



SIMPLY THE BEST FLOWERS INC. MARKETING PLAN 2018

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VA-0205

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PRODUCT DESCRIPTION

Simply the Best Flowers (STBF) is a rural floral shop with two local locations (Eden, North Carolina; Martinsville, Virginia). It is co-owned by Herbert Davis and Deborah Barker since 2006. They both hold the value of being an outlet to share expression through floral design including sympathy, wedding, holiday, home décor, everyday occasions, and gourmet/gifts. Simply the Best Flowers focuses on providing a personalized customer experience that fits their special occasion. There are currently eight full time employees in the Martinsville location and five in the Eden location.

Nearby competitors include: Creative Expressions, Bryant-Everett, and Pam's Flowers. To further stand out in nearby competition, Simply the Best Flowers is investigating a change of marketing strategies in the wedding industry. With the resources and skills the flower shop offers, Simply the Best Flowers is ready to initiate a new approach in the changing industry.



MARKET ANALYSIS

CLIENT STATUS IN CURRENT MARKET

A review of Simply the Best offerings reveals that, wedding work ranks seventh after holiday, sympathy, everyday arrangements, gifts, home décor, and special occasions. This could be mainly due to the local area having a five-month period where brides opt to get married, making 2-3% of their annual income for a year. For the upcoming brides, Simply the Best Flowers provides a scheduled appointment with the client and their family six months prior to the wedding. As far as advertising, Simply the Best Flowers has a website where they post a portfolio of completed work but show little to no presence on social media platforms. Due to this, there is minimal outreach for upcoming brides in the area, and there is too much of a reliance for the customer scheduling an appointment.



INDUSTRY TRENDS

“Do It Yourself” (DIY) Wedding
80% of couples plan to DIY some part of their wedding.¹ The most popular items that are being made “yourself” are print items, décor items, and favors. Of course, there are several reasons why couples DIY weddings, but the main one is the combination of saving money and design control. The average wedding cost in the United States is \$33,391, so there is no doubt that couples want to reduce the costs and make items for themselves.² Florists are even taking advantage of this DIY trend and offering packages including basic design course and rental of building space.¹

“Keeping It Casual & Minimal”
Couples approach their wedding with the less-is-more mindset. Couples will invest in a few more magical items, rather than multiple, less special items.³ This is the biggest departure from traditional style weddings as guests, couples, parents, and vendors are able to do whatever they want to do. Wedding Wire researched that millennial couples are moving away from formal traditions.⁴

Summer and Fall Weddings
Each year, fall and summer are neck-and-neck for the most popular wedding season. 37% of weddings are scheduled in either the summer or fall, with 16% being in September, 15% in June, and 14% in October.⁵ Within these seasonal weddings, there is an emphasis in making the wedding a true reflection of who they are as a couple. The Knot surveyed 13,000 brides and 69% of them created a personalized wedding.⁵

Greenery

Brides are aiming their weddings towards nature's “serene ambiance.” Brides will showcase their love for nature and eco-friendly personality using greenery in their wedding designs.⁴ Also, having green as the main color scheme allows for the wedding to be more cost effective when compared to using cut flowers. Greeneries including dusty miller, eucalyptus, myrtle, tree fern, leatherleaf, and grevillea show a lower price per bunch value compared to top notch flowers that are prominent in wedding work.⁶

¹ The Numbers Behind the DIY Wedding. (2017, April 29). Retrieved May 12, 2018, from <http://www.bridebox.com/blog/diy-wedding-statistics/>
² Jacob, S. (2018, April 2). The Average Wedding Costs in America. Retrieved May 29, 2018, from <http://www.businessinsider.com/average-wedding-costs-in-america-most-expensive-2018-3>

³ Olson, A.P. (2017, December 6). The Wedding Trends to Keep and Ditch in 2018. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://www.brides.com/story/2017-wedding-trend-predictions>

⁴ Smith, E. (2018, February 13). Top 5 Wedding Trends for 2018. Retrieved April 26, 2018, from <http://problog.weddingwire.com/index.php/trends-and-stats/top-wedding-trends-2018/>

