Final Report: Sweet Twist of Fate Case Study

Meghan Robins, Sweet Twist of Fate Owner

2358 Briargrove Circle

Oakville, Ontario

L6M 5A3

Instructor: Mandeep Malik

COMM 3MC3

Group 15-07

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Last Name, First Name	Student Number
Carey, Melissa	0855417
Moore, Jason	0750042
Sheridan, Matthew	0750604
Taiyab, Terri	0564194

Executive Summary

Sweet Twist of Fate is a home run bakery offering a wide variety of homemade desserts for any function or special occasion. The company was founded in early 2007 by sole-proprietor and current owner Meghan Robins. Meghan Robins currently runs the business part-time alongside her job as an accountant; however, is looking eventually grow it into a full time job.

A full marketing audit has revealed the products to be of above average quality while finding their price to be 100-200% below average. Currently the business is run from Meghan Robin's home in Oakville, Ontario. The promotional efforts of Sweet Twist of Fate have been very limited to date.

The business has failed to generate sufficient profits to meet the owner's expectations. Owner Meghan Robins' requires that the business generate annual profits of \$56,000 in order to consider the business a success. Operational inefficiencies and lack of promotional activities are the cause of this businesses failure to meet its goals.

An examination of the strengths and weaknesses of Sweet Twist of Fate found the strengths of the business to be mass customization as well an annual breast cancer cookie sale. The weaknesses of the business are its quote based pricing structure, lack of promotional activities and small production facilities.

External research surrounding the industry has identified modest growth opportunities for businesses which are able to successfully exploit niche markets. Additional opportunities lie within the introduction of healthy, whole grain product lines and the use of pre-mixed dough. Threats identified within the industry include low margins and the unstable price of key commodities.

The recommendation is for Sweet Twist of Fate to adjust their target market to cater towards the B2B segment. This will be accomplished though bulk pricing, intensified promotion, the use of pre-mixed dough as well as implementation of E-commerce functionality. By selling goods to small non-franchised restaurants and cafes, Meghan will be able to easily scale the size of her business and keep fixed costs low until she has the capital required to open a storefront. This revised promotional campaign addresses the business's weaknesses and will allow Sweet Twist of Fate to reach it goals within the next three years.

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Company Introduction

Sweet Twist of Fate (STOF) is a home run bakery offering a wide variety of homemade desserts for any function or special occasion. This bakery falls under the classification Retail Bakeries (not for immediate consumption) under the NAICS code 311811 (Stats Canada 2007) and Retail Bakeries - Baking and Selling under the SIC code 5426 (Standard Industrial Classification Manual 1986). Meghan Robins, a CMA by profession, is the sole proprietor of the business, running it on a part-time basis alongside her full-time job at Maple Leaf Food Inc. She currently performs all operations from her family residence in Oakville, Ontario. Meghan obtained a basic culinary diploma from George Brown College, and also attended supplementary cake decorating and baking/pastry classes. Meghan then launched SToF in February 2007.

As a sole operator and owner of SToF, Meghan occasionally receives unpaid help from a close friend and her sister during her annual Breast Cancer Cookie Sale. This sale runs every October and half of the revenue is donated to the Breast Cancer Foundation. In addition to the cookie sale, from late 2007 to early 2008, SToF sold a line of desserts to a restaurant downtown Toronto called Wish. A review of the restaurant written by Metro Toronto Newspaper highlighted positive aspects about Meghan's desserts and can be found in Appendix A. This was SToF's first unofficial review. Meghan also sold breakfast trays to small businesses in Mississauga and Oakville around the same time. From January 2010 through July 2010, Meghan made the decision to slow down the operations of SToF, however, she is currently looking at increasing production once again. Meghan's goal is to increase SToF's productivity and

profitability by 200% to 300% by 2012. By 2014, Meghan would like SToF to generate enough revenue so that SToF becomes a full time business for Meghan.

Marketing Audit

Product

When first established, SToF only produced specialty cakes for large events. Now SToF has expanded to produce a complete line of high quality homemade baked goods of all different varieties and flavors. Meghan's baked goods can be divided into two main categories; fully customized orders and à la Carte holiday/fundraiser products. Within the customized products, Meghan's most popular choices are cakes, cupcakes, cookies, muffins and pies which can be seen in Appendix B. Meghan also has the capability to produce breads and breakfast trays for businesses however these are amongst her worst selling products. Each of these products can be made in any flavor or style that the customer desires but currently her most popular flavors are chocolate and vanilla.

Meghan also has an annual Christmas product line that contains pumpkin cheesecake, apple pie, giant gingerbread men and holly cupcakes.

In addition to her free delivery on her Breast Cancer Cookie Sale, Meghan also provides a free delivery service for orders over \$50. She delivers to customers within the GTA but is willing to drive further for larger orders such as wedding cakes and restaurants.

Currently, Meghan only has the capacity to produce one large order per week due to time constraints from her full time job. In addition to this, Meghan is limited to the number of orders she can take on in the summer due to the loss of the cold storage in her garage. In the summer months she must make products closer to the delivery date and she cannot work on products well in advance.

The customer need fulfilled by SToF varies in terms of market segmentation. Her ultimate consumer segment benefits from having a superior quality product for special occasions. Customers also benefit from having a variety of customization options, allowing the customer to get exactly what they want without the hassle of creating it themselves. SToF's corporate customers benefit from her products by having the ability to provide their employees with nutritious breakfast trays at cost effective prices. These breakfast trays are a convenient way for a corporation to recognize their employee's for their hard work. Restaurants and other resellers benefit from her products by having high quality desserts without the need to employ a permanent dessert chef.

Price

Meghan currently has implemented two pricing schemes that correspond to her à la Carte holiday/fundraiser products as well as her custom orders. Some of her most popular set priced items include; basic swirl design cupcakes starting at \$2.25, and her Breast Cancer Cookie sale where she prices a dozen ribbon shaped cookies dipped in chocolate and vanilla for \$10. A more detailed list of prices can be seen in Appendix C. Since no two custom orders are ever the same, Meghan has declined to implement a structured price scheme for this market. This allows for more tailored prices that can be based on ingredients, difficulty of baking, and turn-around time. Meghan typically sets a base price around the estimated cost of production plus 30%. In comparison to her competitors, Meghan's pricing strategy favours pricing below

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the market par. Meghan has come to realize that her low pricing scheme is cutting into her bottom line.

Promotion

Meghan typically uses three main avenues of promotion; word of mouth, social media and traditional advertising. Meghan currently spends around \$200 on her website hosting and business cards. Other than this cost, Meghan does not have a set promotional budget. This strategy helps to keep costs down while simultaneously attracting attention to the homemade qualities of her brand. Most of the word of mouth promotion is accomplished via her colleagues at her full time job and with her friends and family. Word of mouth has also spread about her very successful, annual Breast Cancer Cookie Sale that runs each October. Meghan also uses her website; www.sweettwistoffate.com (Appendix D) and her business' Facebook profile, which has around 55 users (Appendix E) to advertise to potential customers. Additionally, Meghan has a list of over 200 email addresses from her past customers. Meghan uses this list to send out occasional e-flyers that outline current seasonal promotions and charity cookie sales as seen in Appendix F. Meghan has had this unstructured promotional scheme for a while, but has recently implemented some promotional activities.

