

PR Campaign for The Ugly Mug Diner

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sisterhood Strategies PR is honored and excited to collaborate with The Ugly Mug Diner, a beloved small business that has served the downtown Salem community for a decade. Recognizing the diner's strong community ties and potential for growth, we propose a strategy to expand its reach by tapping into the nighttime dining market, as well as implementing a strong advertising campaign.

Leveraging our expertise in social media and the digital landscape, we aim to position The Ugly Mug Diner as a must-visit evening destination, attracting new customers and potential investors.

We look forward to your feedback on the proposal outlined below and are eager to partner with you on this exciting journey of growth.

IMPLEMENTATION

Background Research

The client is The Ugly Mug Diner located in downtown Salem, Massachusetts. The Ugly Mug, also known as 'The Mug', is a well-established restaurant known for their breakfast and lunch menu. The restaurant opened in April of 2014 and has remained a staple in downtown Salem ever since.

The Ugly Mug has a plethora of good reviews on Yelp, a good presence on social media, and a lot of earned media through social media posts. Their Instagram contains good quality photographs of their food, and they post regularly. They have also recently started a TikTok account to branch out and reach a broader audience. Reviews of the restaurant that have been posted on Yelp are overwhelmingly positive, with most of the reviews being 4 or 5-stars. The main critiques of the restaurant being that there was too long of a wait to get a table.

Strengths: The Ugly Mug has a great location in downtown Salem with a lot of foot traffic that passes by, so there is high visibility to pull in customers. They have over 7k followers on Facebook, over 4k on Instagram (@uglymugdiner), and have recently also started a TikTok (@uglymugdiner) account. They also have an overwhelming amount of positive earned media on social media from customers and tourists who have come by.

Weaknesses: Customers have complained about long wait times and the restaurant being very small and lacking in physical space. The Ugly Mug also experiences a large drop off in business during the wintertime, due to lack of tourism. They also do not post very often on social media platforms, so they are not keeping their audiences engaged and reaching new audiences through consistent posting.

Opportunities: The Ugly Mug has some opportunities to be open at night and doing some events to appeal to a later night crowd. There is also opportunity to expand to another location to allow for more opportunities for customers to enjoy their food and cut down wait time for a table. They could strengthen their website and social media presence as well. Their Instagram account has good quality posts, however, there is an opportunity to grow and engage audiences further with more frequency in posting and keep the restaurant in people's minds, so they are more likely to come in the wintertime.

Threats: The Ugly Mug is located at a spot in downtown where there are multiple other restaurants and cafes nearby. Many people that don't want to wait for a table there end up turning to other restaurants nearby for faster service or end up going to the other cafes to get a coffee while they wait in line for a table.

The Ugly Mug Diner's goal is to continue to have customers coming to the restaurant in the "off season", attract a nighttime crowd through doing events in the evening, and to increase their online presence to attract potential investors to expand to a second location.

Target Audiences and Opinion Leaders

The target audience are individuals who live within or are visiting the Salem area. There are no specific age, race, or gender demographics that we are targeting. Ideally it would be customers who are also on social media and are able to engage with and view The Ugly Mug Diner's social media posts and advertisements.

Proposed Primary Research Methods and Research Opinions

The primary research method we will be using for this client is a customer survey. Our method of doing research was to print out QR codes linking to the survey and putting them on

tables in the restaurant. We left the codes up for a seven-day period, to ensure that we were getting enough data. This way of performing the survey allowed for the customers to do it on their own authority without feeling pressured by an individual and allows for anonymity of the participants.

The goal of this research is to hear the opinions from the customers on the restaurant. We want to know what brought them there, what their wait times would be like, and hear customer recommendations on what they would change about the restaurant. With this information, we can switch or come up with new marketing tactics. The survey also allows for us to gauge customer interest in attending nighttime events at the Ugly Mug, and see if reopening at night for events would be worth the cost.

Goals for The Ugly Mug Diner Campaign

1. Increase year-round customer engagement, particularly during the off-season (winter months).
2. Attract a nighttime crowd through hosting evening events and promotions.
3. Strengthen online presence to reach new audiences and appeal to potential investors for expansion.
4. Improve weekend coffee wait time through advertising online ordering service.

Objectives (following the SMART model)

1. **Increase Social Media Engagement:** Boost engagement on Instagram and TikTok by 30% within three months through consistent posting (3–4 times per week) and interaction with followers.
2. **Enhance Customer Retention During Winter:** Achieve a 15% increase in off-season foot traffic within six months by launching a targeted winter marketing campaign, including social media ads and local promotions.
3. **Assess Nighttime Event Interest:** Gather actionable insights from at least 200 completed customer surveys about nighttime event preferences within a four-week research period.
4. **Improve Wait-Time Perception:** Reduce customer complaints about wait times by 20% within three months through greater advertising and communication of online pre-order service on the website.

Messages and Themes

The overall idea we hope to task away with this campaign is to attract more customers throughout the year & not just during the months of September & October. We want to have a bond with our customers and want them to feel like they're included and partake in our business.

