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The following is an actual business plan written by a young entrepreneur, with individual's names, sensitive competitive details, and place names changed.

The sample represents a well-written business plan, but you still may find some sections or parts of the plan that could have been completed differently, or even better. Business plans are not perfect pieces of writing, but are documents in action, written at a certain point in time based on the best possible, available information. This plan will most certainly be changed as the business changes and grows, or as the writer/entrepreneur finds better information to support the marketing, operations, and financial management of the company.

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business Name: Tops of Shop Creative
Christy Toller (owner)

Address: 105 Robideau Place
Woolsey, Ontario
L1R 3G8

Phone Number: (905) 649 9033

Legal Structure: Sole Proprietorship

Business Advisors: Katherine Lilley
Lilley Communications Incorporated
St. Mary's, Ontario

Natalie Parker
Integral Research International Ltd.
Port Deveraux, Ontario

Business Mentors: Joe Atchison
Associate Professor, Communication Design – Ryerson University,
Victoria, British Columbia

MISSION STATEMENT

Tops of Shop Creative is committed to providing innovative design and marketing solutions for effectively establishing small businesses within the community.

VALUES STATEMENT

- We strive to provide custom advertising options for small businesses tailored to each type of budget.
- We strive to have open communication with all clients throughout each project.
- We strive to incorporate creativity into each aspect of our business providing innovative solutions for each new challenge.
- We strive to be involved within our local community by participating in charity initiatives through design.
- We strive to constantly evaluate and implement changes within the world of advertising and how it applies to small business needs.

Business Concept

Tops of Shop Creative is a graphic design company that creates advertising and promotional concepts for start-up and small businesses. We offer print design from posters, brochures, annual reports, and flyers, to digital design in the form of websites, custom Facebook/Myspace/Twitter pages and e-blasts. We provide custom-advertising packages catered to a particular business as well as design individual pieces for promotional needs.

We will operate in the city of Woolsey within a home office with the goal of moving to a rented storefront space in September of 2019. This will lower operating costs during start-up as well as be within reach of printing and paper suppliers. The area of customer reach will be all of Dovercourt region with a focus on smaller cities and towns where many small businesses do not have easy access to design/advertising services found in larger city centres.

Our goal is for the business to be registered and operational by August 2017. The first few goals include becoming established within the local community and to have ten recurring customers by December 2017. During the months of July and August, we will initiate our marketing plan that includes both traditional as well as modern social marketing methods. By Fall of 2019, we plan to purchase printing equipment and open a store front space where we can meet with clients, print the majority of our projects, and

develop a functioning design studio.

We will be open to clients Monday to Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM. We chose these working hours because it is traditionally when many other businesses are operating. The working hours may extend outside of this timeframe depending on the project and the deadlines.

Many start-ups and existing small businesses do not have the time or capabilities to create effective advertising and are not sure of what they want to effectively promote their business. Most current advertising options appear daunting to a small business, which have few employees. It is from discovering this challenge, along with our love of continuously challenging ourselves in a creative way that the business idea for Tops of Shop Creative was born. The world of advertising is constantly changing at high speed, and small businesses, which are thriving, do not want to be left in the dark. With constant evaluation and implementation of these changes, we can provide effective advertising options to meet the unique needs of the small business market.

For the early stages of this business Christy Toller will be the only employee until such time that other design professionals are required due to a large number of projects and/or clients. Natalie Parker and Katherine Lilley from the Youth Entrepreneurship Program will be business mentors, and Ryerson professor of Communication Design, Joe Atchison, will be a business mentor.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Goal: to have ten recurring clients by end of December 2017.

Objectives:

- Develop packages that allow for recurring business such as a yearly ad package that covers each holiday in a year (July 30 2017)
- Create social networking packages that have recurring ad drops (online coupon offers, event promotions etc) (July 30 2017)
- Attend local networking meetings to meet new clients (Dovercourt Business Association) (monthly, starting September 2017)
- Meet with local newspapers and publications to partner and potentially offer design/advertising packages for clients (September 2017)
- Canvas local businesses to see what needs are and then post-evaluate how my services fit to their needs (August 2017)
- Once clients are established, follow-up with client appreciation and request feedback/testimonials to use for website (December 2017)

Goal: to establish ourselves within the local business community

Objectives:

- Attend meetings of local business organizations such as DHSBA (Dovercourt Home Small Business Association), BIA (Business Improvement Area) and local Chamber of Commerce (monthly, starting immediately)
- Join at least of the most appropriate organizations (September 2017)
- Create a e-newsletter about tips for advertising for local small businesses (January 2018)
- Attend and set up a booth at local business trade shows (October 2018)

Goal: to open a storefront location by September 2019

Objectives:

- Research the associated costs of renting and what the cost will be for be for potential spaces (January 2019)
- Research how much square feet of space is necessary (January 2019)
- Budget how much can be afforded for rent (February 2019)
- Investigate available options for spaces in the local area (May to July 2019)
- Budget for lease-hold improvements to potential spaces (May to July 2019)
- Budget for office furniture in potential spaces (May to July 2019)
- Lease chosen space (August 2019)

Goal: to purchase printing equipment for small to medium-sized projects by November 2019

Objectives:

- Research printer options from various companies (June 2019)
- Get quotes for chosen options (July 2019)
- Re-work and update financial information (July 2019)
- Approach bank for loan or line of credit (August to September 2019)
- Purchase printers (November 2019)

Goal: to hire a contract web designer by April 2019

Objectives:

- Calculate what percentage of work is website related (December 2018)
- Contact local colleges and universities to find out about recent graduates in web/design programs (January 2019)
- Advertise the job position online and in local papers/job posting areas (February to March 2019)

- Interview potential candidates (March 2019)
- Select one to hire (April 2019)

1. MARKET ANALYSIS

1.1 Overall Market Analysis

The economy in Dovercourt Region continues to expand by population as well as by number of business ventures. Within five years (between 2008 and 2013), the population increased by 11%, and is expected to reach 644,000 in 2018 – an increase of 15% from 20013 (*2016 Dovercourt Region Focus Your Vision Economic Report*, developed by The Regional Municipality of Dovercourt Economic Development and Tourism, page 1).

The population growth within Dovercourt Region also echoes the economic climate. The Conference Board of Canada identified Oakwood, Clearview and Woolsey as the fastest growing metropolitan economies in the country from 2015 to 2018 (*Regional Snapshot 2014, Report for Dovercourt Region*, page 8). This type of growth indicates a strong environment supportive of new businesses to the region. According to the Dovercourt Region Profile, 9.6% of the workforce in 2013 is self-employed, and Peter LeBel, director of Community and Marketing services for Woolsey, said that he expects to see “more retail come to Dovercourt Region as the population continues to swell and demand for shopping and services continues to grow.” This information is extremely beneficial since an increase in retail means more of our primary customers (and new small businesses) within Dovercourt Region.

The growth trend for new and emerging businesses also extends to existing small businesses planning to expand in 2017. According to an RBC (Royal Bank of Canada) survey (February 26, 2017), one-in-three Canadian small business owners plan to expand over the next six months while 26% are in the start-up phase of their business (*One-third of Canadian Small Business Owners Planning Growth or Expansion: RBC Poll*, Canadian Newswire, February 26, 2017, accessed March 9, 2017). Expansion can be both physical such as with a larger store space, a growth in customer territory, or a new product line. Each type of business growth often has design requirements such as new advertising, product branding, or an increase of web presence.

Within these growth plans outsourcing plays a major role, as small businesses often do not have the time to spend on tasks beyond their core skill or product related to their company. Linked closely to outsourcing is the trend for utilizing social marketing because small businesses see the benefits, but lack the time to take advantage of these opportunities often preferring to outsource at a reasonable cost. Social marketing has become a booming trend among small and medium-sized businesses as an extension to guerilla marketing that capitalizes on small budgets with maximum exposure and results.

The graphic design industry in some regard has become a hybrid of marketing, branding

and design initiatives offering a myriad of options to the customer. In order to be competitive, Tops of Shop Creative will take advantage of these industry trends to focus on a variety of offerings for small business.

1.2 Customer Analysis

Our primary customer is comprised of three groups: start-up businesses, existing small businesses, and part-time home-based businesses. Each segment focuses on the small business in different stages.

These businesses generally employ one to 20 people and based on reputation, they are established, or they are looking to establish themselves within Dovercourt Region. They mainly focus on traditional ways to advertise, but are starting to allocate portions of their budget to new alternatives such as social and online marketing.

For these small businesses, the focus is on the unique product or service they are offering and, since they often have very few staff, advertising and design is not a realistic use of their time.

In Ontario, entrepreneurs start over 100,000 businesses each year (*Business Advisory Centre of Dovercourt*, <http://www.bacd.ca/nc/index.html>). Start-up businesses are aware of the need for advertising and design in terms of logo, branding, and marketing, but they also lack the time and expertise to concentrate on these elements.

In 2017, graphic designer forums foresee a trend of small and medium sized businesses focusing on branding (*Graphic Design Trends 2017, Little Box of Ideas*, published May 22, 2016, accessed March 3, 2017). Since lack of time is a common theme among all small business owners, it will be important to maximize the time spent with these clients and to make sure they feel we are aware of how valuable their time is.

1.2a Primary Customers: Demographic Profile

According to Industry Canada, approximately 15 percent of all employed workers were self-employed in 2015 (Industry Canada, Small Business and Tourism Branch, *Key Small Business Statistics*, July 2016, www.ic.gc.ca/sbststatistics). This percentage indicates that a large number of people in the workforce are running their own business in a variety of industries. Of those self-employed, 65% are male while 35% are female (Industry Canada, Small Business and Tourism Branch, *Key Small Business Statistics*, July 2016, www.ic.gc.ca/sbststatistics, accessed March 5, 2017). Even though a significant number of business owners are male, the percentage of female Canadians who are self-employed has increased dramatically over the last few years. This indicates that our target customers will most likely be male, but those who are female are a part of a growing trend which will most likely continue to increase.

Our customers, as small and medium sized businesses, have revenues between \$30,000

and \$5,000,000 and spend on average \$8,100 or 1.3% of their total revenues on advertising (Statistics Canada, special tabulation, unpublished data, *Small Business Profiles, Annual Retail Trade Survey 2006-2013*, accessed March 5, 2017). This gives a general idea as to what percentage of revenue will our clients most likely spend, but also was percentage of revenue they are expecting based on the amount they have budgeted to spend. The small and medium-sized business category includes 99 percent of companies in Ontario according to the Ontario Ministry of Small Businesses and Consumer Services (*Regional Review: Dovercourt Region* – Economic Development and Tourism Department, January 2016 issue). This is a very large percentage comparatively, which is why we targeted our services to specifically serve this niche.

1.2b Primary Customers: Psychographic Profile

Many small businesses either do not have a website, or if they have a website, it is rarely updated. They are a part of the 85% of small businesses that have Internet access, and the 36% that own a website as per a survey in 2014 (Statistics Canada, *Survey of Electronic Commerce and Technology (SECT)*, 2015). These two statistics showed a significant increase from 2000, therefore trending even higher in 2017. The fact that such a high percentage of small businesses are connected to the Internet, but a much lower percentage have websites means that simply not having access to an Internet connection is not the reason for not having a website.

This same survey showed that out of the same group of small business owners surveyed, 45 percent purchase online even though only seven percent sell online (*Electronic Commerce and Technology Survey*). These entrepreneurs are very familiar with the online environment, but lack either the time or familiarity to use it for their own business uses. Our advertising will address how these challenges can be easily overcome with the use of our services.

When it comes to marketing initiatives, many small business owners, especially new entrepreneurs, choose to design and execute advertising themselves. Unfortunately, the personal efforts of most small business owners produce disappointing results, and they end up spending more than they get in return (*Avoid Business Marketing Mistakes and Identify Profitable Opportunities*, www.efactor.com, Nic Soto, March 8, 2017, accessed March 9, 2017). When this happens, they will tend to look to a design/advertising professional to assist, but will fear high costs and a similar disappointing result. It will be important to address these fears by educating potential clients about the benefits of using a design professional as well as the costs saved and profit gained in the long term.

With any size business, attracting the customer is everything so it comes as no surprise that this is the biggest problem for people who are self-employed, especially when they are starting out (*Want More Clients? Just do these two things*, Susan Ward, Tuesday March 9, 2017, <http://sbinfocanada.about.com>, accessed March 9, 2017). When it comes to marketing for most new and existing small businesses, the goal is to get the attention of potential new customers and to turn them into repeat customers. Our services tap into the need for well-designed advertising for small businesses as it addresses this fear in a

well-calculated way by effectively reaching those potential customers.

1.2c Secondary Customers: Demographic Profile

Our secondary customer base is comprised of organizations, events, large businesses that are outsourcing their design needs, and professionals who use large amounts of self-promotion.

There are many organizations that are either not-for-profit or are community-minded requiring both design work and marketing to promote their message and services. Within Canada in 2013, there were about 161,000 non-profit and voluntary organizations in operation (Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, published Monday September 20, 2014, accessed March 27, 2017). The organizations we are focusing on are smaller and local or local branches of a larger organization. Examples of this include Precious Minds, the Oxbridge Youth Centre, Cadenza Productions (community theatre) and Seaforth Arts Association. They have an allocated budget towards advertising and promotion whether it is for overall marketing of the organization or for a specific campaign.

Events follow within the same category as they also have a specific budget similar to a business in terms of advertising. According to the International Special Events Society, the amount spent on events in Canada is 2.5 billion dollars annually (*How to Start an Event Planning Service*, Entrepreneur Magazine, <http://www.entrepreneur.com>, accessed April 6, 2017). Since an event is deemed successful when seen as well attended, advertising and promotions play a large role in achieving this success. We will be targeting local events such as charity fundraisers, concerts as well as business event initiatives including product launches and holiday shopping parties.

One type of professional who requires a variety of advertising materials is a Real Estate Agent. In Ontario there are 45 000 brokers and salespeople (Ontario Real Estate Association, *About OREA*, <http://www.orea.com>, accessed April 7, 2017). Although agents attract clients through a real estate broker's office, they are often self-reliant on promotion to ensure clients use their services over a competitor. Self-promotion items include websites, social marketing, as well as print marketing such as post cards, magnets, business cards, and flyers. Once they have a client, it is necessary to advertise the house or property to sell. We will service this need with custom packages; one geared towards self-promotion and the other focusing on the advertising needs of their client.

