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**The Baby Sistah Story**

 Baby Sistah Cookies is a Boston-based bakery specializing in homemade gourmet cookies for sale online and in select Boston boutiques. Owner, founder and baker Carltaro Jackson is the man behind the apron, with each cookie creation coming from his many inspirations, starting with his family and particularly, the inspiring women that have been in his life. His passion for cooking and baking, and the love he has for making delicious creations for people to enjoy, is evident in the unique cookies, exquisite ingredients and exciting new creations he develops.

 Baby Sistah Cookies is more than the pairing of excellent ingredients - such as rich, dark chocolate and zesty orange spices, or a kick of peppermint and smooth chocolate - they are moments of joy because the care of Carltaro is brought to life in the cookies. His story of how he came to make gourmet cookies is as genuine as his love for sharing these cookies, and mostly, his inspiration came from outside the cookies. It is through special people who allowed him to pursue dreams of sharing his talent in cooking and baking that Baby Sistah came to be. The very name Baby Sistah is a tribute to the dynamic women in his life, his grandmother, mother, aunts and of course, his blood and non-blood sisters. Strong women motivated him to share his recipes with the world and the cookies are special enough to more than live up to the tribute.

World’s apart from an average cookie one might find in the grocery store or at a retail bakery, Baby Sistah offers new creations regularly and each cookie is an experience for the sweet tooth. It is the inspirations behind the cookies, their roots in people he loves, experiences that have inspired him, that sets his cookies above others - the taste will keep people coming back. The stories behind the cookies will draw new people to the Baby Sistah cookie experience, which is necessary to keep Carltaro’s dream a reality, but to keep them there, the man behind the apron is ready and able with his talents.

**Current Interactive Landscape:**

Baby Sistah is present on popular digital platforms, which is exceptional compared to other small businesses. Its website’s primary purpose is for people to order cookies, and it includes an “About us” section with links to its Facebook and Twitter accounts. The home page of the website also includes a very brief “welcome” from the company, with details about ordering cookies. There is currently no sharing capability on the website, such as a “share” button after one purchases a cookie or visits a page. There is also no commenting or feedback option for visitors. The imagery on the website has an old-fashioned, black and white theme; the family photographs create an inviting, personal theme, but also create the allure of mystery. Some of that mystery behind the photos is explained in the “About Us” section, that displays a story of “why Baby Sistah Cookies.” The story is well beyond a length that most people would read online - we know people often spend less than 10 seconds on a website. In addition, the story doesn’t engage the reader with a clear connection between the story and the cookies, and the website does not give consumers a way to interact by commenting, sharing the story or going to other digital platforms, like Facebook.

 The Baby Sistah Facebook page is a one-way conversation with a variety of activity, but it’s not very regular. Baby Sistah is primarily posting photos of its cookies and updates from “the test kitchen,” which have a great amount of potential to incite dialogue. The posts speak directly to the visitors, which is ideal. Some visitors have commented about the cookies on the Facebook page, and Baby Sistah has responded to some comments, and used tagging capabilities, as well. They also have the reviews section featured on their company page, showing some engagement from fans through testimonials, which can help build enthusiasm for the company. The photos are beautiful and professional in appearance, but they lack variety: almost all are of cookies with no atmosphere or any environment to put context to the “text kitchen,” the baker, his inspirations or his daily life. The Facebook page is also used to show their partnerships by tagging their partners, other companies or organizations they are involved with, such as Cedar Circle Farm, who donated fresh pumpkins for Baby Sistah’s first pumpkin pie cookies. They have used Facebook to hold a contest, drawing a winner to receive a batch of cookies, which supported a charity they are involved with through Brigham and Women’s hospital. The contest did not leverage content and very little engagement from online communities during the contest was seen.

 On Twitter, the company is using the handle “BabySistahCooki,” a version of the name that may be creating confusion for fans or potential fans. Similar to Facebook, visitors are getting news about what is being made in the Test Kitchen, and “Twitter language,” (succinct, active, including hash-tags) is being used well, but the irregularity of the posts makes it hard to gather from their feed what the company is all about. Like Facebook, beautiful photos of cookies are posted on Twitter, without hash-tags, however. There is minimal interaction with other people on Twitter - interaction, which is key to Twitter, is limited to retweets of posts about the Boston community, such as a post from Boston Magazine about food and restaurants in Boston. In addition to the website, Facebook and Twitter, Baby Sistah has a tumblr blog that is focused on another talent of Carltaro’s - barbeque. The blog is called “Baby Sistah Cookies Plus,” discussing catering, BBQ and other adventures, but not Baby Sistah’s cookies. The main purpose of the blog is for customers to contact for food catering, not for introducing or for selling cookies.

 In conclusion, Baby Sistah’s current interactive identity is ready to be established, integrated and used to draw in new fans and send people to the website to purchase cookies. However, strategy that connects the platforms needs to be implemented to allow for interaction among online communities. As it stands, there is also no opportunity for fans to tell Baby Sistah what they like, dislike, what they are excited for, what their favorite cookies are, because Baby Sistah is focused only on the product and sharing images and information about their cookies. This shouldn’t stop, but shouldn’t be the only strategy for using the digital platforms. We will now discuss strategies that will complement and help Baby Sistah build an interactive plan to strengthen the Baby Sistah brand and create many life-long fans.

