

**NOTICE:** The following is a team marketing plan that I composed recently along with two other students. I was directly responsible for the contents of the following sections; customer environment, external environment, SWOT analysis, analysis of the SWOT matrix, marketing goals and objectives, primary and secondary target markets, overall branding strategy, structural issues, and the tactical marketing activities.

Strategic Marketing Plan: Curry Pot Express

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## **I. Executive Summary**

This marketing plan is presented for Curry Pot, an Indian restaurant located in the four corners plaza on Apison Pike. The Ooltewah area has a wide range of cuisine ranging from Mexican, Thai to Southern food. The restaurant is in a convenient location and has the potential to be one of the top restaurants in town. Our mission is to improve the product and pricing strategy for a more seamless and effective experience. As a result of COVID-19 people, our opting to use delivery services due to safety reasons. We want to use a variety of delivery services, especially during the COVID-19 situation, to continue reaching all customers in our target market.

There are always opportunities for a business to grow on social media. We want to improve the website and be active on all our social media accounts. To do this, we all be running campaigns with hashtags for engagement. The account will also be used for brand awareness, advertisements, and announcements. Being active on social media will help customers stay connected to the brand during COVID-19. We also want to be involved in the community to increase visibility. With a university nearby, there will be many opportunities for collaboration and sales promotions.

Ultimately our goal is to increase brand awareness and implement strategies for long term success. The restaurant has the potential to provide something different because of their South Indian background. Bringing in more elements that represent South Indian culture will help customers understand the restaurant and their offerings better. This distinction amongst the rest of the Indian restaurants here in Chattanooga can create a competitive advantage.

## **II. Situation Analysis**

## Internal Environment

### Review of Current Marketing Objectives, Strategy, and Performance

The current marketing goal is to reach the target market by introducing a South Indian restaurant with low prices compared to competitors. Before COVID-19, the restaurant served its food through a buffet line. When the restaurant first opened, customers were being charged for rice, and then a month or two later, the dish became complementary with entrees. Disposable plates and cutlery are used for dine-in customers as well as takeout. Once dine-in customers are done paying for their order, they can sit themselves and enjoy their meal.

The performance of the restaurant is due to the business opening prematurely. Before COVID-19, there was no menu, and the labels on the buffet line were sticky notes. People did not know what the restaurant had to offer other than that it specialized in Indian food. The restaurants' offerings are not always consistent, which can be a weakness for their target market. The location of Curry Pot is working in their favor because people were excited for an Indian restaurant to open in the Collegedale area. The pricing strategy has also been inconsistent, but due to the nearby university, it should not negatively affect the business. The restaurant has heavily relied on word of mouth, which has been useful in gaining a customer base, but it is ineffective for the long term without other strategies. Due to the poorly implemented strategy, COVID-19 has caused the restaurant to alter its current strategy. The buffet-style is not the best sanitary approach as people are concerned about their health and the nearby university shutting down. The restaurant has since changed its buffet-style approach to a made to order approach. The pricing strategy has changed, and a menu is now available on their website. Delivery service has also been implemented where customers can get free delivery on orders \$50 and up. Looking

past the current unstable climate that COVID-19 has caused Curry Pot will need to revise their current strategy for better performance.

#### Review of Current and Anticipated Organizational Resources

Due to COVID-19, the restaurant might not be able to compensate new employees to help run the service more effectively. To make better use of limited resources partnering with delivery services will help more timely and efficient deliveries. The pandemic might also affect the food supply chain due to delays in delivery and shortage of workers. Compensation may also impact digital marketing needs, such as updating the website and menus.

#### Review of Current and Anticipated Cultural and Structural Issues

The restaurant is run by a family, which means they are committed to the organization. There is not a clear distinction of power, which can cause challenges in acquiring resources. To help improve customer orientation, there will need to be a distinct manager to cancel communication errors.

#### Customer Environment

In assessing the customer environment, we first decided to research businesses within the restaurant industry that are most popular with customers in the Ooltewah area. By conducting a google search we were able to identify the restaurants in the Ooltewah area with the highest customer ratings online. The top five results of this search were El Jinete Mexican Restaurant, Taco Bell, Puleo's Grille, Countryside Cafe, Southern Burger Co., and Cracker Barrel. At a glance, these restaurants appear to have absolutely no commonalities and very different cuisine offerings. However, we identified three main characteristics of which these establishments hold

one or more. Each of these establishments are outstanding in either their authenticity, their affordability, their accessibility, or all three.

