

## Part 1 - Insight into Business

A marketing plan to increase customer numbers at Roots Herefordshire

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PART 2 - SUSTAINABILITY

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## Part 1 –Company Project

### Summary

Roots Herefordshire, a farm shop based near Ledbury, is employing a new marketing plan to increase customer numbers in the shop and café. The changes are being made to boost customer numbers to ensure the shop and café remain profitable as sales have recently declined. The marketing plan looks at hosting a range of events aimed at attracting new customers, in addition to having more powerful social media pages. Events include children's entertainment and supplier tasting sessions. The social media pages to be updated are Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Additionally, the shop loyalty cards are going to be updated to incorporate the new branding to raise awareness of the changes. Also, VIP lunches are being arranged to introduce local journalists to the business so they are aware of the shop and the team behind it.

### Introduction

Roots Herefordshire is a farm shop, plant centre and café based just outside Ledbury. It is owned and managed by husband and wife team Will and Meg Edmonds and employs a team of staff in the shop, kitchen and plant centre. Roots Herefordshire has been struggling to attract new customers over the past couple of years but has managed to keep the loyal existing customers. Therefore it seemed appropriate to come up with a marketing plan aimed at broadening the target market and attracting new faces and interest. Change is needed as customer numbers are not high enough to keep the shop profitable. Marketing is about increasing revenue and gaining a competitive advantage, by better targeting of customers and better marketing strategies (Haines, 1999). The marketing plan is going to lead to the implementation of some changes to Roots Herefordshire to try and attract a wider target market.

The first method used to improve the site, was a complete revamp to the shop, kitchen and outside area, as well as a new name and new branding. This was to create a more modern and more inviting environment, and also something to tell the newspapers about to gain publicity. The name change from Roots at Little Verzons to Roots Herefordshire, was to reflect the surrounding area in which products are sourced from, rather than just the location of the shop. The bakery in the shop was moved from being in the back out of the public eye to the first thing people can see and smell as they come into the store. "Researchers have found a pleasant-smelling environment can have a positive effect on shopping behaviour" (Marketing Profs, 2001). The smell of freshly baked cakes should encourage sales in the café and shop. Publicising the new changes to the layout and design of the site is very important as it will lead to customers coming in to see the improvements. It will also lead to word of mouth publicity as they tell their friends about the changes. The changes were carried out to not only freshen up the place, but to be a talking point for the press and local newspapers. A stronger brand image could be key in providing a more memorable experience as it is more eye catching than the previous logo and signage. Also it is something new that they can tell their friends about which could lead to increased custom by word of mouth.

Another marketing strategy to be used is introducing a series of events to the shop including tastings and meet the supplier events, aimed at promoting different products. Meet the supplier events

allows customer to ask questions and feel involved, an experience they do not receive at larger stores such as supermarkets.

The menu in the café has also been modernised and updated, and also branding will soon be making more of an impact in the café with the introduction of new menus and menu stands incorporating the new logo. Constantly showing people the new logo means they are going to be more likely to remember it. The new menu in the café reflects seasonal produce, and also promotes the home grown meat and produce available, and also offers vegetarian options as an integral part of the menu rather than just an option because it has to be there. Promoting seasonal produce is very important in the café as the produce will also be available in the shop.

The roadside location means signs outside the shop can be displayed and can be crucial in attracting passers by who have not visited the shop before. Seasonal produce is advertised this way, in particular premium products such as asparagus that is only available for a short season.

## Marketing plan objectives

### Objective 1: Identify and list events for shop and café for the next year

It is important to highlight calendar dates that are going to be relevant over the forthcoming year to ensure there is enough time for plans or advertising to be put into place. For example, Mothering Sunday and Father's Day are very important dates in the retail calendar as people will be willing to treat their parents. Promoting the fact that Roots has gifts available should encourage people into the farm shop. Food events have to meet a different range of consumer and producer expectations than other events (Michael Hall and Sharples, 2008). Food is a major part of consumer expenditure, 11.3% of household expenditure went on food in 2011 (National Statistics, 2011). Hosting events is a good way to attract new customers as they will something different to the usual shopping experience. This is one of the reasons customers use farm shops, they may appreciate the customer attention which they do not receive in a supermarket or larger shops. The Farmers' retail and Markets Association's survey suggests that 90% of shoppers would rather buy from farm shops if they could (Lane, 2004). Price is also a key factor in shoppers purchase choices, and during the recession consumers have had less disposable income. This could be why shoppers are not buying from farm shops even though they would like to.