1.2d Secondary Customers: Psychographic Profile

When organizations source places where they can purchase products or services, they often look locally in an effort to establish support within their community. Trend analyst company Faith Popcorn noted that this would continue to be the case with all consumers in 2017. This trend which applies to all businesses is dubbed the "locovore" movement which will see consumers making a concentrated effort to buy community produced goods and services (*2017 the year of Lo-co*, Predictions from Faith Popcorn's Brain

Reserve, December 2016, page 2).

Many of these organizations as well as small and large businesses host events. Whether it is a store opening or a fundraising gala, these events require marketing and design collateral. Similar to organizations, events will usually have a set budget with a portion allocated to do marketing and promotion. Since the success of an event is almost entirely dependent on the people who attend, advertising is a key element recognized by the event organizers or sponsors.

Along with design elements for events, large businesses will often outsource all of their design work, as it is less costly than having to pay an additional employee. Due to the recession, the “outsourcing” trend has seen many larger businesses trim their staff numbers down and contract out parts of their business. Entrepreneur Magazine recently discussed the benefits of outsourcing saying, “don’t outsource the unique skill or product that you bring to the business, but everything else is fair game” (*Going + Forward: Ask a Pro - Employees. Who needs ‘em?*, Entrepreneur Magazine, March 2017, VOL 38, No. 3, Entrepreneur Media Inc., page 18).

Working professionals such as real estate agents and potential candidates running for an elected position all require a large amount of personal promotion in their everyday work. Both of these jobs are examples where many people working for the same “company” often compete for the same clients therefore requiring differentiation through their advertising. Real estate agents constantly require marketing collateral for promoting not only their services, but housing listings as well as open house events for those listings.

1.3 Competitive Analysis

1.3a Direct Competitors: SWOT Analysis

We identified our direct competitors based on nearest location, in Oxbridge, Port Deveraux, and Woolsey.

Second World Media – Oxbridge

Second World Media is a small media company located in Oxbridge, Ontario. They are a relatively new company who quickly established themselves within the local community by developing a monthly magazine called Oxbridge Town Talk. They offer web and graphic design as well as logo development and consulting for small businesses. Their background and strengths are in journalism and publishing as well as setting up websites for clients who can then take over and update themselves (www.secondworldmedia.com).

The two co-owners of Second World Media can be contacted by phone, or email during business hours of 9 AM to 4 PM, but they do not have an office location where clients can drop in. They have a strong web presence with their website, Facebook Business Page, as well as Twitter page effectively utilizing social marketing to promote their business.

Specific services offered include publishing, web design, graphic design, logo development, print marketing materials, copy writing and editing, new media and business consulting for small business. They have successfully integrated their services so that advertisers for their publication will most likely also utilize their graphic and web design services.

Clients include many local Oxbridge businesses both independently owned and franchises of chains. These businesses advertise through Oxbridge Town Talk and in many cases that business uses Second World Media to design the advertisement. Web design is their strength while graphic print design is not. This is also evident through their own business branding which is somewhat inconsistent in terms of what images and text are a part of their logo and tag lines.

Within the community, they are established through their monthly publication as well as contacts through the Oxbridge Chamber of Commerce where they attend meetings as well as present as guest speakers.

Second World Media may feel threatened by our entrance into the market, but since their monthly publication is their niche, they will always be attracting a clientele through that medium which is a very different service offering than ours.

Radical Heat Design - Oxbridge

Radical Heat Design is Oxbridge's most established graphic design firm in operation since June 2009 and boasting a large client portfolio as well as a variety of local awards. They are located at 9A Bottomley Street in Oxbridge with a street-front location attached to Sugar Fix, a candy shop also operated by the owner of Radical Heat Design (<http://www.goldbook.ca>).

Local businesses and organizations within the Oxbridge area often use Radical Heat Design for their design needs since they have the most presence within the community. They entered the market at a time when people were unhappy with the only other local graphic design firm (not in operation anymore) and capitalized on those weaknesses to their benefit. Their storefront location houses a few large-scale printers allowing for in-house production of client's projects and eliminates the cost of outsourcing.

Radical Heat Design can be contacted by phone or email both of which are listed online through Goldbook.ca as well as the local Oxbridge phone book. They do not have a website.

Their services include design and printing of paper items such as posters, programs, and business cards as well as non-paper items such as stickers, decals, banners and indoor/outdoor signs. They appear to be targeting both business and personal projects by offering the range of services listed above as well as design and printing of invitations, thank-you cards and party favours. They do not offer any form of Internet-based services

such as web design or social marketing material. We will capitalize on this by combining packages of both print and web advertising for our clients.

Due to the strong need in the community, Radical Heat Design does not do very much marketing and do not have a website. Word-of-mouth is how they find many of their clients so they do not usually promote through traditional advertising either. We will take advantage of this weakness by establishing a strong web presence early on as well as through traditional avenues in the local community.

Upon our business entering the market, Radical Heat Design may feel threatened, but will most likely not react initially. With a thriving local community, they are not always able to take on new projects because of obligations to current clients. If this changes, they may counter-act by offering discounts on printing services as well as invest time and money into more elaborate marketing.

Entrevision – Port Deveraux

Entrevision is a graphic design firm located 180 Mary Street, Unit 10 in Port Deveraux. They have been in business for six years with a range of clients from hip-hop artists (a whole division dedicated to graphic design for music artists), an interior design firm, to a teapot company (<http://www.entrevision.com/>).

They can be contacted by phone, email or through a quote request form on their website where the customer can type in what service they are looking for, their timeline and their budget. Entrevision has a strong web presence with a website that utilizes search-engine-optimization, Twitter and Facebook pages as well as listings on various graphic/web design oriented online resources. In April 2016, they opened two new sales offices – one in Lakewood, and one in Otterly in order to better service their customers although these locations are not promoted on the Entrevision website (<http://www.facebook.com>). This indicates that they are focusing on a particular client and are not finding that client in Port Deveraux where their main office is located.

Services offered include a wide array of print and web, but by looking at their portfolio and descriptions, they are focusing strongly on branding and website design. Although they utilize social marketing (Twitter and Facebook) for their own purposing, they do not offer the creation and development of custom pages for their clients. Their website design services are a definite strength starting with the design of their own website which is interactive and user-friendly, to the sites they have created for clients which are equally strong in both areas. The section of their website and social marketing presence that is lacking is how often updates are made. The “recent news” section of the website has not had an update since December 2015 and Facebook updates have not been done since April 2016. This would indicate to a potential client that the portfolio would also be out of date.

Within the website there is an “About Us” section focusing on the history of the business and the values and process of the services offered. There is no mention of the lead

designer or his background. This also suggests that they are targeting a very corporate client instead of the local businesses who are looking for a personal face or community connection. We plan to connect with our clients and community through both our business and personal approach to every project we take on. It is less intimidating to a small business owner and suggests that we too understand small business and will be accommodating because we can relate on that level.

If Entrevision feels threatened by our presence, they may start to target local businesses and since they are familiar with social marketing for their own use, they may begin to offer it as a service to their clients.

Altercreative – Woolsey/Oakwood

Altercreative, a larger competitor operational for over 10 years, is located at 42 Wood Avenue, Suite 100 in Oakwood. They have a full time staff of four and can be contacted either in person at their office location in Oakwood, or by phone, fax or email through their website, www.aftershockcreative.com. Clients range from small local businesses and organizations within the Woolsey/Oakwood area to larger ones such as the Oakwood Oilers Hockey Team and the Seavey Casino (<http://www.altercreative.com>).

They offer a variety of services from web and graphic design to branding and photography. The technology known as Adobe Flash makes up a large portion of their websites and portfolio work and this is a weakness because the design world is phasing it out since many mobile devices such as iPhone and iPad do not use it. Similar to the Blue Ray/HD DVD fight, Flash has come head-to-head with HTML 5 who appear to be winning the battle (*10 Great Sites for Watching Video on Your iPad, Mashable: the Social Media Guide*, by Barb Dybwad. <http://mashable.com>, published April 3, 2017, accessed April 3, 2017.) We will take advantage of this by staying on top of current trends and making sure to invest minimally into new technology fads until they become solid trends.

Along with a well designed website and diverse portfolio, Altercreative displays both testimonials from clients and personal bios of their staff to give the company a personal touch. If they are a part of any local community or trade associations they do not promote this on their website, but they do have local clients some of which are organizations such as Rouge Valley Health Foundation and Dovercourt Region Economic Development. Not only are local clients the cornerstone of our business, but also we feel it is important to be linked into the local business neighbourhood. We plan to do this by joining the Dovercourt Home/Small Business Association and after a year of operation, the Woolsey Chamber of Commerce, to better connect within our community and find out the needs of small businesses.

Upon our entrance into the market, Altercreative will most likely not feel threatened due to the number of years in business and the large number of competitors who entered the market during that time. If they felt threatened once we enter the market, they may branch into offering design for social marketing services by hiring another full-time

employee to manage it solely.

1.3b Indirect Competitors: SWOT Analysis

We put our indirect competitors into two groups: web-focused businesses, do-it-yourself programs along with online services.

Web Focused Businesses – Dovercourt Region

There are a large number of graphic design firms in the Dovercourt Region that offer services specifically related to the web. According to Inc. Magazine, most typical companies see their website as a venue for sales with relatively low upkeep (*How to Jazz up Your Website*, Inc. Magazine, by Max Chafkin and Ryan McCarthy, published Feb 1, 2015, <http://www.inc.com>, accessed March 6, 2017). This means that some businesses may turn to a web-specific business in order to satisfy this advertising need.

Companies such as Entrevision in Bayview offer things such as Search Engine Optimization, the trendy word-about-town for small business owners who are concerned with their Google rank. According to Jon Rognerud, SEO expert, many businesses hire professional consultants for Search Engine Optimization, while others will take the time to do it themselves (*What Exactly is SEO?*, Entrepreneur.com, by Jon Rognerud, published January 5, 2014, <http://www.entrepreneur.com>, accessed April 8, 2017).

Their strengths lay in the fact that Search Engine Optimization is a phrase that is a popular topic of conversation among small business owners who are unfamiliar with what it truly means, but believe that it is an integral part of their online marketing initiatives. Many web-focused graphic design businesses are promoting their skills in regards to Search Engine Optimization as a way to attract new clients who feel they do not have the skills to handle this part of web design themselves.

For these web-focused competitors, the biggest weakness is the threat of do-it-yourself options that have quickly populated the Internet in the wake of online business popularity. Many small business forums and blogs list ways for non-tech-savvy people who have the time to do these tasks themselves.

These types of competitors indirectly compete with us because they are working in a specific niche within the graphic design field. Many small businesses are time-poor so working with more than one agency for their advertising can seem like a daunting process to a small business with a very small staff. Those who are very focused on their website presence, such as businesses doing e-commerce, or businesses planning on large expansion, may want to hire an expert specifically in the area of websites. It is due to this reason that it is unlikely they will feel threatened by our entrance into the market. With the popularity of social marketing's integration for business use, companies such as these may adjust their offerings to include social marketing services.

Do-it-Yourself Programs and Online Services

A quick search on Google with the words “do-it-yourself website” renders thousands of free online services that bypass the cost of hiring a designer entirely. Examples of online do-it-yourself programs for both websites and logo design include: www.weebly.com, www.logoyes.com, www.custombusinesslogos.com, www.wordpress.com, and www.homestead.com. Each of these websites offers a variety of free services ranging in level of difficulty for the user. Even though an astonishing 85 percent of Canadian small businesses have high-speed Internet access, only 36 percent have a business website (*E-Commerce Boom Leaves Small Businesses in its Wake*, Articlesbase, published February 26, 2017, accessed April 10, 2017, <http://www.articlesbase.com>). As recently as in the last few months, small and medium businesses are turning to (or are planning to turn to) website and web marketing as a way to propel themselves out of the recession blues of 2016.

With this increased interest by small business and because of the limited funds they have to spend, a number of online website-creation services like those mentioned above are popping up more frequently. An IBM survey of over 32 000 consumers revealed that 79 percent want to use websites to access and print coupons (*IBM Survey: Tech –Savvy Shoppers Setting the Pace for the Future; Retailers Must Follow their Lead*, www.ibm.com, published January 10, 2017, accessed April 10, 2017). With the popularity of the “shop local” trend driving businesses in 2017, more and more consumers are using the internet to shop and browse for information about their local home-town business as well as big-box store.

Strengths shared by these types of do-it-yourself offerings include the ability to attract small business owners who may not be internet savvy, but are often cash-strapped and looking for a cheaper alternative to get into web marketing. A quick search online makes these programs easy to find, and if payment is required, an automated service is available. Many online services promote awards they have won from reputable consumer awareness organizations or articles written in the New York Times, Times Magazine and other popular business-related publications.

The biggest weakness of these types of services is the quality of the design work and therefore the results of using these designs for advertising purposes. The websites, logos and advertisements produced this way often look amateur or similar to others since templates are used. Branding becomes inconsistent, confusing the customer, and ultimately wastes time and money of the business owner. Another weakness is customer service. Most of these types of programs offer an email option and in some cases a 1-800 number in case of problems. By placing calls and sending emails to various help lines from some of the services listed above we discovered that in many cases a generic response was given that did not really solve our problem or answer our question. In some instances, it took almost more than two days to receive a response via email!

Due to the large scale and international location many of these businesses have, there is a very small chance that we will threaten them. They face several direct competitors who

would be the top priority in terms of threats within the industry making our company insignificant to their strategy.

1.3c Competitive Strategy

The most common strength shared by our direct competitors is that they establish themselves within the community and therefore have a strong reputation with local businesses. A second strength is a strong, user-friendly website. It is important within the field of graphic design to have a website since 85 percent of small businesses are connected to the Internet as mentioned previously (Statistics Canada), and the trend for 2017 as noted by trend analyst Faith Popcorn is that the online community will be focused on finding out local information (*Predictions from Faith Popcorn's Brain Reserve*). Many of our direct competitors have a well designed website with portfolio pieces and information about their services, as well as testimonials from clients.

We will counteract these strengths by establishing our business within the community through our enrollment with local business associations, participating in trade shows as well as connecting through fundraising and charity events. Our website will contain strong, effective design as well as be informative and user friendly for our customers.

In order to explain the benefits of our social marketing services we will establish a section of our website with business related news articles and links as well as keep up to date with our own social marketing initiatives such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. In addition, we will have a regular newsletter sent out to small business owners starting in January 2018 that will cover changes and advances in the advertising industry and how it pertains to small business.