Place

Meghan currently produces and sells her baked goods from her home located at Postmaster Drive and Dundas Street West, Oakville, Ontario. Since this is her family home, simple orders are placed via email, Facebook and over the phone for privacy purposes. Meghan can be reached by phone during the hours of 12pm to 2pm and after 5pm on weekdays and at any time on the weekends. For more complex orders like wedding cakes, an in person consultation is arranged to make sure the customers' requests are accurately and adequately met. Meghan also provides a free delivery service to customers around the GTA. A map outlining the location of Meghan's home (blue cross) as well as competitors in the west side of the GTA (light red dots) can be seen in Appendix G.

Current Target Market

Meghan currently sells SToF products to businesses and ultimate consumers. Within the industry, people that are between 35 and 54 spend more on cakes and cupcakes than any other age group. Meghan's sales originated from friends and family and through word of mouth has expanded to include referrals. Eventually her sales grew as she became associated with smaller offices, restaurants as well as to ultimate consumers. Meghan works with small local offices that are generally interested in breakfast trays and other desserts. Meghan has targeted restaurants that are interested in providing desserts to customers. These restaurants are typically sit-down restaurants that are upper scale with elaborate menus.

Meghan's ultimate consumers are married couples--prominently new mothers that are between 25 and 45. They have a higher disposable income because consumers with a lower income range would purchase desserts from grocery store bakeries. Meghan's current customers tend to prefer trendy, modern desserts to traditional ones. SToF's customers come from the Greater Toronto Area, however, the two most popular cities where her sales originate from are Burlington and Toronto.

Current Positioning

Pastel colours are the most prominent within SToF's branding style as seen in the company logo (Appendix H, Figure-2). Pastel shades such as pink and yellow represent warmth

and relaxation, and are colours that are very familiar to her target market of mothers. Since Meghan can fulfill all of her customers' dessert needs, the warm, calming and relaxing colours are fitting because they promote an at home feeling and put the customer at ease knowing they came to the right business to purchase desserts for any occasion.

Meghan has a few aspects of SToF which help her to differentiate her business from competitors in the eyes of her prospects. She has that homemade appeal since she bakes majority of her products in her own home. This portrays to consumers the idea that she has original recipes. SToF is also seen as a socially responsible company since it donates to the Breast Cancer Foundation annually, attracting a lot of business by her female target market.

Since Meghan does not have a complete recipe book of all of the types of cupcakes, cakes and other treats that she makes, people are able to fully customize their orders. This makes Meghan's products more distinguishable from other businesses because her customers are getting exactly what they want. Currently, Meghan provides free delivery making it convenient for her customers as well. People also like the style of Meghan's desserts, giving Meghan a lot of repeat business.

Problem Identification

Since SToF's opening, it has failed to generate sufficient profits to meet Meghan's expectations. Currently, Meghan's business operates with profits of approximately \$3000. Meghan's objective is for her business to generate sufficient profits to support her family in the coming years.

The root cause of SToF's lack of profits is seen in the company's current marketing mix combined with a number of operational inefficiencies. The marketing mix has failed to reach its target market due to the lack of a consistent brand and the omission of key information (such as business location and operating hours) throughout SToF's brochures and informational handouts. In addition, operational inefficiencies have confused customers by failing to properly identify the products and services offered by the business.

Although SToF's goals represent an 1800% increase in profit, this objective should be realistically attainable due to the current low profits, future increased economies of scale and a correction of the marketing mix.

Strengths

Meghan offers a high degree of customization of her products for her customers. This allows her to cater to a wide range of consumers that have different needs, providing customers with exactly what they want. This enhances customer loyalty to her products as well as creating repeat business.

SToF currently offers free delivery on orders that are \$50 or more throughout the Greater Toronto Area (Mississauga, Toronto, Burlington, Oakville and Hamilton). This free service is beneficial to consumers because they save time and money. Since Meghan has a lot of experience in packaging and moving her bigger products, this delivery service ensures that products will not get ruined by the time she gets to the destination. This puts the onus on Meghan if something were to happen to the products which gives her customers peace of mind knowing that their orders will get delivered safely. This service increases customer satisfaction thus generating repeat business. SToF currently holds an annual cookie sale in which all the proceeds are donated towards Breast Cancer Research. Not only is this a strength because it provides free advertising, but also because Breast Cancer is one of the more common diseases among her target market, so many of Meghan's customers have been affected by Breast Cancer through friends or family or themselves, making them more excited to donate to the cause. This sale helps to promote the business as a 'socially responsible' brand and assists in spreading the brand beyond its normal customer base though positive among word-of-mouth.

Weaknesses

SToF has applied a quote based pricing strategy which has very little structure or formal consistency associated with it. Not only has this quote based structure led to customer confusion, but also increased operating costs for the business. Historically the prices charged by SToF have been 100% - 150% below market par. Since SToF sells a product of superior quality, pricing the good below par has led to customer confusion regarding the product's perceived quality. If this is left unchecked, SToF will lose business to competitors in the area.

The business has engaged in sporadic promotional activities throughout its lifetime. Generally these promotions have failed to maintain a consistent brand identity, and are often missing key information such as a contact number and business location. If these consumers are unable to get in touch with the business in a timely manner, they will likely search out other businesses to fill their needs, further reducing SToF's sales volume. Currently SToF produces all of its goods inside Meghan's home. Due to the lack of space associated with this facility, production of orders are subject to significant delays and large orders received during the summer months are rejected all together. Customers who are unaware of these delays before ordering will likely suffer regret and talk negatively about the business to friends, leading to a decrease in sales for SToF.

SToF has poorly defined the breadth and depth of their products and services. SToF does not have a readily available product list for the customer to look through. Failing to provide clientele with sufficient decision making criteria may lead to confusion and therefore hesitation by the customer. If an unsure customer is unable to obtain enough detailed information to make a decision, it may lead them to turn away and seek out a different bakery resulting in a loss of sales.

Meghan Robins has only had four years of experience producing cakes and although competent at her trade, her skills fall short of highly experienced bakers. These bakeries are able to produce more elaborate designs and offer expertise which is beyond Meghan's qualifications. If customers become aware of this gap, it could make her products seem inferior, causing customers to purchase baked goods elsewhere.

Social/Cultural Factors

Consumers are being more educated by searching food labels for desirable and undesirable ingredients (International 2010). From a survey, 60% of consumers feel that the nutritional ratings on packages matter a great deal in their purchasing decisions (International 2010). If Meghan fails to put nutritional information on her products may see a decline in sales from health-conscious consumers.

There continues to be a prominent health trend within the baked goods industry (Facts, Fresh Baked Goods in th U.S. - August 2010 2010). Based on a survey conducted about in-store bakeries, 69% of consumers are looking for smaller portions, 54% are seeking whole grains and 42% are asking for gluten-free options (Facts, Fresh Baked Goods in th U.S. - August 2010 2010). These three trends can be seen as opportunities for bakeries within the industry. If Meghan offers smaller portions, whole grains and gluten-free options she will see an increase in sales.

The value of Internet retail sales is expected to increase dramatically, from C\$2.7 billion in 2010 to C\$3.9 billion in 2015 (International 2010). In 2009, the Canadian Internet Use Survey stated that 39% of Canadians 16 years and up used the Internet to place 95 million orders, compared to 35% and 70 million orders in 2007 (International 2010). With this trend, there is an opportunity for Meghan to increase website visibility to consumers, which would increase overall revenue and lower costs for businesses.