⁵ Seaver, M. (2018). The Knot 2017 Real Wedding Study. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://xogroupinc.com/press-releases/the-knot-2017-real-weddings-study-wedding-spend/>

⁶ Hernandez, J. (2018). Tree Acre Farm Flower Price List. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://www.treeacrefarm.net/flower-price-list/>

BUYER PROFILE AND BEHAVIOR

- Simply the Best Flowers is aware that brides tend to seek floral assistance last, leaving their budgets much lower than anticipated. Brides can be classified as very price-driven and vision-oriented.
- 64% of brides use Pinterest to find inspiration on what they want. In the floral industry, wedding consumers often show images in a vision board from the application to floral designers.⁷
- Many of the brides have never made a purchase in categories they suddenly find themselves shopping when planning for a wedding. They are suddenly tasked with finding flowers, catering, entertainment, and formalwear. They are first time buyers and are in need of marketing assistance.⁸
- Wedding consumers are focused on accomplishing tasks but can become overwhelmed by the amount of work that goes into planning a wedding. To combat the emotional stage, consumers rely on outlets that track their journey of their planning process including reading wedding blogs and having a one-on-one personal connection with a wedding planner.⁸

SWOT ANALYSIS

COMPANIES	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
PAM'S FLORAL DESIGNS & GIFTS	-Silk flowers provide a large customer satisfaction -Lower prices in silk (wreath starting at \$40) -Posts updating silk designs seasonally	-Sticks to one specialty -General fresh design -Receives a lot of customer complaints in fresh arrangements -Higher delivery charge (\$10 add-on)	-Able to reach more customers because they are in a more open community -Become more involved in other aspects in the floral industry	-Overpowering of negative customer feedback -Rise of contemporary trends in fresh floral work ⁸
BRYANT FLOWERS	-Been around for 100 years with trained staff -Strong website that answers common customer questions -Prime location on business district	-Small staff (2 people in 1 location) -Far away from floral needed businesses (Funeral, hospital, and churches) -No social media	-Advertise with upcoming churches to build a floral partnership -Receive more customers by starting a social media page	-Having the name brand lost with the rise of online retail (1-800 Flowers) ⁹ -Become part of the 86% that are undone from other businesses due to small staff ⁹
CREATIVE EXPRESSIONS	-Detailed and updated website showcasing their own designs -Interactive with customers using photos and videos on Facebook	-Repetitive use of flowers and designs in photo album -Low quality camera -Short business hours (10:00 AM – 1 PM)	-Have organization in photo albums -Connect with more customers using other social media platforms -Promote products with a high-quality camera	-The decline of younger Facebook users (Lost 2.8 million U.S. users under 25) ¹⁰
SIMPLY THE BEST FLOWERS	-Provides a more floral contemporary design -Has built a huge floral brand in the local area -Each designer has own specialization due to an abundance of staff -Versatile in design work due to trained staff and abundance of resources in the shop	-More travel if consumers booked venue from further distance -Costs of wedding prices (5 to 1 ratio mark-up) -Lack of customer outreach and assistance -Poor use of social media and no frequent updates on current Facebook page	-Partnership with local businesses in the wedding industry (i.e. catering) -Create a stronger specialization for wedding work -Have large participation if STBF creates an event due to its built name -With its diverse staff, there are opportunities for specific wedding work	-STBF having large number of orders in times of a wedding -Floral expenses rising during seasonal holidays -Consumers buying flowers from chain stores (Walmart, Kroger, etc.) ¹¹

⁶ Schmidt, S. (2017, May 16). The Wedding Industry in 2017 and Beyond. Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <https://blog.marketresearch.com/the-wedding/>
⁷ Soat, Molly. (2018). Inside the Mind of a Wedding Consumer. Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <https://www.ama.org/publications/marketingnews>

⁸ Seaver, M. (2018). The Knot 2017 Real Wedding Study. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://xogroupinc.com/press-releases/the-knot-2017-real-weddings-study-wedding-spend/>
⁹ Weissmann, J. (2014, February 12). Roses are in the Red: Why Local Florists Are Fading. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/02/>