In September of 2019, we will have a storefront location taking advantage of the weakness seen with most of our competitors who work out of a home office. This way we will offer a comfortable local setting for clients to take care of their design needs without having to make a formal appointment or forgo the personal interaction as is common with telephone or email.

Another weakness with our competitors is their lack of involvement within the local business community. Within our first year, we will join and attend meetings for at least one local business organization. Community integration is one of our main goals and local business organizations such as a Chamber of Commerce or Business Improvement Area group not only offer incredible networking opportunities, but they also keep up-to-date with events and changes within the community.

The opportunity missed by our competitors comes from a lack of observation and knowledge of their customers. The concerns of many small business owners originate with a fear of losing customers or being unable to gain new customers. Business owners use marketing and advertising initiatives to counteract this fear, but often do not know what options are available to them and what costs are associated with each. We will take advantage of this opportunity by educating our customer through offering prepackaged

advertising options and outlining the benefits of each option.

Once our competitors realize this, they may attempt to offer the same type of pricing/package options to entice clients. To counteract this, we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of each of our advertising packages to adjust and improve based on feedback and the integration of new options. Our goal is to have a reputation for this type of service before our competition even begins to adjust their strategy.

2. MARKETING PLAN

2.1 Summary of Market Analysis

The population in Dovercourt Region continues to expand at a substantial rate attracting new entrepreneurial opportunities as well as drawing existing businesses to the area. Many small businesses are planning to implement growth plans, either through physical size or by expansion into new customer bases, innovative products or new branches of already thriving industries. After feeling the effects of a recession, the outlook is positive focusing on what needs to be done to bounce back and recapture lost profits.

The graphic design industry is experiencing a large number of changes over a short period due to technology advancements affecting how people interact both socially and from a business perspective. According to BizLaunch: The Small Biz Blog, 2017 business trends include:

- People in their 20's and 50's starting a business since they are unable to find work
- More women starting a business
- Big business is bad while small business is good, and there will be less full-time employment and more contract work (*Top Trends for Small Businesses 2017*, BizLaunch: The Small Biz Blog, December 18, 2016, accessed March 25, 2017).
-

These trends are important to note since it re-emphasizes the fact that many new entrepreneurs will be entering the market and many of them will not have a business background. Shopping local from your neighbourhood store versus the big-box chain store will also boost the use of local services. The increase in contract work means that medium-to-large sized businesses who might have had a full-time staff member doing their design work now sources out to a design agency.

Primary and Secondary Customers

Tops of Shop Creative's primary customers come from three groups: start-up businesses, existing small businesses and part-time home-based businesses. These businesses are looking to establish themselves within the community and generally employs only 1-20 people. When it comes to advertising they mainly stick to the traditional methods they are familiar with, but they are starting to feel the pressure to set-up an online presence for their business. Time is extremely valuable to them because as a small business owner,

they are filling many roles at the same time including marketing, public relations and advertising.

As small and medium-sized business owners, our customers have annual revenues of \$30,000 to \$5,000,000 (Statistics Canada). They are located within the Dovercourt Region and are independently owned and operated. They range in age and, although more women are becoming new entrepreneurs, 65% were male, while 35% were female in 2015 (Industry Canada). Although they may not have a set advertising budget, they do have an expected return-on-investment for money spent on marketing initiatives for their business.

Many small business owners fear high costs when it comes to advertising design, but find that personal attempts lead to disappointing results. When it comes to the Internet, although 85% of small businesses have access, 36% had a website in 2014 (Statistics Canada, SECT). It is important to note that although they are familiar with the Internet, small business owners are currently not utilizing the web for their own business needs.

Tops of Shop Creative's secondary customer base is comprised of organizations, events, large businesses that are outsourcing their design needs, and professionals who use large amount of self-promotion.

There are many different types and sizes of organizations, but we will be focusing on local ones as well as local branches of larger provincial or national organizations. They usually have a regulated budget similar to a business, but often have different needs and goals. Instead of looking to increase a customer base, the main goal of an organization may often be just to bring awareness to a current issue.

Events are another avenue that requires a variety of promotional materials. These events may include both fundraising initiatives for charity as well as gala events hosted by other businesses. Promotions can include invitations, advertising and posters as well as Internet presence with Facebook, E-blasts, and event listings.

Both categories of larger businesses and professionals relate to the trend of outsourcing. As companies aim to cut costs, many design-related jobs that were previously done in-house are now sourced out in order to save money. Working professionals who are self-reliant for promotion, but do not technically run their own business include real estate agents who require a large amount of advertising material.

Direct and Indirect Competitors

Tops of Shop Creative's direct competitors are graphic design-combination-marketing businesses with services catered towards small businesses located in the North Dovercourt areas of Port Deveraux and Oxbridge or the South Dovercourt area of Woolsey. Direct competitors include Second World Media, Radical Heat Design, Entrevision, and Altercreative.

Second World Media provides design and marketing services to small businesses in the Oxbridge area focusing mostly on websites and a local publication called Oxbridge Town Talk. Radical Heat Design offers a variety of design services excluding web, and currently has many local businesses as clients. Entrevision and Altercreative both offer design services for both print and web for small, medium, and large-sized businesses and organizations. They do not offer marketing services.

Our indirect competitors are web-focused businesses, do-it-yourself programs and online services. Local web-focused businesses include Entrevision, Tremendous Media, and Custom Web Solutions. Examples of do-it-yourself programs and online services are Microsoft Publisher, AAA Logo, Weebly, and Dream template. Web-focused businesses are in high demand with new websites for businesses that previously did not need a website, but are now investing in an online presence. Lower cost is the competitive advantage that most do-it-yourself programs and online services have. Many are very inexpensive and some are even free for a basic version with a cost-associated upgrade for more professional software.

Competitive Strategy

The core of our competitive strategy focuses on establishing ourselves within the local business community, as this is a key strength of our competitors. The second key component involves having an effective web presence including website, Facebook Business Page, Blog and Twitter account. Some of our competitors utilize a couple of these tools, but on a minimal scale.

In order to be competitive we will network through local business organizations such as The Dovercourt Home and Small Business Association and the Woolsey Chamber of Commerce. Our goal is to then become an online destination as a resource for small businesses advertising information. Through our online presence, we will post links to informative articles and tools to assist small businesses with their daily marketing and advertising needs. It is important to update with new content on a regular basis to provide fresh, relevant news and ideas.

Tops of Shop Creative will also capitalize on a missed opportunity by creating prepackaged advertising options with benefit explanations for each. Small business owners fear high prices and unsatisfactory results from their advertising. These packages will show what options are available and what the cost is for each.

2.2 Marketing Goals and Objectives

Goal: To have ten recurring clients by December 2017

Objectives:

- Buy a networking ad in the Dovercourt Business Times every two months
- Create a listing on the Your Local Marketplace online directory by July 2017
- Buy a 1/16th colour ad in Focus on Seaforth every two months

- Join the Dovercourt Home Small Business Association by September 2017
- Join the Woolsey Chamber of Commerce by September 2018
- Launch website at www.topsofshopcreative.com by August 15, 2017
- Launch a design blog linked to the website and update at least three times a week by July 2017
- Continue to update Twitter, Facebook Fan Page and Linked In profile at least 3 times a week starting immediately
- Continue to update Twitter, Facebook Fan Page and Linked In profile at least three times a week starting immediately
- Send customer appreciation follow-up material in the form of cards, promotional packages and holiday greetings (seasonal)
- Follow-up with previous clients regarding updates and new services offered as appropriate

Goal: To network within the local business community

Objectives:

- Create print promotional material in the form of business cards and postcards by July 1, 2017
- Create promotional “Plant a Seed” packages by August 16, 2017
- Join the Dovercourt Home Small Business Association by September 2017
- Join the Woolsey Chamber of Commerce by September 2018
- Attend local events regularly within Woolsey, Port Deveraux and Oxbridge to meet new people and business contacts
- Attend the Local Biz Expo show at the General Motors Centre in October 2017
- Do a presentation to at least one business networking association with a topic relevant to small business owners by June 2018
- Set up a booth at Local Biz Expo show at the General Motors Centre in October 2018

Goals: Achieve an online presence

Objectives:

- Launch website at www.topsofshopcreative.com by August 15, 2017
- Launch a design blog linked to the website and update at least three times a week by July 2017
- Continue to update Twitter, Facebook Fan Page and Linked In profile at least three times a week starting immediately
- Implement search engine optimization techniques
- Create a listing on the Your Local Marketplace online directory by July 2017
- Create an e-newsletter about small business advertising trends to be sent out to subscribers starting January 2018 (sent every two months to start)

2.3 Situation Analysis

2.3a The Marketplace

A recent report from the Conference Board of Canada cites the Oakwood CMA (Oakwood, Clearview and Woolsey) as one of the fastest-growing metropolitan economies in Canada between 2015 and 2018 (*Regional Snapshot 2014 Report for Dovercourt Region*). Despite the recent recession, this area has continued to expand both by population and by number of businesses. As increasingly dense areas of homes are built, the demand for new businesses of every kind has increased.

In Dovercourt region in particular, there are a variety of resources available to start-up business owners. This combined with a strong entrepreneurial culture from existing small and medium-sized businesses indicates that the growth seen in self-employed numbers (our clients) will continue to increase (*2016 Economic Report: Dovercourt Region*). These new businesses will have both traditional and non-traditional advertising needs as trends change and technologies advance.

In 2017, one of the largest of small-business-related trends is the ability to deliver effective social media marketing campaigns (*The Best Business Opportunities of 2017*, About.com Canadian Small Business, Susan Ward, published December 7, 2016, accessed March 5, 2017). We will offer this service to our clients as their needs for an online presence grow to include new technologies previously unnecessary for small businesses.

When it comes to changes and trends, the needs of businesses of all sizes are important to graphic designers. According to Statistics Canada, graphic design businesses earned 81% of their operating revenue from clients who are other businesses (*Specialized Design Facts and Figures*, Statistics Canada, March 2, 2010). This revenue comes from a variety of projects some of which are new and unique while others are common with all businesses.

Understandably, the time a graphic designer spends working on a project varies depending on what the projects needs are for each client. Results from the Graphic Designers of Canada 2014/2015 survey show that corporate identity/branding and advertising design were the areas or work most designers were involved in during this time (*National Survey of Graphic Design Salaries and Billing Practices*, RGD Ontario, 2014/2015). These two areas are the most common, but this also highlights the fact that traditional projects such as these take up the majority of time instead of online marketing. This information also has a strong impact on solo graphic design firm income during this time.

Across Canada, solo graphic design firms earned between \$0 and \$220,000 in 2013 with an average income of \$47,592 (*National Survey of Graphic Design*). The chart “Income Solo Designer Firm,” highlighting this information in further detail, defines income as billings minus business related expenses. A second chart entitled “Averages for Project Fees” outlines where this income comes from on average.

2.3b Information Parity and Advantage

Within the graphic design industry it has become commonplace to have a website whether or not web design services are being offered at that particular agency. What sets a graphic design studio's website apart from the rest is how they utilize it. Many have basic information and a few portfolio pieces, but do not update regularly or embed social media applications to encourage customers to make their site a destination.

When it comes to social marketing in general, most graphic design firms are not embracing this trend. Websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn offer several benefits for small businesses – especially those in a visually creative field. It allows direct connection with customers as well as an easy way to keep your design studio top-of-mind with fresh, relevant information.

In terms of traditional advertising, most of our competitors do not place ads within local publications such as newspapers, community newsletters or business directories. We will pick select community publications targeted to local businesses to take advantage of this opportunity. Similar to our competitors, we will create a free listing within the Woolsey Your Local Marketplace online directory. Where we will have the advantage is by including our website and continuing to keep the information accurate as changes occur.

2.4 Marketing Program

As a start-up enterprise, we will engage in a comprehensive customer targeted marketing plan of advertising and promotional activities.

By targeting our marketing efforts to the previously described demographic and psychographic profile of our clients, we will effectively reach potential primary and secondary customers with a message that is sure to sell and/or educate.

By targeting our efforts to address our primary competitors' SWOT, particularly in reference to their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in terms of their marketing programs, we will meet strengths, capitalize on weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities, and proactively address any threats that may arise as competitors see what we are doing.

2.4a Primary and Secondary Influence Points

Influence Point 1

- Small businesses are unsure if they will get a good return on investment from hiring a graphic designer and assume a high cost is associated
- **Message to customer:** Graphic design tailored to your budget; come in for a free consultation

Influence Point 2

- Small businesses have a fear of not standing out from the competition
- **Message to customer:** Freshen up your look with new branding and advertising for your business

Influence Point 3

- Many small businesses are faced with too many options and are not sure what is best for their business
- * **Message to customer:** We will walk through the options to determine which is the best for you

Influence Point 4

- Small businesses fear not attracting new or returning customers
- **Message to customer:** Promotional web and print advertising programs designed to turn new clients into returning happy ones

Influence Point 5

- Real estate agents fear that if they do not promote their clients property/house, they will not attract desirable attention to the listing
- **Message to customer:** We will help you develop promotions that will grab and retain interest for your listings

Influence Point 6

- Event organizers fear a lack of attendance to their event
- **Message to customer:** Gain awareness that leads to ticket sales for your event through fresh and effective promotional print and web material

Influence Point 7

- Small businesses fear high costs and lack of understanding when it comes to establishing a web presence
- **Message to customer:** We offer web design services suited to all budgets clearly explained through each step of the process

Influence Point 8

- Small businesses are afraid of being talked over and confused with tech talk they do not understand.
- **Message to customer:** We provide a detailed schedule and explanation of each

part in the process for your design project

2.4b Marketing SWOT: Direct/Indirect

Direct Competitors

Second World Media

Second World Media is a graphic design and marketing company located in Oxbridge, Ontario. Their marketing consists of a mix of both traditional and new advertising methods. Their traditional methods include advertisements in their printed monthly news publication called Oxbridge Town Talk and networking through the Oxbridge Chamber of Commerce. Newer techniques utilize the Internet as well as social marketing through their website, a Facebook Business Page and Twitter. Their strengths lie in how relatively quick they established themselves within the business community as well as how they have integrated both new and traditional marketing methods for their business.

When looking at weaknesses, the utilization of web marketing is where they could make changes. Although they employ the use of Twitter and a Facebook Fan Page, they do not update.

The best opportunity for Tops of Shop Creative is to implement elements of their marketing campaign that will benefit us, but to also take each one a step further. Examples of this include integrating client appreciation programs as well as taking the time to promote the business of our clients through our own social marketing initiatives.