A cider tasting event was conscientiously planned for the Saturday before Father's day, to attract people to buy gifts for their Dad's and treat them to a day out and lunch in the café. Supplier tasting events allow customers to speak directly to the producer and ask any questions they may have. This is a fantastic selling point as in supermarkets they do not get this opportunity. It also allows them to try before they buy, to make sure they are happy with the product, which they will appreciate if it is a premium product in a higher price range. Supplier events also offers an opportunity to attract new customers if the event is advertised properly. If the supplier also advertises it, some of their customers who may not have previously been to the shop may come to the event and keep coming back if they find products they like.

Events planned and hosted include cake decorating for children during half-term holidays, a garden themed children's event in the summer holidays and other supplier tasting sessions to coincide with relevant "food weeks". These are found in the appendices.

Important dates in the calendar can be exploited, with themed occasions or products adding value to stock. Pumpkin carving for children at Halloween is a very important event to advertise well as pumpkins are home grown and offer a great opportunity for a high profit margin, especially if value is added through selling the pumpkin carving event rather than just the pumpkin. Additionally it is important to attract children and parents to the farm shop so they are aware of the variety of fruit and vegetables available to encourage healthy eating. Other dates such as relevant national food weeks and days can be utilised, with promotions in the café and shop. Recipe ideas to go with the specific product will also increase sales if the customer realises they will be able to create the dish.

"Foodie" nights celebrating seasonal produce are events that Meg and Will have made the most of for the last few years, but have slowed down in the last few months as work was being carried out at both shops. As part of the marketing plan the events will be offered again because as well as showcasing the home grown or home made produce, value is added to the product when it is sold as the meal and entertainment rather than just an individual product. "The modern consumer needs to be entertained and informed" (Lane, 2004). The customer needs to have a reason for choosing a farm shop rather than a more convenient supermarket store. Additionally, once the customer has tried the product cooked for them they will want to recreate it themselves at home so it will increase sales of the produce used. Customers are constantly searching for meal solutions (EBLEX, 2007). Providing customers with the ideas and arranging the ingredients and recipes for them should increase sales as it is saving their time.

The Rushwick farm shop has had a kitchen installed and now hosts regular pizza nights, and the popularity of these suggest it would be worthwhile introducing them to Roots Herefordshire. They will be quite straightforward to run as the format has already been used at Rushwick, there will not need to be any extra training as Meg knows the recipes and methods.

The events held in store are to be advertised further afield than just in store to ensure new customers are targeted. The events organised for children will be promoted at the local schools, with flyers and posters being distributed by cafe staff who already have children at the schools. Children's events such as cake decorating give children entertainment whilst the parents can browse the shop or relax with coffee and cake in the café, both of which will lead to spending.

## Objective 2: Check status of Facebook and Twitter

Facebook and Twitter are very powerful tools in marketing. They are reasonably simple and quick ways of passing on a message to a larger audience compared to other marketing methods. A valid objective for social media usage in a business is to increase brand awareness (Zwilling, 2013). Brand awareness needs to be increased for the Roots Herefordshire shop, so it is important that Facebook and Twitter are used more effectively. It is imperative that these sites are kept up to date, as success will not appear overnight (Evans, 2010). The pages also need to be interesting so that people "like" or "follow" the page to carry on receiving feeds. A 30-day campaign has been set up for Twitter, where all the tweets have been planned in advance, based on significant things happening over the

period, and every day has its own tweet. As it is created in advance it does not take extra time up during the period, the twitter user can simply check the list and compose the tweet for that day. Examples are letting customers know when new local produce is available, and also gently reminding people of events that are taking place in the near future. Facebook and Twitter are important as followers and customers can be reminded with a tweet or status of events they may have seen beforehand but since forgotten about. It is a more subtle method than reminding them directly.

