MEJO 332-002 Public Relations Writing
APPLES Client Portfolio
The Meantime Coffee Co.
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COMMUNICATION AUDIT

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BACKGROUND

The Meantime Coffee Co. is a student-run nonprofit café located in the lobby of the Campus Y, a hub for social justice and innovation at UNC-Chapel Hill. Founded in 2016 by and for students, Meantime started as a Creating University Born Entrepreneurs (CUBE) venture and quickly expanded through local partnerships. Starting with a $10,000 donation to the Global Gap Year program in 2017, Meantime gives back to the Carolina community annually by funding scholarships and donating to local organizations. Meantime also partners with small businesses such as Carrboro Coffee Roasters to make sustainable food products accessible on campus. Meantime is committed to upholding values of transparency, integrity, kindness, innovation and social responsibility, and its mission includes providing opportunities for professional development, reinvesting in the Chapel Hill community, supporting student ventures, and fostering responsible consumption on campus.

Since its founding, Meantime has developed a consistent marketing presence, most notably on popular social media channels Facebook and Instagram. With rotating marketing officials, Meantime's engagement with student audiences has been variable depending on creative decisions. Meantime's marketing mix is primarily centered around its website, social media, and physical outreach. This communication audit will perform a SWOT analysis on each of these communications channels and conclude with recommendations in order to further enhance Meantime's impact in Chapel Hill and beyond.

SWOT ANALYSIS

WEBSITE

Strengths	- Clean, minimal aesthetic - Concise but informative language on home page - Detailed 2022 Impact Report increases professionalism and reifies the community impact of the company - Intuitive navigation tools to secondary pages - Compelling language emphasizes community & sustainability foci
Weaknesses	- Generic photos reduce uniqueness of the brand - Lack of in-store photos, including baristas and products - Lack of accessible information about recent donations - Lack of clear mission statement
Opportunities	- Embed social media posts into website to ensure recency of content - Make contact info (emails & phone numbers) more accessible - Increase personability through recent pictures, events, menus, etc. - Use infographics to clearly link selling products in-store with community impact - Potential for an online merchandise page to showcase t-shirts, mugs, stickers, etc.
Threats	- Lose professional/catering opportunities to more refined and upscale brands like Carolina Coffee Shop - Lose trust with customers about social investment due to lack of donation details - Brand lacks cohesion, as website style has remained static while merch and physical café have recently been improved - Product information falls to the background, could lose competition to cafés with more unique flavors and drink specials

The Meantime Coffee Co.'s website lacks a refined brand image that maintains a concise explanation of its values while uplifting the authentic and bubbly nature of its student-run café. This issue is seen most evidently through its home page, which persuasively summarizes its community and sustainability initiatives but lacks photos and animated visuals that showcase its student workers and specialty products. The Meantime marketing team should look for a website

design that maintains a sleek, professional aesthetic while allowing room to exhibit student creativity, as seen on its social media pages. Additionally, communication tools such as embedded social media posts and infographics can provide more detailed information about its donation structure, current menus and events, and barista ventures. Using these tactics to find a stronger balance of informativity and imagination will boost relatability with its student consumers and more accurately portray its quirky café culture.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Strengths	- Strong and growing Instagram presence seen through follower and like counts - Informative Instagram posts educate followers about products, events, and operations - Concise biography underscores fundamental aspects of brand and distinguishes it from competitors - TikToks and Instagram reels follow relevant trends to target student audiences
Weaknesses	- Lack of cohesion in post styles, such as caption variations - Lack of consistent posting on TikTok and Instagram reels, important tools for reaching student audiences - Infographic and photo posts are not integrated well in the Instagram feed
Opportunities	- Boost audience engagement through interactive content such as polls and giveaways - Establish and follow a consistent color palette for Instagram graphics and photos - Utilize content calendars in order to spread out social media posts more evenly and engage audience at times of peak activity
Threats	- Overly edited graphics disconnect the brand from its priorities in terms of drinks, donations, and community - Navigate a healthy balance between quirky/funny content and informative/educational content guided by brand values

