iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 10 **Issue:** VIII **Month of publication:** August 2022

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2022.46141

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 10 Issue VIII August 2022- Available at www.ijraset.com

Analysis of Small Food Businesses in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija using Creative Marketing: Basis for Development of Business Plan

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Abstract: ***The researchers' primary focus is on analysing the creative marketing strategy of small food businesses in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija. This study is critical also for the development of a business plan. This study has developed a business plan that will help small food businesses to improve their business and marketing strategy through the use of creative marketing analysis. This research utilized a developmental research design as it aims to develop a business plan. The study was conducted in San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija. This study utilized twenty respondents in analysing the creative marketing of the small food business. The researchers used total population which is a type of sampling. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling where the whole population of interest is studied. The data that was collected from the locale was encoded, tallied, and analysed. The results suggest that from the perspective of the small food business owners when it comes to branding: (1) their store has a unique feature that attracts more customers; (2) regarding their promotion, the trust and confidence of the customers have built; (3) about the product and services, their customers are satisfied on the food they eat; and (4) with regards in visual merchandising the customers create good feedback on their business. The suggestion for improvements in the marketing strategy was to take action that will ensure that the business will perform with the highest level of effectiveness. The researchers strongly recommend that to develop the marketing strategy of the business, the owners should let their business try the innovations, interventions, and recommendations from others.***

Keywords: Small Food Businesses, Creative Marketing, Marketing Strategies, Development of Business plan

I. INTRODUCTION AND RELATED LITERATURE

Today's environment is a time of globalization. Technology is available in all places which results in different business ideas. It has been the most known in terms of building connections between people. Technology helped in the fast operation of businesses where products become globally competitive and more new products are being introduced to the market compared to traditional business. One of these is the introduction of food parks in different places. This allows more stores in one place to accompany many customers as they can.

There are 5 types of creative marketing branding, products and services, promotion, customer experience, and visual merchandising. Branding is a positive and strong perception of a company, products, and services with the use of advertisements, promotions, designs, and other marketing means.

Promotion is communication between customers, encouraging them to buy products. Customer experiences are the insights and feelings of the customers toward a product or service [1]. Visual merchandising means appearance and the overall look of the store to avoid the lost sale and engage customers to make an impulse buy the product. The idea of innovation and creativity in terms of strategies might be easy with its implementation [2]. Success can be achieved if the marketing strategies are executed perfectly [3]. The researchers put so much effort into understanding the effective execution such as market orientation, innovation orientation, and most of all marketing strategy about your product to gain more customers.

San Leonardo, officially the Municipality of San Leonardo is a 1st class municipality in the province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines. San Leonardo has 20 permitted small food businesses which are currently operating [4]. As time goes by, new trends and different activities were introduced in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija and one of these is the Small Food businesses. The Small food businesses were located in a food park. Food Park is modern and innovative like a school canteen or food court with many different stalls and stores which offers various choices. Most Filipinos love to eat, just like their desire to take pictures and post it on their social media. It is a new and excellent way to introduce the Filipinos to improved food culture. Filipinos are delighted to try a distinct and modern course that will satisfy their taste buds.

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They enjoyed eating with their families and friends cherishing the more memorable moment, providing the venue with ease.

Despite all the advantages a business has, still the business food parks encounter problems that affect the performance of the business if not managed properly. But this can be avoided or can easily be gotten over through thru creative marketing and by providing a business development plan. Unique vision and artistic minds are mostly needed. In doing creative marketing one needs to make sure not to sacrifice the effectiveness in creativity it ensures, meeting the prospective consumers or users. A study that addresses this research gap is, therefore, necessary hence; the need for this study was realized.