Once Tops of Shop Creative enters the market, they may notice our implementation of these programs and try to duplicate it. Since client appreciation focuses on existing clients and repeat business, this should not affect our business directly.

Radical Heat Design

Radical Heat Design is a well-established graphic design business located in Oxbridge Ontario. They boast a large client list as well as a list of local awards. Most of their “advertising” is from word-of-mouth and referrals.

It is difficult to pinpoint their marketing strengths as they rarely advertise, but they have established strong branding with the colour red, used throughout their business material such as cards and invoices as well as their storefront location.

Weaknesses include lack of advertising in general. They do very little (if any) print advertising and do not have a website. They also do not do any client appreciation or promotion of their work through a digital or print portfolio.

The opportunity for Tops of Shop Creative is to make sure we advertise on a regular basis in mediums targeted to our customer. The important key to note from Radical Heat

Design is that a collective branding of all advertising material is important.

Once we enter the market with our advertising campaign threats are unlikely because they are already aware that they need to establish a web presence are not taking the time to do so. We will be ahead of the curve by working with this medium from day one and continuing to monitor advertising trends in the future.

Entrevison

Entrevison is a graphic design firm located in Port Deveraux, Ontario. They have a range of clients, but focus mostly on music-related clients such as bands, labels and clothing. Their advertising methods focus almost entirely on web methods such as a Facebook Business Page and their website. They do not appear to advertise in any local publications and mostly rely on word-of-mouth for their local clients.

For Entrevison, their biggest strength is their website. It is a well-designed portfolio piece not only displaying their web designing abilities, but also highlighting their other work from various clients. There are sections with information for potential customers such as what information they should consider when looking for a quote. They also link this with a Facebook campaign.

Although Entrevison has a strong website they do have a couple of weaknesses when it comes to web presence. There is a recent news section and the last update was over a year ago. The portfolio work also appears to be older work, which means there is no fresh information or visuals to draw viewers back to the site on a continuous basis. They also do not appear to advertise in any local papers, magazines or trade publications.

Their lack of presence in local media is an opportunity for us to make a large impact on the local business community, establishing that our mission is to serve their needs. We will also make sure to keep our website up to date with recent projects and information making it a destination for clients.

Our presence within the market and focus on the local community may pose a threat to Entrevison and cause them to refocus their marketing efforts. In this circumstance we will already be implementing a client appreciation program for returning clients as well as furthering our website as a place for small businesses to gain information related to their advertising needs.

Altercreative

Altercreative is a large graphic design firm located in Oakwood, Ontario. They have a larger staff of four people who work full-time in their office location. Marketing efforts are focused on their website which boasts a strong portfolio and wide-array of clients from small to large businesses and organizations in the Oakwood/Woolsey area.

Altercreative is another competitor that does not advertise by traditional methods such as

newspapers. This weakness seems to be common with established graphic design firms who are often working from referrals and word-of-mouth. Their website is built entirely in Flash which is a medium that takes a long time to load when viewed from slower internet connections creating a potentially disappointing experience for potential clients.

Their weaknesses become our opportunities by utilizing a focused print-advertisement marketing initiative to capture the clients that they are potentially alienating. Our website will include elements of Flash, but will be well balanced with HTML to create an enjoyable user experience. Another opportunity we have is to extend our web presence to include Facebook, Twitter and a Blog, which they currently do not utilize.

We will most likely not pose as a threat to Aftershock Creative since they are currently not aggressively advertising at this time.

Indirect Competitors

Web-focused Businesses

Web-focused Businesses, including Entrevision in Brooklin, offer services specifically related to your businesses' presence on the Internet. As more and more businesses are finding it necessary to have a website, they are turning to professionals within the industry to satisfy their needs. Marketing initiatives for this type of business is very similar to those of a graphic design firm. Many do both traditional advertising in their local paper as well as online advertising.

Strengths include the ability to maximize their web marketing initiatives simply because it is what their business is about. Most are still employing traditional advertising methods, which is smart because their clients may not be familiar with the Internet and still rely on the local newspaper to locate desirable services.

For a web-focused business, their biggest weakness is often a poorly designed print advertisement. Since it is not strength, this comes through in the print medium causing the effect on the client to be undesirable.

Our opportunities lie with creating dynamic print and digital advertising to capture this portion of the market.

As web design is not our sole focus and we do not offer specialized web coding, we will not be a threat to most web-focused businesses.

Do-it-yourself and online services

Do-it-yourself programs and online services include Microsoft Publisher, www.weebly.com (websites), and www.logoyes.com (logos). These types of programs are often free or come with software already purchased (Microsoft Publisher comes with Microsoft Office). Marketing includes search-engine-optimization techniques as well as

advertising through stores where they sell software at the consumer level such as Best Buy and Future Shop.

Search-engine-optimization is their biggest strength. Top keywords such as “logo design” or “website design” often turn up these type of results versus a local business in their area. They focus on a niche group of people who are looking for inexpensive design to satisfy their need without much care for the design quality.

Weaknesses include the lack of trust the customer associates with these types of businesses as well as frustration with the results if they are ineffective.

This opens up the opportunity for us to educate our potential clients about the benefits of good design through our web presence. We will do this through highlighting examples of good design and what the benefits are to the business. We will also be educating the client on how they can achieve the effect they want from their advertising design needs.

We will not pose a threat to these types of businesses who face a variety of direct competitors who are their focus.

2.4c Positioning Statement

Tops of Shop Creative offers integrated graphic design services with cost-effective, tailored design and production packages to effectively promote small to medium-sized businesses.

2.4d Program Components

2.4d(i) Advertising Campaign

A detailed calendar of when all advertising campaign elements will occur within the first year of operation is located in Appendix B (Marketing Calendar).

Dovercourt Business Times

Publication/Advertising Information

Dovercourt Business Times provides a monthly look at issues affecting Dovercourt businesses. Features include news, calendars, industry updates and focuses on Dovercourt businesses.

- Circulation: 25 000 per month
- Number of Issues: 12 (monthly)
- Geographic Area Served: Dovercourt Region
- Distribution:
 - 11 000 direct delivery to every business in Dovercourt Region
 - 3500 sent to owner, managers and key decision makers in the business community

- 3300 displayed at key locations including banks, Chamber of Commerce and government offices
- 7200 demographically friendly homes in Dovercourt
- Competitors/Indirect Competitors Advertising: ABC Web Solutions (indirect Competitor)
- Average Reader: Business owner or manager

Advertising Description

Chosen Display Ad Rate: Networking Ad(Business card size): \$179 colour insertion, \$129 BW insertion (minimum six insertions). Tops of Shop Creative will do six insertions in colour from September 2017 until August 2018 (every two months for a total of \$1,074). Networking Advertisements are located on the back exterior page of the publication (unless an advertiser chooses to buy the back page space) in a Networking section.

Advertising Design and Preparation Details

We will contact Chantel Bondoux at Dovercourt Business Times to book the advertising space.

- Phone Number: 905 426 4676
- Email: cbondoux@Dovercourtregion.com

Tops of Shop Creative will design and submit the advertisement (\$0 charge). We will format the file to a PDF formatted from Adobe Illustrator, InDesign or Photoshop version CS at a resolution of 300 dpi.

Tops of Shop Creative will submit the file to Dovercourt Business Times via FTP upload (at no charge) using the following upload information:

- host: [ftp.metroland.com](ftp://ftp.metroland.com)
- user id: adbank
- pass: csl
- folder: Dovercourt Business Times

Deadlines for Submission

The deadline for confirmation of participation is the second Friday of the month before the publication month. The deadline for an advertisement to be submitted is the third Wednesday of the month before the publication month.

Additional Promotional Opportunities

If you advertise a minimum of six times in one calendar year in the Networking Opportunities space, you get a free editorial. Tops of Shop Creative will be advertising six times in the year between September 2017 and August 2018 therefore receiving the free editorial opportunity. The topic of this editorial will follow similar themes being focused on in our blog and e-newsletter on trends and updates in advertising that affect small businesses.

Dovercourt Business Times places the editorial, which fills approximately half a page, above the networking advertisement space. Each month has a themed feature with

discount rates for advertising. In 2017, the June feature is Printing and New Media. Although we are too late to participate this year, Tops of Shop Creative will advertise prominently in the June 2018 feature taking advantage of the themed issue and the discounted advertising rates.

Frequency of Advertising

Tops of Shop Creative will advertise every two months for our first year of operation (between September 2017 and August 2018) for a total of six insertions at a cost of \$1074 for the year.

Focus on Seaforth

Publication/Advertising Information

Focus On Seaforth is a monthly news and features magazine about the people and events taking place in Seaforth Township.

- Circulation: 9300
- Number of Issues: 12 (monthly)
- Geographic Area Served: Seaforth Township
- Distribution:
 - Canada Post delivery to all homes and business in Seaforth Township
 - Drops throughout Port Deveraux
- Competitors/Indirect Competitors Advertising: BB Printing/Digital Consulting (more printing than design), ABC Web Solutions (indirect competitor)

Advertising Description

Chosen Display Ad Rate: 1/16 Page: \$85, Colour \$110. Tops of Shop Creative will do six insertions in colour from September 2017 until August 2018 (every two months for a total of \$660). Our advertisement will be located between pages 10 and 18.

Advertising Design and Preparation Details

Tops of Shop Creative will contact MaryAnn Fleming to book the advertising space.

- Phone Number: 905 985 8585
- Email: mflaming@focusonseaforth.com
- Website: www.focusonseaforth.com

Tops of Shop Creative will design and submit the advertisement as a PDF file by emailing it to MaryAnn (\$0 charge).

Deadlines for Submission

The deadline for an advertisement to be submitted is the second last Thursday of the month before the publication month.

Additional Promotional Opportunities

Focus on Seaforth has a section called “Changing Faces” where they promote new businesses and organizations within the community. It is a couple of lines describing the business and contact information at no charge. Although we do not qualify for this opportunity right now (since our business is not located within Seaforth), we will keep this in mind for when we open our storefront location.

Frequency of Advertising

Tops of Shop Creative will advertise every two months for our first year of operation (between September 2017 and August 2018) for a total of six insertions at a cost of \$660 for the year.

Facebook Advertising Campaign

Publication/Advertising Information

Facebook is a social networking website for anyone 13 or older to connect with friends, family, organizations, groups or businesses. There are over 400 million active users around the world. Facebook Advertisements are displayed on the right side of the Facebook user’s screen as they are viewing the Facebook page. The decision as to which ads are displayed lies with a range of criteria decided by the advertiser when the ad is created.

Advertising Description

Tops of Shop Creative will be advertising through Facebook on a pay per click (cpc) campaign which means that we only pay when someone clicks on the advertisement at the right side of their screen. The click-through amount will be set with a bid of \$1.00 per click to a daily maximum of \$5.00 a day.

Advertising Design and Preparation Details

Tops of Shop Creative will design the advertisement (\$0 charge) and upload the associated text and image to Facebook.

Deadlines for Submission

Facebook advertisements do not have a deadline for submission, but due to the approval process, there is a recommended time of 12 hours for submissions to be received before the time aimed to appear online.

Additional Promotional Opportunities

See section 2.4d (ii) for information on the Facebook “Like” Page that we will set up to integrate with the Facebook Advertising Campaign.

Frequency of Advertising

Tops of Shop Creative will be running a new Facebook Advertising Campaign each week for a total of 12 weeks (at a cost of \$420 if maximum bids and daily maximums are used). The campaign will focus on attracting viewers to “Like” the Tops of Shop Creative

Page. These viewers will then be subscribed to the page and will receive updates.

Your Local Marketplace

Publication/Advertising Information

Your Local Marketplace (ylm.ca) is an online public business directory based on location and keywords. Listings appear within a search based on chosen keywords. This directory can be accessed through ylm.ca or through a link found at Woolsey.ca

Advertising Description

The advertisement is text only with fields to enter information such as contact info and business description based on keywords.

Advertising Design and Preparation Details

Tops of Shop Creative will create a free advertisement on ylm.ca (\$0 charge). There is no imagery available, but text information will include a link to our website, topsofshopcreative.com as well as phone and address information.

Deadlines for Submission

There are no deadlines to submit a listing to this registry.

Additional Promotional Opportunities

There is an option to enhance our listing for a monthly fee, which would include the option to upload images and have e-coupons. Tops of Shop Creative does not feel that there would be a benefit to enhancing our listing at this time.

Frequency of Advertising

We will create this listing immediately and continue to update it as changes occur.

www.topsofshopcreative.com

Publication/Advertising Venue Information

Our website will be accessed through the domain name www.topsofshopcreative.com. We will use this as a way to promote our business as well as highlight our past work, a resource for small business owners, and a tool for our customers to be able to access information.

Advertising Description

www.topsofshopcreative.com will feature at least five pages as well as a link to our blog, Twitter and Facebook Business Page.

Advertising Design and Preparation Details

The website will be designed, uploaded, maintained and updated by Tops of Shop Creative (\$0 charge). Already purchased items include the domain (www.topsofshopcreative.com) and hosting from www.doteasy.com for \$26.21 per year.

Deadlines for Submission

Our deadline for having our website fully operational is August 15 2017.

Additional Promotional Opportunities

Our website will be linked to our blog, Facebook and Twitter pages which will feature updates of new work as well as information useful to small businesses and their advertising needs.

Frequency of Advertising

Our website will be fully operational 24/7 and will be updated at a minimum of three times a week.

2.4d(ii) Promotional Campaign

A detailed calendar of when all promotional campaign elements will occur within the first year of operation is located in Appendix B (Marketing Calendar).

Facebook “Like” Page (also known as Facebook Business Page)Promotion Description

A Facebook “Like” Page is a resource for businesses, organizations and groups to create a web space within Facebook dedicated to their needs. It is very similar to a personal Facebook page, but this page is linked directly with Facebook’s advertising system.

Promotion Design and Details

The Facebook “Like” Page for Tops of Shop Creative will be set up immediately. Information will include a short description of the business, contact information, a link to www.topsofshopcreative.com and hours of operation. The logo for Tops of Shop Creative will be uploaded to the page. We will send out invitations to “Like” the page to the Friend list of Christy Toller and Leon Toller. Until a blog is set up, posts will be made to the Wall of the Facebook “Like” Page displaying previous projects, highlighting other exceptional work in the industry as well as posting links to useful articles and tutorials related to advertising for small businesses. Once a blog is set up, the posts to the Wall will be automated through the blog with the same type of content as mentioned previously.

The goal with the Facebook “Like” Page is to gain awareness among local social network users including local businesses that already use Facebook to promote their goods or services. Our page will “Like” other local business pages in an effort to cross promote and recognize a support system among local business owners and operators.