¹⁰ Wagner, K. (2018, February 12). Facebook U.S. Users. Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <https://www.recode.net/2018/2/12/16998750/facebook-users>
¹¹ Florists – US Market Research Report. (2017, December). Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <https://www.ibisworld.com/industry-trends/market-research>

PRIMARY RESEARCH RESULTS

Primary research results were compiled from 28 local individuals who have scheduled a wedding appointment with Simply the Best Flowers (STBF) in the past 5 years. The majority of the respondents were made through the STBF filing system, but some were made on Magna Vista FFA's Facebook page. The demographics of these respondents include: 89% 22-29 years old, 11% 30 years and older, 96% female, and 4% male. Results were used to determine marketing opportunities for Simply the Best Flowers in the wedding industry. From the surveys, we concluded that local brides are in need of more outreach for wedding services and wish to purchase all services in one place. Also, consumers are very price-driven and commented that "weddings are already expensive enough." These are the responses to questions we asked in the local area:

How did you find out about Simply the Best Flowers and their wedding work?

- Family members/friends: 71%
- Internet search/Facebook: 18%
- Eden Chamber/Martinsville Website: 7%
- Other: 4% (Business sign)

What is the most important factor in planning a wedding?

- Price: 64%
- Personal touch and uniqueness: 22%
- Season and theme: 14%

How would you describe STBF's wedding work?

- "Remarkable! I underestimated the creativity STBF has."
- "It's like they understood my idea and made it better."
- "Very modern! Don't expect the basic clump of flowers."
- "Pure quality. It does not look rushed at all."

What suggestions would you have for Simply the Best Flowers in the wedding industry?

- "Partner with other local businesses in the industry."
- "Create incentives that encourage us to choose you!"
- "Contact consumers before and after the appointment."

BUSINESS PROPOSITION

MISSION STATEMENT

At Simply the Best Flowers, we strive to maintain a modern viewpoint that fits consumer wishes for all occasions and to provide the personal experience you deserve. Our dedicated team of employees will make your ideal occasion perfect by maintaining the balance of keeping up with the newest trends and adding your own personal touch.

KEY PLANNING ASSUMPTION

- Customers are shifting towards a more DIY bridal theme.¹²
- Buyers wish to support local businesses.
- Simply the Best Flowers will provide advertisement for the bridal show to increase vendor participation.
- Market data indicates the growing use of contemporary design.¹³
- Upcoming brides will be in need of services other than floral (catering, jewelry, dresses, etc.).¹⁴
- The time period of planning process is 9-12 months (engagement period).¹⁴

SHORT TERM GOALS

Year 1

- Increase wedding appointments such that wedding work at Simply the Best Flowers represents 5% of their annual floral income
- Create a bridal show in Martinsville with 11 participants (brides) at Shindig Catering and Events
- Have seven vendors attend the bridal show

Year 2

- Utilize self-made images of bridal show wedding work on website and social media
- Have 15 participants in the bridal show with eight vendors
- Increase wedding appointment by 28% from the previous year

LONG TERM GOALS

Year 5

- Increase wedding work at Simply the Best Flowers to 10% of their annual floral income
- Have a wedding designated staff to take charge of wedding appointments and design
- Have 20 participants (brides) in the bridal show with partnership of other vendors to create a \$1,000 incentive giveaway
- Have a strong presence in future social media outlets that will showcase previous and reoccurring events offered by Simply the Best Flowers
- Change location with more vendor space (12 vendors)

¹² Hosie, R. (2017, June 7). How Millennials Are Revolutionizing Weddings. Retrieved May 2, 2018, from <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/wedding-millennials-how-change-six-ways-revolution.html>

¹³ Olson, A.P. (2017, December 6). The Wedding Trends to Keep and Ditch in 2018. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://www.brides.com/story/2017-wedding-trend-predictions>

¹⁴ Seaver, M. (2018). The Knot 2017 Real Wedding Study. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://xogroupinc.com/press-releases/the-knot-2017-real-weddings-study-wedding-spend/>

TARGET MARKET

The primary target market is upcoming brides and grooms aged 23-40 who live in a 100-mile radius of Martinsville, Virginia. Wedding demographics vary upon time of marriage, so Simply the Best Flowers will offer equal assistance to all ages. Upcoming brides and grooms are overwhelmed in their daily life when it comes to planning a wedding, so they are in need of personal communication with a professional to create the wedding of their dreams.¹⁵ Also, Simply the Best Flowers will target individuals who fit the DIY and non-traditional trends.