The study aims to know information on how a business can develop a competitive strategy when circumstance occurs. Also, the researchers aim to identify different creative marketing strategies that successful businesses use. This will benefit the small food business in San Leonardo who are using creative marketing for them to improve and have more knowledge about managing their businesses. This can help in increasing the market share and revenue growth.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. *Marketing Strategy Creativity*

A creative marketing strategy is a collection of actions designed to promote products/services to narrow or broad target markets in order to achieve a company's objectives. Newcomers can only remain competitive by taking a unique strategy [5]. Marketing creativity is defined as the process by which innovative marketing activities are conceptualized in the marketing department. A business that takes a unique, creative, or innovative approach can obtain a competitive edge and is less likely to be copied by competitors [6]. Organizations may achieve favorable outcomes only if they believe in a rigorous decision-making process, novel solutions, and inventive methods [7]. Cirque du Soleil, for example, is the best illustration of a very imaginative or "Blue Ocean" method [8]. Businesses that are innovative and creative develop new strategies, think creatively, and increase their competitive position in the industry by meeting their customers' requests [9]. Innovative strategies may include a new price structure, value propositions, market expansion, customer-driven policies, an efficient supply chain, and other methods of "reaching out to customers." This marketing mix is the primary reason customers choose a certain product/service, as it results in greater organizational success through a distinction in customer value.

B. *Branding*

By strategically building a recognised brand, you may increase customer value perception, elevate the product's quality, and increase profitability [10]. Proactively inventing a business strategy, differentiating the brand, and establishing trends all contribute to the company's image [11]. Small restaurant owners should continue to develop novel product concepts in order to expand their brands. In a restaurant, brand image can be a factor that contributes to client complaints [12]. Brand strategists are responsible with determining which customer populations are most likely to speak positively about a firm brand in order to affect quantitative aspects of sales and profitability through various communication channels [13].

C. *Small Restaurant Size and Survival*

Nearly all full-service restaurants are small companies, with 98% employing fewer than 100 people [14]. The bulk of restaurants are self-contained, with seven out of ten eateries operating as a single entity [15]. The SBA (2015) reports that nine out of ten restaurants are small enterprises, and 50% of small businesses fail within the first five years. In difficult economic times, full-service restaurants are the section of the restaurant industry that is most hit, and owners must be proactive in their grasp of business cycles and strategic planning [16].

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aims to answer the following questions:

1) How may the profile of the business be described in terms of:
a) Location;
b) Years of Operation;
c) Average Number of customers per day;
d) Cost of capital; and
e) Number of employees?

2) How may the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses be assessed in terms of:

a) Branding;
b) Promotion;
c) Products and Services; and
d) Visual Merchandising?
3) What are the problems encountered by the small food business in their business operations?
4) What business development plan may be proposed to improve the marketing management of small food businesses?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

This study utilized a descriptive-evaluative research design. Descriptive research is a type of research used to characterize a population's characteristics. It collects data needed to answer a variety of what, when, and how inquiries on a certain population or group. [17].

B. *Study Locale*

This research was conducted in the municipality of San Leonardo, Nueva Ecija where the respondents were identified. Profile was extracted from the municipal hall of San Leonardo. The respondents of this study came from the different barangays found in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija.

C. *Participant Selection*

The active and permitted small food businesses were the target respondents of this study. The data was given by the Department of Trade and Industry in the municipality of San Leonardo. The table below presents the distribution of the respondents in the total enumeration population found. San Leonardo has 20 small food businesses that were permitted to operate regarding the data of DTI San Leonardo. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling where the whole population of interest (i.e., a group whose members all share a given characteristic) is studied. It is most practical when the total population is of manageable sizes, such as a well-defined subgroup of a larger population [18].

D. *Research Instrument*

The finding of this study conducted was through an online survey form, with the database can collect and store data, it also provides statistical software analysis of the findings. Survey research is the most fundamental tool for all quantitative outcome research methodologies and studies.

Survey questionnaires are a set of questions to accomplish the objectives of the study participants encourage to complete them over the internet via a Google form. The online survey questionnaires constructed in the Google form consisted of three parts.

