

Business Marketing Plan

Group 11

Nick Conti, Drew Davidoff, Brendan Deliee, Noah Rice

Executive Summary

The goal of this project is to provide a comprehensive plan to market the book *Webster the Beagle*. The marketing plan provided is divided into five distinct parts. The first part of the plan analyzes the current situation of the children's book industry. This analysis is done using two tools, a SWOT analysis, and Porter's 5 forces. Next, the plan analysis customers the book will be sold to. This section provides a clear picture of the books potential customers also offering additional unique customers that can be targeted. Having an accurate target market will make selling and marketing the book much easier. Next, the value proposition and competitive advantage are presented. When marketing the book to customers it is important to make clear why *Webster the Beagle* is the children's book customers should buy. The value proposition helps a potential buyer understand why they are buying the book. Since the book's proceeds are going to charity it is important to make this clear in all of the marketing. Part four of the marketing plan discusses KPI's and balanced scorecard. The importance of this section is that it provides a groundwork for measuring the success of the marketing plan. Using the balanced scorecard approach allows for all portions of the business to be accounted for equally. Next, the strategy for marketing the book is presented. The most important part of the strategy is the digital marketing plan. Digital marketing is essential to successful book sales. Using each part of the digital plan will increase the awareness of the book and most likely increase the sales of the book. In addition, digital marketing is a cost-effective and relatively low-effort way to market a product. Lastly we will layout our recommended allocation of the ten-thousand dollar budget. Overall, the marketing plan for *Webster the Beagle* outlines the steps need to increase the sales of the book. Understanding the children's book industry, target market, and having a comprehensive strategy help sell the book in order to benefit the charity it supports.

Situational Analysis, SWOT, and Porter's 5

Forces Analysis

Situation Analysis

External

- Economic: Consumers disposable incomes are increasing.
- Technological: The increased access to e-books makes it easier for consumers to access books.
- Cultural: Many studies about how leading to children help the child's cognitive development.
- Competitive: The children's book industry is very crowded. There is a lot of competition to get the consumers attention.
- Legal: Continued protection of copyrights will help grow the book industry

Internal

- Price: The current list price for the book is \$14.95.
- Product: Hardcover children's book
- Place: The product so currently being sold on the internet through Amazon, the publisher's website, and Target.
- Promotion: The product is being promoted through word of mouth and on a limited basis on social media.

SWOT

Strengths

All proceeds for the book are going to charity. This is good for building the author's image, as well as providing cause to buy the book other than as a consumer good. Another strength of the book is that it has a unique, true story. This makes the story unique and hard to replicate, and makes it stand out from competitors.

Weaknesses

The book is currently more expensive than other books in its category. In part this is due to there only being a hardcover copy available for purchase. Currently there are no plans to write additional books or make a series, which is understandable due to the unique story, however somewhat hurts the brand created. There is currently no option to buy an eBook, which hurts for consumers who would rather not have a hardcover book. Going through a vanity publisher may be resulting in some lost profits, as the author had to pay them to publish the book, and they are not really concerned with the success of his book after the fact. Due to the minimal coverage of the book, and the small amount of sales, there are hardly any reviews of the book on platforms such as Amazon. These reviews are extremely important in furthering sales, and need to be emphasized going forward. Lastly, there are not many physical locations that carry the book, and the author relies largely on online platforms to generate sales. This is dangerous, as currently there is not much of a marketing plan to get the word out about the book, and the little reviews that the book has makes it difficult to sell on the online platforms.

Opportunities

The biggest opportunity comes from growing the online social media presence. As it stands, the book has very little online marketing, thus creating very little awareness. Creating dedicated social media pages, on different platforms, will drastically improve awareness for the book, and more awareness will ultimately generate more sales. Not only will more social media pages improve the awareness of the book, but they will also improve the image and awareness of the author, giving him a fanbase should he choose to write another book or create a series out of his current story. Investing in apparel and other forms of merchandise, such as the bookmarks that are already available, will help create more revenue streams, and will also bring more awareness for the book.

Threats

Threats include the current landscape for eBooks. Not being able to supply one hurts immensely, as more and more consumers are moving toward eBooks and online purchasing.