***Competitive Landscape***

The cookie market is highly fragmented. Local cookie companies doing well are successful because they are engaging their consumers via social media and creating two-way dialogue by running contests and promotions on Facebook and Twitter - some are even using Instagram and Pinterest, which are two emerging social media platforms for the food community. By giving its consumers a way to directly speak with them and share their information, the companies are creating a meaningful relationship that will last beyond the cookie purchase. These companies are also actively listening to their consumers and modifying their menus to reflect the taste of all sweet tooth lovers. This creates meaning for consumers, as well as a desire to tell their friends and social networks about their great experiences.

*The Chipyard - “Very Special Chocolate Chip Cookies”*

Location: Fanueil Hall, Boston, MA

Story: In 1976, two brothers, 15 and 13, decided to take on summertime jobs. Since they were too young to work, their dad bought them an abandoned taco truck so they could sell chocolate chip cookies like their mom. She helped them create the perfect recipe and find the finest ingredients, and in May, they opened for business. Within weeks, the brothers were making cookies by the thousands.

Position: Chipyard only bakes the original chocolate chip cookie and variations of it - banana chocolate chip, mint chocolate chip, macadamia chocolate chip and so on.

Online Shopping:

- Three ways to begin shopping on website homepage

- “Shop Now” button on bottom of every page

- “We ship daily” - orders placed before 3 pm are guaranteed for next day delivery

Online Price:

- $7 a dozen, plus shipping and handling

- Minimum order is two dozen cookies

Social Media:

 - No social media icons on website

- Facebook and Twitter pages exist, but little activity

*Georgetown Cupcakes*

Locations: Georgetown, Bethesda, SoHo, Boston, LA and Atlanta

Story: Inspired by their grandmother, in 2008, Katherine and Sophie traded careers in fashion and venture capital to follow their passion for baking and opened their first location in Washington, DC.

Position: Georgetown Cupcake believes in community; they regularly participate in neighborhood and community events in the Washington DC region and support numerous local and national charitable organizations and foundations, in particular charities that focus on women’s and children’s health issues.

Online Shopping:

- Minimum order is 1 dozen cupcakes

- “Send as Gift” option

Price: $2.75 each • $15 half dozen • $29 dozen

Social Media:

- Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram icons on website

- Pages are active and highlight products, employees and events

- Can elect to follow company on Twitter and Instagram directly from website

- Community page on website for information on upcoming fundraisers and events

*Cookie Monstah Food Truck*

Location: It’s a Blodgett oven on wheels moving throughout Boston.

Story: Missy Gale, mother of four and lifelong foodie, decided to follow her dreams of baking and open a cookie truck in 2012. She learned to bake from her mother, and believes that everyone deserves a warm chocolate chip cookie.

 Position: Cookie Monstah bakes on the mobile truck all day long so its customers get

 the freshest cookie possible. It moves around Boston and has a “Find the Truck” tab

 on its website to make sure everyone can find the truck at anytime.

 Online Shopping:

-The company has partnered with a courier service - for $10 or less, have cookies delivered to your door

- Minimum order of 1 dozen

- Only 4 types of cookies available for purchase online; can mix between two flavors

- “Order Online” tab and “Order Now” button on Products page take you to different places (not good)

Price:

 - $25 dozen

 Social Media:

 - Facebook and Twitter icons on website

- Uses Twitter and Facebook to communicate whereabouts

- Active on both pages and responds to all tweets/comments

*Dancing Deer*

Location: National cookie company available in boutique shops and has a huge online presence.

Position: Support charities and raise awareness about important community issues. Most recently, Dancing Deer partnered with the Soldiers’ Angels to send a holiday cookie packages to a soldiers.

Website:

- Can shop by product or price

- Gift suggestions

- Holiday and seasonal specific items are heavily promoted on website

- Have gifts specifically targeted for businesses

- Point out that they are a certified green company and have links to their philanthropy projects

- Store finder allows customers to easily find their products in a nearby store

Price: Range is from $17 for low-end “nibbler” package to as much as $150 for their deluxe baskets. A standard box of cookies looks to run about $24 and weighs a little over a pound.

Social Media:

- Facebook and Pinterest icons on website

- Multiple boards on Pinterest for different seasons

- Heavily promote the “cookies for soldiers” charity on Facebook

***Target Audience***

Baby Sistah should target urban females, 18 - 45 years old, mid to upper-middle income. Overall, these women use Twitter to talk about cookie brands they love and Facebook to interact directly with the cookie companies (Mintel, 2013). Baby Sistah should also put a special emphasis on women with families. These women are shopping online, looking for fun gifts and constantly searching for new party ideas.