Recently, there has been a heavy emphasis on the reliable flavours - vanilla and chocolate that will dominate in 2011 (Facts, Snack and Dessert Trends in the U.S. Foodservice Market - October 2010 2010). Consumers are more conservative and enjoy their favorite comfort foods like ice cream, pies and cakes in more traditional flavours (Facts, Snack and Dessert Trends in the U.S. Foodservice Market - October 2010 2010). In a recent survey, it was stated that 46% of consumers are trying fewer new products (Facts, Snack and Dessert Trends in the U.S. Foodservice Market - October 2010 2010). There may be a decline in sales of the more exotic products so Meghan should focus her sales and time on the more conservative flavours.

Demographic Trends

The best customers for cakes and cupcakes include householders from 35-54 who spend 14% more on cakes and cupcakes than the average consumer (New Strategist Publication Inc. 2009). Additionally, married couples with school-aged children spend 45-58% more than the average household on cakes and cupcakes (New Strategist Publication Inc. 2009). This knowledge of best customers can be posed as an opportunity to bakeries that sell cupcakes and cakes because it will be much easier to direct promotions towards these niches rather than mass advertising to populations that do not regularly buy these desserts.

Average household spending on cakes and cupcakes should continue to decline since baby boomers' children are moving out, causing household sizes to shrink (New Strategist Publication Inc. 2009). This may pose as a threat to businesses within the baked goods industry because sales of these desserts will decline, resulting in less revenue for companies to put back in their business towards other areas like promotion.

Economic and Business Conditions

Currently the barriers to entry in the bakery industry are low and are expected to stay low for the foreseeable future. (Kopylovsky 2010) This is an obvious opportunity for an entrepreneur like Meghan, who is just starting to grow her business. A low barrier to entry can allow a bakery like SToF to enter the market and quickly find their niche. A particular stumbling point for small bakeries is the high initial capital investment in commercial kitchen appliances and storefront. With the proper magnitude and allocation of initial funding it should be relatively easy to break into this market.

According to an Industry report on the production of bread products in the United States, the domestic price of flour is a major driver for the industry and heavily affects the profitability of firms in this sector. (Kopylovsky 2010) Other inputs into the bread product industry such as: milk, butter, eggs and sugar are also strongly correlated with sector profits. (Kopylovsky 2010) Even though experts believe the price of wheat is expected to fall in the next few years, (Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food 2011) currently every input into the bread production process has been increasing in price in Canada over the last 15 years as seen in the graphs below and in appendix I. (S. Canada 2011)These increased prices are a definite threat to Meghan's bakery because they can drastically reduce profit margins. This threat is compounded when Meghan's unstructured pricing scheme is taken to account, that errs on the low side of price estimates. If Meghan is going to be successful with SToF, she must factor these increasing prices into a more structured and profitable pricing scheme.

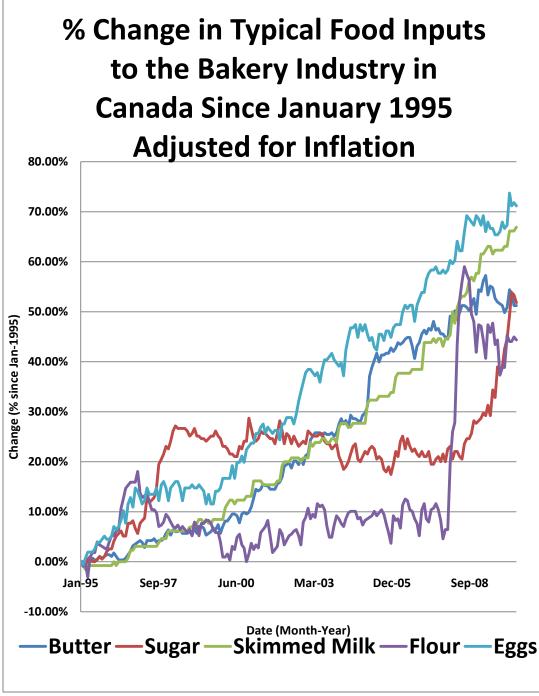


Figure 1: Key Industry Commodity Prices

Political and Legal Issues

Health Canada has released an IMA allowing the voluntary fortification of bakery

products with Vitamin D to assist in improving consumer health. They also plan to amend the

Food and Drug Regulations to reflect this (The Baking Association of Canada 2011). By enriching their baked goods with vitamin D bakeries have the ability to cater to the growing health conscious consumer market and exploit a number of niche growth opportunities (Kopylovsky 2010), thus leading to a potential increase in revenue.

Technological Issues

A new technology that has recently become available to the small bakery industry is premixed dough (Kopylovsky 2010). The premixed dough product is a mixture of flour, baking powder, salt and sugar that is accurately measured and mixed in the correct proportions (Kopylovsky 2010). Since this mixture does not contain any of the wet ingredients such as eggs, oil and milk the shelf life of this product can be up to one year (Kopylovsky 2010). The benefits of this product for small bakeries are quite large and include increased inventory economies of scale as well as a substantial reduction in labor costs. This is an opportunity for SToF because it allows Meghan to buy dough supplies in bulk and reduce costs associated with inventory. This product will also help Meghan reduce the amount of time needed to produce her baked goods. This will allow for more time and resources to be allocated to growing her business as well as focusing on the creative aspects of her bakery

Another technology that is currently being leveraged by the small bakery industry is Ecommerce (Kopylovsky 2010). E-commerce allows small bakeries to focus on providing high quality baked goods to their customers while leaving sales, basic accounting and inventory management to their website. Meghan already has implemented a simple website but she can benefit immensely from upgrading this website to include E-commerce functionality. If customers could place orders online and pay for them Meghan would have to spend less time on the phone completing sales. This would provide a unique opportunity to increase productivity without having to increase the time taken from her current full time job and family.

Primary Competitors

The two primary competitors that were selected are both very similar to SToF. They are both home run bakeries, catering to the same target market, and specializing in custom desserts.

Essence Cakes

Essence Cakes is located in Brampton, ON and specializes in custom cakes and cupcakes (see appendix J for product examples). The product mix includes stand rentals, delivery and consultation. Essence Cakes also caters to many dietary restrictions such as eggless cakes, gluten free, dairy free, sugar free and vegan cakes. The company uses a quote-based pricing strategy, however does list starting prices on a per serving basis (see appendix J for price list sample). Essence Cakes offers delivery for all its products Monday through Friday from 10am through 5pm and on Saturdays from 11am through 5:30pm. Delivery is offered to Brampton, Mississauga, Woodbridge, Vaughan, Toronto, Markham, Oakville and other parts of the GTA. Customers can place orders, request quotes, and product/service related questions via an order form available on the website. It is recommended that orders are placed two weeks prior to the event, however last minute accommodations are also available. In terms of promotion, the company has a website, blog, Twitter and Facebook page with detailed information and pictures about the company as well as its products and services (see appendix J for promotion examples). The website is also connected to Amazon which allows customers to shop for baking-related products through a trusted E-commerce business, straight through the company's website.

One of the biggest strengths Essence Cakes and a threat to SToF is catering to different dietary restrictions. Due to the fact that many bakeries like SToF do not cater to many restrictions, it allows Essence Cakes to expand its target market and often take away sales from other bakeries like SToF. Another strength of the company is its connection with Amazon. Being associated with a well-recognized E-business makes Essence Cakes more reputable.

One weakness of Essence Cakes is its lack of phone contact available to customers. Eliminating phone contact from the initial entry point might suggest that the company is impersonal and may turn customers away if they are unable to speak to someone right away.