Facebook and Twitter will also be key in attracting new and local people. In the area, twice a week there is a "Hereford hour", in which local businesses communicate on twitter and can use the hashtag and share information with other businesses and followers. This is useful as different businesses can support each other with ideas or skills. It also provides local people with an easy search to find out information, they know they can look for #Herefordhour and find local results.

### Objective 3: Reprint of loyalty card to include café and space for an email address

Another idea to promote the branding of the shop is to reprint the loyalty cards currently used in the farm shop to include the café as well, and also to include space for customers to leave an email address, so we can collect details for a customer database. The loyalty cards currently work by the customer receiving a stamp for every £5 they spend in the shop, and once they have 10 stamps they receive a free cup of coffee in the café. To improve their attraction to customers, they will be able to be used when £5 is spent in the café too. Additionally, once they have the new logo and branding on, they are something that customers carry around and can show other people. Also keeping the card in their purse or wallet reminds the customer of the shop. Including space on the card for an email address will be a quick and efficient way to collect customer details, in the most useful method for marketing potential. Emails are a quick and modern method of communication, for the sender and recipient. The email address can be used for sending customers a newsletter letting them know what is going on at Roots. It will contain events coming up, what produce is in season and available in store, and the weekly menu for the café. The loyalty card should encourage customer longevity if they feel spending in store will lead to benefits in the long run. Additionally, if a customer knows they are close to reaching enough stamps for a free drink they may increase their spending to gain this reward. Again, the new design and set up including receiving stamps for spending in the café can be publicised in the press or online to help attract new customers.

### Objective 4: LinkedIn

Another way in which to raise brand awareness and therefore increase customers is by networking with other businesses and staff. Therefore, as part of the marketing plan a LinkedIn account is to be set up for business owner Meg Edmonds, to create a network online. LinkedIn brings business people together in a novel way (Harwood, 2013). Users can get connected with colleagues, similar people or potential employers. LinkedIn will be useful for the business as it can get connected to many useful contacts, especially other producers and suppliers. The website can also be used for recommendations and advice, both of which will raise awareness for the business. A network of contacts will be useful for the business owner as it may help with finding new suppliers. Suppliers may get in contact via the website, and suggest appropriate products they may have. This is a

modern way of discussing business, compared to previous methods of cold calling. It also means there is time to think about the products rather than making a decision on the spot.

### Objective 5: list of VIP's for lunch with business owner

As part of the marketing plan, to publicise the shop in a more unusual way, a list has been drawn up of local influences it would be important to invite to a VIP lunch with Meg, the business owner. It is vital to get journalists aware of Roots and what the shop and café offers, to ensure when there are stories to put into the press they will be more inclined to cover the story. People who are on this list include journalists from all of the local newspapers and magazines. Also people that work for tourism in the area, as they too will be useful contacts to have on side when there are important events to advertise. The guests will be invited to a one on one lunch, and then to a more formal launch with the other guests. The lunch will showcase the new kitchen, café and menu, and raise the profile of the shop so that journalists are aware of it.

### Conclusion

To increase customer numbers at Roots Herefordshire it is important to offer them an experience that they do not receive at other shops to encourage a return to the store. Hosting events for children keeps them occupied whilst allowing the parents to browse the shop or enjoy the café. Foodie nights will offer food education to consumers that may not have previously used a certain product. Additionally, supplier tastings allow consumers to meet producers, which offers another dimension to the weekly shop and provides a change from trawling through aisles. Events need to be advertised to a new target market to insure new customers are found. Also to increase customer numbers, marketing on social media needs to be frequent and effective to ensure the message is passed on. Additionally, an improved loyalty card scheme should encourage new customers and spending once advertised properly. Finally, a closer relationship with journalists and people in the tourism industry should also help to boost numbers and sales. A new image and signage will also increase chances of passers by calling in if they have not visited the shop before.