Established children's books and authors are also threats to the current situation. Purchasers will be unlikely to stray away from things they are familiar with, especially if the current marketing plan does not do much to try and persuade them. Also, the current economic landscape for books and bookstores, with consumers drifting more towards online book purchases, it might be dangerous to try to push the book into brick and mortar stores.

5 Forces for the Children's Book industry

Suppliers

- Power: High
- Reasons: Writer relies heavily on companies like Amazon to publish their books. Amazon, Target, and Wal-Mart control which books are placed in their stores.

Buyers

- Power: High
- Reasons: Few publishers for books. Have the ability to decide how much they take for producing and selling the book.

Substitutes

- Power: High
- Reasons: Services like Netflix and Hulu have programs children can watch. YouTube also has videos of people reading children's books that people can watch instead of buying a book.

New Entrants

- Power/Threat: High
- Easy to distribute the books through Amazon. Little to no start-up costs when publishing a book.

Rivals

- Power/Threat: High
- Reasons: Many children's book writers. The industry is not growing rapidly. Many opportunities to use free resources to promote your book and brand.

Customer Analysis

Customer Analysis:

We are targeting different book carriers, with the end consumers being parents with small children, parents that are pet lovers (specifically dog lovers), and possibly parents that have children with special conditions, who relate to the story of a therapy dog.

We also had the idea of pitching the book to gift shops in children's hospitals. The story is a feel-good story for children and would be very relatable because Webster was converted into a therapy dog. We believe it would be a good target for this book.

In the buying centers, we would primarily be dealing with the owners of bookstores, as well as those in charge of the inventory bookstores carry. These agents are going to be influencers and deciders in the buying center model. In terms of marketing to bookstores, the buying centers would typically involve one to two people if the bookstore was local. Even dealing with chain bookstores, the inventory manager or general manager of the bookstore would be the one making the decision on whether to carry the book or not.

With the idea of attempting to have the book carried in gift shops of children's hospitals, there are probably more parties involved with that decision, most likely 3-5.

In terms of derived demand, the number of inventory bookstores would need to order depends on the amount of demand generated by consumers. Marketing the book to consumers would increase derived demand felt by bookstores.

Customer Personas:

Pablo is 35-45 years old and has at least a bachelor's degree. Pablo owns a local bookstore with 11-25 employees. Pablo's bookstore success is determined by revenue generated, and one of his biggest challenges is staying competitive in a market that is slowly being overtaken by online booksellers and e-books.

Stacey is 25-34 years old and has at least a bachelor's degree. Stacy is a registered nurse in a large hospital with 500-1000 employees. Stacey is married and has 2 children, ages 2 and 4, and loves reading to them each night. Stacey and her children enjoy the classic children's stories but are open to new stories that are not as popular.

Pearl is age 55-64 and is retired. Pearl is a grandmother with 5 grandchildren all under the age of 7. She enjoys reading to her grandchildren and knows that their parents read to them as well. She is thinking of getting a new storybook for her younger grandchildren for the holidays.

Barriers to entry:

The barriers to entry for this book begin with the minimal current marketing the book has. Other than the initial book signing that the author put on at his local country club, the only real marketing the book has has been a piece in the local newspaper, and the Facebook page, which is underwhelming. Another barrier that needs to be overcome is the small amount of positive reviews the book currently has on websites that carry it, Amazon being the primary source of feedback. If more consumers can be convinced to review the book, it will look better to more possible buyers. With the minimal exposure and marketing plan the book currently has, it is difficult to gain access to distribution channels. Book sellers will be more inclined to carry this book as part of their inventory if more consumers are purchasing it, and more consumers will purchase if there is more awareness of the product. A less financial barrier to entry, but still important, is the competition among the children's book industry. It will be difficult to compete with the established, classic children's books as well as competing with established children's authors who already have success creating new stories.

The relationship with the publisher, which is the key relationship in the supply chain, is basically nonexistent. Since the publisher is a vanity publisher, and the client paid them to publish the book, they have no stake in the success of the project and are unconcerned with whether the book generates sales or not.

