UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Student Report

Melt Collective: A Strategic Development Plan to Bring Melt Collective Products to Market Peony Au, Mina Han, Edward Sim, Tyson Tan University of British Columbia

COMM 486M

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MELT COLLECTIVE: STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

TEAM 7

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The phrase "one man's trash is another man's treasure" embodies Melt Collective, a multi-disciplinary project group working on plastic recycling at UBC. They are creating a contained recycling process that melts plastic waste and reforms it into high quality, well-made goods. Although the concept is clear, to successfully bring Melt Collective products to market there are four considerations to address:

- 1. Bring structure and further clarify product development direction
- 2. Increase brand awareness through strengthened marketing presence
- 3. Reduce the impact of turnover by implementing succession planning
- 4. Establish more consistent cash flow

The three core business elements for Melt Collective to invest in and develop are Marketing/Product, Finance, and Human Resources.

INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Melt is a new entrant to the recycled products industry. Plastic is a commonly recycled material for good reason. Energy consumption is 80-90% lower when producing recycled plastic compared to producing virgin materials. Unfortunately, a key issue facing the industry is the perception of inferiority when comparing recycled to virgin materials plastics. Even so, market demand is continually expanding with increased global emphasis on sustainability and advancements in processing and sorting. As consumer education continues to increase, the market for recycled products will expand. A local example is UBC's goal of diverting 80% of operational waste by 2020 through their waste management program. Melt has the potential to have a key role in this transition.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Although competitors selling products made from recycled material mainly focus on home wares, there is still value in the comparison. Three companies we identified are CRP Products, Preserve Products and Refleece. All these companies are well established, whether it is an online presence, brick-and-mortar stores, or through their partnerships with stores such as Whole Foods Market.

CUSTOMER ANALYSIS

There are three overlapping customer segments Melt can target. Melt Collective's ideals and operations appeal to UBC students in the age group of 18 to 25 year olds. The second are the members of student-led workshops, UBC club events, and school summer camps. Finally, there are Green-focused customers who are motivated by both their personal needs and an interest in the preservation of the environment. Green focused millennials are willing to pay more for environmentally friendly products, but are not willing to sacrifice quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

MARKETING

In order to increase Melt Collective's online presence, we suggest a redevelopment of the website with a focus on increasing content through more consistent updates. Furthermore, the UI is characterized by black and grey colours, which may not appeal to Melt's customers. We suggest Melt choose brighter colours that reflect sustainability. The "About" section should more clearly state what issues Melt is tackling, and the approach.

Additionally, workshops would be a great way to increase local awareness. We have been in contact with Geering Up UBC, a

science-focused summer camp that is interested in working with Melt to host summer events for high school students. While this age segment is not our direct target market, this is a good method to spread the brand outside of UBC.

Finally, we recommend Melt to conduct market research by maintaining a constant feedback loop in order to improve design and meet customer demands. Since Melt does not have any brand equity at the moment, working from the bottom up is essential to build trust with potential customers. We have spoken with the Sauder Undergraduate Programs Office, who is interested in discussing Melt's ability to provide clipboards for incoming undergrads, who could provide important feedback.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Melt Collective faces issues of task division and succession planning. We recommend a grant manager position to generate consistent grant applications. This will ensure a more consistent cash flow. Additionally, we recommend a clear succession plan due to the high turnover nature of Melt Collective. By evaluating the skills of the current workforce, Melt can better prepare themselves for eventual changes.

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

The first six months will be marked by target market research and product design. From the third month on, manufacturing and distributing a small volume of products will provide good indication of the scalability of the process and the quality of the products. From month six, data collected from customers can be implemented. Following design modifications, the process will restart.

The sample testing strategy is marred by a lack of initial revenues. As such, grant applications will be key in achieving the funds expected for the first six month's expense and for the second half of the year. This capital will cover our marketing, R&D cost, and sample manufacturing / distribution. Year 2 will be marked by a move to retail, through both e-commerce and local shops. Our document outlines in detail the possibility of both success and failure, and mitigation plans for both.

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

We have identified three risks Melt Collective may face when implementing our recommendations:

- 1. Inability to receive grants
- 2. Volunteer and employee safety
- 3. Poor customer feedback surveys

Our report outlines the likelihood and impact of the risk, the steps needed to mitigate the risk from occurring and the steps Melt Collective should take if the risk occurs.





