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**Ralph’s Joy of Living Marketing Strategy Plan**

**Background Overview**

Ralph’s Joy of Living has used a website, Facebook page, van, and new pictures to help with their marketing, but they did not receive the success that they planned. However, recently they are changing their website with all new pictures and adding an App. They hope that this will help them to increase their traffic since they have updated with youth oriented aspects such as the App.

**Duration of the Plan/ Review dates**

The duration of our plan varies from year to year. We created a marketing plan for the years 2013-2015. For the year 2013 the idea is simply a year-long improvement on overall advertising. This will include billboards, social media, events and other enhancing ideas. For the year 2014, there would be an increase on advertisements from the previous year. Towards the latter part of the year would be the “it’s coming campaign.” This campaign would include billboards and social media as well. The idea behind this campaign is to create hype for the year 2015. The year 2015 would be the 65th anniversary of Ralph’s Joy of Living. This year would be filled with special merchandise, events, social media campaigns, and billboards. These three years together make up our marketing plan.

**Competitive Analysis**

Ralph’s Joy of Living is a unique store that has two sides to it: the appliance side and the kitchen side. They offer prices on quality brand products i.e. GE, LG, and Maytag. Also, being family owned, the store has a friendly environment where the customer can come in and feel as though they matter. However, Ralph’s lacks in advertising. Also, the quality of the store’s website does not match the quality of the store. Some opportunities that the store has are that they could potentially use billboards as an advertising tool and that could create more traffic within the store. They could also update their website to match what the store is actually like on the inside. Another opportunity would be for them to rearrange their store to where the kitchen side of it is displayed first. Then the customers can get that homey feeling when they first walk into the store. One other opportunity that this store has is its location; being very close to two colleges, it has the opportunity to reach out to these students and even the parents to get loyal customers. The threats that this store has would be for another appliance store, like Lowes, to take the customers of Ralph’s Joy of Living because they have better prices or for Ralph’s to not have the appropriate amount of advertising to reach out to potential customers.

**Advertising Goal**

The main goal of Ralph’s Joy of Living is to simply get more people to come inside of the store. There is confidence that once a person enters the store he or she will purchase something. For every one person that enters the store, he or she adds pass-along value to Ralph’s Joy of Living. The goal is to convince people to come and “experience the joy” that Ralph’s has to offer. A reachable goal for Ralph’s Joy of Living is by 2015 increase traffic by 70%. We set the mark so high so that the focus will be about gaining more loyal customers.

**Recommended Advertising Activities**

A few recommendations on advertising activities go as follows: billboard and radio. About 84.8% of the United States population listens to the radio at some point in their day. Although this doesn’t guarantee that they will want to go straight to Ralph’s Joy of Living at that very second, it does inform them of the store at that moment or later on in the day. If Ralph’s Joy of Living can come up with a catchy jingle that would definitely keep the store in potential customers’ minds. Also a billboard advertisement in the city or outskirts of Tiffin, Ohio, would really be effective. A billboard ad location with Lamar Advertising in Tiffin is one of the options that we think will benefit Ralph’s Joy of Living greatly.

**Optional, or Conditional, Advertising Activities**

We believe that mail can be a very effective way of getting new customers. Occasionally sending out an advertisement to the residents of Tiffin and Fostoria could possibly be the nudge that the customers need to get to the store. Sending a small 15% off coupon or even higher would definitely get the customers to the store. Everyone loves a sale and there is nothing better than being able to catch the sale before it ends. Online sales could skyrocket. Many people are too busy to go out to the store to buy things; sometimes it is better for them with coupons because they know exactly what they want. Online shopping could also set this company apart from the others. Finally, sending brochures or magazine subscriptions in the mail could help. Eastbay magazine was very successful because of their magazines. This is senior friendly, like online shopping is young adult friendly, because many older people are not familiar with using such technology which can appeal to the older generation of Ralph’s Joy of Living’s target market.

**Non-advertising and Creative Media Options**

Our non-advertising plan includes a special Tiffin University wine tasting event during Tiffin Universities’ freshman weekend. This event would be specifically geared to the parents of the incoming freshmen. On average two-thirds to half of the freshman incoming class participate in freshman weekend. That is a staggering number of students and parents. This event could provide the parents with a way to experience one of the jewels of Tiffin Ohio. This would be scheduled for the years 2013 and 2014. The year 2015 would consist of huge hands on BBQ bash. Amazing food with an opportunity for participants to use specific products sold in the store with possibly a wine tasting even as well. The idea behind this is to celebrate Ralph’s 65th anniversary while also allowing people to create a personal connection with the store and its products.

**Description of Target Markets/ Audiences**

As a group we have concluded that a generous target audience for Ralph would start at newlyweds and increase in age from there. The reason we think this target audience would start with newlyweds is because that is the stage where you begin to settle down and start buying appliances and kitchen items for themselves. There is no age limit from newlyweds because parents buy items for their adult children or vice versa. Anyone of any age can walk into Ralph’s and find something he or she might want to buy. His main customers come from the Tiffin area, but also the Fremont area, since there is a Fremont store as well. Ralph’s Joy of Living is a very unique store that not only belongs in one market but two markets because of the different items it sells.