Value Proposition and Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Value Proposition

Webster the Beagle brings families together through parents reading to children. Creating family time reading to children every night before bed can have great positive impact on their development. Webster's story also teaches the value of helping others, through Frank initially helping Webster, as well as through Webster helping others by becoming a therapy dog. This story also teaches children the value of making an impact on people's lives no matter who or what you are. Frank saved Webster from a poor living situation, and Webster went from being just a hunting dog to making a huge impact on the lives of children in hospitals. Another aspect of the value proposition is that the proceeds go to charitable organizations. So, not only are buyers getting a good, heartfelt story, they are also helping to support organizations that all have good causes.

Sustainable competitive advantage

Compared to other children's books, *Webster the Beagle* is unique, and based on a true story. This is interesting for a children's book, because they are usually based on fiction so as to

be entertaining enough to capture the attention of children. The content of the story is engaging and heartfelt, a good story to read as an adult and a good story to listen to as a child. The illustrations in the book are very high-quality good illustrations, which are engaging and exciting for children to look at. The cover is a quality made hardcover, the pages are thick and durable, easy to turn and difficult to tear. Lastly, part of the competitive advantage of this book is that the proceeds go to charity. In some cases, people will purchase the book just to support the organizations, which benefits sales of the book.

Key Performance Indicators and Balanced Scorecard

Key Performance Indicators

We believe the most important indicators of performance to track are how many books we can sell over a period of time, how much “word of mouth” we can generate around the book, and how much of a profit margin we can make off of each sale of the book. Word of mouth is crucial in the early stages of growth, the book needs to be in the minds of parents and children so that it is at least recognizable. The next most important factor we intend to monitor as we implement our marketing strategy is the profit margin that we can make on each sale, this will be completed mostly through a change in publishing house and an increased effort to market our books through other channels than Amazon.

How will you measure them?

To measure the amount of attention that we can generate for the book we intend to set a goal for a minimum of 4 book reviews per month. This will be achieved through mainly entering blog tours or children's book tours to gain exposure. These tours are not great for generating straight sales but provide an opportunity for you as an author to network and meet other authors and/or bloggers who can be useful in spreading word of mouth. We also recommend that you start your own blog with the sole intention writing mutual book reviews with your fellow authors, these are a great way to get exposure for both of you. Finally with regards to spreading word of mouth we recommend that you get in touch with Carol Roman, previously mentioned, who has offered to host you on her children's book podcast, hopefully gaining you some initial traction for growth in the community. Book fairs are a little more expensive option but were seen as crucial in the eyes of other authors, with a price point of about \$500-800 we are going to set a benchmark for Webster to be in at least 2 book fairs by the end of the fiscal year and a growth of one per year after that.

To measure the rate at which books are selling we will be expecting an increase of about 20% in total sales in the upcoming year. After implementing all of the strategies that we have laid out we believe that a 20% increase is modest and easily obtainable, we are hoping for exponential growth as Webster becomes increasingly popular. To measure the profit margins made on each sale we will be tracking the total number of books sold from Amazon vs. all other outlets. The first 2,000 books printed cost about 6\$ a piece to print, if sold through Amazon he makes \$1-2, (Amazon makes 8) through selling independent he makes about 9\$ a book (at 15\$ price point). These numbers show just how crucial it is to expand out sales channels, Amazon is great for convenience and reaching a large market but it is not ideal for a small amount of sales focused on maximizing profit. With a switch to an Indie publisher as well as owning the ISBN necessary to sell the book globally, in combination with the previously mentioned awareness spreading, we believe that expanding our sales to different channels will be easy. On top of this we recommend that several hard copies of the book be printed so that they can be donated to local libraries as well as schools to help increase sales in local communities.

Benchmarks

- We will expect a 20% increase in sales after implementing our marketing strategy. This would be an increase of about 200 books sold in the following year.
- We will also try to achieve an ideal ratio of Amazon to non-Amazon sales to help keep the average profit margin as high as possible. We will expect a modest increase to have about a 20% increase of sales come from outside Amazon
- We will set a goal starting with at least 4 new reviews a month, as we know reviews are crucial in getting our awareness out there.