Taco Bell, for example, is not the most authentic but is definitely affordable and has mastered the element of accessibility. Taco Bell is high in both time utility and place utility. They offer a drive through option for customers which continues running through late nights and early morning hours. Taco Bell also offers delivery services through the Doordash and UberEats delivery partners. In fact, all of the restaurants on this list with the exception of Countryside cafe offer some form of delivery service whether it be in house or through partnership with an independent delivery service. El Jinete Mexican restaurant has the advantage of their authenticity and Cracker Barrel offers family meals at affordable pricing. It is clear through these observations that in order to become a top contender among popular restaurants in the Ooltewah area, the customer needs to be met are authenticity, affordability, or accessibility.

Automatically, the authenticity of Curry Pot Express is an advantage. The owners of the restaurant as well as other staff members are originally from South India and have first hand experience in the culture that the offered cuisine is a part of. In speaking with the managers, their knowledge of the ingredients, cultural significance of different dishes, and passion for sharing this with customers through the food is made clear. The restaurant is decorated with ornaments, colors, and furnishings that are unique to South Indian culture and are representative of traditions that the managers were able to share with us. There is, however, room in this area for improvement in their communication of the significance to their customers. The items and decor are only explained when the managers or workers are asked about them. Communicating and displaying the ties of these items to Southern Indian culture through signs and plaques may help

Curry Pot to further solidify a reputation of authenticity among local customers. CurryPot is also making efforts to become more accessible to customers through delivery service. They are providing their own delivery service to customers who place orders of over fifty dollar value. They have also partnered with DinnerDelivered, an independent delivery service who fulfills delivery for orders without an established purchase minimum. Although their menu options are not overly expensive, they are by far not the cheapest restaurant option in the area. There is currently a one size only element to their menu options. In order to increase affordability Curry Pot can consider adding size options to their menu for customers to have more of a choice in how much they are willing to spend on a meal at Curry Pot.

### External Environment

The external environment can have a significant impact on the marketing activities of the firm in the form of competitive, economic, social, political/legal, and technological factors. Analysis of these factors and their impact is especially important during this time in which the world and economy is rapidly experiencing change after change. Thus far, Curry Pot Express is the only Indian restaurant in the Collegedale/Ooltewah area, however, there is a presence of other asian and eastern cultured restaurants that may hold similar menu offerings. Within the greater Chattanooga area, there are about three other Indian restaurants, all of which offer some form of delivery to local guests and a similar menu offering. The conditions of COVID-19's impact on the world has introduced new social and political factors to the operations of these restaurants and vendors in general. On April 6th, 2020 Tennessee Governor Bill Lee signed the Executive Order 17 which enforces specific requirements for restaurants and establishments that wish to remain open during these COVID-19 conditions. These requirements state that "Establishments

are to exclusively offer drive-thru, take-out or delivery options to support families, businesses ,and the food supply chain during this emergency.”

The government strictly prohibits the operation of dine in services and speaks strongly against buffet style offerings. Each of the Indian restaurants in the Chattanooga area have been known to host buffet lunches (and often dinners) daily and to be a popular option for dine in experiences. However, these restaurants and many others have had to adapt to the new safety conditions in order to keep their doors open. Before the new laws associated with this pandemic, Curry Pot was known to operate only on a buffet style food service, with new additions each day and no established menu. However, during this time, Curry Pot has established a very extensive menu that has been posted on a new company website and is also available in paper form at the restaurant. Customers can now call in to order and pick up. Curry Pot has also partnered with delivery services to become available on apps such as DinnerDelivered and has offered their own delivery services for orders of over fifty dollars. The future of the virus and economic conditions are full of uncertainties. Considering this, it was imperative for Curry Pot to adapt and offer their services in a different form in order to continue making sales and to stay afloat for the length of this coronavirus period.