1) Part 1 includes the socio-demographic profile of the business. It was constructed by the researchers and a checklist form.
2) Part 2 consists of different questions that assess the creative marketing strategies of small food business in terms of branding, promotion, products, and services, and visual merchandising. It is formulated in the modified 4 points Likert scale (4) Strongly Agree, (3) Agree, (2) Disagree, (1) Strongly Disagree. Respondents were instructed to rate the statement and answer the question. It was patterned and modified from the questionnaire of Jan Hazelen T. Magboo et al, Creative Marketing Strategies of Food Park Businesses in Batangas, Philippines (2020).
3) Part 3 consists of an open-ended question formulated by the researchers about the problems encountered by the respondents in using the Creative Marketing Strategy. The respondents were asked to state their honest opinions regarding the questions being asked.

The research instrument was validated corrections and suggestions were incorporated in the final draft; interviews were done with the other consumers to check the reliability and validity of the instrument.

E. *Data Collection*

After the approval of the research topic entitled “Creative Marketing Strategies of Small Food Businesses in San Leonardo”, the researchers begin collecting related data and information from the internet the questionnaire was guided by the related studies and undergoes confirmation by the competent individual for validation, the suggestion opinions were included. The researchers conduct a dry run to check the reliability and validity of the formulated questionnaire. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was tested and measured to check the internal consistency.

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The validity of the research instrument was established by presenting the developed research instrument for the comment of the expert who rates the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was tested and measured with a score of .958, which means that the instrument has a good internal consistency. The validity of the research instrument was established by presenting the developed research instrument for the comments of the expert who rated the instrument with 4.55 as its weighted mean having a verbal interpretation of very good.

F. Data Analysis

The data collected from the locale were encoded, tallied, and analysed. Statistical tools such as Percentage, Frequency Distribution, Weighted Mean, and Thematic Analysis using Colizzi's 7 Steps Method were used in analysing the data gathered the scale below was employed to interpret the result.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Profile of the Respondents

1) Respondent's profile variable according to Location.

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of Location.

Table 1. Profile of the respondents in terms of Location.

Location	Frequency	Percentage
Bonifacio	1	5%
Castellano	2	10%
Diversion	5	25%
Mallorca	3	15%
Mambangnan	1	5%
Nieves	2	10%
San Anton	4	20%
San Bartolome	1	5%
Tabuating	1	5%
Total	20	100%

The table above shows the percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of location. Based on the data, the majority of the respondents were located in Diversion which is a twenty-five percent (25%) or a total of 5 respondents. The result shows that businesses located in Diversion attract a large number of target customers since it is on the highway. Based on the records by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) San Leonardo, the highest number of registered small food businesses are majority located at Diversion.

The proper location attracts not just a huge number of customers, but also the right type of people to help your firm develop. Additionally, its prominent placement in a city/region with a strong business reputation helps build a brand and image. Your business's location can have a substantial impact on its success. According to the comments, they elected to put their business in the heart of San Leonardo in order to reach a broader audience [19].

2) Respondent's profile variable according to years of operation.

Table 2 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of years of operation.

Table 2. profile of the respondents in terms of years of operation.

Years of Operation	Frequency	Percentage
0-1 year	5	25%
2 – 9 years	11	55%
10 years and above	4	20%
Total	20	100%

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The table shows that the majority of small food businesses have the years of operation in 2-9 years, which constitutes 55% of the respondents. On the other hand, operations in 0-1 year constitute 25% and 10 years and above constitute 20% of the respondents. A considerable number of businesses had been operating for quite some time now, which indicates that their business is growing and developing as time passes by.

Business operations are a collection of essential responsibilities that all firms, regardless of industry, size, or maturity level, must perform in order to remain operational. To manage your business operations successfully, you must juggle numerous moving elements across multiple businesses – all while operating on a tight budget and timeline. You'll require meticulous upkeep, astute strategic planning, and laser-focused execution to succeed [20].

3) Respondent's profile variable according to the Number of customers per day.

Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of the Number of Customers per day

Table 3. profile of the respondents in terms of Number of Customers per day.

Number of Customers per day	Frequency	Percentage
1-10	4	20%
11-20	5	25%
21-30	6	30%
31 and above	5	25%
Total	20	100%

In terms of the number of customers per day, many of the stores have the greatest number of customers from 21 to 30 which constitutes 30% of the respondents. Customers are constantly looking for something new and are interested in seeing what the stores have to offer. Because many individuals have leisure time, most businesses may open in the afternoon and stay open until midnight. It's also possible that it's a collective decision, as most people who go to food parks do so with their friends and family to bond. It's also probable that they're drawn in by the store's features and ambiance, which include a nice selection of food.