Kathy Dvorski

This primary competitor is also located in Oakville, ON. Kathy's product mix includes cakes, cupcakes, cookies, cake toppers, sugar arts and delivery (see appendix K for product examples). All of Kathy's products are based on custom orders and she also uses a quote-based pricing strategy. No prices are available to customers until initial contact. Kathy delivers to the GTA – as far as 300km outside of Toronto. The minimum time required to place an order is a week and she is willing to accommodate last minute orders if her schedule allows her to do so. Orders can be placed via her website, email, phone and Facebook. She also has a website, a Facebook and twitter page and a blog (see appendix K for promotion examples).

Kathy's major strength is the minimum time required to place an order. This short time allows for increased revenues because many specialty bakeries like SToF that require at least two weeks for order placement may turn away these late orders. Orders therefore maybe turned into Kathy's hands because she is accommodating. It also helps build a reliable view of the company for its current and prospective customers.

Kathy's promotional efforts are also considered a strength since a lot of value is placed on providing customers with detailed company information. Keeping customers informed and up to date with the company's current status allows her to create a stronger relationship with her customers, allowing the company to create repeat customers and easily attract first time customers, thus increasing revenue.

Kathy's delivery options may be a weakness to the company because the distance she is covering is large. Customers may not want to place orders to far from their location since road and weather conditions may cause delay in delivery times thus failing to build a trusting relationship with customers living at a distance.

Secondary Competitor

SToF's secondary competitors are comprised of bakeries located in grocery stores. These bakeries typically sell cupcakes, cakes, cakelets, pies, tarts, breads and muffins. The product mix also includes a basic consultation service free of charge. Bakeries in grocery stores price their products lower than specialty bakeries like SToF. For example cakes on average are priced between \$19.99-\$49.99 (see appendix L for more detailed prices). Customers that are price conscious and looking for products similar to specialty bakeries but for a lower price are more likely to visit a grocery store bakery. Most grocery stores are located close to residential areas, making them easily accessible to customers. Many of these bakeries are open the same hours as the grocery stores. Association with a grocery store is a major promotional tool in itself for bakeries.

Location of grocery stores is a major strength and thus a threat to SToF. Being close to residential areas offers customers a lot of convenience and also saves them time in their one stop shopping trip where as SToF maybe out of their way and schedule. Timing is also a critical decision making factor since desserts are available for longer hours, thus catering to different customer's schedules.

Since bakeries are associated with well-recognized grocery stores, it poses as a threat to SToF. If customers are already shopping there, the trust and reliability factor is already created, something that SToF can only achieve in time with repeat business.

The biggest weakness for bakeries comes from the lack of creativity of the products offered. Most of these bakeries do not have trendy and customized cakes which results in a revenue loss for customers that are looking for these more extravagant cakes.

Objectives:

For Meghan to be able meet her goal of supporting her family she will need to raise annual profits to \$15,000 by October 2013 and eventually raise profits to \$56,000 in time to meet SToF's final goal in April 2014. The success of any strategy will be determined by its ability to meet the above goals in a timely manner. During the implementation period time will be taken to review the business' progress thus far and make sure that steps have been taken to meet these goals.

Strategy Alternatives and Recommendations

Business Alternative

Target Market

Adjusting SToF's target market to cater to other businesses such as restaurants and coffee shops in the GTA will provide Meghan with a steady source of business, allowing her to focus on her core competency, baking. These businesses will likely be non-franchised, small to medium in size, with a desire to employ a skilled dessert chef that they do not currently have.

Product

When engaging in B2B sales with a restaurant, SToF will need to be able to cater to a wide range of dietary restrictions. These restrictions will come as a result of the demands of the restaurant's clientele, including nut-free, gluten free and low-calorie products. Although these products may not always be in production when contacting a business, it will be stated that these products are available upon request.

In order to reduce production time and save on possible additional labor costs, Meghan will invest in pre-mixed dough. The prices for pre-mixed dough can be found in Appendix M.

Meghan should continue to enhance her skills by taking additional baking and dessert classes to make sure she is up to par with her competition. To continue her classes at George Brown College, Meghan will need to invest in additional classes starting at a cost of \$329.

Price

Initially Meghan must organize her pricing strategy so that it accurately reflects the value of her products. Since these prices will be used for businesses they are only rough estimates and large orders would be worked out on a more individual quote basis. Large orders over \$500/wk would also receive a bulk discount of 15%. Any orders that are much larger than \$500 would be discounted on a discretionary basis. Some of these prices are fondant-frosted cakes from \$4.00 per serving and a dozen standard cupcakes from \$18. A more detailed price list can be seen in Appendix N.

Meghan must also retool her delivery pricing scheme. She should base delivery prices on distance and current gas prices. This will ensure that her delivery costs do not cut into her already thin margins.

Promotion

In order to create a positive and professional image in the B2B sector, Meghan will be required to create portfolios showcasing her products and services. These portfolios will be provided to the businesses she is targeting and will include a basic history of her business, product list and pictures of desserts she is able to provide, starting prices, nutritional information and testimonials from past customers. Cost for portfolios are budgeted at \$400 per year for 60 portfolios (Staples 2011).

Meghan already has a blog geared towards baking and she needs to connect her blog to her business. Her blog will provide businesses with consumer insight about upcoming trends within the industry. This will strengthen the relationship between Meghan and her customers. Meghan also needs to streamline her website and make it more business-friendly. Some of the important information she needs to include on her website is her location, product and service details and a basic price list.

It is likely that a restaurant will wish to engage in a straight re-buy scenario through which they will buy the same product as they have previously with minor modifications. In order to facilitate this process, Meghan should setup an e-commerce web presence. This will minimize the time spent by both parties and allow Meghan to focus her efforts on baking. This presence will ensure there is no miscommunication during the re-ordering process. In addition, Meghan will have the ability to electronically track all of her inventory and automate the ordering of necessary raw materials. Meghan can easily setup osCommerce via Go Daddy's one-click service for no charge on top of their current ISP plan (Go Daddy 2011).

Place

Meghan currently does not have a proper storage facility for her products. She uses her family fridge to store the products and her garage in the winter. This leads to reduced orders for the company during summer months since her storage space decreases from the garage to just her fridge. In order to effectively facilitate large orders year round, Meghan will need to invest in a larger refrigerating space for her business. She will require a number of fridges to increase her capacity to a sufficient level, this will cost approximately \$800 at a price of \$400 per fridge (Leon's 2011). SToF will require a facility where Meghan bakes products, as well as bringing business owners to sample the products prior to their purchase. This facility will require a storage unit to hold a large amount of raw materials to create the products and finished goods waiting to be delivered. This production facility would ideally be located within a low-level industrial park in the GTA in order to cut costs and maximize available production space.

Pros

Targeting a specific market such as restaurants and cafes reduces the cost and increases efficiency of promotion. Catering to restaurants and cafes will result in a steady source of reliable income since these businesses place orders on a constant basis. Producing large quantities of products will also increase the economies of scale since it reduces the average cost of production for Meghan. Furthermore, low fixed costs also results in high scalability since she can increase and decrease production as she pleases. This is because Meghan has expressed that she will like to keep her full time job until the business is stable.

Cons

Since catering to businesses will require selling large quantities, offering bulk discount will result in lower profit margins. It will also lead to less business visibility due to the fact that a store front will be located in a warehouse. Less visibility of the business is also because restaurants will not be promoting the products under SToF's name. Also, having to produce large quantities of desserts will require Meghan to invest in additional storage space which increases her initial capital investment.