Mintel reports that first time moms are now more likely to be in their 20s or early 30s. These two factors—motherhood and falling within the Millennial generation—increase the odds that she owns a smartphone and uses it to shop. About one quarter of these moms say they are influenced by social networks and websites or online communities/blogs, also allowing for an opportunity to reach them (Mintel, 2013). 56% of moms report visiting or belonging to a social media/networking website. 61% of 18 - 24 year olds, 49% of 25 - 34 year olds and 40% of 35 - 44 year olds report visiting these social media sites at least three times a day, again, making them a prime audience for Baby Sistah. These women also enjoy sharing recipes and online meal ideas with their friends, making it noteworthy that Pinterest has become popular with moms as a place where they can find both information and inspiration. A 2012 study by Nielsen found that moms are 61% more likely than the average American to visit the site.

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**Statement of Need:**

 Currently, Baby Sistah has a great digital foundation on several platforms, but the engagement with Baby Sistah is lacking something for the customer that wants to know more - what is behind the cookies, what is the inspiration, who is the chef and what is he all about, and of course, what is the name about!? These questions are in need of answers. The interaction with the company ends at buying a dozen cookies online and being “wowed” with no one to “share” with digitally. The strategy to buy online lends itself to expanding this interaction so that customers can go directly to the cookies and order their own once they see the digital conversation going on with Baby Sistah. The current distribution strategy is also the most conducive to the capacity of Baby Sistah’s business and we recommend no changes. Specifically along the lines of the digital media platforms, being active on Facebook is key, as our research shows, the target audience is using Facebook as a primary, (if not favorite), social media tool. Overall, Facebook is a great space to start and maintain conversations, provide insight into the “kitchen” and Baby Sistah, host interactive contests and one-time online “events,” and collect user-generated content, (this term we will use photos, stories, comments and “shares” to encompass user generated content). The cross-promotion that Baby Sistah is currently doing with local organizations like Cedar Circle Farm is a good tactic to increase visibility to many online communities.

 With this foundation, however, the story still remains a mystery so people are left thinking, ‘these are great cookies, but I want to know more. What’s behind this company and why are they different?” Baby Sistah isn’t sharing their story, they are screaming at the top of their lungs about the delicious cookies- which are delicious, but their message gets lost in the online space. The story behind the passion that goes into the cookies is what will distinguish the cookies, and allow people to engage with Baby Sistah, by providing them something to react to, relate to, and engage with. Currently, Baby Sistah is telling people about the delicious cookies on their interactive platforms, but they aren’t telling the story of what inspired the chef behind the cookies, the ingredients, and who and what motivates the company to share their cookies.

 With the goal of ongoing engagement from online fans, and potential fans, we recommend Carltaro focuses on three overall ideas:

**Enhance the Brand’s Identity:**

* Provide stories about the cookies to give the company as a whole a brand. The stories brand the cookies and Baby Sistah as an “experience,” as a family-rooted company, and as a company that wants to gather people around delicious cookies to share their passions and loves (people, memories, etc.)
* Keep this consistent with all new cookies: Each should have a name and subsequent content on the website and social media platforms should reflect the idea that “behind the cookies is a story.”

**Streamline and Integrate Content:**

* Keep content tailored but consistent across the platforms. People should be able to engage with the conversation on any of the platforms Baby Sistah is on and not miss a beat. If it’s on Facebook, how will it look on Twitter? We have suggestions for this.
* Consistently re-direct to the website to purchase cookies, since that will bring new fans and business.
* Always link to other platforms and the website so people can find a space where they can engage.

**Provide Opportunities to share:**

* Give people the opportunity to share about themselves, their passions, their favorites and more by eliciting feedback in varying, exciting ways. The same old question doesn’t work, but different opportunities to share will encourage consistent engagement.
* Allow people to tell others about their purchase: There should be the ability on the website for someone to brag that they got Baby Sistah cookies, which is the equivalent in the digital space to the value of immediate word-of-mouth recommendation. This prompt may require some technological additions to the website, but they can be free and easy to incorporate in different ways.
* Provide an opportunity for people to share their “stories” of cookies and content related to cookies so that you can have a dialogue with online visitors. When people are prompted to comment, share a story, and give their own personal anecdote, they are more likely to “like” a page, follow the company on Pinterest or Twitter, which is all online “activity” that will help Baby Sistah’s name spread on online platforms, improving SEO.
	+ When posting to social media communities, leave questions open-ended to encourage discussion so people have chance to interact - liking, re-tweeting, commenting, spreading something
	+ Ask the crowd! People have lots of opinions about food, and with the foodie craze growing, people are excited to take part in food adventures. Without losing the hold and touch on the recipes and the end product of unique, gourmet cookies, Baby Sistah can leverage the enthusiasm and great ideas from the online communities with which they engage.

***The Big Idea***

Without a story to share, Baby Sistah cookies become lost in the array of gourmet cookies available through online ordering, boutique shops, large markets and food trucks. In Boston, we can see that competitive landscape makes it necessary for a business selling only cookies to stand out in a big way. But Baby Sistah has stories to share about what’s behind the company, the values and the cookie chef, in addition to the unique ingredients and inspirations that make the cookies so good. These stories hook customers and can be the distinguishing factor that makes people want to be a cookie lover that has a favorite local cookie - Baby Sistah cookies. Baby Sistah has to give people a reason to say that Baby Sistah’s cookies are their favorite because they relate to X story... or the name of the cookie, (is it their Mother’s or aunt’s name?)...or the memory that led to the reinvented cookie recipe...or the value of the company share in the story..etc.

