

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE:
A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR THE OLDE COLONIAL CAFE**

Honors Thesis

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Abstract

Having a clear and consistent brand is an important marketing tool for any business. As a whole, the restaurant industry has a unique opportunity to attract a wide range of customers and multiple tools at their disposal to help deliver consistent clientele as well as draw in new people. This paper provides a case study of the Olde Colonial Cafe, a restaurant located in Norwood, Massachusetts. The purpose of this study was to examine the current state of the restaurant and find and create tools that the owner and manager could use to attract a younger target audience, which is a stated primary goal of theirs. Using a variety of research as well as by drawing on my own experiences as a seven year employee of the O.C.C., several changes were recommended and models provided to demonstrate the kinds of updates that are likely to expand their customer base.

Sweeping upgrades were made to the O.C.C.'s website and menu. To align with the O.C.C.'s goal of reaching a younger audience, two releases were created. The first was a standard format event release and the second a social media release. Both were created based on findings from original research and conversations with the manager and staff at the O.C.C. about ways they might be interested in reaching their desired target audience.

Introduction

Understanding media and target audience are critical aspects of running a business. For restaurants, these elements can be challenging, especially for older establishments that tend to lag behind in the use of media, technology, social media and digital strategy. Over the course of nine months I examined the communications practices of the Olde Colonial Cafe in Norwood, Massachusetts. Based on discussions with the owner and manager, it was agreed upon that the focus should be on attracting a target audience between the approximate ages of 30 to 40 years of age. This age group differs when compared to the restaurant's current patrons who are roughly 15-20 years older (45-65 years old). It was the goal of this project to examine the O.C.C.'s menu design, website, and community relations in order to provide suggestions and recommendations to encourage a younger customer base. This project will provide information about the town demographics of Norwood and information about the intended target audience. The overall goal is to provide the O.C.C. with clear, useful information and media tools that can be easily implemented and used to better reach their target audience.

To begin, a questionnaire was made to assist the owner and manager of the restaurant in articulating their end goals for the project. The questions focused on various aspects of the O.C.C.'s image. For example, they were asked to describe their ideal concept, the current typical client (including age range) and how they currently communicate with their audience. All of this data collection was conducted in an effort to educate the owner of the O.C.C. about the multitude of different ways he might reach patrons and to equip O.C.C. staff with tools that will ultimately help them best serve their desired clientele.

Demographics

Norwood, Massachusetts is located in Norfolk county in eastern Massachusetts. The town has five elementary schools, an early childhood center, one middle school, and one high school. A private K-8 catholic school is also located in downtown Norwood. The town of Norwood has a population of 29,018 people, a median age of 40.5 and a median household income of \$83,883 ([“Norwood, MA,” n.d.](#)). The town has two train stations on the Franklin commuter rail line, which gives the town a higher average of commuters using public transportation than the national average([“Norwood, MA,” n.d.](#)). The downtown area has multiple public lots and is surrounded by local business and a town common. All of this makes Norwood quite accessible to the average person.

Target Audience

Based on the client questionnaire, the desire to reach a younger demographic was clear. As stated, current patrons of the restaurant range between 45 to 65 years of age. After speaking with the manager it was decided that the goal should be to target people closer to 30 years of age, a range commonly known as millennials. Tapping into the millennial market is important because millenials are the largest living generation within the United States (Oydele, 2018). According to “Millennials as New Parents” people between 25 and 34 years old account for 10.8 million households with children. Furthermore, the percentage of this age group who live in suburban areas is 51 percent ([Fromm, 2013](#)). Being a southern suburb of Boston means that Norwood is a desirable location with a robust population of millennials in close proximity to the Olde Colonial Cafe.

We know millennials live and work in the area, but how best to reach them? This age group is more likely than older generations to create and use social media platforms.

“Millennials are also more likely than older adults to say technology makes life easier and brings family and friends closer together” ([NW, Washington, & Inquiries, 2010](#)). The generation gap in technology use is a wide one, and clearly shows that millennials can easily be reached online. Platforms commonly used by this age group are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Of course, millennials also rely on company websites to give them information and aid in their decision making. Online interactions between businesses and customers is an integral part of marketing to this age group ([Kaye, 2014](#)). Kaye states that millennials are more likely to support organizations that share their values and actively support and better the community. According to research, adults under 50 years old rely heavily on reviews and word of mouth ([Smith & Anderson, 2016](#)). This indicates a heavy reliance on peer reviews and online comments when it comes to millennial decision making. Websites like [yelp.com](#) and [tripadvisor.com](#) are other likely sources of information for millennials, two sites that can help or hurt business depending on the nature of the reviews.