People have an instinctive response to innovation. On the one hand, they are averse to attempting something new. On the other side, our society values novelty and being the first to attempt anything new [21].

Business owners must understand how your target group thinks and behaves as a consumer. It is not enough to merely understand their ages, salaries, regions, and purchase patterns. Furthermore, you should constantly be conscious of your rival' operating hours and client traffic throughout those hours [22].

4) Respondent's profile variable according to Cost of Capital.

Table 4 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of the Cost of Capital.

Table 4. profile of the respondents in terms of Cost of Capital.

Cost of Capital	Frequency	Percentage
50,000 – 100,000	9	45%
101,000 – 150,000	6	30%
151,000 – 200,000	2	10%
201,000 – 250,000	3	15%
Total	20	100%

In terms of cost of capital, many of the stores have the most startup cost ranging from ₱50,000 – to 100,000 which constitute 45% of the respondents. It shows that the small food businesses do not require a huge amount of capital for them to start a business. According to the respondents, the small capital that they have can be roll-out to make it bigger. The amount of the capital can be determined with the help of experts through a feasibility study.

While each type of business has unique financing requirements, professionals have some guidelines to assist you in establishing how much cash you'll require.

For instance, Drew Gerber, a serial entrepreneur who launched a technology company, a financial planning organization, and a public relations firm, believes that an entrepreneur will require six months' worth of fixed costs to get started [23].

5) Respondent's profile variable according to the number of employees.
Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents in terms of the number of employees.

Table 5. profile of the respondents in terms of the number of employees.

The number of employees.	Frequency	Percentage
1 -5	4	20%
6 – 10	8	40%
11 – 15	6	30%
16 - 20	2	10%
Continuation of Table 7.		
Total	20	100%

In terms of the number of employees, many of the small food stores have the most number of employees 6 - 10 which constitutes 40% of the respondents. The result constitutes that the employees were distributed in different departments of their business. Also, these employees were working on an alternative schedule arrangement.
Food establishment must function with a few staff due to its small size and counter-service method. The executive chef will oversee the menu and the rest of the culinary staff. Depending on the size of your food establishment, you may only have two or three cooks and/or chefs on duty at any given time. However, if your establishment is open seven days a week, extra cooks will almost probably be required to cover all shifts. At one restaurant, one of the cooks is asked to double as an order taker and cashier. This division of responsibilities is totally achievable, especially if your food is made quickly. However, busier venues almost always require a professional cashier on each shift to handle ordering and payment while the cooks concentrate on the cooking [24].

B. Marketing Strategies Of Small Food Businesses (Assessment)

1) Assessing the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of branding.
Table 6 presents the creative marketing Strategies of small food businesses in Terms of branding.

Table 6. creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of branding.

Branding	WM	VI	VB
1. Effective in persuading a customer to eat at your restaurant	3.45	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
2. The logo was creative enough to attract customers.	3.45	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
3. The name of the store helps to attract more customers.	3.45	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
4. The store has unique features that attract more customers.	4	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
5. Increases the competitive advantage of the business operation.	3.4	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
Average Weighted Mean	3.55	Strongly agree	

Among the items cited, the store has unique features that attract more customers got the highest weighted mean of 4, with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree, while increasing the competitive advantage of the business operation got the lowest weighted mean of 3.4. The top-ranking item conveys a largely favorable impression of the shop, indicating that it offers distinctive attributes that attract more consumers. Perhaps establishments inside San Leonardo's food industry are inventing how to attract more consumers through branding. Perhaps each business within the building provides unique delicacies from its competitors that are more enticing to customers in terms of branding. Perhaps they employed a successful advertisement to draw in additional clients.