**Persuasive Strategy**

We believe that when you walk into Ralph’s Joy of Living you will automatically be impressed and want to buy something; the problem is that customers need the motivation to go to Ralph’s Joy of Living. With our slogan, “Experience the Joy,” the customer should expect to walk in and have a great time inside the store. This with the products and people enjoying themselves, people will want to come and see what Ralph’s Joy of Living is all about, which will bring in more traffic to the store.

**Creative Strategy**

For our creative strategy we are going to use the phrase “Experience the Joy.” This pertains to Ralph’s Joy of Living because they want all of their customers to have a great “experience” when they walk into the store. Also, we plan to use bright colors when marketing. Ralph’s Joy of Living currently uses bright colors and we do not want to change the way their marketing is right now; we just plan to enhance it by using fewer bright colors on the advertisements. Also, using fewer colors will help make the main points pop as opposed to many things in all different colors. This will help present the fun and as well as the quality of the store so the customer can expect a great “experience.”

**Research**

In researching for Ralph’s Joy of Living we have found that billboards are successful advertising tools that can help Ralph’s business get a lot of traffic. They are the 2nd source of advertising reaching 93% of Americans. There are 5.5 billion dollars being spent on advertising and of those 5.5 billion dollars 62% of that is outdoor billboards. So using a billboard would be a great asset to any business. We also researched how cookbooks can help out within business. According to frpbooks.com, cookbooks generated $159 million dollars in 2006 and that amount has increased since. The website also informed us that the average American woman owns 15 cookbooks and three out of ten women collect them. So in conclusion cookbooks are also a great way to improve traffic at Ralph’s Joy of Living as well.

**Customer Feedback**

There are so many ways you can get the customer involved with how you run your business. The customer is always right and they will tell you what you need to do in order to fulfill their shopping needs. On the website there should be an FAQ/customer service page. This would give people the opportunity to say what they think is holding the company back and what they need to improve. Also, Ralph’s Joy of Living should incorporate an online survey to be entered into a draw to win the coolest gadget of the month. With the store and the town that the store is in, being so small, many people would fill out the survey because the chance of them winning is higher than say a Wal-Mart or Lowe’s.

**Media Plan**

The main aspect of the media plan is different types of billboards. These billboards include one geared toward the products of Ralph’s Joy of Living. For example, the billboard would say: “Experience the Joy of Wine.” The second would be an “It’s coming.” This billboard would build the anticipation of the year 2015 or Ralph’s Joy of Living 65th Anniversary. The billboard would state, “Experience something 65 years in the making.” The last billboard would be used during the year 2015; the billboard would state, “Celebrate the joy of experience at Ralph’s Joy of Living’s 65th Anniversary!” All these billboards could also be printed in flyer form if desired. The media plan would also involve an increased presence in the social media game. This would consist of drawings and contests to help increase followers as well. All these aspects together create the media plan.

**Media Strategy**

The strategy behind our media plan is simply get the word out about Ralph’s Joy of Living at an affordable cost. We plan to do this by strategically placing billboards throughout Tiffin, Ohio. Billboards are one of the cheapest forms of advertisement that large amounts of people view on a regular basis. The second idea is through strategically placed flyers at registry and bridal stores across the area. Together these can provide a cheap form of advertisement.

**Budget**

In figuring a budget for Ralph’s Joy of Living we budgeted for having a barbecue bash where Ralph’s Joy of Living will rent billboards and sell customer cookbooks and t-shirts shirts as an advertising tool. The overall total estimated price for the barbecue bash would be around $2,165. This consists of: a barbecue bash which we estimate at $350, inflatables for kids which came to $300-$500 for one inflatable, cookbooks which would be $4.40 dollars for 100 books for a price of $440 dollars, and t-shirts for 110 people would be roughly $975 dollars. We’ve also estimated that in buying billboards with Lamar Advertising, the cost per month would be $465 with a $150 fee for a poster flex; however, the poster flex is only a one-time fee. We believe that money is being well spent because all of these advertising products will bring customers to Ralph’s Joy of Living.

**Evaluation**

We want to give Ralph’s Joy of Living an affordable marketing strategy. For example, people drive by billboards all the time which provides people with a reminder of Ralph’s Joy of Living with every drive-by. Also, they do not have to buy multiple billboards at once, but start with one and increase the number as time goes on in correlation with the sales. All of the advertising suggestions are to bring in traffic to the store for a major event which we planned as the 65th anniversary barbecue bash. With this event, there will be expenses, but we feel that the event will cause many people to come to Ralph’s Joy of Living, in fact, creating an increase in sales. Overall, we think that our plan will help create more loyal customers through their experience within the store. Our goal is to get more people to come to Ralph’s Joy of Living and we believe that our marketing strategy will do just that.