### **III. Swot Analysis**

#### Strengths

- Unique Cuisine
- (Healthy) Vegetarian/Vegan Options
- Location

#### Weaknesses

- Small Staff
- New Entrant to the Market

### Opportunities

- Opportunity to become a leader amongst direct competitors in social media
- Proximity to College Campus with limited food options

### Threats

- COVID-19/ New Regulations
- Competitor's accessibility to customers in this area
- Assumptions from weak communication of brand significance thus far

### Analysis of the SWOT Matrix

We identified three specific strengths that Curry Pot has including their unique cuisine, their strategic location, and their health conscious food options. These strengths are based mostly on Curry Pot's product offerings and their ability to fulfill the needs of local customers. Curry Pot has a very extensive menu with an entire page of vegetarian options and many vegan options as well. The plaza in which Curry Pot is located offers ample parking and is near a junction that is the meeting of Ooltewah/Ringgold, Collegedale, Apison, and is near a highway that brings traffic leaving or traveling to Chattanooga.

We also identified two weaknesses of Curry Pot including their minimally staffed team, and their position as new entrants to the market. Curry Pot has a staff of five individuals who rotate shifts and days. About two to three staff are usually on the clock during the same shift. Although this may be advantageous for cost savings in salary payments, it is a worrying number when considering the amount of services offered by Curry Pot. Previously, Curry Pot operated solely on buffet style offerings, however, since the COVID-19 situation the restaurant has moved to strictly order in services. There have been no final decisions made as to how operations will run after the current COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and if customer demands require both of these styles of services, the small staff may not be able to handle the daily task load. The buffet



lines include a host of different product offerings that must be filled consistently or as customers come in, which is quite a task on its own. Handling this in addition to call in orders is sure to overwhelm only two to three employees during peak hours. Their second weakness is their status as a newcomer to the area and the market. Other restaurants in the greater Chattanooga area that offer many of the same product items have been around for years and have already earned the trust of consumers. Many restaurants in the Ooltewah/Collegedale area have been known to local markets for years and have already defined returning and loyal customers, as well as created discount partnerships with area organizations such as Southern Adventist University (these students are a part of the local target market).

A few opportunities within the marketplace that we were able to identify are the space for an Indian restaurant in the Chattanooga area on social media platforms and the lack of authentic food options available to students on the nearest college campus. Of the three other Indian restaurants in the greater Chattanooga area, we were not able to discover an active Instagram or Twitter account for any. All three of the referenced classes have a Facebook page but they are not very active, with one of the restaurant's last posts being from 2016. None of the mentioned restaurants have made a Facebook post in the 2020 year, and with Curry Pot already being active on Facebook and recently beginning its Instagram account we believe that Curry Pot has an opportunity to connect with their target audience on a platform that is not being utilized by their competitors. The second opportunity has to do with Curry Pot's proximity to a university campus of over two thousand students, Southern Adventist University, that offers very limited authentic ethnic food options. There are no ethnic restaurants on campus although the campus cafeteria does offer their own version of international dishes on a rotating basis. Also, the campus

cafeteria is open for limited hours during the day and does not open at all on Sundays for the students. Curry Pot offers a lengthy variety of authentic ethnic cuisines and has hours until eight o'clock in the evening on six days a week. Not only does Curry Pot open their doors on Sundays, but they offer an all you can eat buffet option until 5pm at a cost of fourteen dollars and ninety-nine cents for all access and nine dollars and ninety-nine cents for access to vegetarian options only.

The three weaknesses that we defined were the government mandated restrictions in the current COVID-19 situation, the accessibility that Curry Pot's direct competitors have to customers in this area, and the weak communication of Curry Pot's brand significance to its target customers thus far. The newly instituted safety measures by the government forbid operation of dine in services and buffets, which were Curry Pot's main source of revenue before the necessary adaptations were made. Also, COVID-19 restrictions prevent a certain volume of customers in the store at one period of time, limiting customer numbers. Coronavirus conditions have also made consumers fearful of eating restaurant food or food that was not made at home, and also has made them hesitant to venture out of their homes for things such as take-out food. Curry Pot does not have their own full delivery program, although they do pledge to make deliveries on orders of a fifty dollar value or more. Other Indian restaurants in the greater Chattanooga area have long since partnered with independent delivery companies such as Doordash, UberEats, and Dinner Delivered. Although they are not located in the Apison/Collegedale/Ooltewah area like Curry Pot, these delivery services offer customers in this area easy access to their products. In fact, UberEats is currently offering its users free delivery for purchases from local restaurants, a chance that Curry Pot is currently missing out on. Curry

