics through print media. Specifically, we intend to build relations with independent film producers and directors who are looking to take advantage of an audio post facility as well as an orchestral recording facility under one roof. By targeting the independent directors and producers looking to take their film's audio production to the next level we will establish connections throughout the industry.

4.5.2 PR Objectives & Goals

- Create reliable customer relationships
- Strengthen image awareness
- Establish honest connections
- Motivate potential clientele

4.5.3 PR Strategies, Tools & Tactics

Our PR and Publicity is directly intended to develop excellent relations with editors of magazines, industry trade magazines, and independent film companies. The timing of our publicity is important. Therefore, by releasing our print press kits, press releases and media alerts in mid-summer, we hope to maximize our exposure to independent film companies who are looking to release their movies in the summer of the following year. Our content will be well-written and contain all the necessary information that our media gatekeepers desire. By making pitch calls, we hope to strengthen our relationships with editors, directors and company figureheads. The newsworthy details

pertaining to Blackbird Post are our superb state of the art audio facilities, the skill and work ethic of our staff, and our ability to bring complete audio post production including sound effects, ADR, foley, soundtrack/orchestral recording and mastering to our client's projects.

4.5.4 Implementation

Tactics	Person Responsible	Projected Completion Date
Client calls, lunches, meetings	Khalil Al-Arefi	May 10, 2009
Client and employee overview	Chuck Flores	May 23, 2009
Media alerts and press releases	Ian Gebhart	May 3, 2009

4.5.5 Media List

The Daily Aztec.
 San Diego State Univ. BAM Bldg. 2
 San Diego, CA 92182-7800
 Alex Jones
 619.594.6975
 datempo@hotmail.com
 www.thedailyaztec.com

San Diego Beat
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San Diego Magazine
1450 Front Street
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Tom Blair
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www.sandiegomagazine.com

5. Sales Forecast

5.1 Sales Forecast Overview

Blackbird Post has an internal sales force. Production companies come to us directly with their projects and pay us upon completion. We have structured our sales force to be customer based.

For our sales process we first make sure we are known. We are going to advertise in entertainment magazine, because most of our customers will bring their work to us we have to market ourselves. The client needs to be aware of us and know that we can do. Then when we are approached we evaluate the project by watching it through and seeing what it will need. After we have assessed the project we will show them examples of what we have done and try and give the production company an idea of what we can and will do if they allow us. Once we have both decided we are compatible financially and creatively we will work on the project until it is complete. All the time we will be checking with the client and making sure we are all working to the same goals. Also when we are complete we will make sure we that the company is satisfied.

At Blackbird Post we plan to make at least \$300,000. We will have close to 36 clients paying an average about \$8,300 per project. But as the projects cost will vary and be on project-to-project bases, we can make more with less clients or with more clients. Best case we would make \$350,000, which would give us on average \$60,000 a year on salaries. Worse case we don't get enough clients to meet our facilities needs.

5.2 Sales Forecast Chart

Quarter 1

Items	January	February	March	Total
Number of clients	3	2	3	8
Sales amount	25000	15666	25000	65666

Quarter 2

Items	April	May	June	Total
Number of client	4	4	3	11
Sales amount	34332	33332	25000	92664

Quarter 3

Items	July	August	September	Total
Number of Clients	2	2	3	7
Sales Amount	15666	15666	25000	56332

Quarter 4

Items	October	November	December	Total	Grand Total
Number of Clients	4	2	3	9	35
Sales Amount	33332	15666	25000	76998	291660

6. Marketing Expense Forecast

6.1 Marketing Expense Forecast Overview

During the course of our first year of operations we intend on spending our overall marketing dollars in means that would acquire the highest possible amount of exposure and earnings.

We're looking to place half-page advertisements in Trade Magazines like Animation Magazine, and Film Maker Magazine every quarter. This traditional method of marketing through magazine advertisement should cost \$12,465 dollars during the course of the year. Placing advertisements on Google through their AdWord feature will provide a customizable and easily assessable form of advertising. The cost for this feature would be about \$5 dollars a day. We have also set a yearly budget of \$600 dollars for the printing and posting of poster ads inside of independent film theatres. These are ways we plan to expose our

company to a wide variety of prospective customers in the niche market of A/V production.

6.2 Marketing Expense Budget

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	Total
Animation Mag	1495	1390	1390	1390	5665
FilmMaker Mag	1700	1700	1700	1700	6800
Google Ad	450	450	450	475	1825
Posters	150	150	150	150	600
					14890

7. Implementation

Marketing Tactic	Person Responsible	Completion Data	Month 1 April	Month 2 May
Animation Magazine Ad.	Khalil Al-Arefi	May 20, 2009	April design Advertising	Implement advertising
Filmmaker Magazine Ad.	Keith Furr	Apr 25, 2009	April design advertising and implement	
Google Ad.	Chuck Flores	May 1, 2009	April design Advertising	Implement advertising
Posters	Ian Gebhart	Apr 29, 2009	April design Poster	Place posters around selected areas

8. Marketing Controls

We will evaluate and monitor our marketing plan by measuring customer acquisition and retention. Through out our starting years we will comprise a list of all the clients we do business and how many times. Each new business year we will compare the results of the list to measure acquisition and retention. We will focus on customer retention our first year by following up after the completed project, by asking our clients to fill out a survey to evaluate our performance. The survey will ask about the quality of the project, if the project was completed efficiently, and if the project was produced to the clients desired outcome.

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