Deadlines for Submission

There are no deadlines set by Facebook, but we will set up our page immediately to gain exposure. Once 25 people “like” our page, we can set up a direct link that includes our business name: [Facebook.com/topsofshopcreative](https://www.facebook.com/topsofshopcreative)

Additional Promotional Opportunities

In order to promote our Facebook “Like” Page we will set up a Facebook Pay-per-click Advertising Campaign. This is outlined in detail in the Advertising Campaign section. The goal with this campaign is to attract people to “Like” our page, which will mean that our posts will show up on their Facebook Wall.

Frequency of Promoting

Updated posts to our Facebook “Like” Page Wall will be made at least three times a week. Other information such as contact numbers, location, and hours of operation will be updated as changes are made.

Twitter

Promotion Description

Twitter is a real-time information network powered by subscribers. People sign up for an account and “follow” other people by receiving their Tweets. Tweets are posts of 140 characters or less that include text and links, but no images.

Promotion Design and Details

Tops of Shop Creative will create a Twitter account and design a custom background for it. Once launched, Tops of Shop Creative will begin to “follow” other people and businesses that are up-to-date with trends and useful information. We will also follow local businesses that join Twitter to help with cross promotion. The Twitter account will be connected to our Facebook “Like” Page, LinkedIn, our blog and our website.

Deadlines for Submission

There is no set deadline to set up a Twitter account, but we will set up the account for Tops of Shop Creative immediately in order to gain maximum exposure.

Additional Promotional Opportunities

The main purpose of Twitter is to create a dialogue. We intend to set up this dialogue between other professionals within the industry and ourselves, as well as with our customers.

Frequency of Promoting

We will make updated “Tweets” (posts) to the Tops of Shop Creative Twitter page at least three times a week.

LinkedIn

Promotion Description

LinkedIn is a social networking service designed to be a tool for your professional needs by taking business networking online. It offers the ability to post information about your past and current work situation, your experience, talents and abilities and who you are

connected with on a professional level.

Promotion Design and Details

Tops of Shop Creative will use LinkedIn as another resource for promoting our services to other small businesses. Adding “Owner of Tops of Shop Creative” as the current position for Christy Toller will do this. We will then link our Twitter account to our LinkedIn account in order for “Tweets” to appear in the news feed for all of our contacts. All of the posts as mentioned previously will be fed into the LinkedIn account, which will therefore provide the same benefits.

Deadlines for Submission

There is no set deadline to set up a LinkedIn account, but we will set up the account for Tops of Shop Creative immediately in order to gain maximum exposure.

Frequency of Promoting

Information will be updated in the newsfeed via Twitter at least three times a week.

Tops of Shop Creative Blog

Promotion Description

A blog is a “web log” of information posted regularly by a user with the intent to discuss, promote or inform about a particular subject, issue or event (Dictionary.com).

Promotion Design and Details

Tops of Shop Creative will set up a blog using the free service Blogger. Tops of Shop Creative will do the design of the blog at \$0 charge. Information posted to the blog will include recent projects (images and text), industry trends and highlights as well as relevant information regarding advertising for small businesses. The goal with this blog is to become a destination for small businesses to go for information related to advertising and promotion, whether or not it requires our services. The posts to the blog will automatically feed into the Twitter, Facebook “Like” Page and LinkedIn accounts for Tops of Shop Creative.

Deadlines for Submission

There is no set deadline to set up a blog, but we will set up our blog by July 1, 2017 to create buzz for our website launch in August.

Frequency of Promotion

Information will be updated to the blog at least three times a week.

Dovercourt Home/Small Business Membership

Promotion Description

The Dovercourt Home/Small Business is an organization where one can experience personal and business growth while building many important relationships. They host

networking sessions, informative meetings, educational workshops, and provide motivational support.

Promotion Details

The cost to join as a member of the DHSBA is \$55.00 per year. The cost to attend meetings is \$15.00 per meeting which occur 10 times a year making the total annual cost \$205.00

Deadlines

Tops of Shop Creative will join the DHSBA and begin attending meetings in September.

Frequency of Promoting

Meetings occur once a month from September to June of each year.

E-newsletter

Promotion Description

Tops of Shop Creative will send out an e-newsletter using a list of email addresses collected into a database by Tops of Shop Creative. The focus of the newsletter will be trends, tips and hints for advertising and marketing for small businesses.

Promotion Design and Details

The newsletter will be designed by Tops of Shop Creative at \$0 charge and will be sent out using free software through mailchimp.com.

Deadlines

Tops of Shop Creative will start sending out an e-newsletter starting in January of 2018 and issues will continue to be designed and sent out every two months for the first year. In order to develop a database for the e-newsletter and sign-up form will be posted on the Facebook "Like" Page and website for Tops of Shop Creative. A link to the subscription sign-up will be posted through Twitter and on the Tops of Shop Creative blog.

Frequency of Promoting

The e-newsletter will be sent out every two months for the first year (between January 2018 and December 2019) with a potential to go to monthly distribution depending on popularity.

Seasonal Client Appreciation Cards

Promotion Description

Tops of Shop Creative will send out five Client Appreciation Cards each year. The cards will be sent in December (holiday theme), February (Valentine's Day theme), May (spring theme), August (back-to-school theme), and October (Tops of Shop Creative logo-branded) to approximately 50 chosen clients.

Promotion Design and Details

Tops of Shop Creative will design the cards at \$0 charge, have them printed by Master Print at a cost of \$35.00, and mail them in envelopes from Staples (\$5.19 for 50 envelopes, \$28.50 for 50 stamps).

Deadlines

We will start with the first card in October to first build up a client base. The first card will have the Tops of Shop Creative logo on the front and it will be an introduction to our business along with information about holiday advertising design packages. The deadlines for the subsequent cards are outlined in the Marketing Calendar.

Frequency of Promoting

As noted above, the cards will be sent out five times a year; December, February, May, August, and October.

2.4d(iii) Identification and Promotional Materials

Business Cards

Quantity

500 cards (design will be changed every 500 cards)

Description

The business cards will be full colour single sided on card stock. Information on the card will include our logo (Tops of Shop Creative), Christy Toller, Christy @topsofshopcreative.com, 905.649.9033, and www.topsofshopcreative.com.

Design Services

Tops of Shop Creative will design the business card at \$0 charge.

Printing/Production Services

Master Print located at 10 Sunray St. Units 3-5 in Woolsey will print 500 business cards for \$65.00. This price includes a proof of our design and final printing.

Format of Designed Material

The business card file will be submitted to Master Print by email. It will be a PDF file from Adobe Illustrator.

Timelines/Deadlines

The file must be sent to the printer by July 1

Total Monthly and 12-Month Cost

\$65.00 (per 500 cards)

Postcards

Quantity

400 postcards (design will be changed once 400 are used)

Description

The postcard will be double-sided with colour on both sides. The first side will contain a larger-scale version of our business card with our logo and contact information. The backside will include a couple key examples of recent work.

Design Services

Tops of Shop Creative will design the postcard at \$0 charge.

Printing/Production Services

Master Print located in Woolsey will print 400 business cards for \$120.00 plus tax. This price includes a proof of our design and final printing.

Format of Designed Material

The postcard file will be submitted to Master Print by email. It will be a PDF file from Adobe InDesign.

Timelines/Deadlines

The file must be sent to the printer by July 1

Total Monthly and 12 Month Cost

\$120.00 plus tax (for 400 postcards)

Promotional Package – “Plant a Seed”Quantity

50 promotional packages will be produced and sent to a select target market of potential clients.

Description

The promotional package contains a small clay pot and a clay tray, mini garden tools, a small packet of soil and small packet of seeds. We will brand each item with the Tops of Shop Creative logo and brand colours. Additional material for sending each promotional package includes business cards, boxes, and protective stuffing. Each package will be hand delivered. The concept is to imply that Tops of Shop Creative will help your business become “established, embedded and effective” similar to planting seeds whose roots embed into the soil to effectively create the strong base for the plant to prosper.

Design Services

Tops of Shop Creative will design and assemble this promotional package at \$0 charge.

Printing/Production Services

Printing of the tags and labels will be done in house on card stock with an HP Inkjet printer. Printing of the business cards included in the package is mentioned previously.

Costs per item are:

- Clay pots (12 cm): \$0.50 each (\$25.00 total for 50) (Dollarama)
- Clay bottom trays (12 cm): three for \$1.00 (\$17.00 total for 51) (Dollarama)
- Mini garden tools: \$0.50 each (\$25.00 total for 50)
- Soil: \$2.59 per bag (\$7.77 total for three bags) (Home Depot)
- Bags to divide soil: \$1.00 for 40 (\$2.00 total for 80 bags) (Dollarama)
- Cardstock for tags: \$16.74 for 250 sheets (Staples)
- Soil bag labels: \$13.35 for 10 sheets of full page labels (Staples)
- Clay pot labels: \$13.96 for 300 clear mailing labels (Staples)
- Forget-Me-Not seeds: \$1.99 for 50 seeds approx. (\$9.95 for five packages) (Home Depot)
- Butcher cord: \$4.27 for 550 ft (Canadian Tire)

Tops of Shop Creative will assemble each promotional package at \$0 charge. They will all be hand delivered at a cost of approximately \$40 for gas.

Format of Designed Material

The seeds, soil bag, and business card will be put inside the clay pot. The clay tray will be placed on top of the pot like a lid and the garden tool will be tied to the top using butcher cord to keep both the tool and lid attached to the clay pot. The tag will be attached to the handle of the garden tool and the labels will be attached to the soil bag, and clay pot.

Timelines/Deadlines

The items for each promotional package must be purchased by July 31, which will allow for two weeks of assembling and printing. The packages will be hand delivered during a two-week period between August 16 and 28.

Total Monthly and 12-Month Cost

The total cost to execute this promotion once is approximately \$175.00.

Website (www.topsofshopcreative.com)

Description

Our website will be accessed through the domain name www.topsofshopcreative.com. We will use it as a tool for promoting our business, a showcase of our past work, a resource for small business owners, and as a tool for our customers to be able to access information.

www.topsofshopcreative.com will feature at least five pages as well as links to our blog, Facebook and Twitter pages that will feature updates of new work as well as information useful to small businesses and their advertising needs.

Design Services

The website will be designed, uploaded, maintained and updated by Tops of Shop Creative (\$0 charge).

Printing/Production Services

The domain (www.topsofshopcreative.com) and hosting have already been purchased from www.doteasy.com for \$26.21 for the year.

Format of Designed Material

The website will be formatted as html files which will be uploaded to our hosting space. It will be accessed by the public from the web URL www.topsofshopcreative.com.

Timelines/Deadlines

Our deadline for having our website fully operational is August 15 2017.

Total Monthly and 12 Month Cost

Our website will cost \$26.21 per year which will break down to a monthly cost of \$2.18. This cost may increase as online needs change.

2.4d(iv) Pricing, Placement, and Distribution

Every few years, the Graphic Designers of Canada association does a survey with its members across the country. This survey covers many aspects of the graphic design field including pricing. The pricing is divided by the different services offered by graphic designers as well as the number of years experience. All of the information listed below is from the Solo Designer Firm Billing Rates section of the 14/15 survey. See Appendix A for the detailed charts.

- Graphic Design: less than five years experience – average \$51.00/hour (low: \$25, high: \$85)
- Web Design: less than five years experience – average \$65.00/hour (low: \$34, high: \$200)
- Brand Strategy/Consulting: less than five years – average \$53.00/hour (low: \$35, high: \$120)
- Creative Design/Direction: less than five years – average \$49.00/hour (low: \$20, high: \$75)

Some of the services offered by Tops of Shop Creative include logo design and development, branding, on-screen pre-movie advertisements, posters, postcards, flyers, business card design as well as website design. Each of these services was broken down by task and the amount of time required to execute that task. Each task was assigned as part of one of these three categories: consultation, design, and administration. The hourly rate for consultation time is \$30/hour, design time is \$45/hour, and administrative time is \$20/hour.

This hourly rate will be applied to custom projects where the pre-packaged services do

not satisfy the client's needs. Each pre-packaged service is broken down further below. These packages do not include printing of any projects other than printing required by Tops of Shop Creative for proofs for the purpose of client consultations.

Logo and Branding Package

- Meet with client to discuss needs (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval (two to three hours)
- Receive signed contract and first installment of payment (zero hours)
- Meet with client for business brief (to gain all knowledge and insight into their business venture) (four hours)
- Brainstorm and develop concept phrases and image boards for their business (ten hours)
- Present concept phrases and image boards to client (four hours)
- Send second installment payment invoice (ten minutes)
- Receive second installment payment from client (zero hours)
- Develop three to four logo drafts (ten hours)
- Meet with client to review drafts (four hours)
- Revisions:
 - 16 hours of design work
 - 12 hours of consultations
 - two hours of admin work
- Send final draft to client for sign-off (ten minutes)
- Receive confirmation of logo sign-off (zero hours)
- Create package of logo, disc with logo file formats, colour package, and fonts (two hour)
- Meet with client to go over final package and present final invoice (four hours)

Total Hours: 71 hours

- 28 hours of consultation (x\$30 per hour is \$840.00)
- 36 hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$1620.00)
- seven hours of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$140.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$2600.00
- Materials and supplies (printing etc.): \$500.00
- Total: \$3100.00*

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations and display of final logo and branding for client.

Logo Package 1

- Meet with client (four hours)

- Develop contract and send to client for approval (2- three hour)
- Receive first installment of payment and signed contact (zero hours)
- Develop three -four drafts of logo for client (eight hours)
- Meet with client to review drafts (four hours)
- Revisions:
 - eight hours of design work
 - one hour of admin work
- Sign off on final logo with client (zero hours)
- Put final file formats onto disc (High resolution PDF, High resolution JPEG, low resolution JPEG, list of colours and matching Pantone numbers) (two hours)
- Print logo onto cardstock and put into file folder with CD (included in above time)
- Present package in person to client along with final invoice (four hours)

Total Hours: 34 hours approximately

- 12 hours of consultation (x\$30 per hour is \$360.00)
- 16 hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$720.00)
- six hours of administrative work (x\$20 per hour is \$120.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$1200.00
- Materials and Supplies (Printing etc.): \$150.00
- **Total: \$1350.00***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations and display of final logo for client.