Quick overview: Melt Collective is a hands on plastic recycling project at UBC. The goal is to create a localized-recycling process for plastic goods and "melt" the plastic into high quality, beautiful, well-made goods. Sustainability is at the forefront of Melt Collective's brand and they believe that waste is a valuable resource from which utility and even beauty can be created. - The starting challenge is clear: you have an excellent idea with an unstructured execution plan.

We've thought of four key areas to flesh out that will allow you to take this to the next level: Marketing/Products, Finance and Human Resources. Before we dive into our recommendations, we believe it's important to get a good foundation of the industry

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1. Bring structure and further clarify product development direction.

2. Increase brand awareness through strengthened marketing presence.

3. Reduce the impact of turnover by implementing succession planning.

4. Establish more consistent cash flow.

OVERVIEW ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION CONCLUSION

Before we start, I want to quickly go over the challenges we found that Melt Collective is currently facing:

- 1. Melt needs to bring structure and further clarify product development direction
- 2. Increase brand awareness through strengthened marketing presence
- 3. Reduce the impact of turnover by implementing succession planning
- 4. Establish more consistent cash flow

We've thought of three key areas to flesh out that will allow you to take Melt Collective to the next level: Marketing, Human Resources and Finances. But before we dive into our recommendations, we believe it's important to get a good foundation of the industry and customer details.



Melt participates in the recycled products industry. Plastic is one of the most commonly recycled materials in the world. There is a 80-90% reduction in energy consumption when producing recycled plastic compared to producing plastic from virgin materials. One of the biggest challenges this industry faces is the inaccurate perception that recycled materials are inferior to virgin materials. As demand increases and consumers become more educated, the market for these materials will expand. The market demand continues to increase due to factors such as growing emphasis on sustainability, advancements in processing and sorting technologies, allowing a wider variety of plastic to be recycled. When looking at UBC, where Melt is sourcing their plastic, UBC has a goal to divert 80% of operational waste by 2020 through their waste management program.

References:

https://www.forbes.com/sites/philfava/2011/10/11/plastics-recycling-a-bigger-business-than-you-may-think/#59f5b69af658 https://www.plasticstoday.com/content/there-s-strong-demand-recycled-plastics-so-why-aren-t-more-peoplerecycling/13810849618240 http://buildingoperations.ubc.ca/sustainability/zero-waste/recycling-programs/



When looking at competitors, while we found companies that sell products made from recycled material, they mainly focus on homeware products but we believe there is still value in looking into these companies for Melt. Three companies we identified are CRP Products, Preserve Products and Refleece. All these companies are well established, whether it is an online presence, or through their brick-and-mortar stores, or through their partnerships with stores such as Whole Foods Market. These competitors have products that range from high end furniture, to high end bags and laptop cases.

References: http://www.crpproducts.com/ https://www.preserveproducts.com/ https://www.refleece.com/



Moving on to Customer Analysis, we have identified three customer segments:

- 1. UBC students are our main target market. Melt Collective appeals to UBC Millennials and the age group of 18 to 25 year olds.
- 2. Members of student-led workshops, UBC club events and school summer camps.
- 3. Green Customers who are motivated not only by their personal needs, but also by the respect and preservation of the welfare of society.
 - 47% of Millennials would pay more for environmentally friendly products.
 - Notably, green customers want products that will protect the environment, yet not willing to sacrifice quality or change in their lifestyles.
 - 51% of Millennials are unwilling to purchase green products that are considered too expensive.
 - 56% of Millennials are more likely to pay more than consumers aged 35 and older.

References:

http://pubs.ppai.org/2015/03/seeing-green/

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https://hubpages.com/business/Target-Marketing-Method-Cleaners

http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/1645849575?pq-origsite=summon&accountid=14656

http://www.copa.ca/the-millennial-shopper-what-you-need-to-know/

http://www.emeraldinsight.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/JBS-05-2013-0036



Throughout this process, we've discussed and debated some potential alternatives to approaching this problem. We want to talk about these options, and the reasons why we are currently not pursuing them. First, we spent a bit of time pursuing potentially interested retailers. Although we did get positive responses, we realized at this time looking to retail is not an inefficient use of time without having both an available list of potential products and the ability to bring those to mass market. We started to consider some product ideas, but ended up disregarding them as we realized that:

- a) We are not product designers or engineers. We've decided to leave this up to the experts; you.
- b) Our expertise is in helping you bring whatever you want to make to market. The design, development, and production is on you

We thought a good idea would be to do some research into local and global case competitions, particularly entrepreneurship and sustainability competitions. Although this should be still tabled for the future, Melt does not currently have a structure or bring-to-market strategy to effectively win competitions that would provide any real exposure, financial gain, or exposure to important people. So instead, we decided to focus on market research, increasing brand awareness and improving business structure (i.e. financials and HR).