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A successful brand establishes a favorable relationship with customers. Customers are willing to try something new for the purpose of the experience, even if the brand is unknown. When consumers acquire items, they are constantly on the lookout for the brand. A product's brand is what differentiates it in the marketplace. This may aid the organization in gaining a better level of consumer and market recognition. The more familiar a brand is with a product, the more possibilities for the firm to improve its market competitiveness will arise. Launching a product is simple if it owns a strong brand capable of engendering client loyalty. It's not just about the brand of the goods; it's also about the product's quality and consumer benefits. Not only will business owners have strong ties within the organization, but they will also have broader connections throughout the sector [25].

2) Assessing the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of promotion.
Table 7 presents the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in Terms of Promotion.

Table 7. creative marketing Strategies of small food businesses in terms of Promotion.

Promotion	WM	VI	VB
1. Social media become helpful to your business.	3.75	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
2. The product being first in customers' minds through advertising	3.45	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
3. Helps to increase sales.	3.6	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
4. The trust and confidence of customers are built.	4	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
5. Create more opportunities for the business.	3.5	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
Average Weighted Mean	3.66	Strongly agree	

Among the items cited, the trust and confidence of the customers are built got the highest weighted mean of 4, with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree. Because of certain marketing highlights the customer's experience, customers get trust and confidence in the firm. Another factor is social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, because most customers are hooked if they see that it is trending and has positive reviews, which received a 3.75 weighted mean, while the product is first in customers' minds through advertising received a 3.45 weighted mean. Some business owners are unsure about what form of advertising they should utilize. Perhaps the consumer lacks information about the product as a result of insufficient product advertising.
Promotion is a broad term that encompasses all activities that aim to communicate a product, brand, or service to a user [26]. The primary problem in creating consumer trust and confidence in a way that retains their loyalty and profitability is establishing consumer trust and confidence in a way that retains their loyalty and profitability. Customers today expect businesses to be humane, pleasant, personalized, and attentive to their demands. The other business must grow in terms of sales and revenue. However, in order to acquire a customer's trust and confidence, it is critical to avoid providing an insufficient or wrong response. Since a business owner, the most crucial relationship to create with them is one of trust, as this will encourage them to return as loyal customers, as well as the confidence they display when offering services.

3) Assessing the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of products and services.
Table 8 presents the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in Terms of Products and services.

Table 8. Creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of Products and services.

Product and services	WM	VI	VB
1. The customers are committed to coming back because of the good customer service.	3.7	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
2. The food presentation attracts more customers	3.65	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
3. The customers are satisfied with the food they eat.	4	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
4. The foods that have been offered are affordable.	3.7	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
5. The customers have met their expectations in our store	3.6	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
Average Weighted Mean	3.73	Strongly agree	

Among the items that have been evaluated, customers are satisfied with what they eat, got the highest weighted mean of 4, with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree. Customers may have expected the business to satisfy them in every way, from the presentation of the food to its flavor. If a consumer believes you did not provide the service they expected, they may not return to buy from you. If you provide a service that surpasses consumer expectations, you can be sure they will return to buy from you again and tell all their friends about it. We had the meals that have been supplied are inexpensive, and the consumers have fulfilled their expectations in store tied for the lowest weighted mean of 3.6 with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree.
Customer satisfaction is crucial for building long-term relationships with clients. Customers must be satisfied, and constant value must be delivered. Customers that are satisfied are more likely to return and transact with suppliers or resellers. Satisfied customers, according to study, are more likely to make repeat purchases and are more devoted to a certain brand. Client satisfaction surveys educate businesses on what works and what doesn't in advertising and sales. A single derogatory comment on a social media platform may be read by hundreds of prospective clients. A satisfied customer can take their time and share a recent visit to, say, a fashion retailer, on social media. Thus, unsatisfied customers can harm a business through unfavorable word-of-mouth communication [27].

4) Assessing the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of visual merchandising.
Table 9 presents the creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in Terms of visual merchandising.

Table 9. creative marketing strategies of small food businesses in terms of visual merchandising.