The Menu

Menus serve a dual purpose for restaurants and are one of the most important parts of an establishment. Not only do menus display the food and services offered, the menu is also used to underscore the brand image of the restaurant. The overall design and layout of a menu can have a direct impact on how and what customers order. For instance, menu descriptions can influence guest perception of a dish and how much they expect to pay for it (Charles Spence, 2018). According to Spence’s study, more descriptive menu items are ordered more frequently and can be priced higher. But, this does not mean that every menu item should be described in great detail. When that occurs, guests may be overwhelmed and the restaurant might come across as elitist([Spence, 2018](#)).

Another important aspect in menu design is the number of options. This is especially true when there are too many options for guests to choose from. According to the article *12 Psychological Tricks of Restaurant Menus*, having a large number of choices can increase anxiety in guests, where as when fewer options are presented, the faster and easier guests tend to order (Cooper, 2017). Other suggestions made by Cooper include removing dollar signs when pricing items to shift focus away from money and back to the food. The placement of a dish on the menu is also important in forming customer perception and expectations. With regards to the O.C.C.'s menu, higher priced dishes, such as the Lobster Casserole (listed as market price) were moved to the top of the menu. Moving expensive dishes to top creates the idea that menu items that follow are more reasonably priced ([Kershaw, 2009](#)).

When examining existing menu options for the Olde Colonial Cafe, it was obvious that there were too many choices. When seated, each diner received a standard dinner menu, a dinner special menu and a signature menu. In addition to the overwhelming number of options, each menu had descriptions and dish titles. Overall, it was a lot to take in. The menu, however, did have positive aspects as well. Years ago the owner redesigned the menu from the typical book style to a one page front and back style. He also removed dollar signs from all the pricing and added popular dishes from previous specials.

During the redesign, the overall layout and one page design were kept similar to the current menu as to not create a total departure in style. Simple changes were made to the "Starters" section. For example, removing punctuation that did not aid in description or understanding. Dish titles that included words like "large" or irrelevant cooking methods were rephrased. For example what now reads as "Buffalo Cauliflower" originally read as "Pan seared or Fried Buffalo Cauliflower". Generally speaking, repetitiveness was removed from the menu.

The “starters” section listed a variety of chicken (wings, tenders and nuggets). During the redesign this was shortened to “Chicken Tenders or Wings” with a description of sauces underneath. Terms such as “homemade” and “sauteed” were added to descriptions to enhance the appeal of dishes when appropriate. In adding more complex descriptions you not only entice customers but can change perceptions of quality, price and the customers intentions to purchase menu items ([McCall & Lynn, 2008](#)).

Following the same concept as the “Starters” section, the “Soup & Salad” section was edited to remove descriptions preceding the dish and simplify the list of additions that could be made to salads. For example, combining all small salads on the same line as they are the same price. The wording of one salad, “Roasted Vegetable Salad Topped With Goat Cheese” was changed to simply “Roasted Vegetable & Goat Cheese Salad”.

An entire section was renamed on the new menu design. Previously, “Lightfair” was a section that included dishes typically viewed as heavy, such as scampis and potato dishes. Instead, this section was changed to “Pasta” and all of the typical pasta dishes such as chicken or veal parmesan were moved here. Potato dishes were removed because they felt out of place in all sections of the menu and a single dish described only as “Pasta” was renamed to “Vegetable Medley” to more accurately describe the components of the dish.

The “Seafood” section was condensed to aid in the decision making process. Changes to this section included removing the term “fresh” from the title of the section. Guests assume that the seafood is fresh, and the term would be better used in individual descriptions of seafood dishes. Dishes from the smaller signature menu were also added to this section to decrease the amount of pages guests had to read.

Originally on the “Signature” menu, steaks as well as popular chicken and veal dishes were added to the “House Specialties” category of the main menu. Rearranging this section better reflects the dishes the restaurant most prides itself on. Many of the original items in this section were moved into sections previously referenced that better fit their descriptions. All of these changes created space for smaller “Signature” menu items to be incorporated in the larger main menu.

The redesigned menu will be presented to the owner of the restaurant as a possible replacement to the current menu. At the very least the redesigned menu will be used by the owner and manager to guide future changes and menu additions. As stated in the owner’s questionnaire, he is very eager to learn new tips and tricks that will keep his business open for decades to come.

The Website

Online presence is another essential marketing tool, one that engages customers long before they step through the door. As discussed earlier, millennials are avid users of technology and rely on information provided by organizations and reviewers when making decisions. Web presence is important because it offers access to a business’ identity at all times ([Kasavana, 2002](#)). A business website offers proprietors a chance to reinforce their desired brand image through text, images, and other interactive features that come straight from the source.