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# Appendices

National food dates and important events:

The image shows a calendar for September 2013. The calendar is presented as a page with two binder rings at the top. The month 'september' is written in a large green font at the top left, and '2013' is at the top right. The days of the week are listed in green: MONDAY, TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, and SAT/SUN. The dates are arranged in a grid. Several dates are highlighted with food-related events:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
26 August	27	28	29	30	31/1 September
2	3	4	5	6	7/8
9	10	11	12	13	14/15
16 National cupcake week	17	18	19	20	21/22
23 British cheese week British food fortnight	24	25	26	27	28/29
30	1 October	2	3	4	5/6

# october

2013

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
30 September	1 October British egg week	2	3	4	5/6
7 National curry week	8	9	10	11	12/13 Big Apple Harvestime
14 Chocolate week	15	16	17	18	19/20
21 National apple day	22	23	24	25	26/27
28 Half Term	29	30	31 Halloween	1 November	2/3
4	5	6	7	8	9/10

# november

2013

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
28 October Half term	29	30	31 Halloween	1 November	2/3 Flavours of Herefordshire food festival
4 British sausage week	5 Bonfire night	6	7	8	9/10 National pudding day
11	12	13	14	15	16/17
18	19	20	21	22	23/24
25	26	27	28 Thanksgiving	29	30/1 December St Andrews Day

# december

2013

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
25 November	26	27	28	29	30/1 December
2	3	4	5	6	7/8
9	10	11	12	13	14/15
16	17	18	19	20	21/22
23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas day	26 Boxing Day	27	28/29
30	31 New Years Eve	1 January	2	3	4/5

# january

2014

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
30 December	31	1 New years day	2	3	4/5
6	7	8	9	10	11/12
13	14	15	16	17	18/19
20	21	22	23	24	25/26 Farmhouse Breakfast Week
27	28	29	30	31	1/2 February
3	4	5	6	7	8/9

# february

2014

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
27 January	28	29	30	31	1/2 February
3	4	5	6	7	8/9
10	11	12	13	14 Valentines Day	15/16
17	18	19	20	21	22/23
24 Half Term?	25	26	27	28	1/2 March
3	4	5	6	7	8/9

# march

2014

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
24 February	25	26	27	28	1/2 March St Davids day
3	4 Shrove Tuesday	5 Ash Wednesday	6	7	8/9
10	11	12	13	14	15/16
17 St Patricks Day	18 Bacon connoisseurs week	19	20	21	22/23
24	25	26	27	28	29/30 Mothering Sunday
31	1 April	2	3	4	5/6

# april

2014

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
31 March	1 April	2	3	4	5/6
7	8	9	10	11	12/13
14	15	16	17	18 Good Friday	19/20
21 Easter Sunday Great British Beef Week	22 Easter Monday	23 St George's day	24	25	26/27
28	29	30	1 May	2	3/4
5	6	7	8	9	10/11

# may

2014

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SAT/SUN
28 April	29	30	1 May	2	3/4
5 Bank holiday	6	7	8	9	10/11
12 Real Bread week	13	14	15	16	17/18
19	20	21	22	23	24/25
26 Bank holiday Half term	27	28	29	30	31/1 June
2	3	4	5	6	7/8

## Part 2 - Sustainability

### Summary

A number of methods are used at Roots Herefordshire to run the business sustainably. There are economic, environmental and social concerns that need to be met to help preserve the environment for generations to come.

### Introduction

Sustainability refers to the continuing preservation of systems whilst looking at the environmental, economic and social concerns (Crane and Matten, 2007). Staff at Roots at Rushwick and Roots Herefordshire try to act sustainably in all of these three areas. Sustainability is a key concept businesses must try and meet demands to ensure that our planet is protected for future generations. Roots Herefordshire tries to be as sustainable as possible. The main environmental influence is that the farm is organic, so doesn't pollute the environment. Also the seasonal menu offered at Roots Herefordshire is environmentally friendly as home grown and local produce is primarily used which has a lower carbon footprint than exported produce grown in other climates. The main economic factor Roots tries to focus on, is energy efficiency so to not waste resources.