Consumer Alternative

Target Market

The knowledge about the specific market niche allows us to define a marketing plan to specifically target these people. To target married couples with children, posters will be put up in grocery stores, day cares, arenas, swimming pools and community centers. Additionally, since married couples typically have hectic lives, Meghan will accommodate for these busy schedules Meghan will be open late one night a week and offer delivery in the evening hours. Meghan will have the option of having later hours at least one night a week when necessary, giving her target market the ability to come in for consultations or possibly pick up a cake for the day before at this more convenient time.

Product

Industry forecasts conducted by IBIS world state that as the number of health conscious consumers in the marketplace increase, they will be the main driving factor for growth within the breads and baking sector (Kopylovsky 2010). Meghan should make nutritional information readily available to her clients and introduce an entire line of whole grain and enriched bread products. These products are a subset of the breads and pastries currently offered by SToF and would be served alongside normal product lines. In addition, SToF will benefit by capitalizing on the recent decision by Health Canada to allow the voluntary fortification of baked products with Vitamin D (The Baking Association of Canada 2011). Due to the fact that this fortification process has recently been approved there is limited data to support this suggestion; however, a number of large players within this industry expect significant growth in the sales of vitamin D enriched baked products (The Baking Association of Canada 2011).

Meghan needs to adjust her product line to promote more simple flavours. In consideration of the recent social trend for traditional flavours, Meghan should focus her attention on chocolate and vanilla rather than exotic ones. This will result in Meghan not wasting time producing products that consumers are not interested in.

As recommend for the previous alternative, Meghan should continue to take additional baking classes to enhance her skills.

Price

Meghan needs to have a more structured pricing scheme. She needs to raise her prices in order to protect herself from heavy fluctuations in commodity prices. This new pricing scheme involves fondant-frosted cakes from \$6.00 per serving and standard cupcakes from \$2.50 each, more prices can be found in appendix O.

Meghan must also retool her delivery pricing scheme. She should base delivery prices on distance and current gas prices. This will ensure that her delivery costs do not cut into her already thin margins.

Promotion

Currently SToF's website has very limited information about the company. Meghan should enhance her website visibility by updating the website with detailed information about her products and services. She can also distribute flyers in the residential areas of Oakville, Burlington and Mississauga in an effort to increase both web traffic and brand awareness. The cost of this promotional activity would be \$300 for 1500 coloured flyers annually (Staples 2011) After Meghan is fully established in a store front bakery, it would be beneficial for her to enlist herself with the popular deal website, WagJag. Having coupons and discounts available to potential customers gives them the opportunity to try out her desserts and perhaps become repeat customers. In an effort to generate repeat business and customer awareness, one potential deal SWoF could offer to consumers is if they spend \$25 and receive \$50 worth of products. WagJag will take 30% of total sales, however given only an 80% redemption rate, Meghan will get \$21 on every \$25 dollar sale.

Since Meghan is already raising money for the Breast Cancer Foundation, she should consider sponsoring an individual. By sponsoring a particular individual that is battling cancer, it is more personal and she will likely benefit from positive public relations. This is a stronger way to raise money for the Breast Cancer Foundation and it also generates more awareness for STOF.

Meghan should introduce more seasonal lines throughout the year. These lines will help SToF become more associated with seasonal holidays. When these holidays arrive, customers will order more products based on previous purchases, generating a regular occurring repeat business for SToF.

Place

In order to take on more orders in the summer time, Meghan will need to invest in a proper storage facility. Based on quality and price, a fridge suited for her needs would cost approximately \$400 (Leon's 2011).

Meghan should look into moving her business out of her home and into a store front location. Opening a store front in Downtown Oakville will allow Meghan to benefit from high pedestrian foot traffic in the area as well as increased her accessibility to customers. Opening a storefront will require a substantial financial commitment of \$28,000/year plus the one time purchase of any equipment. Using second-hand commercial equipment to estimate Meghan's setup costs, the fixed cost for her first year of business will be \$31,500.

Pros

Knowing exactly who to target is an efficient way of promotion which saves additional costs and time trying to target an undefined market. Furthermore, since ultimate consumers are increasingly becoming health conscious, it increases the current customer range and brings additional revenue to the company. Health conscious customers are also more likely to spend a little more on products catering to their dietary needs therefore increasing profitability for SToF as well. SToF's ability to cater custom desserts to different holidays will generate increased revenues from these consumers. This store front will increase visibility and provide SToF with more walk-ins, resulting in more sales.

Cons

A major drawback with this strategy is the fact that Meghan will be required to place a significant capital investment. Currently, SToF's costs of operation are fairly low. Opening a store front also involves investing in necessary baking equipment, hiring at least one additional

employee and creating a look that fits the SToF's branding position. This strategy will lead to a less flexible schedule for Meghan, as she will need to work longer hours.

Final Recommendation

In order to effectively meet Meghan's goals, strategy one should be implemented. This strategy offers a low cost alternative which is well within the current abilities of SToF.

Adjusting the target market of SToF to focus primarily on small non-franchised restaurants and coffee shops allows Meghan to apply her skills as a baker to target this high density market. By flexing her personal network, creating a bulk discount pricing model as well as applying an aggressive, low cost marketing strategy, SToF will gain an edge on its competition. This strategy is also a very scalable alternative; offering the ability to slowly increase production as other factors in Meghan's life allow for it. Due to the low fixed costs associated with this strategy, it will be profitable at all revenue levels and thus will continue to offer a steady, dependable source of income. In addition, targeting other businesses will require a low initial capital investment, keeping in-line with financial abilities of the SToF.

	Event	Timeline	Cost	Implementation Responsibility
1	Begin to work on integrating E-commerce	May 2011 –	None	Meghan Robins
	facilities into website.	September 2011		
	Take night classes at George-Brown to increase		\$395	Meghan Robins
	core competencies			
2	Develop and solidify recipes to account for use of pre-mixed dough	June 2011	None	Meghan Robins
3	Introduce low calorie and nut free products	July 2011	None	Meghan Robins
4	Organize pricing model and solidify bulk discount policy	August 2011	None	Meghan Robins

Implementation

	Implement recommended changes to website (excluding E-commerce)		\$250	
5	Purchase and organize additional storage space to insure SToF can handle larger orders	September 2011	\$800	Meghan Robins
	Create promotional media including portfolio, business fliers and business cards.		\$400	
6	Arrange meetings with personal contacts within	October	None	Meghan Robins
	target market to showcase and sell products	2011		
7	Cold call businesses within the target market for	Late	None	Meghan Robins
	a trial period of three weeks. See Appendix P for	October		
	a sample list	2011		
8	Evaluate the success of cold calling businesses in	November	None	Meghan Robins
	the area and make necessary changes	2011		
	Implement changes and continue to contact		None	Meghan Robins
	businesses within the target market			J
9	Introduce industry oriented blog.	March 2012	None	Meghan Robins
		Total:	\$1850	
10	Open an establishment in an industrial complex	April 2013	\$36,000	Meghan Robins
		Total:	\$37,850	

Controls

In order to monitor implementation and the status of her business, Meghan should invest in a basic Management Information System (MIS) database. This database can be used for inventory control, to keep record of cash inflow and outflow as well as formulate basic forecasts for her business based on sales. In addition to keeping a cash flow and inventory record, it will also allow Meghan to keep a record of customers and how they heard about her business. This will act as a good feedback mechanism, as promotional activities that are not successful will be terminated and replaced with ones that do.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the final recommendation is clearly the best course of action for Sweet Twist of Fate. This strategy will address the lack of time the owner has as well as provide the opportunity to scale the business as her financial means increase. Adjusting its target market and increasing promotion will allow Sweet Twist of Fate to reach its goals in within the three year time frame.