 Allowing the stories of family, inspiring women, memories, love and passion to be shared is a way for Baby Sistah to engage with customers on and off-line. Using the stories behind the company and cookies, they can have consistent content to start dialogue, encourage sharing and community, and make people come back again and again to buy their cookies.

***STRATEGIES***

**Establish a brand of “Stories behind the Cookies” through an Online Identity:**

Baby Sistah should first solidify their online identity by developing consistent online profiles, and establishing a presence on two strong platforms that are relevant to their fan base. We recommend the following platforms and the first steps to establishing a consistent identity on the platforms:

1. **Facebook recommendations**
	* On Facebook, we recommend you re-write your “about” section to be short, sweet and to the point. Keep this short so that people can see most of it when they are on your page without having to “see more.”
	* Choose a brand-enhancing logo for your profile picture.
	* Keep your profile fresh: Change your cover photo to match the season, any event or contest you are running, (design headers to promote these), or add the newest featured cookie photo.
	* Increase your connections: Like businesses and people in your community who can return the favor and you can then have dialogue with.
		+ Consider the food-related community, and even the competitors to draw in more people who will see this activity and connection and be directed back to Baby Sistah.
2. **Twitter recommendations**
	* **Similar to Facebook, connect with like-minded, community partners that can dialogue with you on Twitter.**
	* **Use relevant hashtags and key words with all posts to increase the likelihood of appearing in searches on Twitter:**
		+ **Recommended hashtags:** #babysistahcookies, #homemadecookies, #foodie, #cookies, #BostonCookies, #gourmetcookies
		+ Personalized hashtags: Use the test kitchen cookie names and featured cookie names as hastags to promote
3. **Instagram**
	* **Set up account under the name “BabySistahCookies”**
	* **Cross-link photos and posts to Instagram on Facebook and Twitter, which is commonly done on these platforms.**
	* **Utilize hashtags same as Twitter**
		+ hashtagging helps drag Instagram users to the brands’ Instagram page when they search for keywords that they are interested in.
	* Apply a “pull strategy” which asks people for content, and encourages them to tag photos with a particular hashtag, or of themselves sharing Baby Sistah cookies with someone they love.
4. **Pinterest Recommendation: Pinterest is photo focused and many food fans use Pinterest, and our target audience is on Pinterest.** Some studies show that [Pinterest drives more referral traffic than LinkedIn, Google+ and YouTube combined](http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/pinterest-marketing-what-marketers-need-to-know-to-succeed/). Using Pinterest, Baby Sistah can increase customer engagement by getting followers involved in a board created specifically to share stories, such as favorites, cookie ideas, their own family recipes or favorite recipes, etc. **We suggest getting started with Pinterest by:**
	* **Create a Pinterest account and description that describes what the company is about and what you’ll be sharing.**
		+ **Suggested Boards: Favorite ingredients, favorite places to travel, party ideas, pies, cakes, brownies, favorite charities, local markets**
	* **strategy for pinterest discussed below**

**Engagement Strategies**

With a foundation set for your digital engagement, you can now move to implement an integrated strategy. The following strategies are ways to regularly engage the online community and establish an audience that will return to the website and social media and spread Baby Sistah content within their online communities. These strategies have a suggested timeline and regularity, but you can repeat them by varying the content, timing and other elements so that they can be regular strategic engagement tools.

**Strategy 1: From Cookies to Stories:**

The overarching strategy for Baby Sistah should be to look at each cookie they are currently offering as opportunities to share their stories, and bring what’s behind (and inside!) the cookies to life for the customers. Depending on the recipe and the ingredients, Baby Sistah cookies should take on their own identity to which people can relate to. This can be achieved through a telling and unique name for the cookie, an anecdote that is special to that cookie, or a tribute that the cookie makes to someone, or something.

By renaming each cookie, they take on a personality and the“stories” can and should be short anecdotes that:

* Incite curiosity: A straightforward name like “Peanut-butter Balls” doesn’t leave people very interested in the cookie. With a **name like “Auntie’s D’s Favorite**,” customers will ask, “I wonder what’s behind the name?” and then look into the ingredients, and find something they relate to in the story, something a loved one would like, and be more likely to buy the cookie.
* Reveal personal inspirations, memories, stories that are indentifiable: personal, but generalizable – don’t worry about being non-descript, but provide stories or names that many people would be able to relate to
	+ Such as “a summer with grandma” cookie - Chocolate chip cookies, inspired by Grandma
	+ “A Winter’s Kiss” cookie - A holiday, winter seasonall cookie - ingredients of autumn, share a story about your wife - inspire other similar stories of love
	+ Florida Kiss - an grand mariner (orange) inspired cookie, good for summer cook outs, pinics, etc.
	+ Mom’s Fudge Morsels - a mother’s day specialty\*\*
* Relate to the theme of the company – family, love for family and sharing cooking, baking and food with family, the inspiration of loved ones, especially inspiring strong women

Baby Sistah currently has 10 cookies on its website, but not all 10 cookies need a long story behind them. THe cookies can simply have a name that gives them the “Baby Sistah” touch, or a description of the special ingredient that ties it all together, showing the man behind the cookie and his thinking, (of course,without giving away the secret!). To start, Baby Sistah should choose about 3 or 4 cookies that are always available and come-up with engaging stories behind these “founding” cookies. New cookies added can have an anecdote, or at the minimum a unique name.