Visual Merchandising	WM	VI	VB
1. Helps you to attract customers.	3.6	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
2. Creates good feedback on your business.	3.89	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
3. Helps to differentiate itself from other competitors.	3.6	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
4. Enhances the store image	3.45	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
5. Good lighting and appropriate music played helps, for your customers to spend more time at your store.	3.5	Strongly agree	Highly in favor
Average Weighted Mean	3.6	Strongly agree	

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Among the items cited, visual merchandising creates good feedback on your business got the highest weighted mean of 3.79, with the verbal interpretation of strongly agree, on the other hand, enhances the store image factor got 3.45 weighted mean which is the lowest. When it comes to picking a food business, most clients may prefer the atmosphere and appearance of the location. Perhaps the food business' aesthetic merchandising aids the client in providing positive feedback so that they can share the comfort they had with others. It may bring in additional clients since some individuals may share the store's design on social media; in most cases, some of the posts become trending, boosting the store's sales.

A visual merchandiser can execute a variety of tasks, including retail interior design. It may pave the way for client contact by attracting their attention with the assistance of a visual merchandiser through shop designs and displays [28]. It is also crucial for visual merchandising, as past features have claimed that it may make or break visual displays, but it is even more critical today. While the business owner has complete choice over how the store's design is organized in terms of color, complementary hues can really aid increase client traffic. As the adage goes, "where the eyes go, the feet follow," you want to captivate their attention and direct their feet to your facility as a business owner [29].

C. Marketing Problems Encountered By The Respondents

Table 10 presents the marketing problems encountered by the respondents.

Table 10. Marketing problems encountered by the respondents

Problems Encountered	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Budget	5	25%
Increase in number of Competitors	2	10%
Effect of Pandemic on the operation	4	20%
Lack of Social Media Marketing	3	15%
Difficulty in introducing a new product	2	10%
Continuation of Table 12.		
Not keeping up with the trends	3	15%
Poor Customer service	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Lack of Budget is the major problem considered by the respondents or the business owners. The budget got a frequency of 5, which is 25% of the total respondents. According to the owners, they don't have enough funds to be used for their marketing promotions and updating their social media marketing, it affects the business in external and internal factors. People in the business world have a lot of problems like this. There are sudden changes that can affect the flow or process of the operation, which can lead to a lack of money. They also have a hard time keeping up with the trends, competitors, customer service, and the pandemic. To be good entrepreneurs, they need to learn about their business. This way, they can be aware of problems and use marketing strategies when they come across them. Even though a business has a lot of advantages, there are still problems that can hurt its performance. Businesses have problems that lead to bankruptcy. There are ways to avoid this, but it can be done with clever marketing. Unique ideas and artistic minds are the most important. In creative marketing, one needs to make sure not to give up the effectiveness of creativity in order to meet the needs of the people who might use it or buy it.

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D. Proposed Development of Business Plan for Small Food Businesses in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija.

Table 11. Proposed Development Plan

Issues/Problems/ Concerns	Objective/s	Solutions/Strategic Initiatives/Project	Brief Description of the Strategy/Project	Players/Agencies Involve	Budget	Time Frame
Increase in Number of Competitors	To maintain a competitive advantage with competitors.	Provide new and unique products or services that differ from the competitors.	This strategy will help the organization attract potential customers and gain a competitive advantage.	Owner	The budget will be based on the expenses.	Based on its applicability; or as needed
Lack of Budget	To provide an additional Budget for improving the marketing strategy. To seek out fresh sources of additional financing to aid in the expansion and growth of the business.	Expansion and development of new marketing strategies.	This strategy will result in the increasing in sales .	Owner	The budget will be based on the expenses	Based on its applicability; or as needed
Lack of Social media marketing	To help increase and strengthen the market position of the business.	Developing Marketing Strategies and Campaigns that will encourage the customer to buy; like social media advertising, poster advertising, etc.	This strategy provides additional productivity, creates customers and helps to generate income.	Owner	The budget will be based on the approved budget	Immediately once approved.
Effect of Pandemic on the operation	To increase the health and safety inside production with the	Workers should always be reminded about the policies inside the business, in terms of uniforms,	Monitoring and having daily reminders to employees as their guides. It could help the company to	Owner	The budget is based on the expenses	Immediately once approved.