Pot's third threat that we identified are the assumptions that customers may draw because of its weak communication of the brand significance thus far. Curry Pot's theme and interior decor is much less elaborate than what is normally expected of an Indian restaurant and that of their direct competitors. Our perception of the simple and minimal elements at first was that it was cheap and low effort. After speaking with the manager however, we learned that the minimal theme is known to the culture of Southern India, where the managers are originally from. The small fixings have a cultural significance and the colors represent traditional practices of this region. However, this is not in any way communicated to customers currently. Without this communication, customers can view the restaurant as low budget or on a lower scale than other Indian restaurants. If these significance are celebrated, communicated, and fashioned to be a part of the company brand, then the restaurant can distinguish themselves as being unique to target customers.

#### Developing Competitive Advantages

Curry Pot has the opportunity to really capitalize off the uniqueness of their restaurant and off the uniqueness of their menu. Their product strategy and expansive menu with options for different tastes and diets can be a competitive advantage for them. They have the ability to provide a novel eating experience every time you visit as well as a place to learn more about the food and where it comes from. Using social media well to keep the community updated about new offerings, store happenings as well as teach about indian culture is another competitive advantage that curry pot can achieve. The combination of these advantages as well can be an advantage in and of itself. The synergies of a novel and unique menu with great promotion and

communication on social media can be much more effective than having the two advantages separately.

### Strategic Focus

Considering our current strengths and weaknesses, as well as the defined needs of our customer base, we have decided that our focus must be on establishing ourselves as a standout against our direct competitors and local restaurants in this area. We must establish trust and outstanding communication with our target market to foster lasting relationships and customer loyalty. Improving and strengthening our social media activity/engagement in addition to communicating our unique brand significance through these channels will allow us an advantage. We also intend to use these social channels to capitalize our strengths tapping into vegan and vegetarian communities locally and overcome threats by improving our accessibility. Making ourselves the best quality, convenient, and affordable option will allow us to prosper in the pandemic and emerge even more successful after.

## **IV. Marketing Goals and Objectives**

Goals:

- Increase online presence on Instagram and website and Facebook
- Increasing following on these pages (present is 51 on Facebook and 22 on Instagram)
- Market adjustments and adaptations for COVID-19 (Place)

We have three main goals for Curry Pot moving forward. The first of the three is increasing our presence online through Instagram, maintaining our activity on Facebook, and keeping our website updated. One of our greatest target customers are local college students, a demographic who spends a majority of their time online. Social media platforms are the best way to communicate with them, assess their needs, and gain feedback. Our second goal is to increase our following on these social media platforms in order to spread awareness and gain popularity.

Our current following is at fifty-one on Facebook and twenty-two on Instagram. Our third and final goal is to market the adjustments and adaptations that we have made during COVID-19 to push the message that we care about our customers' safety but are also creative and committed to continued service for them.

Objectives:

- Establish brand and communicate the cultural significance through scheduled social media posts (6 posts)
- Get posted by Chattanooga Vegan Facebook, and Instagram groups
- 100 followers on Instagram in a month; 100 on Facebook as well (At least 40% local college students)
- Marketing campaign for adjustments and adaptations during COVID-19
- Partner with 3 local delivery services (Doordash, UberEats, Dinnerdelivered) to increase options for local customers.

We have created five measurable and quantitative objectives to achieve our stated goals for Curry Pot. The first of these is establishing our brand and communicating the cultural significance through a series of six scheduled social media posts on each platform as well as adding some of this cultural context information to our website "About" page. Each post would feature a different element of decor in our restaurant that is traditional to South Indian culture along with its meaning, or a dish on our menu that is originally south Indian along with information on holidays or cultural events that it is tied to, or a special ingredient/spice that we use in our product offerings that is unique to South India. The website should also feature cultural background information on South India, its traditions, and the style of cuisine. The second objective is to get posted by Chattanooga Vegan Facebook, and Instagram groups in order to break into those communities that are already established, foster a level of morale with that demographic, and create positive word of mouth. We will do this by highlighting our vegan options in specific posts on our social platforms and using hashtags such as #chattanoogavegans

to hopefully be seen and command attention from those communities. We can also use our Instagram to follow group pages of these communities and local influencers who are a part of them.