***Engagement via website: REDESIGN OF THE WEB SITE***

Not only is a company website the main source of information, it’s also a launching point that directs consumers to social media sites used by Baby Sistah. To incorporate these ideas as well as draw from its stories to connect with consumers, we recommend Baby Sistah Cookies reformat the website to highlight the stories behind its cookies as well as monthly test kitchen events. The website should also simplify the ordering process and display an “Order Cookies” button along with its social media icons on the top right of every page. Also, while taking place, Baby Sistah’s fundraising initiatives should be highlighted in a sidebar on the homepage.

We suggest the following structure for the Baby Sistah website:



The color scheme should remain the same - green, purple and gold. We do suggest changing the font to a more standard text, such as Calibri, Arial or Georgia. We also suggest using more of the screen rather than keeping all the text in the center and leaving empty space on the left and right of the screen.

*Homepage/Cookie of the Month*

The main photo on the Baby Sistah homepage should be the Cookie of the Month from the test kitchen. The cookie story will be below the photo. There should also be feature photos of prior Cookies of the Month below the main photo; these photos will link to the story of that photo, which will be archived on the Our Cookies tab. Linking to pages within a website via multiple routes is a great way to help consumers seamlessly navigate the website. By linking the feature photos to the Our Cookies tab, consumers have two ways on the homepage alone to find the cookie stories - the main header also links to Our Cookies.

While contests and fundraisers are running, they should be displayed in a sidebar on the homepage. In the sidebar, links to the social media platform being used to run that event should be included.

*Our Story*

Baby Sistah should continue to highlight its story and keep a tab dedicated for Caltoro to share his story and talk about his influencers.

*Our Cookies*

All of the main, regularly produced cookies should have a story as a description. There are currently 10 cookies on the Baby Sistah website. Not all 10 cookies need a longer story about the inspiration behind them, but there should be 2 - 4 special cookies that have an inspired story; these cookies should be at the top of the page. The other cookie descriptions should be shorter and can be associated with memories or relatable experiences. Such as describing the Snickerdoodle as the *Autumn for Lovers cookie with tastes of cinnamon, rich dark chocolate and nutmeg that remind me of crisp fall walks through the city, paired with hot-chocolate or warm spiced tea, beside the lady I love. Who will you share yours with?*

While separate pages for each cookie is not necessary, a list of cookies at the top of the Our Cookies page, where consumers can click on a cookie, is a good idea. This allows consumers to jump to a particular cookie rather than scroll through the whole page if they desire.

There will be a separate page to order the cookies, but at the end of each story, there should be an Order Now or Click Here to purchase link; this will take consumers to the Order Cookies page. Making two separate pages - one for the cookie stories and one for ordering cookies - helps highlight the stories, but Baby Sistah also wants to ensure the two pages are flawlessly linked allowing ease of ordering. Once a consumer is intrigued, Baby Sistah needs to get them to the ordering page as quickly as possible.

*Share Your Stories*

It’s vital for Baby Sistah to encourage sharing of stories via social media on the website. To get consumers to share their cookie and sweets’ stories, Baby Sistah should include a tab that highlights a few recently shared consumer stories. These stories should be taken from social media and can be about experiences with Baby Sistah cookies or simply about memories consumers associate with certain cookies. This section should also highlight how consumers can share their stories via Baby Sistah’s social media platforms.

*Order Cookies*

There will be an Order Cookies button on the header of every page, but Baby Sistah should also have a Order Cookies tab. This should be a separate tab from Our Cookies, as that it is solely dedicated to the cookie stories.

 *Tell Your Friends What You Bought*

 Once consumers have purchased their cookies, Baby Sistah should prompt them to

share what they bought with their friends via Facebook or Twitter. This includes a simple pop-up box that allows the customer to write a few words and then click on the social media icon of their choice, immediately posting the information.

*Contact Us*

Baby Sistah’s current Contact Us page is effective, allowing consumers to send messages to the company directly through the website. On this page, Baby Sistah should also include its direct contact information, including phone, email and location if applicable. Social media links should also be provided to encourage people to connect with Baby Sistah in several ways.

**Strategy 2: “Cookie of the Month Name” Contest**

As previously mentioned, one of the problems with Baby Sistah’s online presence is that they are only engaging in one-way conversations, a post on Facebook showing a cookie accompanied by text saying they are in the test kitchen, or something to that nature. We feel that in order to better engage with customers is to post calls to action. Something that will engage their customers and get them to respond back, and in turn, spread the word and get others to read about the Baby Sistah company, and to visit and engage with the Facebook page.