Strategies and Channels of Communication

The ugly mug diner is a diner more tourists visit. There are returning customers but due to this diner being right in the middle of Salem it's mainly customers who come during the months of September & October. But our goal is to host more events throughout the year to keep the diner busy & going. We want to stay consistent on social media and with our ads promoting our diner.

IMPLEMENTATION

Tactics

1. Press release of Friday nighttime events to be sent to local news outlets:

After October, the Ugly Mug faces a big fall off in momentum. Something that the owner wants to implement that can help increase the momentum in the wintertime is to extend hours on Friday nights to host events where people in the North Shore community can hang out and relax. Here's an example of a press release that can be sent to news outlets to get the word out.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Popular breakfast place begins hosting events Friday nights

SALEM, Mass. - Beloved North Shore breakfast place The Ugly Mug Diner will extend its hours on Friday to host nighttime events starting in early January 2025.

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This notion is a part of Ugly Mug's plan to become more than just a breakfast spot. The expanded hours will offer a cozy atmosphere where people can unwind after a long day of work or school, catch up with friends or study.

"Ugly Mug has always been about the community," says Ugly Mug co-owner Dave Babcock. . "Opening at night allows us to expand that mission and give people a space to hang out, study, relax and most importantly, have fun."

According to Babcock, such events include mug decorating contests and game and trivia nights. The diner will also be hosting comedy and artist spotlights where aspiring comedians, musicians and poets can showcase their talents to the North Shore community.

Ugly Mug is currently hiring staff to fulfill its nighttime operations and will launch a promotional campaign across its social media platforms where followers can be updated on event announcements and see exclusive behind-the-scenes footage of its upcoming events. There will also be a form that local comedians, musicians, and poets can fill out for the artist spotlight and comedy night events.

About Ugly Mug Diner

Located in Downtown Salem, Ugly Mug Diner has been serving the North Shore community delicious and nutritious breakfast since 2014. It offers a variety of breakfast and brunch from waffles and briskets to mimosas and sandwiches that customers can order and eat in person or online at home. Ugly Mug is open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, visit UglyMugDiner.com

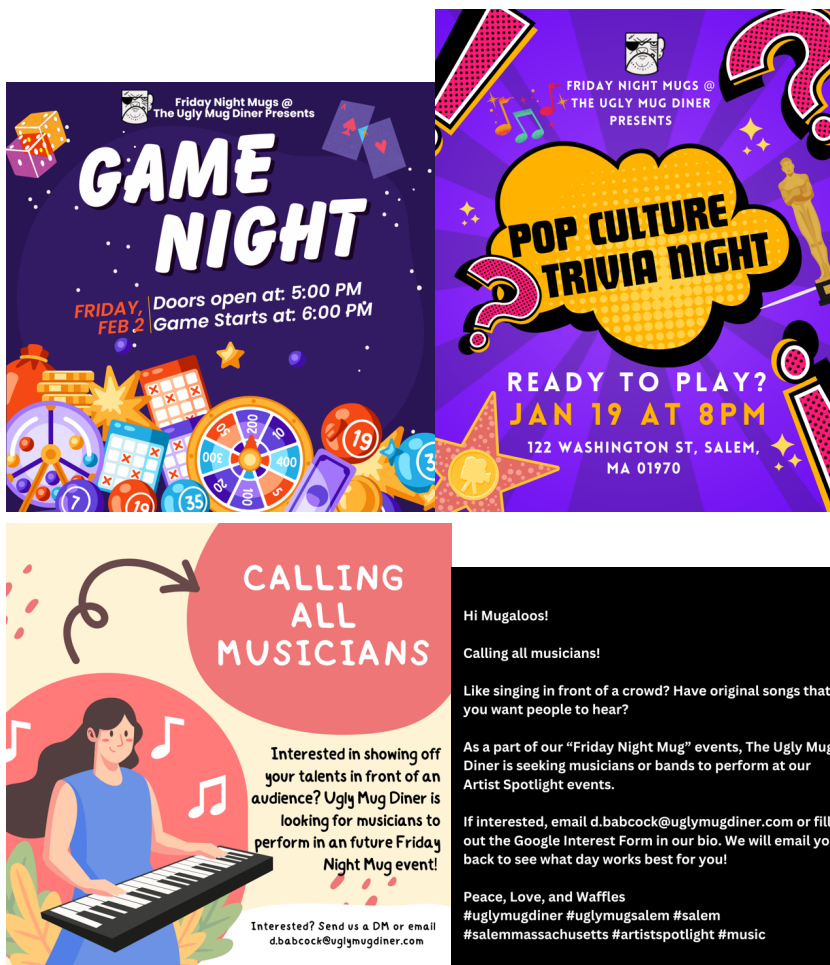
2. Social Media posts announcing nighttime events.