Our third objective is to reach one hundred followers on each of our social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) in one month; with at least forty percent of this following being local college students because they are a huge factor in our online brand awareness and target market. Once universities are back in session, we can raise our following with them by using contests offering coupons as a prize, making a follow one of the requirements to win. Social media contests are very popular with this demographic and using the “Share on your story (or wall)” requirement will also increase our reach. Our fourth objective is to execute a marketing campaign for the adjustments and adaptations during COVID-19 which will achieve the goal of getting across the message that we care about our customers’ safety but are also creative and committed to continued service for them. We will make a series of posts about adjustments that we have made and details on how they are to the customers’ benefit as the government enacts several stages of a plan to return to normalcy. We will use the hashtag #currypotexpress on these and our other posts. Our fifth and final objective is to partner with 3 local delivery services, namely, Doordash, UberEats, and Dinner Delivered to increase accessibility for local customers. We chose these three apps because they are the most popular in this area. This would also serve to contend with our direct competitors such as India Mahal, Dosa Hut, and Sitar who offer services to customers through these applications. Additionally, this would serve as a form of promotion because these apps are advertising through television, streaming services, social media, and email to their users that they are offering free delivery on

local restaurant orders. Being a local restaurant, this encourages customers to make a purchase from us on platforms that we may not be able to afford independently with no additional cost to us.

## **V. Marketing Strategy**

### **Primary (and Secondary) Target Markets**

Being the only Indian restaurant in the Collegedale/Ooltewah/Apison area, our target market is mainly geared at these local communities and the ethnic food lovers within them. Our prices are not especially expensive so it does cater to a specific class, however before and after the coronavirus restrictions our express cafeteria style made us a convenient spot for busy employees and workers on their lunch break. We appeal to all sorts of demographics locally including families, young adults, older generations and college students. The college students are a more specific (secondary) target market for us with Southern Adventist University being so closely located. We appeal to them as an authentic ethnic restaurant experience without the pressing financial impositions such as gratuities or the pressure of tipping waitstaff (customers must get food from the order counter). Many individuals in the Collegedale/Ooltewah/Apison area (especially Southern attendees) are Seventh-Day Adventist and may live a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle. We offer items that cater to them as well in a high variety.

### **Overall Branding Strategy**

For our overall branding strategy we would like to keep all elements consistent with the Southern India theme (the region that our managers are originally from). They explained to us that the decor from the vases and ornaments to the hatched roof replica are consistent with Southern Indian traditions within the restaurant. This is a defining element of the restaurant and

we plan to share its cultural significance through our social media platforms and on our website. The menu, differing slightly from the other Indian restaurants in the greater Chattanooga area, follows suit with this uniqueness. The colors inside of the restaurant are shades of brown, orange, and red which the managers also pointed out as a part of Southern Indian culture. The only inconsistent factor in-store are the blue and purple colorful paper plates used. However, there are other bulk options for paper plates that are more consistent to the theme and pattern and we will transition into using a better option. These colors are also represented on the website, social media, and in the logo generated for the Facebook page. We've decided to keep this general color scheme across all platforms but edit and simplify the previous logo to make it more visually pleasing, less noisy, and recognizable. Also, there is a different photo/logo used on the Instagram page to the Facebook page and we would like to make these the same across all platforms to help customers grow to easily recognize our logo and branding.

### Product Strategy

Many of the nearby restaurants like Thai Chili close from 3-5 pm to prepare for dinner. It is in Curry Pots' best interest to take this approach because it gives the employees time to prepare fresh food for dinner.

We want to use a combo strategy for the menu. We realize the menu, or the lack thereof is confusing for new customers and does not provide consistency for current customers. Having a choice of appetizers, entrees, and sides, with a choice of a drink is straightforward. Add on will be included at more cost. Before COVID-19, the restaurant would add a new entrée or side to the buffet line daily. We want to keep this strategy to introduce new food options but to add consistency. We suggest it be a weekly occurrence instead. Given that the Collegedale area has a



large Seventh-day Adventist community, a vegetarian menu should be included in the regular menu and heavily marketed.

### Pricing Strategy

Organize the menu by Category and Price. Sections can include:

- Regular and Premium Appetizers
- Regular and Premium Entrees
- Additional Sides and Add ons
- Desserts
- Beverages

Each Regular Appetizer or Entree will have a flat rate price and Each Premium Appetizer or Entree will have a flat rate. Each other section may have a flat rate price as well although this may not be as necessary since items in these categories won't be rotated out as often.