ACTION PLAN

PRODUCT

Our proposed product is an annual bridal show that incorporates many local businesses that brides could use when planning their weddings to help reduce costs. For example, Simply the Best Flowers will partner with clothing boutiques, caterers, jewelers, travel agents, and venues, along with many other businesses in the local area. The bridal show will be hosted by Simply the Best Flowers, so that we have the prominent presence of floral work. There will be different sections in the bridal show where Simply the Best Flowers will provide centerpieces for all booths, as well as a facility for DIY brides. The bridal show will also represent different themes and wedding designs in various areas of the building.



Local businesses around the Martinsville area will be given the chance to showcase their services in the bridal show. Each table will represent a service that can be used in a wedding with floral centerpieces from Simply the Best Flowers.



The Bride-Box will be offered to consumers who wish to DIY their wedding. The Bride-Box will include loose fresh flowers, foam, containers, floral equipment, and floral preservatives to ensure maximum quality. There will also be an optional DIY space rental facility for DIY brides to design and store wedding items.

PLACE

Shindig Catering and Events, 37 East Uptown Martinsville, Virginia

Shindig offers full catering services and event management with a focus on superior service, elegance, and style. Shindig features high quality, creative cuisine prepared in-house. The chef will also customize a menu per wedding theme across the bridal show. The building is a renovated 1920s event facility with 29-ft by 100-ft room with 2-story tin ceiling; 29-ft by 12-ft balcony with seating in an intimate setting; custom-made 35-ft oak bar, and hardwood floors. Shindig will also offer amenities such as decorations, various colors of linens and cloth napkins, AV equipment (sound system, projector screen, wireless microphone), and a DJ.



PRICE

There will be no-charge for upcoming brides to attend the bridal show, but services will be provided if the consumer wishes to purchase. The Bride Box will start at \$100 which will include loose fresh flowers of carnations, mums, and filler for the bride's bouquet and groom's boutonniere (\$50), a clear vase (\$5), floral preservatives (\$2), packaging (\$10), and equipment (\$10). The Bride Box will max at \$950 which will include higher-end flowers for bouquets, boutonnieres, centerpieces, and flower girl crown (\$450), hardgoods (\$200), equipment (\$50), floral preservatives (\$6), and packaging (\$30). All prices were based on the current prices at Simply the Best Flowers with each Bride-Box having money left over for labor work (20%) and investment. Of course, upcoming brides will have the option to allow Simply the Best Flowers to do the wedding work if time and skill is an issue. Also, the DIY space rental facility will start at \$100, and vendors will have to pay \$50 for a table.

¹⁵ Brockway, L.S. (2018, April 19). Rise Above Wedding Planning Stress Research Results. Retrieved May 1, 2018, from <https://thespruce.com/rise-above-wedding-planning-stress-results-3490124>

POSITION

Since the target market for Simply the Best Flowers includes upcoming brides and grooms seeking wedding assistance, Simply the Best Flowers' products will be positioned as personal, understanding, and out-of-the-box on all of their wedding appointments and designs. Simply the Best Flowers will position their bridal show to clients in need of inspiration and professional services. It will be an outlet for upcoming brides to plan their whole wedding in one facility. Simply the Best Flowers' logo will be featured to reinforce 100% customer loyalty.