Focus on market research, increasing brand awareness, and developing business structure (i.e. financials and HR).

	MARKETING	HUMAN RESOURCES	FINANCIALS
	Website Educate Consumers Market Research	Grant Manager Succession Planning Role Assessment	Budgeting Plan Cash Flow Analysis Implementation
		A	
OVE	RVIEW ANALYSIS R	ECOMMENDATIONS IMP	LEMENTATION CONCLUSION





OVERVIEW ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION CONCLUSION

The first recommendation is to develop a plan to increase Melt's online presence. The first step that we suggest Melt to take is to redevelop their website. Currently, the website is very empty, and has not been updated for the past 4-5 months. The user interface is not very appealing either, as it mainly consists of darker colours such as black and grey. This choice of colours does not match the entrepreneurial and sustainable side of Melt; in other words, consumers may get confused with the brand image that the company wants to portray themselves with. We therefore suggest Melt to choose brighter colours that reflect sustainability (e.g. green).

Aside from the choice of colours, we have also noticed that the Calendar tab is very empty. The navigation bar disappears upon clicking on the calendar tab, and it seems that not a lot of effort has been put in to stylize the calendar page. More importantly, however, the events do not have any details listed. For example, the calendar showed an event called "Melt Brainwash Week" between March 19-25. When trying to get more details on the event, nothing was available in the "Additional details" section. We still have not figured out what the event is about, and the same would apply to potential customers as well. We therefore suggest to keep the calendar updated at all times by, for instance, color-coding events, workshops, or milestones, and always attaching a link to either social media or the related page on the website.

Lastly, we suggest that the "About" section be updated with more detail. By outlining the "What", "Why", and "How", Melt can clearly state the issues they are tackling, and the methodology that they use. It does not necessarily have to be in the form of text - in fact, we suggest Melt to create a short 1-2 minute video that outlines all of their practices, in order to prove the consumers that all processes are sustainable. By doing this, Melt can potentially gain more trust from consumers.



WEBSITE REVAMP



Example of website facelift.

https://www.ecoactionrecycling.com/





Our second recommendation is to hold workshops on-campus. This can be in the form of a tour, or a powerpoint presentation which outlines the processes that Melt undertakes to deliver the product and the positive impacts that the business brings. The workshops can either be hosted directly where the products are processed, but they could also be hosted through third-party events. An example is the upcoming Geering Up UBC, a summer event which is targeted towards high school students. While this age segment is not our direct target market, this is a good method to spread the brand outside of UBC. Furthermore, some of these students may attend UBC in the future, meaning that they will already be aware of Melt Collective by the time they start their studies. We have already reached out to Geering UP, and they have expressed interest in meeting with Melt for upcoming workshops. This may also be a potential revenue stream for Melt, depending on how the contract negotiations go.



WAKKETING



Our final marketing recommendation is to conduct extensive market research by maintaining a constant feedback loop. Since Melt does not have any brand equity at the moment, they have to work from the bottom to build trust with potential customers. We suggest that they do it by providing products (clipboards in our case) to students for free. During major events and club week, there are many opportunities to partner with clubs and add the clipboard to the club's swag bags. Along with the clipboard, we will provide a URL or QR code with a survey in regards to the product (e.g. quality, design, etc.). The constructive feedback will be used to redefine the design, and constantly check what the customers are looking for. By continuing to bring improvements in the products, Melt will eventually be able to develop something that will only bring positive feedback for the majority of the time. This will then lead to more trust in the brand, on top of an image that shows that Melt is always trying to bring the best value to the customer. Once the quality is good enough for the clipboard to enter the market, Melt has the opportunity to take over manufacturing clipboards for first year students on Imagine Day. We have already reached out to the executives who are responsible for distributing these clipboards, and they have expressed interest in working with Melt in the next couple of years (this year's batch has already been ordered).