A strategy we feel would draw people to Baby Sistah cookie’s and distinguish them from other cookie companies is to host a monthly “Name that Cookie” contest. Currently, each cookie is named, “chocolate chip coconut almond macaroons,” “ lemon hearts shortbread,” etc., and Baby Sistah is telling their online community what is being produced in the Test Kitchen. Instead, Baby Sistah could allow users to be ***part of*** the Test Kitchen and post ingredients of the new cookie he has created. Each month, (or as often as possible), Baby Sistah can describe the inspiration behind the cookie, or what it would be great to enjoy with, or a special characteristic of the cookie, (how it crumbles, the combination of ingredients). With these ingredients and the story behind the cookie in mind, consumers could then get creative: decide a name that fits this cookies “persona.” People can post their idea, and others would be encouraged to vote for their favorite, (“like” their favorite). The most liked name and the creator behind the name, would be announced after a week, on all platforms so that content is consistent and all communities, regardless of the platform, are aware of the contest, and will participate on Facebook next month, and share with their communities. This user-generated content increases excitement, and strengthens the relationship between Baby Sistah and it’s fans, allowing them to feel part of the “family.” It also encourages people to share that they have posted a name, and want their online community of friends and family to “like” or vote for their name, increasing visibility for the company’s page. The contest creates excitement among customers for the winning cookie name to be released for sale to the public on the website. The winner becomes a dedicated fan of Baby Sistah, receives a dozen of the cookies of the month with their winning name, and shares their creative win with their online communities. They also receive recognition on the Baby Sistah website, and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, when their winning name is announced at the close of the contest.

\*\*We have seen this call to action works in several ways: it engages the community in a dialogue, not just between Baby Sistah and their customers, but between the customers as well (nothing like a friendly competition to get people motivated); and encourages spreadable content that the community shares and then re-shares.

 ***Platform for Name that Cookie:* Facebook** Facebook can be a great tool to have dialogue with customers, keeping them engaged on a regular basis, as most Facebook users visit the site several times a day. It can also be a place for fans and potential customers of Baby Sistah to express their ideas, thoughts and concerns, using the comment feature that allows for dialogue back and forth. Currently, because the Facebook posts are sporadic, right now a customer may not go to their page for months at a time because they don’t know if there is a new post. Posting regularly will help tremendously in bringing Baby Sistah to the attention of online communities, and their current online fan base. Currently there is only a one-way conversation occurring on the Facebook page, where viewers are getting photos of cookies and occasional updates, but they aren’t asked for feedback, thoughts, or ideas. The conversation isn’t two-way. One way to change this is by holding contests on their Facebook page would be one way to get the dialog flowing, which will lead to more likes, which will lead to more sales. Facebook posts should relate back to the story behind the cookies, to bring the stories to life and share on the social media sites. It must encourage the customers to respond, because they relate to it, can find it inspiring, heart-warming or personalized. This encourages people to like the content, which will increase visibility, (it will be seen on the person’s), or to repost the content.

 Facebook is the ideal platform for Baby Sistah to engage the crowd by getting them involved with the naming of cookies. The Facebook community - and other social communities - can pick a name for the cookie of the month. From the test kitchen monthly, Carltaro can share his newest creation and what inspired it, focusing on the story and the special unique characteristics of the cookie. Sharing this on Facebook, and then asking people to suggest a name for the cookie. As people suggest names in their comments, others can “vote” by liking the names, so that whatever name gets the most likes is the winner. The winner is announced on Facebook, and other platforms.

**Strategy for User-Submitted Content: Strategies for Leveraging Facebook, Instagram, Twitter**

**-Place here Trevor’s examples of FB posts**

While we feel it is important for Baby Sistah to push out their own content on Instagram, we feel it is imperative that this content encourages them to join in on the conversation and generate content. We suggest Baby Sistah ask for people to submit photos, which is the only content shared on Instagram. These photos can be of themselves, their friends or their family enjoying Baby Sistah Cookies with the caption explaining their tips of how they enjoy these cookies such as dipping in a glass of milk, heat them up before enjoying with hot chocolate, spreading peanut butter all over the cookie, and so forth. We would especially recommend pushing for this content around any sort of holiday. This will remind customers that while Baby Sistah Cookies are great to share any time of the year, they go great, especially around the holidays and for parties. This also correlates with our female target audience, which enjoys gifting and shopping for parties and holidays. These insights from the user submitted content can be used as crowdsourced ideas to develop new products that will better meet the preference of Baby Sistah fans.

One thing of note, when asking customers for content or pushing it yourselves, it is important to use the proper hashtags such as #LoveTips, #SpreadTheLove, #LoveForShare, etc. These are keywords of sorts that will allow more users to easily find out about Baby Sistah when they search for content by these words.