Balanced Scorecard

Financial:

We are setting our benchmarks for success at a 20% increase in sales for the upcoming year. We believe this to be a modest valuation based on the situation you have presented us, being that we are expecting you to continue working your full time job and probably unable to implement all the changes that we suggest. Though we do believe that with a full time effort and an expansion on the idea of Webster into a series will create an opportunity for exponentially larger growth as awareness continues to spread. The charitable aspect of your venture brings a semblance of sincerity that is not commonly found in the market, we believe that proper marketing of this aspect could significantly increase your ability to stick in the minds of customers and increase their likelihood of a purchase.

Customer:

One of our main goals is to spread awareness as well as improve our relationship with our customers, fellow authors, and industry professionals. We believe getting onto the 'Childrens Book Tour' as well as working with fellow indie authors to help spread mutual awareness is one of the most effective way to build awareness and relationships in the industry. Making Webster into a series is key for success in this industry and constant promotional efforts around release dates such as associated press releases will be key to expansion. These press releases only cost about \$200 each but provide an invaluable opportunity to build up hype around release dates and the series in general, possibly even encouraging customers to go back and experience previous iterations in the series.

Internal Processes:

We recommend that one of the first steps that you should take is to switch from a Vanity publisher to an Indie publisher. This will allow the product to be more easily accessible to the general public. Going through an Indie publisher will bring down the cost per book and eliminate the up front costs of buying a supply of books (as you can print them as they are ordered for a lower rate). This route will also allow you to control where you sell your book as you will be provided with a unique ISBN that can be used anywhere from book fairs to eBook vendors.

Education and Growth:

The number one recommendation we present, to ensure long term growth and the expansion of your charitable fundraising effort, is to make "Webster" into a series. Carol Roman, the popular children's author made it clear that stand alone children's books do not sell, the number one priority is to create a series of stories that can be marketed as a whole to help increase the familiarity of "Webster" as a brand. The books have a good children friendly art style that we believe will do well, we do recommend that as you continue writing the series that you continue to work on adapting your writing to the children's market, possibly looking towards guides to help get tips. The above recommendations for expanding sales will all help you acclimate yourself into the market and provide you with invaluable experience helping you adapt to more successful efforts in the children's book market.

Strategy

Traditional Promotional Strategy

Publishing

One of the first steps we recommend you take is to switch from using a vanity publisher to becoming an indie publisher. Indie publishing can be done by Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) who prints books on demand when they ordered by customers. The advantages of being an indie publisher numerous. First, the cost of indie publishing is much less than vanity publishing. Indie publishing eliminates the upfront cost of buying books and you will receive much more on each book sale. Next, KDP allows you to combine book giveaways through Amazon in order to increase the sales of the book. Lastly, being an indie publisher allows you to control how and where your book is sold. Giving your book a unique ISBN will allow the book to be found more easily by consumers. You can market the book using many tools and strategies to maximize the book's sales.

Promotional Items

Distributing more physical promotional items will help to raise awareness for the book. Items that can be distributed include bookmarks, postcards, and stuffed animals. All of these items are inexpensive and when given to friends and customer can help to promote future sales. With a marketing budget of \$10,000, buying all of these items in bulk will not make a dent in that budget.

Ebook

Giving the customer the option to purchase an ebook is a low-cost way to increase book sales. This can be done directly through Kindle Direct Publishing and the ebook would appear on the Kindle store. A good price to sell the ebook at on Amazon is \$2.99. At this price point, you will make \$2.09 per book. Having this option will increase overall sales enabling you to give more to your charities.

Writing more books

Our group believes that in order to have long-term success selling *Webster the Beagle* you will have to write more children's books. We would recommend you start a series of books about Webster and his adventures. Writing more books will increase sales because if consumers like one of the books they will buy another book in the series. Also, the more books that are written will increase the amount of money you are able to give to your charities.

Children's Hospital Gift Shops

Since one of the charities the book's proceeds are going to is children's hospitals, we believe selling the books in the gift shop of the children's hospital would lead to great success. Since books cannot be passed from patient to patient for health reasons putting them in the gift shop will provide a potential customer with access to a book that could brighten their child's day.