Logo Package 2

- Meet with client (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval (two hours)
- Receive first installment of payment and signed contact (zero hours)
- Develop one to two logo concepts (two hours)
- Email drafts to client (ten minutes)
- Revisions:
 - four hours of design work
 - ½ hour of admin work
- Put final file formats onto disc (High resolution PDF, High resolution JPEG, low resolution JPEG, list of colours and matching Pantone numbers) (two hours)
- Print logo onto cardstock and put into file folder with CD (included in time allotted above)
- Present package in person to client along with final installment invoice (four hours)

Total Hours: 20.5 hours approximately

- eight hours of consultation (x\$30 per hour is \$240.00)
- eight hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$360.00)
- 4.5 hours of administrative work (x\$20 per hour is \$90.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$690.00
- Materials and supplies (printing etc.): \$100.00
- **Total: \$790.00***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations and display of final logo for client.

On-screen Advertising (15 seconds)

- Meet with client to discuss advertising plan (1/2 to one hour)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval (ten minutes)
- Develop concept for advertising and storyboard (three hours)
- Meet with client to discuss storyboard of advertising concept to client (four hours)
- Receive revisions to concept from client (zero hours)
- Sign off on concept with client (zero hours)
- Develop advertisement (one hour)
- Send advertisement in .pps format to client for review (ten minutes)
- Receive revisions from client (zero hours)
- Make revisions to advertisement (1/2 hour)
- Send final advertisement to client along with invoice (ten minutes)

Total Hours: ten hours approximately

- Five hours of consultation (x30 per hour is \$150.00)
- 4.5 hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$202.50)
- 1/2 hour of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$10.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$362.50
- Materials and Supplies: \$20.00
- Total: \$382.50*

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations and display of final advertisement for client.

Poster/Flyer/Postcard Design

- Meet with client to discuss needs (one to two hours)

- Develop contract and send to client for approval (ten minutes)
- Develop concept draft for poster/flyer (two hours)
- Email concept draft to client (ten minutes)
- Receive revisions to concept from client (zero hours)
- Do revisions to poster/flyer (one hour)
- Email revisions to client (ten minutes)
- Receive further revisions from client (zero hours)
- Make further revisions to poster/flyer (1/2 hour)
- Send final poster/flyer file to client along with invoice (ten minutes)

Total hours: 5.5 hours approximately

- hours of consultation (x30 per hour is \$60.00)
- 3.5 hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$157.50)
- 1/2 hour of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$10.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$227.50
- Materials and supplies (printing etc.): \$50.00
- **Total: \$277.50**

Advertiser Update – for Rialto Theatres Screen Advertising

- Receive update from client via email (zero hours)
- Add updated into rotation and send by email to the Rialto to be updated (1/2 hour)
- Send invoice to client (ten minutes)

Total hours: ½ hour approximately

Pricing:

- **Total: \$25.00**

Website Package 1 – (four to six pages – no Flash)

- Meet with client to discuss needs and assist with set-up of domain and hosting (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval along with invoice for first installment payment (one hour)
- Receive first installment payment and signed contract
- Develop storyboards of home page with three to four concepts (six hours)
- Meet with client to discuss concepts (ten minutes)
- Do revisions to chosen concept (three hours)
- Email revisions to client (ten minutes)
- Receive sign-off from client to move forward with full storyboards (zero hours)
- Develop storyboards for all pages (six hours)
- Meet with client to discuss storyboard (four hours)

- Receive sign-off from client to proceed with website (zero hours)
- Send invoice for second installment payment (ten minutes)
- Receive second installment payment from client (zero hours)
- Receive content from client for website (zero hours)
- Develop all web pages and upload to server (16 hours)
- Email to client for approval and editing of content (ten minutes)
- Revisions:
 - four hours of design work
 - one hour of admin work
- Prepare final package for client and send final invoice for third installment payment (two hours)

Total hours: 51.5 hours approximately

- 16 hours of consultation (x30 per hour is \$480.00)
- 31 hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$1395.00)
- 4.5 hours of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$90.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$1965.00
- Materials and Supplies (printing etc.): \$100.00
- **Total: \$2065.00**

Website Package 2 – (five pages or less – self-updatable)

- Meet with client to discuss needs and assist with set-up of domain and hosting (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval along with first invoice (one hour)
- Receive first installment of payment and signed contract (zero hours)
- Develop storyboards of home page with two - three concepts (four hours)
- Meet with client to discuss concepts (four hours)
- Do revisions to chosen concept (two hours)
- Email revisions to client (ten minutes)
- Receive sign-off from client to move forward with pages (zero hours)
- Send second invoice to client (ten minutes)
- Receive second installment of payment (zero hours)
- Receive content from client for website (zero hours)
- Develop all pages (eight hours)
- Email client to notify pages are complete (ten minutes)
- Receive edits to website from client (zero hours)
- Do any necessary revisions to website (two hours)
- Prepare final package for client (1/2 hour)
- Send final invoice to client for last installment (ten hours)
- Meet with client on how to update and maintain website (four hours)

Total hours: 34.5 hours approximately

- 16 hours of consultation (x30 per hour is \$480.00)
- 16 hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$720.00)
- 2.5 hours of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$50.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$1250.00
- Materials and Supplies (printing etc.): \$100.00
- **Total: \$1350.00***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional pages above the allotted six pages within this package

Business Card Design (with existing logo)

- Develop contract and send to client for approval (ten minutes)
- Receive email with client's information and accompanying logo for business card (zero hours)
- Develop three to four colour drafts (two hours)
- Email colour drafts to client (ten minutes)
- Receive choice of draft and revisions from client (zero hours)
- Do revisions to chosen draft (1/2 hour)
- Email revisions to client (ten minutes)
- Receive further revisions from client (zero hours)
- Do further revisions to draft (1/2 hour)
- Email revisions to client (ten minutes)
- Sign off on final design with client (zero hours)
- Email final file to client as a print-ready high resolution PDF (or quote on printing) as well as invoice (ten minutes)

Total hours: five hours approximately

- hours of layout work (x\$25 per hour is \$75.00)
- ½ hour of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$10.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$85.00
- Materials and Supplies: \$10.00
- **Total: \$95.00***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations and display of business card for client.

Business Card Design (without existing logo)

- Develop contract and send to client for approval (ten minutes)
- Receive email with client's information for business card (zero hours)
- Develop three -four business card drafts (three hours)
- Email colour drafts to client (ten minutes)
- Revisions:
 - two hours of design work
 - ½ hour of admin work
- Sign off on final design with client (zero hours)
- Email final file to client as a print-ready high resolution PDF (or quote on printing) as well as an invoice (ten minutes)

Total hours: six hours approximately

- five hours of layout work (x\$25 per hour is \$125.00)
- one hour of administrative (x\$20 per hour is \$20.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$145.00
- Materials and Supplies: \$10.00
- **Total: \$155.00***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations and display of business card for client.

Advertising Packages

E-blast Promo Package (without website)

Description: The E-blast Promo Package includes a form for customers to fill out their email addresses (usually located at point-of-purchase and offers a deal i.e.: "Sign up to receive discounts and sales information by email, and receive 10% off your purchase today." A database is comprised with these emails. Two different e-blasts are created (for separate occasions). After these e-blast coupons are brought into the store, a post-e-blast analysis is done to see effectiveness and how to proceed. (this package is for 500 emails or less)

Tasks:

- Meet with client to discuss details for the sign-up form and offer, what will be included in the e-blasts, and when they will be delivered. (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval (1/2 hour)
- Receive confirmation of information to be on the sign-up form (zero hours)
- Develop sign-up form (two hours)
- Have sign-up form printed onto glossy heavy paper (one hour)

- 500 forms (8 per 8.5"x11" sheet)
- 63 sheets at \$0.49 per sheet is \$30.87
- \$30.87x 25% mark-up is \$38.59
- Deliver forms to client (two hours)
- Develop first e-blast (eight hours)
- Pick up forms from client (two hours)
- Enter forms into spreadsheet (four hours)
- Send first e-blast to client for approval (1/2 hour)
- Receive approval from client (zero hours)
- Send first e-blast to database (1/2 hour)
- Track results (either with coupons returned or through Mail Chimp reports) (four hours)
- Develop second e-blast (eight hours)
- Send second e-blast to client for approval (1/2 hour)
- Receive approval from client (zero hours)
- Send second e-blast to database (1/2 hour)
- Track results (either with coupons returned or through Mail Chimp reports) (four hours)
- Develop final report package for client (eight hours)
- Meet with client to discuss results and how to proceed (four hours)

Total Hours: 51 hours approximately

- ten hours of consultation (x\$30 per hour is \$300.00)
- 39 hours of design and implementation (x\$45 per hour is \$1755.00)
- two hours of administrative work (x\$20 per hour is \$40.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$2095.00
- Printing and Materials: \$38.59 + \$50.00
- **Total: \$2183.59***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations for client.

Social Marketing Package

Description: The Social Marketing Package includes the set-up of a Facebook "Like" Page, Twitter account, and blog for the use of promoting a small business. Also included are consultation sessions on maintaining a social media presence.

Tasks:

- Meet with client to discuss marketing needs and goals to achieve through implementing a social marketing program for their business (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval (1/2 hour)

- Set up each account/page (Facebook, Twitter, blog) (four hours)
- Develop custom plan and guidelines for social marketing for the client (four hours)
- Design visual content:
 - Facebook profile picture (two hours)
 - Twitter background and profile picture (two hours)
 - Blog header and design (four hours)
- Meet with client for first tutorial session: Introduction to Facebook, Twitter and Blogging (four hours)
- Meet with client for second tutorial session: How to make updates to each account (four hours)
- Meet with client for third tutorial session: what types of updates to make, how often etc. (four hours)

Total Hours: 32.5 hours approximately

- 16 hours of consultation (x\$30 per hour is \$480.00)
- 16 hours of design and implementation (x\$45 per hour is \$720.00)
- ½ hour of administrative work (x\$20 per hour is \$10.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$1210.00
- Printing and Materials: \$50.00
- **Total: \$1260.00***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations for client.

Client Appreciation Package

Description: The Client Appreciation Package is a comprehensive campaign to show appreciation to those supportive customers who deserve a little thanks for being so loyal. The package includes a customer-designed card to send to clients, including a postcard insert with a coupon or special offer (as decided by the client). This package includes up to 250 cards.

Tasks:

- Meet with client to discuss the design of the card as well as the coupon/special offer included inside (four hours)
- Develop contract and send to client for approval (ten minutes)
- Design draft of card and coupon postcard (six hours)
- Send draft to client (ten minutes)
- Revisions:
 - two hours of design work
 - ½ hour of administrative work

- Send final artwork to client for approval (ten minutes)
- Receive final approval to print (zero hours)
- Meet with printer to order cards and coupon postcard (one hour)
- Printing:
 - Cards (250 cards, 4 ¼” 5 ½”): \$133.00
 - Postcards: \$70.00 for 250
 - \$203.00 total x 25% mark-up is \$253.75
 - Envelopes (4 3/8” x 5 ¾”): \$25.95 x 25% mark-up is \$32.44
- Pick up cards from the printer (1/2 hour)
- Deliver cards and envelopes to client (two hours)

Total Hours: 16.5 hours approximately

- six hours of consultation (x\$30 per hour is \$180.00)
- eight hours of design work (x\$45 per hour is \$360.00)
- 2.5 hours of administrative work (x\$20 per hour is \$50.00)

Pricing:

- Hours working on project: \$590.00
- Printing and Materials: \$286.19 (for cards, postcards and envelopes) + \$25.00
- **Total: \$901.19***

*This price does not include the cost of any additional photographs or illustrations that may need to be purchased or additional printing runs of designed material other than that necessary for consultations for client.

2.4e Controls

Online Marketing

www.topsofshopcreative.com will be connected to Google Analytics in order to analyze traffic data to our website. Our Facebook “Like” Page displays data such as information about the fans who “Like” the page as well as what type of interactions have occurred between fans and Tops of Shop Creative. Our blog and website will both run separate coupon programs in order to track visitors who choose to utilize our services. The coupons will be unique to location posted and time displayed in order to better track data on users.

Print Marketing

When new clients contact Tops of Shop Creative they will be asked how they heard about our business whether it was online, word-of-mouth or from our print advertisements in Dovercourt Business Times or Focus on Seaforth.

Promotional Materials

Our main promotional campaign involving our “plant a seed” theme will be tracked using a database created in Microsoft Excel. Information about each potential customer who receives a package will be input to the database and each time one of those businesses contacts us, this information will also be included in the database. This will be important to monitor the effectiveness of the campaign and for making changes to the next one.

2.4f Marketing Plan Financial Narrative

Advertising Campaign

Dovercourt Business Times

A networking ad (business card size) costs \$179 per colour insertion for minimum of six insertions. Tops of Shop Creative will do six insertions in colour from September 2017 until August 2018 every two months for a total of \$1074.

Focus on Seaforth

The cost for a 1/16 page advertisement is \$110 in full colour. Tops of Shop Creative will do six insertions in colour from August 2017 until July 2018, every two months for a total of \$660.

Facebook Advertising Campaign

Tops of Shop Creative will be advertising through Facebook on a pay per click (cpc) campaign which means that we only pay when someone clicks on the advertisement at the right side of their screen. The click-through amount will be set with a bid of \$1.00 per click to a daily maximum of \$5.00 a day making the monthly maximum approximately \$150.00 per month. The campaign will run for 12 weeks for a total of \$450.00 per month is maximum click-throughs occur.

www.topsofshopcreative.com

The website will be designed, uploaded, maintained and updated by Tops of Shop Creative (\$0 charge). We have already purchased the domain (www.topsofshopcreative.com) and hosting from www.doteasy.com for \$26.21 for the year (or \$2.18 per month). This cost is significantly low for a website since website design is a service offered by Tops of Shop Creative and therefore has no actual cost associated due to the design and implementation being executed in-house.

[Your Local Marketplace \(ylm.ca\)](http://YourLocalMarketplace.com)

Your Local Marketplace (ylm.ca) is an online public business directory based on location and keywords. Listings appear within a search based on chosen keywords. It is accessible through ylm.ca or through a link found at Woolsey.ca. Tops of Shop Creative will create a free advertisement on ylm.ca (\$0 charge).

Promotional Campaign

Facebook “Like” Page

A Facebook “Like” Page is a resource for businesses, organizations and groups to create a web space within Facebook dedicated to their needs. It is very similar to a personal Facebook page, but it is linked directly with Facebook’s advertising system. Tops of Shop Creative will set up a Facebook “Like” Page immediately at \$0 charge.