The Meantime Coffee Co.'s use of social media, primarily Instagram and TikTok, successfully establishes a fun yet driven brand image. However, this can be further refined by maintaining consistency in the aesthetics of Instagram posts and utilizing content calendars to space out posts that fulfill different niches. I specifically recommend that captions all follow a consistent algorithm which includes a hook and call to action. This can make posts more digestible and pull more viewers into the physical café. Similarly, photo-based and graphic-based content should be more balanced and integrated in the feed in order to provide necessary information to the audience while connecting this information to real images of products and the local community. Overly edited graphics can clog the feed and create a disconnect between information such as donation announcements and the physical café operations that fuel these advancements. Its TikTok and Instagram reels videos follow trends that are relevant to student audiences, but these videos could be created and posted on a more regular basis to stay in tune with shifting trends in the world of digital media.

PHYSICAL OUTREACH

Strengths	- Signage on the Campus Y door clearly indicates location and hours - Rotating stand-up chalkboard uses bright colors and intriguing designs to raise awareness of special products, events, and more - Tabling events use free merch, informative branded materials, and personal interactions to increase brand awareness, targeting younger students to form a loyal customer base - Annual voter registration event creates a plan of action for customers that advances Meantime's values of social justice and equity
Weaknesses	- Lack of signage navigating students to Meantime from nearby - Chalkboard sign is worn and often illegible or outdated - Lack of direct communication with UNC professors, faculty, and other Chapel Hill residents that are part of a significant customer base

Opportunities	● Tabling at central student hubs such as the pit will create further integration with campus life ● Flyers and signage in central campus areas such as the pit, the Student Union, and dining halls can form connections between these areas and the distant location of the Campus Y ● Events could be held more frequently and diversified in type, such as arts events or informational presentations about the coffee industry
Threats	● Paper materials might struggle to compete with competitors that are shifting to prioritize digital marketing tactics ● Lack of resources to explore alternatives to traditional flyers ● Physical outreach must be consistent and energetic in order to cyclically educate new populations on campus and remain relevant

The Meantime Coffee Co.'s use of physical outreach, consisting primarily of signage, outreach events, and in-house events, creates a personable image of a brand that cares about its surrounding community. The primary opportunities for growth in this communication sector are through consistent events and targeted outreach in high-populated areas on campus, such as the pit and the quad. Students are always on the move but tend to congregate in central parts of campus which can feel quite removed from the Campus Y, which is situated near North campus. In-person outreach events are especially important to put a person behind Meantime's brand and display the zeal of student workers at Meantime through authentic interactions. Also, clear and attention-grabbing signage should be positioned alongside events in these high-population areas in order to spread awareness of Meantime's northern location and reaffirm a brand image that is transparent in its messaging.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Meantime Coffee Co.'s current communications mix demonstrates a clear commitment to connect and collaborate with student audiences through persuasive social media posts, centralized website messaging, and authentic outreach events. To strengthen this mix and amplify its reach on UNC's campus, I recommend that Meantime develops an updated strategic branding plan that includes standardized practices on Instagram, its website, and in-person advocacy. These updates should include a standardized color palette for all communications, best practices in terms of captions and story messaging, and graphic design that strategically connects important company information to imagery of the café and in-person operations.

Communications should prioritize creating this important link between buying a drink in the physical café and supporting Meantime's mission in terms of social investments, professional development, and more. This tactic will motivate customers to connect on a genuine level with Meantime's community goals and see the larger impact of their seemingly simple café decisions. One large component of this solution is a website redesign, which should create a digital space that more adequately reflects the creativity behind Meantime's story and student workers. The website should include integrated social media posts in order to create a more seamless digital presence that allows viewers to hop across platforms with ease.

Marketing efforts should serve to uphold Meantime's core values, notably transparency, while efficiently educating consumers about the company's current products, events, and initiatives. By following these recommendations, Meantime has the opportunity to grow its relationship with current markets in Chapel Hill while gaining new, loyal supporters to fuel the business for years to come.