One of the things we have / will talk about is the importance of securing funding (initially grant based) in this pre-business stage. During our meeting with Patrick, we discussed how the person who was spending the most time applying for grants left at the end of last year. Since then, grant applications have not been occurring. There are two HR issues present here: Effective delegation/task division and the importance of succession planning.

Clearly, there is an opportunity to assign someone the task of applying for grants. To ensure there is consistency in grant applications, we recommend setting a quota of (initially) 3 grant applications per month. To further ease the role, you could assign 3 different people to apply for 1 grant per month. Not only will this ensure there is a more consistent cash flow, it will also help applicants have a more macro understanding of Melt's business.

The second key here is succession planning. This means ensuring job roles are clear so that

- If someone leaves, you know exactly what skills are missing
- You have a better understanding of the role the person has in the organization
- You can more effectively fill the role
- The person has a more clear job description

Now would be a good time to evaluate the skills of your current workforce, to better prepare yourself for eventual changes.

Implementation

FINANCIALS



For the first six month, we need to do the research on our target market and design attractive product at the beginning. And start from third month, we gather needed materials, model and manufacture products (ie. Clipboard) and distribute the free samples to our potential customers via student-led workshop and events. On the sixth month, we collect our data from customers' feedbacks, solve problems, identify customer's trends and adjust our products or services. For the next second half, we modify and improve our design base on the customers' feedbacks and continue the sample testing process again.





OVERVIEW ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION CONCLUSION

For the cash flow analysis, we get no revenues for first 12 month due to our sample testing strategy. And we need to raise \$10,000 from funds for first six months' expense and \$10,000 more for second-half. The capital needs to cover our marketing expense, R&D cost, and sample manufacturing and distribution expense.



Currency	MONTH 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	-											
Revenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost Of Goods Sold	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gross Profit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Selling General & Admin Exp.	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500	-500
R & D Exp.	-800	-1500	-1500	-700	-700		-800	-1500	-1500	-700	-700	
Other Operating Expense/(Income)												
Depreciation & Amort.			-350	-450	-450	-550			-350	-450	-450	-550
Operating Income	-1300	-2000	-2350	-1650	-1650	-1050	-1300	-2000	-2350	-1650	-1650	-1050
Taxes												
Depreciation & Amort.												
Change in NWC	1300	2000	2350	1650	1650	1050	1300	2000	2350	1650	1650	1050
Capex												
FCF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

V	Working Capital (from funds)												
	Raise 10K from funding	\$10,000						aise 10Kmore from funding					
		\$8,700	\$6,700	\$4,350	\$2,700	\$1,050	\$0	\$8,700	\$6,700	\$4,350	\$2,700	\$1,050	\$0

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On the next year, we start to obtain revenue via ecommerce and shop retailers. We provide scenarios analysis on our second-year cash flow base on "good time" and "bad time". Good time indicate everything goes our way over the next 12 months while bad time indicate poor sales as a result of poor management and operation. When good time happen, we assume the monthly sales should be \$2000. We need to raise \$10000 from funds in order to increase capacity. We estimate the sales growth will be 5% after 6 months for second year. If bad time happens, the revenue declines to \$1000 for each month. And we need \$12000 from funds; we will spend 20% to investigate the failure of marketing and 80% on improvement to products and services according to customers' feedbacks. Due to our in-depth survey and improvement, we estimate the sales growth will be 7% each month afterward.



RISK	LIKELIHOOD	IMPACT	MITIGATION	CONTINGENCY
Unable to Receive Grants	MEDIUM	HIGH	Focus efforts more on fundraising and crowdsourcing.	Continue to apply for more grants and seek for sponsorships.
Employee Safety	MEDIUM	HIGH	Training and setting high safety standards and protocols.	First aid person, learn from mistakes and adjust workplace environment accordingly.
Poor Customer Feedback	HIGH	HIGH	Meet customer demands, create detailed survey and have a large sample size.	Improve survey questions and re- distribute.
			4	

OVERVIEW ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION CONCLUSION

We've identified three risks that Melt Collective may face when implementing our recommendations.