### Economical

Energy efficiency is very important in sustainability, as energy accounts for 85% of all greenhouse gas emissions (OECD, 2001). To reduce energy consumption, chilled and frozen stock was only ordered as it was needed to keep the number of fridge and freezers used to a minimum. At the Rushwick site after the wood oven was installed, when it was lit it produced enough heat to keep the shop warm in winter months so heating was not needed. In quieter periods of the year when there was surplus produce it got used in meals for the café to minimise waste whilst also saving money. One of the main factors of sustainability is the rising concern of waste disposal (Crane and Matten, 2007). Another way in which waste is managed, is every part of the animal being used, lower value cuts of the animal are being used for mince and bones also being used for stocks and soups.

### Social

Roots Herefordshire prides itself on being a food hub for local products. Produce that is not grown or made by the team is sourced from as close as possible, to support other businesses and reduce food miles. Another social factor is convenience for customers. Both Roots shops offer a wide range of products so people can do a lot of their weekly shop in one place. This therefore reduces customers travelling as they do not need to travel further afield.

A larger social factor is both site provide a number of jobs for people in the community. The farm itself requires a full time farm manager as well as part time work for students in busier periods, when there is lots to do, for example planting or picking produce. The café and shops also provide part time work for a number of people in the community. The jobs available are often flexible to suit mothers with young children, which is good because it means they can still work and pick children up from school. Obesity is a growing problem (Oosterveer and Sonnenfeld, 2012), so it is very important to give children more exposure to farms and farm produce, as they need to be educated about fresh produce to make sure they have a healthy diet.

## Environmental

The farm at Rushwick where the majority of the produce is grown is organic, which means artificial chemical fertilisers are banned and pesticides are restricted. "Organic farming methods offer the best, currently available, practical model for addressing climate-friendly food production" (Soil Association, not dated). Organic farming is one of the most sustainable farming practises, it is least damaging for the environment, there is lower pollution than conventional farming methods. Beef, lamb, chicken, eggs, and a range of fruit and vegetables are all produced on the farm. This is very healthy for the business as it means if there are problems elsewhere they will still have produce to sell. Currently Britain is not self-sufficient, 40% of all food consumed is imported (Global food security, not dated), which is a worrying figure for food security. Fertile soil is developed by using manure (Soil Association, not dated), which means produce has enough nutrients to grow.

Seasonal produce is stocked which is more sustainable than buying in produce in from other climates. Also a seasonal menu is offered in the café which is good for the environment as the carbon footprint from food miles is minimal.

The brand Ecover is stocked, there are large refill bags held in the shop so people can refill their old bottles and get household product refills such as washing up liquid at a lower price than if they were to buy a new bottle. This is more environmentally friendly as a lot less plastic bottles are needed as people do not need a new bottle every time. Products available are washing up liquid, washing liquid, hand soap, fabric conditioner and all-purpose cleaner. The products themselves are green (Ecover, 2013), so are not damaging to the planet. Being able to reuse the bottles is a very popular idea and many people like the fact they are helping the environment. Fruit and vegetable waste is collected for compost throughout the week so this does not contribute to landfill waste. Additionally, the business owners allow recycling bins for the public on the Rushwick car park site. This is very useful for shop recycling but also encourages customers to recycle as they can bring their recycling when they come to the shop. One of the aims of sustainability is to look after the environment for future generations, and recycling and reusing helps with this. Advertising Roots Herefordshire and the events online is more environmentally friendly as it does not require masses of paper for posters and flyers, which means less trees will be needed.

## Conclusion

Roots Herefordshire uses many methods to be a sustainable business. The organic farm produces food for the local area which is more sustainable than relying on exported food producing a large carbon footprint. The farm and farm shops also provide a number of jobs for the community. Additionally produce is sourced from as locally as possible, the majority is from within the county. This is good for supporting other local businesses as well as reducing food miles. Energy consumption is managed carefully, and waste is also controlled as much as possible. However, there is more than can be done. One way in which the business could be more sustainable is by carrying out more tasks electronically rather than using paper. Once all the stock taking has been transferred to an online system, a lot less paper will be needed. Also, renewable energy systems such as solar panels and water collection for irrigation could be introduced. Roots Herefordshire is doing well to be meeting some sustainability targets but as it becomes a higher priority for businesses more will need to be done.

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