	performance of workers	performance, and functions of equipment, and enhance the safety protocol against Covid 19 through posting of policies and signage inside the station.	provide quality and safe drinking water and prevent the covid-19.			
Difficulty in introducing a new product	To provide a good quality of food and the cleanliness of the facility. To increase customers and through it, the income of the organization will increase too.	Expansion and development of a variety of products	This strategy will provide a good quality of food/products and will encourage the customer to buy. This strategy will result in an increase in sales	Owner	The budget is based on the expenses	Immediately once approved, and if there is a budget
Not keeping up with the trends	To provide a comfortable and adequate environment for the customers.	Propose new needed facilities such as new storage room and others needed. Providing aesthetic designs with the facilities.	This plan will create more space for the operation's expansion, which will involve the production and storage of finished goods and will attract customers.	Owner	Php. 10,000 and above (Based on the size of the facilities and expansion).	Immediately once approved, and if there is a budget
Poor Customer service	To prevent negative feedback and bad impression from the customers.	Perform effective customer service.	This strategy will prevent negative feedback and bad impression from the customers.	Owner	The budget is based on the expenses	Immediately once approved, and if there is a budget

The researchers used the data gathered to establish an interpretation that might be contributed to the formulation of the development plan and will serve as a reference for small food businesses in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija.

Table 11 is the proposed business development plan for small food businesses in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija. It is composed of multiple columns that represent the relation of one another. 1st column contains the issues/problems/concerns regarding creative marketing aspects. The items stated in the part were based on the gathered data from the respondents. 2nd column contains the objectives of the items in the 1st column. 3rd column contains the possible solutions/strategic initiatives/projects on the issues/problems/concerns of the small food businesses.

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4th column contains brief descriptions of the strategy/project. The 5th column contains the agencies/persons involved in the proposed development plan who are accountable for the implementation of the projects/activities. The 6th column shows the budget required to execute the proposed projects/activities. The last column shows the time frame to perform the proposed projects/activities. The time frame refers to the critical period of implementing the present action/model for the development of marketing strategy.

Based on the gathered data, the researchers presented the table to help improve and develop the creative marketing strategy for small food businesses in San Leonardo Nueva Ecija. The content of the development plan was based on the actual problems encountered by the small food businesses.

The respondents were also asked to share their various opinions/suggestions on how to solve or face the problems being encountered by the small food businesses. With the shared possible solutions of the respondents, the researchers summed up the idea and present this development plan that can be used or served as guidelines in solving the marketing issues or problems being encountered.

VI. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the respondents' store has unique features that attract more customers. Most of the respondents stated that they have built trust and confidence in the customers. And when it comes to the products and services the customers are satisfied o the food they eat. And mostly their visual merchandising creates good feedback on their business.

Also, most of the respondents stated that their main marketing problem is a lack of budget. They cannot upgrade their equipment and purchase advanced technology for providing more quality products to their customer and to be able to promote their products. also regarding the pandemic they are having a hard time coping with the new normal ad competing with the competitors.

With the above discussion the following are the recommendations of the researchers:

Upgrade the business operation with the current trends in the market. It will help them to increase their sales and gain a higher market position.

It is also recommended that small food businesses should not just only have unique features but also increases the competitive advantage of business operation. Consider the customers' satisfaction and provide high quality and safe products also provide a variety of types of products to produce and offer when it comes to product and service offerings. More options available to people and customers increase the competency of the business over competitors.

In terms of visual merchandising, small food businesses should enhance and maintain the store image to attract more customers. It is also recommended that in terms of promotion, it is a vital tool to make your products familiar and patronized by consumers because of the image you build for them. Small food businesses must deal with different strategies of promotions, researchers observed that most of the respondents have a shortcoming in terms of using online advertisement. The business can utilize this platform to promote the products and services of small food businesses. It can reach a large number of customers and potential customers by appearing online.

Next, the researchers recommend using the crafted development plan to improve the marketing strategy of the business. The owner should let their business try the innovations, interventions, and recommendations from others. Also, they should ask the feedback from their valued customers. It will help the business to improve and develop the appropriate marketing strategy to achieve short-term and long-term objectives as well as the goals of their business.