PROMOTION

Social Media

Social media is slowly becoming a staple in everyday life. A social media presence is very important in spreading news and previous work to consumers. It is important that Simply the Best Flowers has Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest pages to showcase their work to consumers. Brides in today's society seek design ideas before meeting with the florists, therefore they are becoming more educated about what is to be produced. Platforms like Pinterest and Instagram allow for consumers to understand what themes could be implemented in their own wedding, so when Simply the Best Flowers creates their page, it will show upcoming brides what creative work Simply the Best Flowers has to offer. Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter are platforms that have high percentages of youth participation.¹⁶ This allows for the target market to have an outlet for extended communication with Simply the Best Flowers.



Local Magazines

Previously, bridal shows have been represented in local magazines, and a slot in this magazine would broaden the customer base. Local magazines include Smith Mountain Laker and Showcase Magazine. Representation in these magazines would allow for more brides to attend the show.

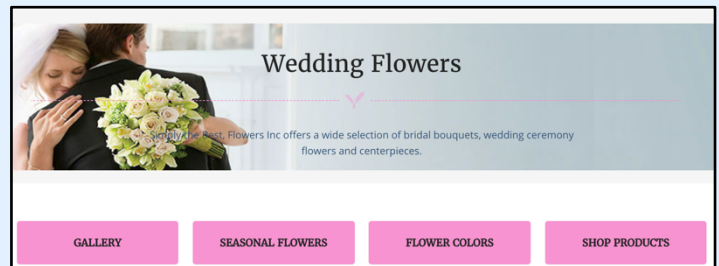


Email/Text Updates

As brides attend the bridal show, they will have the option to sign up for Simply the Best Flowers' email/phone list to provide more assistance in the wedding planning period. STBF will create a personal interaction with the consumers to ensure that their engagement period is stress-free. Also, discounts will be given to individuals who sign up for email and text updates. This will encourage the consumer to allow Simply the Best Flowers to be the prominent location for wedding flowers.

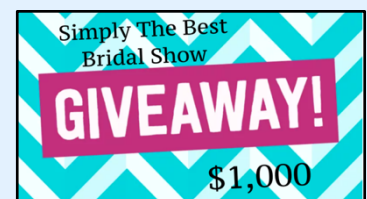
Website

Simply the Best Flowers will continue to operate their own website, but will improve their wedding section on their top selection tab. Currently, stock photos are being used to represent wedding work, which does not allow customers to visualize the floral designs from Simply the Best Flowers. A floral Pictionary will be implemented to showcase several floral design wedding works with a description to give customers an understanding of what is involved in a wedding. The wedding work will be updated frequently, alongside a calendar to showcase upcoming bridal shows and the type of vendors that will be attending the show. The wedding/bridal show information will be placed on the homepage to allow new customers to see Simply the Best Flowers' services.



Giveaway Incentives

To excite upcoming brides to attend the bridal show, incentives will be given to upcoming brides at the end of the show. Each event will hold a new incentive, from discounts on the first year to \$1,000 giveaways on the 5th year. The \$1,000 giveaway will consist of items from other local businesses that total the giveaway price.



¹⁶ Smith, C. (2016, August 17). Here's Why Instagram's Demographics Are So Attractive to Brands. Retrieved April 29, 2018, from <http://www.businessinsider.com/instagram-demographics-2013-12>

BUDGET

MARKETING EXPENSES	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
PHOTO Pictionary	\$365	\$300	\$100
WEBSITE SERVICE	\$275	\$275	\$275
SAMPLES FOR BRIDES	\$550	\$750	\$800
INCENTIVE GIVEAWAYS	\$250	\$400	\$500
MAGAZINE SLOTS	\$500	\$500	\$500
FLYERS	\$75	\$80	\$85
Total Marketing Expenses	\$2,015	\$2,305	\$2,260

INCOME	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
FULL SERVICE WEDDINGS	\$6,840	\$11,400	\$15,960
VENDORS AT \$50.00 PER VENDOR	\$350	\$400	\$500
FLORAL DIY SPACE RENTAL AT \$100	\$100	\$100	\$200
BRIDE BOX AT \$100-\$950 A BOX	\$1,650	\$3,000	\$4,200
Total Gross Sales	\$8,940	\$14,900	\$20,860
-Discounts from Email/Text Letters	\$1,100	\$1,500	\$1,600
Net Income	\$7,840	\$13,400	\$19,260