Twitter

Twitter is a real-time information network powered by subscribers. People sign up for an account and “follow” other people by receiving their Tweets. Tweets are 140 characters or fewer posts that include text and links, but no images. Tops of Shop Creative will set up a Twitter account immediately at \$0 charge.

Linked In

LinkedIn is a social networking service designed to be a tool for your professional needs by taking business networking online. It offers the ability to post information about your past and current work situation, your experience, talents and abilities and who you are connected with on a professional level. Tops of Shop Creative will set up a Linked In account immediately at \$0 charge.

Blog

A blog is a “web log” of information posted regularly by a user with the intent to discuss, promote or inform about a particular subject, issue or event. Tops of Shop Creative will set up a blog using the free blogging service Blogger.

E-newsletter

Tops of Shop Creative will send out an e-newsletter using a list of email addresses collected into a database. The focus of the newsletter will be trends, tips and hints for advertising and marketing for small businesses. The newsletter will be designed by Tops of Shop Creative at \$0 charge and will be sent out using free software through mailchimp.com.

Seasonal Client Appreciation Cards

Tops of Shop Creative will mail out custom designed client appreciation cards five times a year in the months of August, October, December, February, and May. The total cost to mail out cards to 50 clients each time is \$68.69. This will result in an annual cost of \$343.45.

Dovercourt Home/Small Business Membership

The cost to join as a member of the DHSBA is \$55.00 per year. The cost to attend meetings is \$15.00 per meeting which occur 10 times a year making the total annual cost \$205.00

Identification and Promotional Materials

Business Cards

The business cards will be full colour single-sided. Information on the card will include our logo (Tops of Shop Creative), Christy Toller, Christy @topsofshopcreative.com, 905.649.9033, and www.topsofshopcreative.com. The total cost to print 500 cards is \$65.00 plus tax.

Postcards

The postcard will be double-sided with colour on both sides. The first side will contain a larger-scale version of our business card with our logo and contact information. The backside will include a couple key examples of recent work. The total cost to print 400 is \$120.00 plus tax.

Promotional Package – “Plant a Seed”

Tops of Shop Creative will design and assemble this promotional package at \$0 charge. Printing of the tags and labels will be done in house on card stock x with an HP Inkjet printer. Printing of the business cards included in the package are mentioned previously. Costs per item are:

- Clay Pots (12 cm): \$0.50 each (\$25.00 total for 50) (Dollarama)
- Clay Bottom Trays (12 cm): three for \$1.00 (\$17.00 total for 51) (Dollarama)
- Mini Garden Tools: \$0.50 each (\$25.00 total for 50)
- Soil: \$2.59 per bag (\$7.77 total for three bags) (Home Depot)
- Bags to divide soil: \$1.00 for 40 (\$2.00 total for 80 bags) (Dollarama)
- Cardstock for tags: \$16.74 for 250 sheets (Staples)
- Soil Bag Labels: \$13.35 for 10 sheets of full page labels (Staples)
- Clay Pot Labels: \$13.96 for 300 clear mailing labels (Staples)
- Forget-me-not Seeds: \$1.99 for 50 seeds approx. (\$9.95 for 5 packages) (Home Depot)
- Butcher Cord: \$4.27 for 550 ft (Canadian Tire)

Tops of Shop Creative will assemble each package at \$0 charge. They will all be hand delivered at a cost of approximately \$40 for gas. The total cost to execute this promotion once is approximately \$175.00.

2.4g Marketing Plan Financials

Please find details on our marketing plan expenses in the Financial Plan Narrative section, as well the attached spreadsheets.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Owner/Operator/Creative Director

Responsibilities

- Christy Toller will manage all aspects of sales, administration, operation, customer service, human resources, and marketing.

Qualifications

- Credentials include a Bachelor of Design degree from Ryerson University in the Fashion Communications program.

Breakdown of Tasks/Job Description

- Develop and execute marketing/advertising
- Consult with clients for new projects and develop project contracts
- Develop creative direction for each project.
- Design print and web projects for clients.
- Manage accounting and bookkeeping for Tops of Shop Creative
- Provide training to any employees (contract, full time and part time)
- Hiring all full-time, part-time and contract employees
- Manage inventory of office supplies and maintenance of equipment.

Web Designer (to be hired by April 2019 as per goals)

Responsibilities:

- Meeting with clients to discuss their website needs.
- Work with Christy Toller to develop storyboards for client.
- Develop websites for clients.
- Work with client in regards to changes to their website.

Required Skills:

- A solid knowledge of HTML and Dreamweaver.
- Understanding of Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop.
- Knowledge of CSS, Javascript, and HTML 5.
- Responsible and customer service oriented
- Professional and able to work individually.
- Friendly and enthusiastic
- Willing to learn and not afraid to ask questions.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Market Risks

Market Risk 1

- **Risk:** The trend for people to become entrepreneurs goes away in favour of steady jobs
- **Proactive Plan:** We will continue to network in places where potential entrepreneurs gather such as colleges and universities that offer entrepreneurship programs as well as attend networking meetings through Chamber of Commerce and local business club events
- **Contingency Plan:** If the risk becomes a reality, we will focus on existing small businesses that are looking to re-brand and re-market their business. Tops of Shop Creative will also target marketing and advertising initiatives to focus on this group of clients more-so than start-ups

Market Risk 2

- **Risk:** Competitors start to heavily promote through social media outlets
- **Proactive Plan:** Tops of Shop Creative will continue to utilize social marketing on a regular basis making updates at least three times a week of content relevant to our customers. We will monitor new advertising trends within the industry and take advantage of new opportunities as soon as they are available
- **Contingency Plan:** If the risk becomes a reality, we will figure out where niches exist within our clientele base and break down our social marketing efforts into categories where information is targeted to these niche groups

Market Risk 3

- **Risk:** New technology enters the market that our business is not familiar with
- **Proactive Plan:** It is important to be aware of new updates within the industry by reading trade magazines, e-newsletters and blogs. Christy Toller of Tops of Shop Creative will also take part time courses when possible.
- **Contingency Plan:** If this risk becomes a reality, we will outsource for that part of the project.

Operational Risks

Operational Risk 1

- **Risk:** Our computer breaks down, resulting in a loss of equipment and potential lost files
- **Proactive Plan:** We will continue to do updates and regular cleaning of our computer as well as back up on a weekly basis to an external server or drive. The

client will also receive copies of final files after each project is complete. Tops of Shop Creative will also start a business savings account with small monthly amounts in order to prepare for situations where capital is required immediately

- **Contingency Plan:** If this risk becomes a reality, we will see the savings in business savings account to buy a new computer. If unable to purchase a new computer with business savings, we will buy a new computer with the personal savings of Christy Toller and pay back when possible. An additional contingency plan is to use an older computer until we are able to purchase a new one

Operational Risk 2:

- **Risk:** Christy Toller becomes ill and is unable to work
- **Proactive Plan:** Christy Toller will continue to get an annual check-up with her family doctor. She has health and dental coverage through her husband's employment and the health insurance company Great West Life
- **Contingency Plan:** If this risk becomes a reality, we will hire a part-time graphic design student to manage smaller projects. Christy Toller is able to rely on the income of her husband, Leon Toller, until such time her health improves

Operational Risk 3:

- **Risk:** Our main printing supplier, Master Print, closes
- **Proactive Plan:** It is important to keep an open dialogue with our current printer, Master Print, in order to be aware of their challenges and concerns
- **Contingency Plan:** If this risk becomes a reality we will maintain contact with David Thomas Printing and Jellybean Imaging in Woolsey as back up to our main printer, Master Print

FINANCIAL RISKS

Financial Risk 1:

- The business starts slowly resulting in not being able to pay a salary to the owner, Christy Toller, in order to pay suppliers
- **Proactive Plan:** In order to prevent this from happening, we will use aggressive targeted advertising and promotions to gain new clients. Tops of Shop Creative will also promote new services or packages offered to existing clients on a regular basis. Our goal is to turn one-time clients into recurring clients. Tops of Shop Creative will also start off working in a home office to save on costs
- **Contingency Plan:** Christy Toller will be able to be supported by her husband's income during tough financial times or take on outsourced work from other graphic design firms

FINANCIAL PLAN NARRATIVE

Start-up Costs

Business License

The cost to register a business in Ontario is \$60.00 every five years. In order to register Tops of Shop Creative, this fee was paid by Christy Toller in March of 2017.

Office Supplies

Office supplies already purchased and to be purchased include printer paper (\$44.96 per 5000 sheets), ink cartridges (black cartridge is \$28.50, tri-colour cartridge is \$54.61), file folders (\$14.58 per 100 folders), large manila envelopes (\$36.99 per 100 envelopes), pens (\$10.76 for 12 pack), staples (\$2.56), and specialty printing labels (ranging from \$13.35 to \$13.86). The total amount budgeted for office supplies (priced from Staples Business Depot) in start-up costs is \$225.00.

Office Furniture

As Tops of Shop Creative will start by operating out of the house of Christy Toller, most office furniture necessary was purchased previously. The only item required for start-up is a drafting chair priced at \$164.92 from Staples Business Depot.

Apple iMac 24" Computer

The business computer used by Tops of Shop Creative for both graphic design work as well as business bookkeeping is an Apple iMac computer purchased at a cost of \$1870.24 by Christy and Leon Toller in September 2016.

Adobe CS4 Design Suite

Adobe Design Suite is a software package incorporating the following programs used by Tops of Shop Creative: Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, Bridge, Dreamweaver and Flash. Christy Toller purchased this package at a cost of \$450.87 in September of 2016.

Working Capital

Christy Toller will provide working capital. A personal credit card will be used to cover the cost of purchasing office supplies, marketing material for Tops of Shop Creative and other expenses as necessary.

In September 2019, the goal is for Tops of Shop Creative to have a storefront location at which point we will meet with various financial institutions to set up a business line of credit.

Accounting Software

Tops of Shop Creative will be utilizing a bookkeeping template for Microsoft Excel set up by an accountant through the Youth Entrepreneur Program. This template is free of charge and will be customized for Tops of Shop Creative by Christy Toller.

Quickbooks software will be purchased after one or two years of operation. This

accounting software is only available for a PC computer platform in Canada, which will require Tops of Shop Creative to purchase a PC computer. This cost for the software is \$199.95 CAD.

Expenses

Owner's Salary

Tops of Shop Creative owner, Christy Toller, will earn a salary of \$1000 per month from the start-up in July until January 2018. In February of 2018, the salary will increase to \$1500 per month. Her spouse, Leon Toller, will cover additional living expenses beyond this amount.

Marketing

In our first year of operation, we will spend approximately \$3119 on marketing initiatives. This cost is significantly low due to the fact that as a graphic design company, Tops of Shop Creative will be designing all of the marketing material. This includes items such as our website, promotional postcards, and print and web publication advertisements. A couple of the costs included in the total mentioned above are for advertisements in the Dovercourt Business Times, Focus on Seaforth and a Facebook Advertising Campaign. For a more detailed breakdown of marketing costs, see the Marketing Plan Financial Spreadsheet and Narrative.

Accounting

There is no expense for accounting included in the cash flow for year one or two since Christy Toller has previous accounting experience and will be handling this aspect of the business for Tops of Shop Creative.

Mortgage Payment

There is no rent payment as Tops of Shop Creative operates out of a home office at the house of Christy Toller. Mortgage payments are made twice a month in conjunction with the tax payment. The mortgage payment is calculated per month because the office occupies 15% of the building total. The monthly amount for the principal mortgage payment increases currently by \$0.50 per month as the interest payment decreases. For August 2017, the principal amount will start at \$53.73 for 15% of the total building space.

Interest

The interest payment (in relation to the mortgage payment) is calculated per month based on the fact that the office occupies 15% of the building total. The monthly amount for the interest payment decreases currently by \$0.50 per month as the principal payment increases. For August 2017, the interest amount will start at \$101.24 for 15% of the total building space.

Taxes

Taxes for the home-office space occupied by Tops of Shop Creative are paid twice a month in conjunction with the mortgage payments for the same space. The monthly

amount \$225.84 for the whole building. The office occupies 15% of the building resulting in a monthly payment of \$33.88.

Utilities

The utilities are calculated per month because the office occupies 15% of the building total. Hydro is paid every two months. The monthly amount was calculated based on the average of the five bills the building owner has since taking possession in June 2016. This amount works out to \$59.98. Since the office occupies 15% of the total building space, the total hydro cost is \$9.00 per month.

- Gas is paid every month to Enbridge Gas Services. The monthly amount was calculated based on the average of the three bills the building owner has since taking possession. The additional bills during this time were not included because they include base amounts for hook-up fees extra as well as refunds that would make the average inaccurate for future bills. This amount works out to \$81.60 per month. Since the office occupies 15% of the total building space, the total gas cost is \$12.24 per month.
- Water is paid every quarter. The monthly amount was calculated based on the average of the three bills the building owner has since taking possession. This amount works out to \$34.15 per month. Since the office occupies 15% of the total building space, the total water cost is \$5.12 per month.

The total utilities cost per month is \$26.36.

Insurance

The insurance for the office space is covered by the homeowner's insurance of Christy Toller and Leon Toller through Intact Insurance. The premium for the entire building for the year is \$694.00, which covers building damages as well as belongings which includes the computer and printer equipment used by Tops of Shop Creative. The office space occupies 15% of the building resulting in an insurance cost of \$8.68 per month.

Bank Charges

DUCA Financial is where we have set up a business savings bank account. Currently Tops of Shop Creative does not need a chequing account because we do not pay many bills and those that we do pay will be paid by the credit card owned by Christy Toller who will be reimbursed for the expenses every two months in cash. The cost to have this account is \$3.50 per year paid in December of each year.

At the start of year three of operation when a storefront location is opened (as per goals outlined previously) this account will change from a savings to a chequing account. At this time, the fees will be \$0.75 per cheque written or electronic transfer of funds. With an average of 20 cheques written per month, the monthly bank charges fee will be \$15.00. There is no charge for depositing cheques or cash to the ATM machine.

Office Supplies and Postage

The amount shown in Project Expenses is allocated to each project to cover the cost of

some of the office expenses incurred which working on a particular project. That is why only \$25.00 is budgeted for the office supplies and postage section of expenses. Items such as printer paper, ink cartridges, and folders for each individual project are covered under the expenses per project, as they are required on a project-by-project basis.