In addition, Twitter is another good platform for creating conversations with fans. Simple conversations like asking them to share their stories about their Christmas gifts for their loved ones, their special cookie recipes for special occasions or let them share ideas about the ideal gifts for their special ones. Hashtags are also recommended in Twitter conversations.

These impressive stories and photos will generate traffic to Baby Sistah social media platforms. The fans will make conversations flow while Baby Sistah directs the conversations by answering comments and creating subtopics constantly. Baby Sistah can also encourage dialogue with users in online communities by sharing their stories or inspirations for the cookies on platforms.

**Example: Mother’s Day Stories:** Mothers and strong women are an important part of the Baby Sistah story.

* Use Facebook to do posts around the holidays to ask for stories: Example - Mother’s Day- what is your Mother’s favorite cookie, favorite memory of making cookies with mother
* Ask people to share their stories of their Mom’s favorite cookie on Facebook
* Same post on Twitter - and post a hashtag on Twitter

-We suggest using the platforms of Instagram and Facebook to share photos of new cookies, stories of the cookies and re-share stories from viewers.

-Instagram linked to Facebook and Twitter

**Strategy 3: Support A Cookie Party with Pinterest Engagement**

 A successful strategy for businesses looking to engage with potential and current customers online is to partner with a group for a cause, and rally online communities around this cause. Pinterest “pinning” is a way for people to show support, and the “ask” is minimal but there is engagement with the company and brand. Baby Sistah can have a cause-related board in which potential fans can see what the company values and who they support, and also allow fans to be part of something by acting as supporters.
 We propose Baby Sistah taps into their roots in the Boston community and leverages the power of Pinterest to show they care about a group, such as kids. For example, to celebrate and support kids, Baby Sistah could offer to throw a class,or an entire school a “cookie party.” They could think about focusing on the opportunities to throw a party for kids in neighborhoods where there is a lot of need. Baby Sistah can partner with a school to determine what class deserves a cookie party celebration, such as a class that recently achieved high scores on a national test, or recently achieved another milestone. Baby Sistah can offer to rally Pinterest users and have them “pin for the cookie part” so that Baby Sistah then throws a cookie party based on the number of pins of support the school or class gets. This engagement could have multiple levels. The pin that you ask Pinterest users to re-pin could be worth $1 dollar and you could ask people to donate to the school, in which the donation would be in the form of a cookie party, or an extra alongside the cookie party. Another level could be having each repin be a cookie, and Baby Sistah asks people to “Help them reach 50 cookies” for the X grade of X school.

The story behind the cookie party cause should be told with engaging pins on a board dedicated to this specific cause. The initial photo could resemble an ad with a description and the “call to action,” along with a photo of the school, the class, and of course, cookies. The pins to follow this initial photo or pin should tell the story of the class or school, why Baby Sistah wants to help the school/class celebrate,and why they want other Pinterest users to get involved. To incentivize people to re-pin and engage with the board, Baby Sistah can offer the 100th pin a prize of a dozen cookies. An important aspect of a mini campaign like this is to have a set goal and end date and to let people know on the Pinterest board, (through photos) and on the web site. Finally, Baby Sistah should share photos of the cookie party from the school or class, and a thank you to those who re-pin to “throw the cookie party.”

This type of strategy is in essence a call to action of “re-pin to show your support” and could be applied to many different causes that Baby Sistah is interested in. The key is to keep the pins ongoing and consistent in their look, and to have a “call to action” so that people can re-pin and know why they are repinning. Pintrest is also heavily focused on photos and inspirational images, such as quotes. This could also be an avenue to pursue, in terms of quotes and inspiring photos

**Implementation plan:**

***Timeline***

The first step to implementing the strategies we suggest is to rename the cookies to reflect the idea that every cookie has a story attached to it. Once the cookies have stories and/or names attached to them, Baby Sistah can redesign aspects of the website to allow for social media content to have a place on the website. We envision this process taking up to two months, as informal or formal user testing is necessary after the site and social media sites have been redesigned.

After the redesign, Baby Sistah can start engaging its viewers via social media to obtain content for the “Share Your Stories” tab on the website. If this tab is not initially launched with the new site, it can be added later in the year when enough user-submitted content has been generated. This section should feature the best user generated stories, pulled from Instagram, Twitter and Facebook

Name the Cookie Contest should begin shortly after the website launch, around March or April. The actual test kitchen contest may take a month to build out, and Baby Sistah should focus on the website before it begins the next strategy. Support a Cookie Party contest should begin in September when the new school year rolls around. By this time, Baby Sistah should have built a decent social media following to allow for a successful campaign.



***Risks***

Baby Sistah does risk losing time if, indeed, its social media strategies are not met with success. With a limited budget, however, this is essentially the best way to generate word of mouth. On the other hand, if Baby Sistah sees rapid growth, the cost to produce could be too much at once. Baby Sistah needs to manage its time and work at a pace that works for the company. Read the social media trends and adjust as necessary. If there is high traffic on Facebook, keep the engagement up, but don’t promote more than usual if you are behind on orders. Baby Sistah could also give customers a timeframe for when they will receive their cookies to help manage time.