Digital Strategy

Website

The most important tool that can be used to build your personal brand is a website. The website should be a simple design and feature the colors used in the book. Also, the website provides a good place to start a personal blog. A blog is a great place to post about updates on the charities the book supports and more stories about Webster or anything you would like to write about. A blog can also be used to promote reviews about the book and can help you further express your writing style. Other sections on the website would include: a section about the charities, an about Webster section, and a personal bio section. On every page of the website, there should be links that guide the viewer to your social media accounts and a call-to-action encouraging users to buy the book on Amazon and/or learn more or donate to each of your featured charities. Also, there should a call-to-action and a form for website visitors to sign up for your newsletter (that we will discuss in another section). The cost of running a website will be about \$20 a month. We suggest using Weebly if you prefer to create your website yourself. Weebly is a great service that allows you to build a high quality website almost effortlessly and manage it in an ongoing fashion. Overall, a website provides a “home base” for your personal brand and helps to promote the books you write. A website is a salesperson that works for you twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, for three-hundred and sixty-five days per year and it never takes a break. A quality website is essential for any marketing efforts.

Social Media

As a group, we have determined that the book could immensely benefit from a more pronounced digital presence, starting with Facebook. We believe that the first step should be to give the book its own dedicated Facebook page. If the book were to have its own page, it would give fans of the book a platform to discuss and leave positive reviews, as well as give the author a dedicated place to promote the book and the blog. A dedicated Facebook page will also provide a platform to inform fans of giveaways, as well as book tour activities. Also being a part of Facebook groups such as Children’s Books, and Dog Figurines and Books, will be beneficial in expanding awareness of the book. Upon researching those two groups on Facebook, we determined that Children’s Books would have a potential of around 6,500 members per reach, and that Dog Figurines and Books would have a potential of around 4,200 members per reach. Even if these numbers do not translate directly into sales, they massively increase awareness of the book among groups that are likely to be interested in purchasing.

We also suggest trying to get social media support from charity organizations that proceeds of the book supports, such as Peaceful Passings, which could generate around 2,750 likes which equates to a 2,750 person reach. Getting social media support from the charitable organizations the book supports could generate sales from those who are interested in further supporting those organizations. Another area of social media that would benefit awareness and

reach of the book is Twitter. Twitter is a good platform for daily postings, and interacting with fans on Twitter is extremely important. Generating a persona for a Twitter account is important, because fans like to feel like they are having an actual conversation, not interacting with an automatic post. Twitter's platform is centered around short posts that generally are not seen for very long due to the chronological timeline, which makes it perfect for daily postings, such as updates on book tours, or updates on where the book is carried. General promotion of the book would also be good on Twitter, but not so frequent to where the fans feel drowned by postings. Twitter is also a good platform to leave reminders for fans to leave book reviews, as well as promote other social media accounts and the book blog.

Reaching out to "mommy bloggers" on Pinterest can also promote awareness of the book. "Mommy bloggers" on Pinterest put out information for new mothers, as well as review products that they use with their children. Reaching out to them and having them give feedback on the book will be beneficial to expanding awareness, as well as possibly generate sales. Instagram is another social media platform that will benefit overall awareness of the book. Instagram will be good for weekly postings, including giveaways of the book and promotion of book tour dates. Instagram giveaways will be limited to followers of the account, but if hashtags of related items are included, people may find the posts on the discover page. Since Instagram is mostly limited to who is following your account, it is important to promote Instagram on other social media accounts. Promotion of the book is good, but people are going to at least want an idea of what the book is about. This is where Youtube comes in, it can be used as a platform to launch a short book reading preview video. This will give potential buyers that are on the fence a preview into the contents of the book, and might possibly sway them into a purchase. The last piece of digital strategy that we feel is important is gaining the support of influencers. This was touched on earlier with the "mommy bloggers" on Pinterest, but a key figure that we focused on is the Twitter account WeRateDogs. It is a page for dog lovers that posts pictures and videos, submitted by fans of the account. WeRateDogs has roughly 7.4 million Twitter followers, and just one endorsement from that account could be huge for expanding awareness. Overall we feel that there should be multiple social media accounts to help promote awareness for the book, just one Facebook account should not be the only outlet for promotion.