Telephone/Internet

The Internet fee, through Bell, is paid every month. The monthly amount is \$41.17 and does not fluctuate. Since Tops of Shop Creative uses 80% of the Internet at the office space, this amount is \$32.94 per month. The telephone (land line) fee, through Bell, is paid every month. The monthly amount is \$50.87 and does not fluctuate. Since Tops of Shop Creative uses 25% of the telephone (land line) at the office space, this amount is \$12.72 per month. The total telephone/internet cost per month is \$45.66.

Mobile Phone

The mobile phone bill is paid every month. The monthly amount is \$68.93 and does not fluctuate. Since Tops of Shop Creative uses 80% of this mobile phone, this amount is \$55.14 per month.

Books and Periodicals

Within the graphic design industry, it is important to keep on top of trends and developments in software, computer and printing technology. There are several magazines that offer industry insight and listed below are the key periodicals Tops of Shop Creative will subscribe to:

- Applied Arts: \$100 for two year subscription – 20 issues (\$4.17/month)
- How Magazine: \$44.96 for one year – six issues (\$3.75/month)
- Print Magazine: \$55.00 for one year – six issues (\$4.58/month)
- Design Edge Canada: Free! – six issues
- Books will be purchased as necessary. The budget allocated for books as well as periodicals we are not subscribed to will be \$75.00 per month.

The total cost of expenses for books and periodicals is \$87.50 per month.

Income

Since Tops of Shop Creative is a service-based business and therefore does not have inventory-related expenses, the direct costs in the Cash Flow Forecasts are a project-related expense per project for printing and materials.

August

Since September is an important time for many businesses, August will be busy for Tops of Shop Creative as the back-to-school season approaches and advertising is required to advertise retail sales and promotions.

August will be our first month in operation, but since our advertising will start this

month, we are planning on a slower-than-average August in order to build up our awareness within the local community while our marketing campaign begins. For details about the marketing plans for each month, see the Marketing Calendar. The marketing budget is \$701.21 for the month of August. To see a further breakdown of marketing costs, see the Marketing Financial Spreadsheet.

In terms of projects, we will have one web site package, two single or double page advertising projects (poster/flyer/postcard designs), one business card design without a logo, and one social marketing package. For a detailed breakdown of each package, see the Pricing, Placement and Distribution section. With back-to-school just around the corner, it will be important to target retail business clients who will be promoting sales in mid-to-late August, which will be the core of our business. The completion of these projects will produce total cash sales of \$3935.00 for the month of August. After expenses, this will produce a net cash flow of \$1437.00 for our first month of operation.

September, October, November

September through November will be a key time for Tops of Shop Creative as the ramp-up to the holiday season approaches. Advertising campaigns will be in development during this time resulting in a large in-flux of design projects.

The marketing plan for these three months continues to see a strong web and print presence. We also begin our membership with the Dovercourt Home/Small Business Association in order to network with other businesses in the community. The budgets are significantly lower since the marketing start-up costs seen in the August budget are not included. September has a budget of \$344.00, October is \$344.00 and November is \$194.00.

Tops of Shop Creative will be fully launched at this time since a full month of advertising will have passed resulting in a presence in the design and business community. By this time, we will have started working on one large logo and branding package, which is an involved process that takes one to three months depending on the stage at which the client is at with their business start-up. With retail and serviced-based businesses preparing for the holiday shopping season, our main source of income will be smaller advertising projects (poster/flyer/postcard designs) so we have planned on four of this project type for the months of September, October and November. During these three months, we have also planned to have a main logo project (Logo Package 1) over the course of the three months.

In terms of advertising packages, we will have two e-blast promo packages, two client appreciation packages, and one social marketing package. The total cash from these projects as well as other smaller projects not listed (see Financial Spreadsheet for a detailed breakdown) is projected at \$7475.00 in September, \$5170.00 in October, and \$4757.00 in November. After expenses, this will produce a net cash flow of \$4484.00 in September, \$2769.00 in October, and \$2396.00 in November.

December

Early December will continue to be busy as the holiday season approaches and clients request last minute projects. Towards the end of the month, business will slow down as the year winds to a close. We will use this time for a personal break for Christy Toller of Tops of Shop Creative. Inventory will also be evaluated during this time in order to stock up on any necessary supplies.

Marketing in December will consist of our monthly print publication advertisement as well as continued updates to our online presence through our blog, website and Facebook "Like" Page. Networking will continue with our monthly Dovercourt Home/Small Business Association meeting. Our marketing budget for the month of December is \$194.00.

Client projects for the month of December include the start of a new Logo and Branding Package, one Logo Package 2 and three regular advertisements (poster/flyer/postcard design). The number of regular advertisements during this month will depend on how businesses are prepared for the holiday season. Those who are organized will have requested their holiday material in October and November, while those who work last minute may be putting in their requests in early December. We will also have at least one web package and two business card design projects. In terms of advertising packages, it will be slower in December because many will be in the earlier months before the holidays. We will most likely have one client appreciation package in early December in order to boost holiday sales for retail as the holidays approach. The total cash inflow for December will be \$7839.00 and after expenses, the net cash flow will be \$4923.00.

January

Within the graphic design industry, the busy and slow times mirror those of the retail/corporate world. January is traditionally slower since retail businesses are recuperating from the busy holiday season. Tops of Shop Creative will use this time to re-evaluate our marketing for the coming year as well as develop new packages and offerings for clients. It will also be the time where we will map out new clients to target and research their design needs.

For marketing in January, we have the introduction of our first e-newsletter. See the Promotional Campaign section of the Marketing Plan for more details about this marketing initiative. Our monthly print advertisement continues along with our other online efforts. The total marketing budget for January is \$194.00.

Since January is traditionally slower, we will try to schedule larger, more time-consuming projects during this time. Our Logo and Branding Package from December will still be in progress and we should still have some regular advertising projects (poster/flyer/postcard design) during this month since those businesses that are organized will be preparing for Valentine's Day with marketing material. For our advertising packages, we will have at least one client appreciation package since businesses tend to

thank their clientele for their support over the holidays and want to draw sales for the slower month of January. Our cash inflow in January will be \$2896.00 and after expenses, the net cash flow will be \$694.00.

February and March

February through March is where business will start to increase as retail and corporate companies are beginning to implement projects they did not complete in the previous calendar year. They have a fresh budget to work with and are eager to aim for new objectives within their advertising. Within the retail world, the focus begins to shift to spring/summer product that requires advertising development in advance.

Marketing for February and March includes our monthly print advertisements as well as the second issue of our e-newsletter. The theme of our marketing will consist of promoting other businesses to get their spring season advertising in early to boost sales. For our web services we will promote a “Spring Cleaning” opportunity to re-vamp your website. The marketing budget is \$194.00 for February and \$194.00 for March.

During this time, businesses will be ramping up for spring with fresh advertising to attract customers who they may not have seen since the holiday since (due to the lull in business generally felt in the retail world) resulting in a busier few months for Tops of Shop Creative. We have planned on larger projects during this time since many businesses are working with their new budget for the year and have more marketing/design dollars to spend. This includes websites, a higher number of logo packages, and three and four poster/flyer/postcard design projects for February and March respectively. Advertising packages during these two months will include one E-blast Package and one Social Marketing Package. Cash inflow will be \$7221.00 for February and \$7383.00 for March resulting in a net cash flow after expenses of \$4382.00 for February and \$4271.00 for March.

April, May, June

April through June is where spring product is in the store making this the time when retail/corporate companies begin to focus on their summer needs. Traditionally the summer is where many people take vacations and customers (unless in a tourist area), will be doing less shopping, so the ramp-up to prepare for this begins now. Flyers, posters, and banners will comprise the majority of the projects during this time.

Marketing for April, May and June remains consistent with our monthly print advertisements as well as the continuation of our online efforts including the bi-monthly e-newsletter. Networking by attending the monthly Dovercourt Home/Small Business Association, meetings will also continue to be important for gaining new clients. April has a marketing budget of \$125.00, while May is \$263.00 and June is \$125.00.

Throughout April and May our main projects will continue to be regular advertising (poster/flyer/postcard design) as the rush begins for businesses to gain customers before

the summer vacation season is upon us. This will slow down in June as school lets out and employees start taking their vacation time. We will continue to have a few logo projects during this time since many small businesses aim to open in early September during the back-to-school time. Web-based projects will be slower as well resulting in just a few clients per each month during this time. In terms of advertising packages, we will have four of this type of package during these three months. The total projected cash from these projects is \$7200.00 in April, \$6835.00 in May, and \$9794.00 in June. The net cash flow after expenses will therefore be \$4218.00 in April, \$3725.00 in May, and \$6593.00 in June.

July

July will be a slower month as many employees of retail and corporate companies go on vacation during this time. One of the towns within the target market of Tops of Shop Creative is Port Deveraux, which is considered a tourist town and therefore may have retail operations that will require signage during this time. We will focus on these clients and advertising campaigns catered to their needs. We will also use this time as a mid-year evaluation of our own service offerings and marketing initiatives.

Marketing for July will slow down giving us the time necessary to evaluate those initiatives. The Dovercourt Home/Small Business Association breaks for the summer, but our monthly print advertisement will continue as well as our bi-monthly e-newsletter. The marketing budget for July is \$179.00.

In July, we will have a smaller number of regular advertisements and only one or logo package. Since the logo packages are more time consuming, this is ideal for taking time to analyze our business after our first year of operation. The total cash inflow for July is projected to be \$3314.00 that will result in a net cash flow of -\$10492.00 due to the addition of \$10989.00 of yearly income tax to this month of operation.

Year 2

Tops of Shop Creative projects an approximate 4% increase in Total Cash Sales for year two due to recurring clients, the e-newsletter that is starting mid-way through the first year, and the client appreciation we will be sending throughout the year. Graphic design works primarily with recurring customers who require advertising and promotions to run their business. Once a client finds a designer that satisfies their needs, they will return often with new projects required on a seasonal basis. We understand the importance of offering custom services for an affordable price and in a timely manner. By combining these points along with personalized attention in various forms we will turn new customers into returning clients.

Financing

Christy Toller of Tops of Shop Creative will be investing 100% of the \$2731.00 required for start-up costs. Both an Apple iMac 24" computer (\$1870.24) and Adobe CS4 Design

Suite (\$450.87) were purchased previously. In order to cover the remainder of the start-up costs, \$25.00 per week from the money received while in the Youth Entrepreneurship Program is transferred into a savings account.

No additional financing is required at this time.

In order to cover her own personal expenses until the business is on sound financial footing, Christy Toller will have the assistance of income from her husband, Leon Toller.

FINANCIAL and MARKETING SPREADSHEETS

Please refer to the companion website.

Appendix B

Marketing Calendar – Year 1

Immediately

- Set up a Your Local Marketplace advertisement
- Set up a Facebook “Like” Page for Tops of Shop Creative
- Set up a Twitter account for Tops of Shop Creative
- Set up a Linked In account for Tops of Shop Creative (listed as the current position for Christy Toller)

July 2017

- July 1 – order 500 business cards from Master Print
- July 1 – order 400 postcards from Master Print
- July 1 – set up a blog for Tops of Shop Creative using [insert blog name once decided]
- July 22 – submit artwork for Aug. issue of Focus on Seaforth
- July 31 – have all material purchased to assemble the “Plant a Seed” Campaign packages

August 2017

- August 2 - submit first Facebook advertisement for approval
- August 9 – submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- August 13 – confirm participation in Sept. issue of Dovercourt Business Times
- August 15 – launch website
- August 16 – submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- August 16 to 28 – hand deliver the “Plant a Seed” campaign packages to targeted clients
- August 18 – submit artwork for Sept. issue of DBT
- August 23 – submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- August 30 – submit next Facebook advertisement for approval

September 2017

- September – sign up for Dovercourt Home/Small Business Association (DHSBA) membership and attend Sept. meeting
- September 1 - Dovercourt Business Times – Networking ad drops
- September 6 – submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- September 13 - submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- September 16 – submit artwork for Oct. issue of Focus on Seaforth
- September 20 - submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- September 27 - submit next Facebook advertisement for approval

October 2017

- October – attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- October – attend Local Biz Expo for networking opportunities (date not yet)

determined)

- October 1 - Focus on Seaforth ad drops
- October 1 – send first client appreciation card to print (logo branded)
- October 4 - submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- October 8 – confirm participation in Nov. issue of Dovercourt Business times
- October 8 – mail out client appreciation cards to clients
- October 11 - submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- October 18 - submit next Facebook advertisement for approval
- October 20 – submit artwork for Nov. issue of DBT

November 2017

- November - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- November 1 - Dovercourt Business Times – Networking ad drops
- November 18 – submit artwork for Dec issue of Focus on Seaforth

December 2017

- December - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- December 1 - Focus on Seaforth ad drops
- December 1 – send holiday themed client appreciation card to print
- December 5 – send holiday greeting cards to all clients
- December 10 – confirm participation in Jan. issue of Dovercourt Business Times
- December 15 – submit artwork for Jan. issue of DBT

January 2018

- January - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- January 1 - Dovercourt Business Times – Networking ad drops
- January 3 – first e-newsletter from Tops of Shop Creative is sent out
- January 20 – submit artwork for Feb. issue of Focus on Seaforth

February 2018

- February - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- February 1 - Focus on Seaforth ad drops
- February 1 – send Valentine’s Day themed client appreciation card to print
- February 11 – confirm participation in Mar. issue of Dovercourt Business Times
- February 11 – mail out Valentine’s Day themed client appreciation cards
- February 16 – submit artwork for Mar. issue of DBT

March 2018

- March - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- March 1 - Dovercourt Business times – Networking ad drops
- March 1 – March e-newsletter from Tops of Shop Creative is sent out
- March 24 – submit artwork for Apr. issue of Focus on Seaforth

April 2018

- April - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- April 1 - Focus on Seaforth Ad drops
- April 8 – confirm participation in May issue of Dovercourt Business Times
- April 20 – submit artwork for May issue of DBT

May 2018

- May – attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- May 1 - Dovercourt Business Times – Networking Ad drops
- May 1 – send Spring themed client appreciation card to print
- May 2 – May e-newsletter from Tops of Shop Creative is sent out
- May 8 – Mail out Spring themed client appreciation cards
- May 19 – submit artwork for June issue of Focus on Seaforth

June 2018

- June - attend DHSBA monthly meeting
- June 1 - Focus on Seaforth Ad drops
- June 10 – confirm participation in July issue of Dovercourt Business Times
- June 15 – submit artwork for July issue of DBT

July 2018

- July 1 - Dovercourt Business Times – Networking Ad drops
- July 4 – July e-newsletter from Tops of Shop Creative is sent out