The O.C.C. has a website that at first glance is modern and updated. It provides information about the hours of operation and the types of food and services provided by the restaurant. However, once the website is further investigated it reveals itself to be repetitive. Sections overlap and repeat each other and provide surface level information about the history of the O.C.C. and various menu items.

When thinking about how best to create a new website, design, functionality, interactiveness, and clarity were all paramount. Through the questionnaire it was discovered that the current O.C.C. website is not managed by any of the restaurant staff. As such, all content changes have to be emailed to a web designer who incorporates them. The goal in designing a new website for the restaurant was to provide ease of access to the owner and manager, as the current website is not controlled in house. Additional website goals included clear brand imaging and less expensive web design options.

For the new website design wix.com was used. Wix is a free and user friendly way for anyone with internet access to create a website. Premade templates for a variety of businesses, organizations, and personal use are available. Accounts can be quickly created for easy access in order to make changes and updates. Wix offers different models based on a pricing system that ranges from free to \$35 a month. It is because of the ease of use and reasonable pricing that Wix was chosen for the website redesign.

The first step in redesigning the website was to make sure that brand image was consistent. The header “Olde Colonial Cafe” was replicated in cursive font to match the menu and dark red fonts were selected to match the restaurant’s color scheme. A new tag line for the restaurant was also created. “Historic Look, Contemporary Tastes” is displayed on the homepage. This tagline is meant to represent the restaurant’s location in a historic town firehouse and also its modern dining style. A brief description of the atmosphere, photos, and special events were included on the homepage to draw in the guest ([Kasavana, 2002](#)).

Since the O.C.C. has been in business for 50 years it was important to include an “about” section where the history, mission, and the O.C.C.’s years of community involvement could be displayed. As established earlier, millennials seek out brands that align with their values as well

as brands that are actively engaged in the community. According to an article by Restaurant Hospitality, it is important to consider the target audience when designing and creating website content ([Worby, 2015](#)).

In considering the target audience it is important to remember that millennials may not be viewing the website directly on a desktop ([Worby, 2015](#)). Creating a mobile friendly website is important so that messages and content are consistent and user friendly. This was especially important for the menu portion of the website. Instead of listing a few menu items and including PDF links like the old website, the new site gives the menu its own page, which keeps users from popup screens and separate windows. This also meant menu images were removed, presenting a sleeker design that keeps the menu aligned and easy to read on a smartphone.

Important aspects of any website are photo and text quality ([Tanju Güdük & Selda Uca, 2017](#)) that help support the business in its goal of attracting new customers. For the “Function” portion of the O.C.C’s website it was important to highlight services offered, as well as to provide images of the spaces available. Images were included in a slideshow format to make it more interactive for website visitors. On the management side, photos can easily be added or taken down to better represent the types of functions held in the space as time goes on, giving customers concrete ideas of how they might utilize the restaurant’s services.

As described by Tanju [Güdük](#) (2017) in the Journal of Tourism, navigation, interaction, functionality, and marketing characteristics all served as a guide in creating the new website. It was also important to provide links to social media platforms and customer review sites that have more review based information. All of these techniques were done with the younger target audience in mind.

Recommendations

While the website is a great tool to communicate with potential guests, social media is another important medium to use. As discussed in the Target Audience section, millennials are more technologically fluent than older generations, meaning platforms like Facebook are essential in marketing. Facebook offers a variety of advertising tools that can be directed towards a specific audience. Businesses are able to use their Facebook accounts to easily reach customers and grow their businesses even further ([McEleny, 2011](#)). Interacting with customers on Facebook increases businesses recognition and paid advertisements should not be underestimated. They can be utilized to direct people to your social media pages and website, among other things. ([“Tips on Facebook advertising for small businesses,” 2013](#)).

Publicity campaigns are another great tool to utilize in a small business. These can include publicized events and events highlighting changes. Writing newsworthy press releases is a cost effective way to market your business ([“Advertising on a diet budget,” 2011](#)). For example, the Olde Colonial Cafe is currently celebrating 50 years in business. This is a great opportunity to publicize the restaurant, and any new press releases can be turned into social media posts that lead to more information on the website.

In addition to publicity, logos and taglines are important marketing tools as well. Both should always be consistent and focused on desired clientele. The current tagline for the Olde Colonial Cafe is “a touch of Boston in Norwood”, but this tagline does not demonstrate a clear focus. It evokes questions such “what part(s) of Boston?” and gives the impression that the O.C.C might be trying to mimic another restaurant’s style. The tagline created for the new website “Historic Look, Contemporary Tastes” notes the historical building that houses the restaurant and gives the target audience an idea of the atmosphere and types of dishes served.