Appendix A: Recognition - Newspaper Article

Served with passion

Wish

Address 3 Charles St. E. Phone 416-935-0240 Lunch Mon. - Fri. 10am-5pm, Sat-Sun 10am-5pm for brunch Dinner Mon. 5-10pm, Tues. -Wed. 5-11pm, Thu. -Sat. 5pm-12am, Sun 5-10pm (open nightly until 2am for drinks) Dinner for 2 w/tax & tip \$100

By CHRIS ATCHISON Metro Toronto

Profile SISTERS RENDA AND REEMA Abdo, co-owners of Wish, are admittedly media shy when it comes time to discuss their elegant dining and drinking hotspot tucked between the buzz of the Church Wellesley Village and the constant bustle of Yonge Street.

Their philosophy is simple: Allow Wish's eclectic cuisine and progressive ambience do the PR work for them, then allow wordof-mouth to fill the restaurant's tables.

So far it would seem the approach is working. Wish provides the idyllic dining experience for anyone searching for a romantic, yet trendy spot to spend an evening over creative cocktails and succulent entrees.



Wish provides the idyllic dining experience for anyone searching for a romantic, yet trendy spot to spend an evening.

"Dinner should be comfortable and easy," Renda Abdo says. "It shouldn't be fussy, it shouldn't be formal. That's what we're about."

Wish's servers take that philosophy to heart offering precise and attentive, yet simultaneously relaxed and playful, service that only enhances the dining experience.

Chef Adam Baxter has crafted a menu of well-interpreted mainstays such as Wish's root vegetable risotto — rich enough to be tantalizing, but still light enough to allow the flavour of the seasonal veggies to resonate with each bite.

Other highlights include the beef tenderloin with red wine jus and extraordinarily creamy mash, seafood linguine with an assortment of shellfish, as well as the appetizer-sized scallops with smoked bacon, sweet potato and vanilla butter.

The desserts are equally tempting – particularly the pumpkin cheesecake or the apple and pear tart with vanilla ice cream.

But as the Abdo sisters stress, a good meal should be well-executed without seeming like it was created in a lab by a gastro-scientist.

Wish is an accessible and reasonably priced eatery with a welcoming patio — one of the most popular in the area during summer months — that's not only popular with those in-the-know, but anyone who understands the value of freshly and competently prepared food, presented with minimalist flair and served with passion.

Metro Weekend: Feb. 15-18, 2008

Appendix B: Products









Appendix C: Sample Price List

Cupcakes

• Starting from \$2.25 for a basic swirl cupcake.

Breast Cancer Cookie Sale:

- 12 Ribbon shaped cookies half chocolate and half vanilla for \$10.
- 12 Cookies dipped in pink chocolate for \$15.

Christmas Line:

- Pumpkin swirl cheesecake \$35
- Irish Cream Chocolate Cheesecake \$35 (with ganache topping \$40)
- Apple Crumble Pie \$12
- Pecan or Chocolate Pecan Pie \$15
- Pumpkin cupcakes with cream cheese icing \$2.25/cupcake
- Holly cupcakes (custom flavor) \$2.25/cupcake
- Giant Gingerbread with name (7 inches) \$3.50

Cakes covered with fondant:

- 10 inch round \$55-70
- 12 inch round \$75-85
- 10 inch sq \$75-85
- 13x9 inch cake \$60-70
- 3 Tiered cake \$300-330

Appendix D: Sweet Twist of Fate Website

SWEET TWIST OF FATE



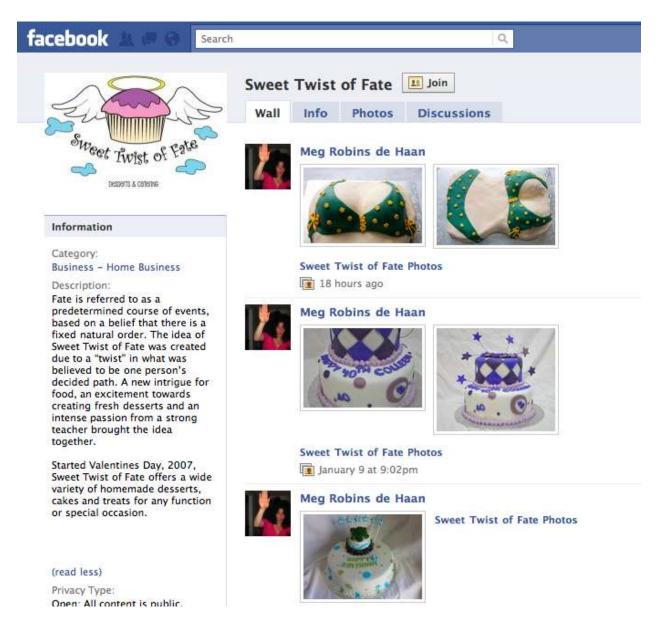
Home Photo Gallery Breast Cancer Cookie Sale Holiday Contact Info

Welcome to Sweet Twist of Fate!

Sweet Twist of Fate was started on Valentines Day, 2007 out of one person's passion to deliver, create and enjoy beautiful and delicious desserts.

If you are looking for a simple and chic wedding cake, a funky set of cupcakes for a special birthday event or yummy cookies, pies & treats for a office function or holiday dinner, then you have come to the right place.

If you have any questions about anything you see or have any inquires about creating something new feel free to contact me, I would be happy to add a "Sweet Twist" to your special event.



Appendix E: Sweet Twist of Fate Facebook Group

Appendix F: Breast Cancer Cookie Sale Flyer



3rd annual breast cancer cookie sale!



THIS YEAF WE ARE OFFERING THE CHOICE OF SUGAR DIPPED OF CHOCOLATE DIPPED COOKIES. WITH YOUF OFDER WILL ALSO RECEIVE A PINK FIBBON AND BREAST CANCER INFORMATION PAMPHLET.

Sugar Dipped - 12 for \$10

Chocolete Dipped - 12 for \$15

6 venille/6 chocolete cookies unless otherwise esked.

50% OF ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO THE CANADIAN BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION

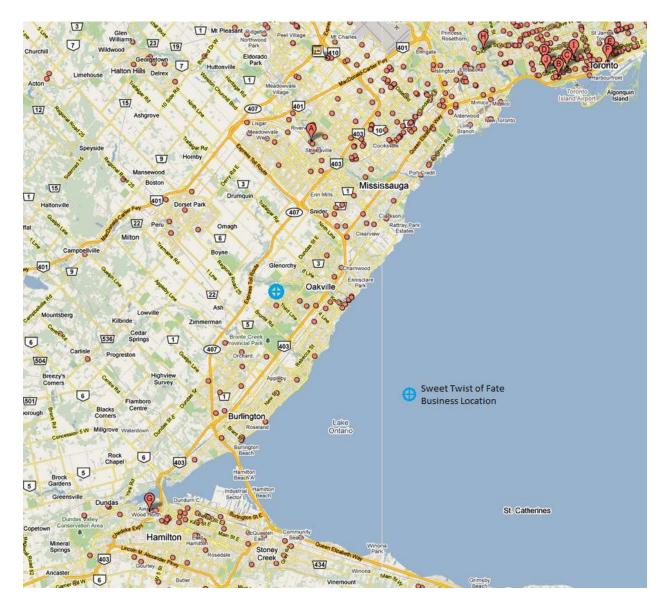
OFDERS CAN BE MADE FROM SEPT 15TH TO OCT 31ST. DELIVERIES WILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF FECEIVING YOUR OFDER.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THIS GREAT CAUSE, PLEASE CONTACT MEG FOBINS @ <u>SWEETTWISTOFFATE@GMAIL.COM</u> OF CALL 289-242-8393