OPERATING EXPENSES	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
BRIDAL SHOW LABOR	\$592	\$828	\$988
FLOWERS FOR WEDDINGS	\$1,368	\$2,280	\$3,192
DIY BOXES	\$330	\$600	\$840
VENUE	\$600	\$600	\$600
FLORAL DESIGN EQUIPMENT	\$120	\$180	\$180
Total Operating Expenses	\$3,010	\$4,488	\$5,800
Marketing Expenses	\$2,015	\$2,305	\$2,260
Total Expenses	\$5,025	\$6,793	\$8,060
Net Income Before Taxes	\$2,815	\$6,607	\$11,200

RETURN ON INVESTMENT	56%	97%	140%
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EVALUATION

BENCHMARKS

Social Media Benchmark

By the end of year 1: 1.2 thousand reaches on Social Media Outlets
 By the end of year 2: 2.0 thousand reaches on Social Media Outlets
 By the end of year 3: 4.6 thousand reaches on Social Media Outlets



Number of Weddings from the Bridal Show

By the end of year 1: 3 Weddings
 By the end of year 2: 5 Weddings
 By the end of year 3: 7 Weddings

Vendor Participation

By the end of year 1: 7 Vendors
 By the end of year 2: 8 Vendors
 By the end of year 3: 10 Vendors



Bride Box Purchases

By the end of year 1: 3 Bride Boxes
 By the end of year 2: 5 Bride Boxes
 By the end of year 3: 7 Bride Boxes

MEASURABLE TOOLS

Dove POS

Simply the Best Flowers will continue to use Dove Point of Sale System in order to keep track of wedding work and customer accounts. The Dove POS tracks all orders to and from the store and runs numerous informative financial and billing reports. Each year, Simply the Best Flowers will look at end of the year sales and see if the business has met its benchmark.

Event Entry


New Task


Event Details


Participants


Locations


Products


Purchasers


Summary


Print Options


Share


Event Notes


Vendors

Event Summary

Totals

Event/Account Name	Event Date	Locations	Proposal Date	Confirmed Date
Jennifer Stewart Wedding	06/28/14	1	05/20/14	05/20/14
Budget	Estimated Total	Payments	Paid	Balance
\$2,000.00	\$1,137.94	1	\$0.00	\$1,137.94
			\$975.38	\$162.56

Purchaser	Phone	Email Address	Last Payment	Payments	Paid	Assigned	Balance
Jennifer Stewart	(405) 555-5555	jstewart@gmail.com		0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Grandma Stewart	(405) 333-3333	gstewart@gmail.com		0	\$0.00	\$975.38	\$975.38
Total				1	\$0.00	\$975.38	\$975.38

ALTERNATIVE STRATEGIES

If benchmarks are not readily met, a plan will be in place to ensure Simply the Best Flowers has sufficient outreach to customers. Considering the main factor in wedding planning is pricing, we suggest potentially altering prices to better meet our goals. It may also be beneficial to consider location and date adaptations to avoid scheduling conflicts. Consumer outreach could prevent these issues if Simply the Best Flowers has regular communication with its customer base. Simply the Best Flowers should also keep in mind the timing of weddings yearly and monitor any changes in this trend to better compliment the season. If STBF is not reaching the number of individuals we have projected through social media, you could consider reinstating the Simply the Best booth at the Fast Track and showcase only wedding work to the attendees.

CONCLUSION

We have comprised a detailed plan to ensure Simply the Best Flowers increases their wedding work in the upcoming years. STBF will be the only local flower shop to offer DIY, non-traditional weddings to their consumers. This will allow your customer base to broaden as you become more recognized in the social media world. Consumers are overwhelmed in the planning process, and this show could allow them to plan all aspects of the wedding in one day. This could help to eliminate some of the bride's stress, make Simply the Best Flowers better known, and increase overall wedding work. The business will be an outlet to the consumers' special day...after all, you are Simply the Best.