1. CASH FLOW ANALYSIS

GOOD												
	Month 13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Currency												
Revenue	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,080	\$2,163	\$2,250	\$2,340	\$2,433	\$2,531
Cost Of Goods Sold	\$2,000	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$2,000	\$100	\$104	\$108	\$2,230	\$117	\$122	\$2,331 \$127
Gross Profit	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$1,900	\$1,976	\$2,055	\$2,137	\$2,223	\$2,312	\$2,404
Selling General & Admin Exp.	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500
R & D Exp.	-3300	-3200	-3300	-3300	-3300	-3200	-3300	-3300	-3300	-3300	-3300	-\$300
Other Operating Expense/(Income)												
Depreciation & Amort.												
Operating Income	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,400	\$1,476	\$1,555	\$1,637	\$1,723	\$1,812	\$1,904
Taxes	-\$35	-\$35	-\$35	-\$35	-\$35	-\$35	-\$37	-\$39	-\$41	-\$43	-\$45	-\$48
Depreciation & Amort.												
Change in NWC							\$10,000					
Capex							-\$10,000					
FCF	\$1,365	\$1,365	\$1,365	\$1,365	\$1,365	\$1,365	\$1,439	\$1,516	\$1,596	\$1,680	\$1,766	\$1,857

OVERVIEW ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION

N CONCLUSION

Cash Flow Analysis for Year 2.



1. CASH FLOW ANALYSIS [CONT'D]

BAD												
	Month 13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Currency												
Revenue	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,070	\$1,145	\$1,225	\$1,311	\$1,403	\$1,501
Cost Of Goods Sold	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,070	\$1,145	\$61	\$66	\$1,403	\$1,501
Gross Profit	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$950	\$1,017	\$1,088	\$1,164	\$1,245	\$1,332	\$1,426
Selling General & Admin Exp.	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500
R & D Exp.	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500	-\$500			-\$300	-\$2,000	-\$2,000
Other Operating Expense/(Income)							-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000	-\$2,000
Depreciation & Amort.												
Operating Income	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	-\$1,484	-\$1,412	-\$1,336	-\$1,255	-\$1,168	-\$1,074
Taxes												
Depreciation & Amort.												
Change in NWC							\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
Capex												
FCF	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$450	\$517	\$588	\$664	\$745	\$832	\$926

OVERVIEW ANALYSIS

RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION

CONCLUSION

Cash Flow Analysis for Year 2, continued.



2. STRATEGIC PLAN EXTENDED

		Assume: spa	ace acquire; produ	uct is a clipbo	ard	
Month 13	Month 14	Month 15	Month 16	Month 17	Month 18	Month 19-24
	S	ell products via po	op up shops, retailers, e	tc.		
		F	eedback			
						\$12,000 Depth Survey [Research] mprovements to Product
OVERVIEW	ANALYSIS	RECOM	MENDATIONS	IMPLEN	IENTATION	CONCLUSION

Implementation of strategic plan for Year



3. CONTACTS

1. Lauren Venema

Sauder School of Business, UBC Student Engagement Officer Email: lauren.venema@sauder.ubc.ca

Emailed her about the possibility of Melt Collective providing clipboards to oncoming first year students at Sauder during Imagine Day (already ordered padfolios for September 2017, but interested to chat about future opportunities and see samples).

Action Item: Email Lauren in May.

2. Geering Up UBC Engineering & Science for Kids

Academic Camp Email: geeringup@apsc.ubc.ca

Facebook messaged the Geering Up page about the opportunity of Melt Collective hosting workshops or events with Geering Up UBC in the summer. He thought it was a fantastic opportunity and would want to be in contact with the Melt Collective team directly.

Action Item: Email about collaboration.



OVERVIEW ANALYSIS RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTATION CO

Contacts we mentioned in our presentation.



3. CONTACTS [CONT'D]

1. Lauren Venema

	ma, Lauren <lauren.venema@ nnifer, Cassandra, me 👻</lauren.venema@ 		Mar 29 (4 days age	
Hi Edv				
but w		olios and notebooks this year already but thank you fo fay please contact us again and we would be happy to		
Regar	rds,			
	n Venema ent Engagement Officer			
The U 166-2	rgraduate Programs Office Sa Iniversity of British Columbia 1 1053 Main Mall Vancouver, BC n.venema@sauder.ubc.ca 604	Vancouver Campus Canada		
UBC		.022.4420		

Email conversation with Lauren Venema.



Email conversation with Geering Up UBC Engineering & Science for Kids.