Search Engine Optimization and Pay-Per Click

Search engine optimization (SEO) is essential to successfully promoting your website. This can be accomplished through a few easy tactics. The first is good content: This is accomplished through regularly writing quality content on your blog that relates to and includes terms in the keyword strategy that will be presented at the end of this section. The second tactic is link building: This will be accomplished during your online book tour and when your book is reviewed. It is important to ensure that every review or mention on a site that is not your own links back to your site. This helps with your search ranking. The third tactic is to ensure your website meets SEO standards: This include making sure each page or blog post has a meta

description, that each image has an alt tag, that all of your on-page links work, that you are not duplicating content, that you have meta tags, and that you are not over-stuffing your content with the keywords in the keyword strategy.

Pay-per click (PPC) campaigns will help to supplement your SEO efforts. Using pay-per click can drive high quality traffic to your website and product listings. Pay-per click campaigns allow you to narrow the audience receiving your ads using demographics and interests. We suggest a three-pronged approach using Google Ads, Facebook Advertising, and Amazon Advertising. As the name suggests, the use of this tactic does have cost. We suggest using Facebook Advertising to drive traffic to the site. We suggest one ad-set with three advertisements, targeting women ages 30-60, who have interests in family, dogs, or children's books. Because Facebook advertising only requires information on demographics and interests, there will be no keyword strategy. Our suggested Amazon and Google Ads strategies will be similar. Each of the keywords will be set to a broad match, in order to maximize the amount of impressions. Because both use keyword matching for their PPC platforms the keywords we advise you to target will be as follows:

- Therapy dog book
- Children's dog book
- Dog book
- Cute dog book
- Children's book
- Book about dogs
- Book about helping kids
- Book about therapy dogs

Email Newsletter

Email is an important and easy tool to use to engage customers. It is important to obtain email addresses from potential customers as well as their permission to send them marketing messages. This can be done through a book giveaway. A drawing could be hosted where customers give their emails in order to be put into the drawing. Another tactic for gathering emails is a call-to-action or form on your website that prompts the user to join your email list. The goal of having an email list is to drive traffic to website and purchase links. Your newsletter can talk about money you have raised, your featured charities, general therapy dog content, and product updates. Just like your blog, you can use your email newsletter to discuss anything you would like to discuss. Also, every email should include a purchase link so potential customers are more pushed to buy the book. A service we recommend you use in order to promote the book over email is MailChimp. At a price of \$10 a month, MailChimp will send bulk emails to all people on the email list. Emails sent by MailChimp look professional and can be specifically tailored to your target customers. Also, you can use MailChimp's analytics features to evaluate the effectiveness of your email marketing efforts.

Budget Allocation

To start, we recommend you allocate \$270 (\$20 is a recurring monthly payment, \$240 yearly) to the purchase of a domain name for your website and the purchase of the business Weebly package. In addition, we recommend using \$120 per year (\$10 monthly payment) to utilize MailChimp's email service platform. We recommend you allocate \$600 monthly to PPC efforts. This would be split evenly among the three platforms with \$200 monthly going to Facebook Advertising, \$200 monthly going to Google Ad campaigns, and \$200 monthly going to Amazon Advertising campaigns.

For our non digital marketing we recommend that you do a minimum of 2 book fairs per year to start out. These cost about \$500 a piece and we recommend that as the Webster brand grows that you continue to expand these expenses through the first 5 years. After that we believe the next most effective expenditure for non digital marketing will be on associated press releases for the subsequent books in the Webster series (if this is the way that you choose to move forward.) These releases cost \$200 to run and will be invaluable in building up excitement and word of mouth for the series as it continues to expand. The last piece of the offline budget that we believe will be a necessary cost for a growth in profits is to expand the awareness of *Webster the Beagle* as a brand. This is achieved first and foremost through book reviews from prominent bloggers and local newspapers. These reviews are valued anywhere from \$50-100 and if you do not have the time or the opportunity to do mutual book reviews to get your 4 reviews a month than you may have to purchase some to remain within our benchmarks for success. With the busy nature of working a full time job and all the work needed to market the book we are going to allocate \$50 a month towards book reviews, realistically. All in all, we believe that these are minor expenditures that can impact the level of sales drastically.