Photos should be used to enhance websites and portray businesses in a positive light. Images should be high quality and accurately represent the business at hand. For instance, on the original website, stock images of dishes were used. These do nothing to aid the business. Repetitiveness is a red flag, owners and managers should be mindful of how repetitive information is. Each section should be clear and provide only the necessary information for that section. It is important that the website is updated regularly, and that all sections that are published are ready for the public to see. On the current website, the “Specials” tab is an empty blog space that anyone visiting the website can see.

Conclusion

Consistent and clear social media usage and successful direct marketing to a target audience are crucial when it comes to gaining new customers and furthering your business. In the restaurant industry this can be challenging especially for establishments that are older and typically slower to integrate new technologies and other strategies into their business. The Olde Colonial Cafe has successfully been in business for 50 years, but has consistently lacked a younger generation among their regular clientele. The evaluation and information in this paper provide the owner of the O.C.C. with new tools to better reach the expanded demographic. By more thoroughly understanding the millennial generation and digital strategy as a whole, the O.C.C. can begin to revitalize their brand to include their menu, website, community relations, and social media platforms.

Appendix

Questionnaire

1. How long has the restaurant been open?
2. Who is the average customer?
3. What types of community outreach do you have if any?
4. Who created/runs your website?
5. Who runs your Facebook and how often is it updated?
6. What do you feel is missing from your communication to future customers?
7. Who do you feel is your target audience?
8. How do you reach these people?
9. Your tagline is “ A touch of Boston in Norwood” is that something you would like to stick with?
10. What is your typical function booking, how many do you have in a week?
11. Your commercial is outdated do you think that it could be changed or taken off air? How often does this commercial air?
12. What would you like to gain from this communications strategy?
13. How often do new customers come in and what is their return rate?

Press Release

Olde Colonial Cafe

171 Nahatan Street • Norwood MA 02062
781 • 769 • 0323

Historic look, Contemporary Taste

Contact: Matthew Eckhardt
508-846-9135
matthew.eckhardtp@gmail.com

Event Release
For Release on
March 1, 2019

Local Favorite Turns 50: Olde Colonial Cafe Celebrates Five Decades of Food, Family, and Fun

Norwood, MA -- The Olde Colonial Cafe will be celebrating 50 years in the food service industry on March 17, 2019. The O.C.C. invites local patrons and community members to mark this momentous occasion with a celebration of live music, dancing, and a buffet featuring many of their most popular menu items. Tickets, available at the door, will be \$20 each. There will also be a cash bar.

The O.C.C. considers this day one of customer appreciation. Staff will be on site thanking customers who have helped make the restaurant such a consistent presence in the community. Guests will be able to enjoy a display of menus throughout the years as well as photos and other memorabilia.

The O.C.C. is owned and operated by Paul and Martha Angelo. Originally located on Savin Ave. in Norwood, they moved the restaurant to the town's center about 20 years ago. Since the move, the restaurant has provided the greater Norwood community with dining five nights a week as well as with private function spaces. The two-floor layout provides guests with more options for functions, and allows the rest of the restaurant to remain open and uninterrupted during events. The Angelo family are much more than just "the owners" - "we are community members and are very active within the town of Norwood" says Paul Angelo.

In 2012, Paul Eckhardt assumed a managerial role after working for Paul Angelo for more than 13 years. As manager, Eckhardt handles the booking of private functions as well as dinner reservations. "The greatest thing about the O.C.C. isn't the restaurant itself, although it is a point of pride for us. But what really matters are the relationships between staff and customers."

Over the years the O.C.C. has become a meeting point for many people. Eckhardt said "we celebrate the happy times and the sad times, but we do it together as a family not just as customers and staff".

The Olde Colonial Cafe is an Italian-American restaurant located in downtown Norwood. The restaurant is committed to serving the greater Norwood community with quality food and drink five nights a week and through private functions. Over the past 50 years the O.C.C. has actively supported local organizations and causes, including the Norwood High School Athletics Program and The Circle of Hope, an organization that works to provide assistance for Norwood residents who face catastrophic medical events.

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Social Media Release

OLDE COLONIAL CAFE CELEBRATES FIVE DECADES OF FOOD, FAMILY, AND FUN



FIFTY YEARS WITH YOU

The Olde Colonial Cafe will be celebrating 50 years in the food service industry on March 17, 2019. The O.C.C. invites local patrons and community members to mark this momentous occasion with a celebration of live music, dancing, and a buffet featuring many of their most popular menu items.