To go along with the press release, this is an example of an Instagram or Facebook post announcing that Ugly Mug Diner will host nighttime events on Fridays. Ugly Mug's biggest weakness is their inconsistent posting on social media platforms. With the announcement of the night events and the rollout of the nighttime campaign, it can get more people to follow and be on the lookout of what is there to come at the diner. This can help during the months were Ugly Mug declines in customers.



3. Example of Event Posts for Friday nighttime events (game, trivia, and artistic/comedy spotlight)

To go along with the press release, this is an example of an Instagram or Facebook post about the Friday night events such as game and trivia night and asking for comedians and musicians who want to show off their talents. This can build consistency in their posting which can increase their following and allow people to stay tuned and excited for what the Ugly Mug has to offer.



4. Social Media Post for mug decorating contest “The Ugly Mug-Off”

Hosting a mug decorating contest is a great way to engage with the community, especially during times when the momentum is low like the wintertime. It’s an interactive event that allows customers to design their own mug where the winning design will turn into a collectible item sold in-store. Competition and creativity are motivators to people. This contest will allow them to have a personal connection and loyalty to the diner and its brand. This event will allow current customers and new ones to go to Ugly Mug’s other events and purchase their food. The following below is a social media post that can be used to promote and announce the contest.



5. Press release of participating in local food festivals to be sent to local news outlets

The Ugly Mug Diner is seeking to expand their location due to the success of its current one, and to resolve the spacing and wait time issue that its customers have. A great way to attract

the interests of potential investors as well as new customers in the area of possible expansion is to participate in food festivals. This will allow them to try out the food and coffee from the diner and would help them finance and look for great locations that they can open another Ugly Mug Diner. It can also help them gain some revenue after the drop off of customers from the Halloween-tourism season. The following below is a press release that can be sent to local news outlets where investors are more likely to hear the news.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Area favorite breakfast place participates in local festivals

SALEM, Mass. - Beloved North Shore breakfast place The Ugly Mug Diner will debut its own food stand at local food, art and music festivals around the North Shore community starting next year.

Festivalgoers can expect Ugly Mug's signature menu items and merchandise at popular events like Salem's So Sweet, the Frozen Fire Festival, Graze the North Shore Food Festival and many more. The diner's presence at these festivals will help attract new customers, delight its loyal ones and attract potential investors to support future expansions.

“Our community has always been the heart of Ugly Mug Diner, and we’re thrilled to introduce and connect with even more people through these well-beloved festivals,” says Ugly Mug co-owner Dave Babcock.

According to Babcock, the diner may participate in competitions at food festivals to earn titles like “Best Coffee in Salem” or “Best Breakfast in Salem” which further fulfill their plans to attract new customers and potential investors as they hope to expand to a different and bigger location.

Ugly Mug will open staff positions to help run the festival stands and launch a promotional campaign across its social media platforms where followers can stay updated on event schedules and exclusive behind-the-scenes content at the festivals.

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6. Celebrate the Holidays with Ugly Mug campaign Magazine/Newspaper Ad – can be converted into a short video ad that can be shown on Instagram, Tik Tok, or YouTube

Since momentum falls in the wintertime, an ad page that can be found in a newspaper or in a pop-up ad that viewers can see when scrolling through Instagram, Facebook, or YouTube can be helpful to remind people that Ugly Mug still exists. This can help potential customers associate The Ugly Mug Diner as a place to go during the holiday season with their families, friends or themselves.



7. Celebrate the Holidays Festive Logo (wintertime only)

The holiday season means a great deal to people as they associate it with happy memories with their family, friends and childhood. People tend to feel more excited when they see decorations everywhere. To accommodate all holidays that people celebrate such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza etc., Ugly Mug can change their logo into a snowman to make it seem neutral and not associated with one particular holiday. The holiday spirit may attract potential customers and current customers to go to Ugly Mug during the winter and even associate the diner with the holiday season. This temporary logo can be used on social media profile pages after Thanksgiving and through the winter season.



Logistics

Budget: Ugly Mug Diner is a small, but successful business with a small but flexible budget.

Timeline: After October, the momentum at The Ugly Mug Diner declines. To increase momentum in the winter season, the “Celebrate the Holiday” campaign which includes the newspaper and social media pop-up ad will take place after Thanksgiving until the end of

December. It will keep its festive logo post-Thanksgiving until the end of February. Starting January 2025, it will launch the “Friday Night Mugs” events to get a consistency of at least 200 customers per day.

Staffing Needs: Ugly Mug will plan to ask current staff if they can work nights for the Friday nighttime events and food festival events. If needed, press release will go out that Ugly Mug is hiring part-time workers for these events.

To measure effectiveness of the campaign, we would need to check our social media growth and attendance of events and contests. We would measure the growth in followers across The Ugly Mig Diner’s social media platforms and utilize business and social media analytics to see user engagement on posts. We would also evaluate the earnings of the events and contests to see if they had a positive or negative impact on the restaurant’s finances. We would also conduct a survey following the campaign to see customer receptiveness and if the events are something that should be continued at the restaurant, as well as get customer feedback on the competitions that the restaurant put on.