Cash/Cheque accepted



Appendix G: Map of GTA



Appendix H: Business Card and Company Logo

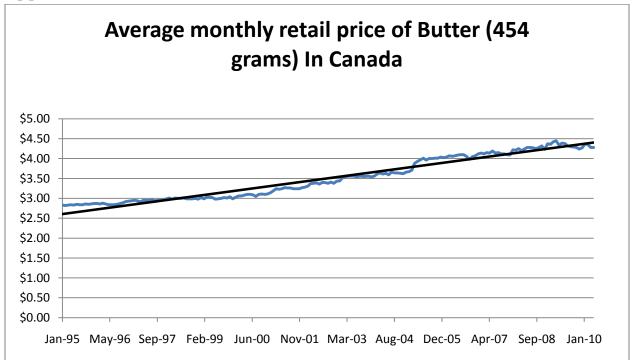


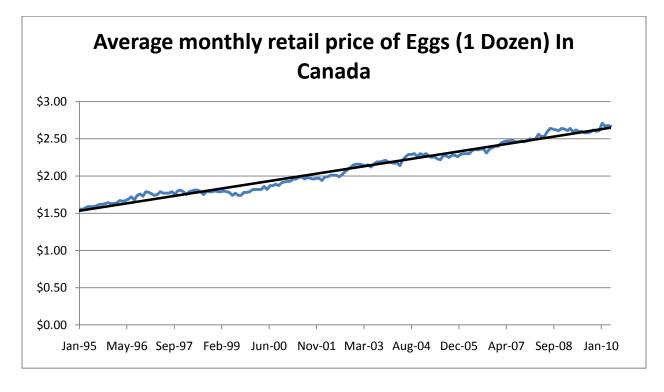
289-242-8393 SWEETTWISTOFF8TE/#EM8IL.COM WWW.SWEETTWISTOFF87E.COM

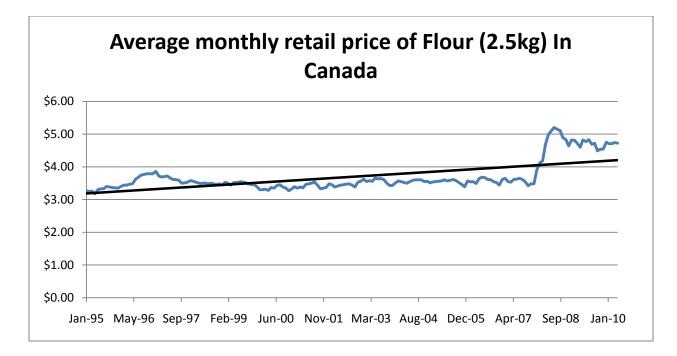


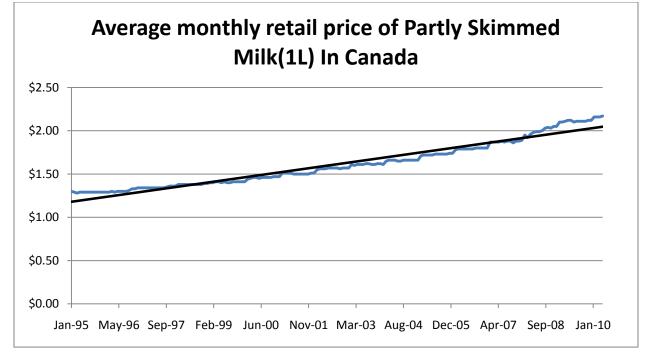
DESSERTS & CATERING

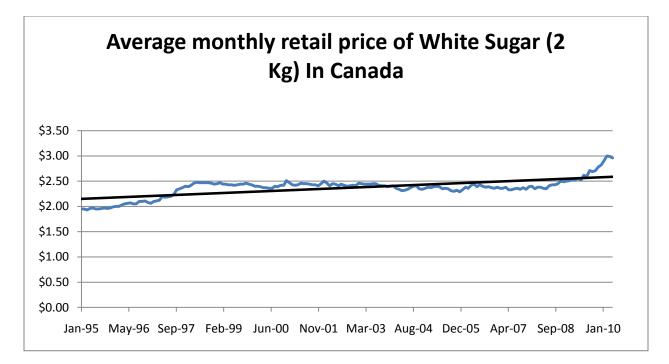
Appendix I: Canadian Food Prices











Prices for these items are collected as part of the regular monthly CPI survey. Prices for the selected food, household supply and personal care items are observed in food supermarkets and drug stores, while prices for cigarettes are collected in supermarkets, department stores, drug stores and tobacco shops. Prices for regular unleaded self-serve gasoline are collected at gas stations. Average city prices for each commodity are weighted by the population of cities to calculate each commodity's Canada average retail price. For regular unleaded self-serve gasoline, average city prices are weighted by provincial volume supplied and cities' population to calculate the Canada average retail price. Commodities that are priced can vary in quality between outlets or between cities. Brands and outlets can also vary from month to month. Therefore, average prices may not necessarily be fully comparable from one month to another and should not be used as an appropriate measure of pure price change through time. A matched commodity and outlet sample is used for the CPI to determine the pure price movement of commodities through time.

Source:

```
Canada, Statistics. Average retail prices for food and other selected items, monthly (Table 326-
0012). January 1st, 2011. http://estat.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-
win/cnsmcgi.pgm?regtkt=&C2Sub=&ARRAYID=3260012&C2DB=EST&VEC=&HILITE=FOO
D+PRICES&LANG=E&SrchVer=&ChunkSize=50&SDDSLOC=//www.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-
bmdi/*-
eng.htm&ROOTDIR=ESTAT/&RESULTTEMPLATE=ESTAT/CII_PICK&ARRAY_PICK=1&SDDSI
D=&S (accessed March 16, 2011).
```

Appendix J: Primary Competitor: Essence Cakes

Product Examples







Essence Cakes price list:

Buttercream-frosted Cakes from \$5.00/serving

Fondant-frosted Cakes from \$6.00/serving

Standard Cupcakes from \$24/doz

Mini Cupcakes from \$12/doz

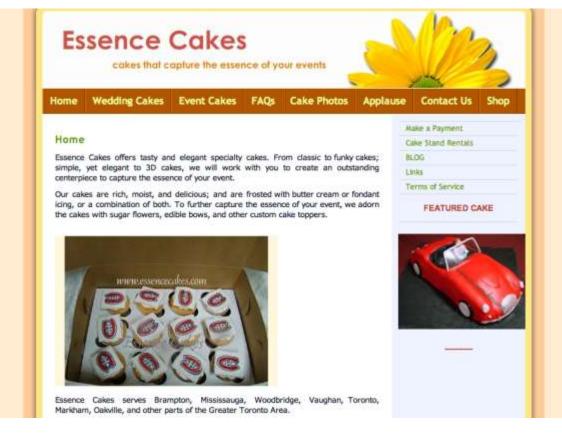
Mini Cakes from \$8.00 each

Tiered Mini Cakes from \$12 each

3D Cakes from \$8/serving, minimum order is \$150.