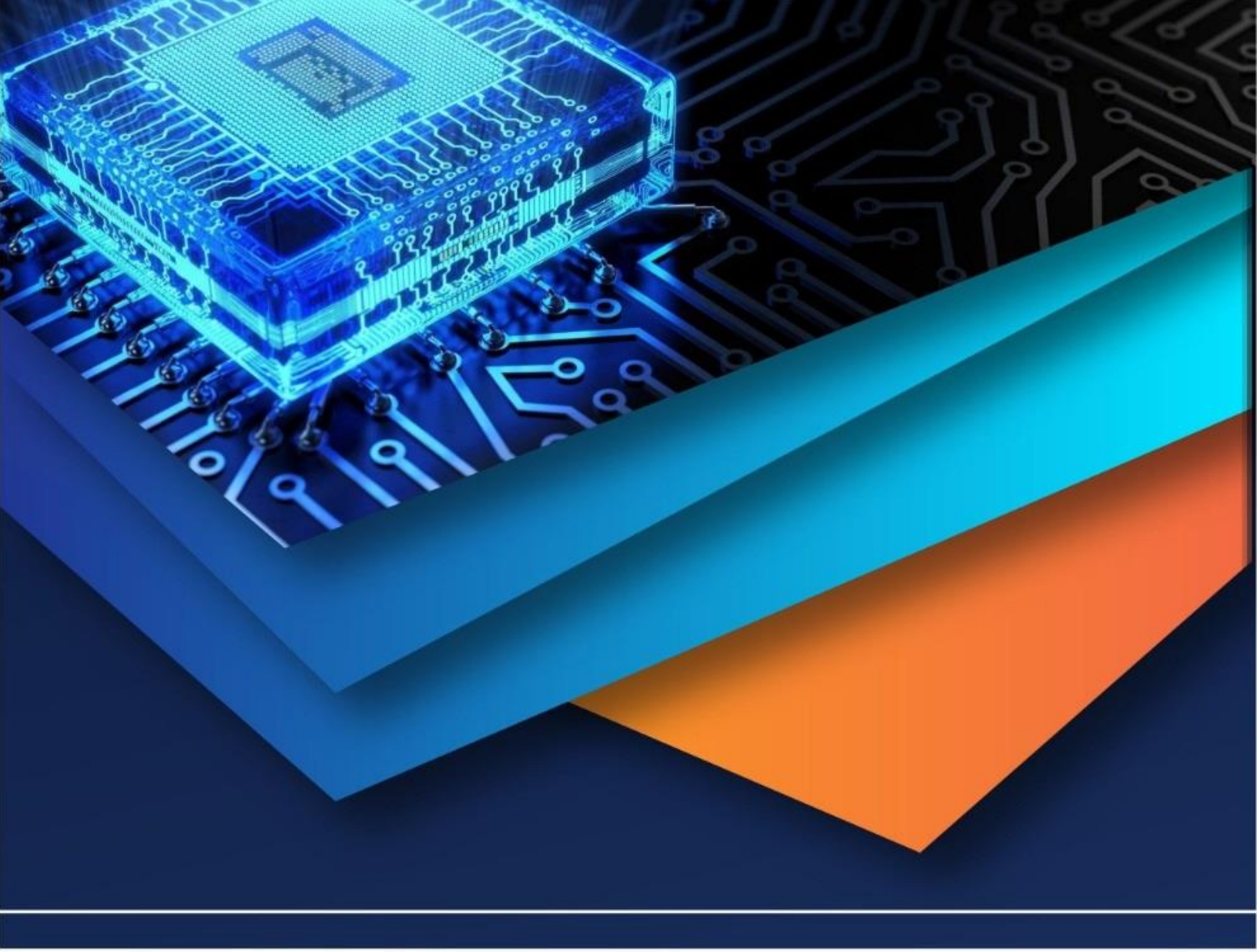
Lastly, for future researchers, this study can be used as the basis or framework for other similar related studies about the small food business or the use of creative marketing.

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