50 YEARS

MENUS, PHOTOS, &
MEMORABILIA

3/17/19

CUSTOMER
APPRECIATION

\$20

TICKETS SOLD
AT THE DOOR

About the O.C.C.

The Olde Colonial Cafe is an Italian-American restaurant located in downtown Norwood. The restaurant is committed to serving the greater Norwood community with quality food and drink five nights a week and through private functions. Over the past 50 years the O.C.C. has actively supported local organizations and causes, including the Norwood High School Athletics Program and The Circle of Hope, an organization that works to provide assistance for Norwood residents who face catastrophic medical events.

Menu Design

<i>Olde Colonial Cafe</i>			
<u>Starters</u>			
OCC Onion Rings	6	Shrimp Cocktail	12
Fried Calamari	10	Bruschetta	10
Mozzarella Sticks	9	Fried Mushrooms	9
Tomato Basil Wheat Pizza	9	Garlic Bread	4
Buffalo Cauliflower (Pan seared or fried)	10	Chicken Tenders or Wings (Sweet Lou's, Buffalo)	9 1 extra
<u>Soup & Salad</u>			
	Cup	Bowl	Greek Salad (with Chicken)
New England Clam Chowder	5	8	(with Shrimp)
Lobster Bisque	5	8	Large Caesar Salad
Roasted Shrimp & Corn Chowder	5	8	(with buffalo or plain chicken)
Small House or Caesar Salad		5	Wedge Salad
Chopped (with grilled chicken)		15	Roasted Vegetable & Goat Cheese Salad
Caprese Salad		9	Spring Mix
<u>Pasta</u>			
Veal Parmesan tender breaded veal topped generously with melted cheese and homemade sauce			20
Pasta & Meatballs Jumbo meatballs topped with romano cheese, fresh basil, and homemade pasta sauce			16
Chicken Parmesan breaded baked chicken topped with melted cheese and homemade sauce			18
Four Cheese Ravioli Jumbo Ravioli stuffed with a blend of four cheeses and choice of sauce			16
Eggplant Parmesan baked breaded eggplant under melted cheese and homemade sauce			17
Spinach Ravioli tossed with roasted vegetables in choice of homemade sauce			18
Chicken Bretti breaded chicken sautéed with capers and a fresh lemon butter sauce			18
Vegetable Medley pasta tossed with roasted vegetables, spinach, and broccoli			17
Bolognese pasta with a homemade meatball and sausage sauce served with hearty garlic bread			18
Veal Bretti tender breaded veal sautéed with capers and a fresh lemon butter sauce			20
<u>Seafood</u>		<u>House Specialties</u>	
Lobster Casserole lobster tails in a butter sauce and buttered crumb topping	mkt	Surf & Turf 6oz fillet and lobster tail filled with seafood stuffing	27
Scallops pan seared, served with choice of potato or vegetable	22	Ribeye 16oz steak served with potato or vegetable	25
Fried Haddock	18	Steak tips over a bed of roasted vegetables	19
Shrimp Scampi	19	Sirloin tender 8oz sirloin served with caprese salad	19
Sweet Potato Crusted Haddock	19	London Broil sliced sirloin served in au jus with potato or vegetable	19
Scallop Scampi	23	Fillet 6oz tender fillet served with potato or vegetable and bearnaise sauce	22
Baked Scrod New England scrod baked with fresh lemon and a butter crumb topping	18	Bermuda Sirloin sirloin seared with peppers and onions in garlic butter	25
House Surprise shrimp and lobster in an herb butter sauce served over a bed of pasta	22	Meatloaf homemade meatloaf served over mashed potatoes or roasted vegetables	16
Salmon pan seared in lemon pepper choice of potato or vegetable	19		
<u>Sandwiches</u>		<u>Pizza</u>	
Hamburger	12	OCC Special peppers, onions, mushrooms, and pepperoni	12
Fried Haddock	13	Gluten Free	10
Sliders meatball or buffalo chicken	13	Original 10" cheese	9
Roast Beef Dip	14	Toppings Pepperoni--Sausage--Hamburger--Anchovies--Chicken--Pepper--Onion--Mushroom--Tomato	.95
Chicken Caesar Wrap	14		
Turkey Club	14		
Roasted Pepper red peppers layered with mozzarella and tomato with balsamic glaze	13		
<u>Side Orders</u>			
Mashed Potato	5	Roasted Vegetable	5
French Fries	5	Rice	5
Sweet Potato Mash	5	Broccoli & Cheese	5
Sautéed Spinach	5	Baked Potato	5
Pasta	5	Cauliflower	5

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