3D CAR Cakes from \$200

Essence Cakes Promotional Examples:





Welcome to Essence of Cakes, the Essence Cakes blog. Here, we shop talk and speak cake. We share stories of our cake orders with you, and keep you abreast of what is happening over here. Please feel free to send us your comments. Interested in our cakes? Contact Us.

Maray, and

Elmo and Jungle Elephant Cake

When we received a request for this cake for a little guy who was turning one, and told about his favourite TV characters, we made a suggestion to incorporate both on his cake. The little guy loves Elmo (who doesn't) and the jungle elephant from Elepant song. Here is what we did.



Flickr Photostream



9

facebook

Info

Photos



Essence Cakes	+1 Add as Friend
🟟 Lives in Brampton, Ontario	

Basic Information

Search

About Essence	Essence Cakes is located in Brampton ON. We provide custom cakes for all occasions. We also offer novelty, 3D or sculpted cakes. Contact us for cakes that capture the essence of your events.
	Essence Cakes is located in Brampton ON. Our focus is on custom cakes to capture the essence of your events.
Contact Inf	ormation

V

Website	http://www.essencecakes.com	
Facebook	facebook.com/essenceofcakes	

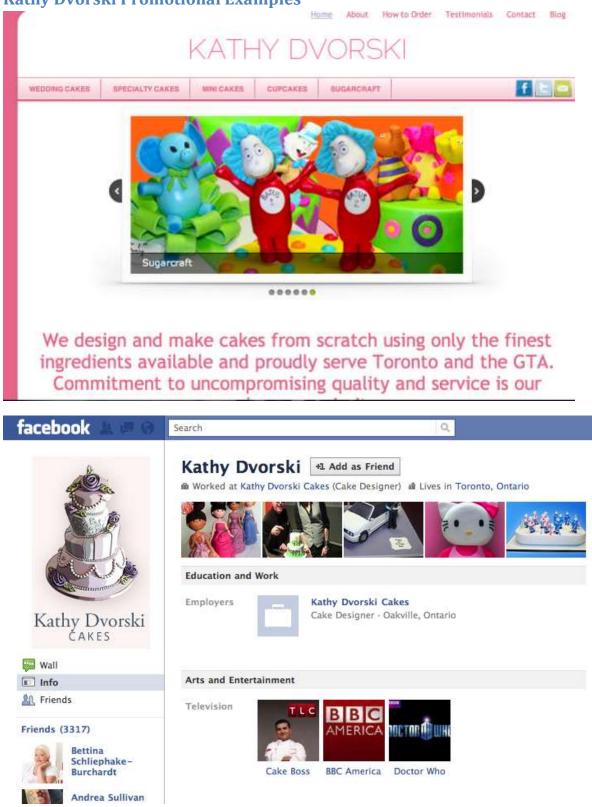
Create Blog

Appendix K: Primary Competitor: Kathy Dvorski

Product Examples



Kathy Dvorski Promotional Examples



Appendix L: Secondary Competitor Price List

Source: From Local Grocery Stores

Cakes: from \$19.99 - \$49.99 Cupakes: from \$1.20 per cupcake Dozen cupcakes: from \$7.99 Mini cupcakes (a dozen): from \$2.99 Tarts: from \$1.50 Muffins: from \$5.99 (for 6 muffins)

Appendix M: Pre-Mixed Dough Prices

Source: http://www.foodservicedirect.com General Mills Pillsbury Bakers Plus German Chocolate Cake Mix 50 Pound \$93.35 Mix Bakers Plus Devils Food Cake 50 Pound \$102.35 Bakers Plus Brownie Mix 50 Pound \$77.35 Mix Bakers Plus White Cake

\$92.35

Appendix N: Business Alternative: Pricing

Buttercream-frosted Cakes from \$3.50/serving Fondant-frosted Cakes from \$4.00/serving Standard Cupcakes from \$18/doz Mini Cupcakes from \$9/doz Mini Cakes from \$4.00 each Muffins from \$12/doz Cookies from \$6.00/doz Brownies from \$1.50/serving

Appendix O: Consumer Alternative Pricing

Buttercream-frosted Cakes from \$5.00/serving Fondant-frosted Cakes from \$6.00/serving Standard Cupcakes from \$2.50 each Mini Cupcakes from \$1.50 each Mini Cakes from \$8.00 each 3D Cakes from \$8/serving

Appendix P: Sample Target Market List

The Olive Press Restaurant 2322 Dundas Street West, Oakville, ON L6M 4J3, Canada +1 905-827-4241

Funky Thai Restaurant 2383 Dundas Street West, Oakville, ON L6M 4J3, Canada +1 905-827-1068

Peppino's Oven Itd 2015 Kingsridge Drive, Oakville, ON L6M 4Y7, Canada +1 905-469-0011

Halton Dragon Chinese Restaurant 2501 Third Line, Oakville, ON L6M 5A9, Canada +1 905-469-5511

Palermo Pub 2512 Old Bronte, Oakville, ON L6M 4J3, Canada +1 905-469-7552

McDonald's Restaurants 1500 Upper Middle Rd W, Oakville, ON L6M 0C2, Canada +1 905-847-6236

Williams Fresh Cafe 1500 Upper Middle Road West, Oakville, ON, Canada +1 905-825-8150 Bamboo Legend 2501 Third Line, Oakville, ON L6M 5A9, Canada +1 905-847-9887

Pizza Depot - more info » 2983 Westoak Trails Boulevard, Oakville, ON, Canada +1 905-827-9711

Il Fornello Restaurant www.ilfornello.com - 203 North Service Road West, Oakville - (905) 338-5233

Paradiso oakville.paradisorestaurant.com - 125 Lakeshore Road East, Oakville - (905) 338-1594

Jonathans Restaurant Of Oakville www.jonathansofoakville.com - 120 Thomas Street, Oakville - (905) 842-4200

Cucci Ristorante www.cucci.ca - 119 Jones Street, Oakville -(905) 469-1811

Montfort Mediterranean Cuisine Restaurant - Trafalgar www.montfortrestaurants.com - 376 Iroquois Shore Road, Oakville - (905) 845-7937

Ristorante Julia www.juliasristorante.com - 312 Lakeshore Road East, Oakville - (905) 844-7401 Moonshine Cafe The www.themoonshinecafe.com - 137 Kerr St, Oakville - (905) 844-2655

Green Bean Coffee Roasting Co The www.greenbean.ca - 210 Lakeshore Road East, Oakville - (905) 844-1286

Artisano Bakery Cafe www.artisanobakery.com - 353 Iroquois Shore Road, Oakville - (905) 339-2020

CJ's Cafe In Bronte www.cjscafeinbronte.com - 2416 Lakeshore Road West, Oakville - (905) 465-0411

The Colborne On Lakeshore maps.google.ca - 174 Lakeshore Road West, Oakville - (905) 337-3766 Williams Fresh Cafe www.williamsfreshcafe.com - 2050 Appleby Line, Burlington - (905) 319-0968

Coffee Culture Cafe & Eatery www.coffeeculture.ca - 390 Brant Street, Burlington - (905) 637-2633 Kindfood www.kindfood.com - 399 John Street, Burlington - (905) 637-2700

Bocco Caffé Ristorante and Catering www.bococaffe.com - 3245 Harvester Road, Burlington - (905) 632-9299

JC's Hot Bagels - 4 reviews - Place page maps.google.ca - 3011 New St, Burlington -(905) 631-6258

Lakeshore Coffee House - Place page maps.google.ca - 2007 Lakeshore Rd, Burlington - (905) 631-1622

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