**Appendix I: Theoretical Background**

Several theoretical strategies were considered as we developed our interactive media plan for Baby Sistah Cookies. We based our plan on the works of Henry Jenkins, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green . *Spreadable Media* (2013) examines an emerging hybrid model of circulation, where a mix of top-down and bottom-up forces determine how material is shared across and among cultures in far more participatory (and messier) ways*.* The author explained that “this shift from distribution to circulation signals a movement toward a more participatory model of culture, as people are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined. And they are doing so not as isolated individuals but within larger communities and networks, which allow them to spread content well beyond their immediate geographic proximity.” People are now the distributors, not just receivers. They decide which media content they will pass along and take on the role of shaping how media circulates. Moreover, they will also make their presence felt by shaping the way that media flows. Producers, brand managers, customer service professionals, and corporate communicators must wake up to the commercial need to actively listen and respond to them.

The term “stickiness” relates to the need to create content that attracts audience attention and engagement. The concept originated in relation to the idea of spreadability as Gladwell (2000) described: “the aspects of media texts which engender deep audience engagement and might motivate them to share what they learned with others.” In short, to Gladwell, sticky content is material that people want to spread.

Stickiness and spreadability are two fundamental aspects of media content improvement. We aim to develop sticky and spreadable media content in order to establish a Baby Sistah community among cookie lovers. This will allow consumers to become announcers who publicize their thoughts and feelings about our cookies in their own communities. In particular, we aim to use the inspired and memorable stories behind our cookies to make it more sticky and let people share their stories to increase the spreadability. The goal for our improved media content is to expand the boundary of the Baby Sistah community and to increase brand awareness for the company.

Crowdsourcing and user-generated content are other fundamental interactive aspects that we considered. As Jeff Howe (2009) stated, “the line between producer and consumer has begun to blur. Amateurs provided the crowdsourcing engine with fuel, and the open source software movement provided it with a blueprint. However, it is the widespread availability of the means of production that empower the crowd to take part in a process that was long dominated by companies. As a result, the ‘consumer’, as traditionally conceived, is becoming an antiquated concept”

Furthermore, Jeff Howe also explained that, “crowdsourcing uses technology to foster unprecedented levels of collaboration and meaningful exchanges between people from every imaginable background in every imaginable geographical location.” This explanation demonstrates that crowdsourcing could be used to enhance customer engagement for Baby Sistah. We selected media tools like the web site, Facebook and Pinterest as platforms for generating crowdsourced ideas and user-generated content in order to better meet the need of Baby Sistah fans.

Take for instance, our strategies include encouraging people to use hashtags whenever they share their dazzling photos of them enjoying Baby Sistah cookies and asking people to suggest names for cookies. These can lead to new ideas which can be developed new products or services such as new flavors of cookies based on how people enjoy them.

Lastly, as Henry Jenkins explained in his book *Convergence Culture*: *Where Old and New Media Collide* (2007) “people are encouraged to seek out information and make connections among dispersed media content.” Thereby, two-way communication is a critical aspect of convergence culture. Hence, Baby Sistah should engage their audience through social media by using simple actions as our strategies stated. By tagging partnered organizations, creating spaces for people to share their stories and feedbacks, and responding to fans on a regular basis Baby Sistah will finally reap the rewards of its hard work.

**Conclusion**

In today’s online world, Baby Sistah Cookies isn’t just competing with other local bakeries, they are competing with just about every dessert company that has a website, a Facebook page and a Twitter account. It is relatively easy to have deserts shipped directly to your house from anywhere across the country. With such a fragmented market it is easy for a company to get lost in the shuffle, but that’s just the way the cookie crumbles (sorry, we had to). The good news for Baby Sistah is that because the market is so fragmented there is plenty of new opportunity.

To distinguish Baby Sistah from the plethora of other cookie and dessert companies available to consumers, Baby Sistah should enact a multiplatform engagement process using Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram. All of this will tie back nicely to the improved website where the customers can see what’s new, read stories, order cookies and then share the purchase with their friends via social media.

They key to success and differentiation is in the engagement process and the idea that “Every Cookie has a Story.” Using Carltaro’s stories to relate the cookies to specific memories and encouraging users to join in and do the same will humanize the product and get the customer excited to join in on the conversation. Whether through a cookie of the month contest on Facebook or repinning a photo on Pinterest, these active engagements strategies will build lasting relationships with customers online. The fact that food is so strongly tied to memory makes it easy for people to associate stories with the cookies. Engaging customers through different calls to action and interesting content encourages them to share these stories and, in the end, purchase cookies from Baby Sistah because it is a brand they can empathize with.

We know Carltaro has stories—that was proven when he came and spoke to us in class. Now it’s just a matter of sharing his stories with others and engaging customers in a way that will make them excited to respond. Remember the mantra, “Every Cookie has a Story.”

**Carltaro and Angela,**

Thank you for allowing us to work with you on this project. We hope that you find our ideas useful and helpful to you as you move forward with Baby Sistah Cookies.

— Anna Marie, Chu, Keith, Trevor, Victoria