### Integrated Marketing Communication (promotion) Strategy

Advertising for the restaurant would help reach customers outside of the Collegedale community. Being able to get customers across the city will help get more traffic in the restaurant. Having active social media accounts will provide a space to make announcements and gain credibility with the community. Even though advertising through the local mail and newspaper is outdated, it can increase visibility. Many people look through local mail to find new business and receive coupons.

To gain visibility Curry Pot should participate in community events and event sponsorship in the future. People love supporting local businesses that are involved in the community. Participating in community events will also help build credibility in the community,

whether it be by serving samples at festivals or water at 5k runs. Southern Adventist University holds an annual Asian night, where the vendors represent different countries in Asia. Serving food that represents India will help bring brand awareness to students and their families. As COVID-19 has changed our dining out standards, the restaurant should release a statement announcing the change in the buffet to call to order dining. The statement will reassure the community that it is "safe" to dine with Curry Pot.

There are many sale promotion opportunities with Southern Adventist University being less than 5 miles away. Many local businesses, such as Rafael's and Papa John's, have a partnership with the university to provide faculty and students with discounts. University students are always looking for local businesses to help push certain initiatives. For example, last year, a group of students partnered with the Aji Peruvian restaurant to sell vegetarian plates on campus for a day. Many students do not have cars, so bringing the food on campus created an excellent convenient alternative for lunch.

Paying for ad space can get pricey. A quick and cost-effective option is posting flyers. Flyers with coupons can be displayed around Southern and other organizations. Pricing is provided for full-color single-sided flyers below:

<b>Stores</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Units</b>
Staples	\$64.99	100
FedEx	\$59.99	100

## **VI. Marketing Implementation**

### **Structural Issues**

Curry Pot is committed to the satisfaction and fulfilled needs of its customers. The managers are very personable and each employee is warm and welcoming. They offer samples of products readily and make an effort to explain the origins and ingredients of offered dishes to each customer. Tom Chacko (one of the managers) is very open about his South Indian culture and experience there. Recently, a screen has been placed in the store to picture a slideshow of menu items being offered and what they typically look like at the serving stage. We have observed the onsite manager go through the slideshow with customers to give a better description of certain menu items. We did however notice that the main server and cashier of the store, though friendly and welcoming, is not as great of a communicator as the managers. The managers speak much more confidently and with less hesitation. There may be a language component to this situation, as is sometimes a factor in cultural restaurants. However, the main server and cashier is essentially the face of the business. Customers will have more interactions with them than they ever will with the chefs of managers. Considering that fact, it is important that the employees with the most direct customer interactions are able to effectively communicate with them to relay important information, solve disputes, and avoid possible issues over miscommunications such as order mix-ups.

### **Tactical Marketing Activities**

Our marketing activities are drawn from the objectives that we created. Immediately, the first thing that we must do is to begin with our branding. Solidifying the defined colors and elements that will make up our brand and a consistent look for our posts and content will make us recognizable. We'll begin establishing our image in correlation to South India with edits to our



website and social media platforms. We'll change our website banner and menu bar to feature our new Curry Pot logo and the specific fonts that we have chosen to be used for our business. We will also incorporate this same logo, theme fonts, and color scheme

into our Facebook and Instagram pages, our physical menus (which are given out at the store and



in special community locations), and on our buffet line labels. Currently the buffet line food labels are the day's available offerings written by hand on colorful sticky notes and taped to the clear glass covering of the buffet area. However, we believe that something more along the lines of the photo below is most appropriate for this display and now that a

concrete menu has been established at Curry Pot, employees can simply rotate labels in accordance with daily offerings and will not need to make new labels often.

On the Curry Pot website, there is a section labeled simply as “An Authentic Taste of India”, with a photo of the store’s outside view and a brief one sentence description of the restaurant’s commitment to fresh ingredients. With so much odd space left over, we feel there is a great opportunity to replace this section with a description of the restaurant’s South Indian origins and the cultural significance. We will also make our first post on our Instagram platform a photo of a South Indian traditional dish that we serve, fully plated, with a caption that describes its cultural significance. For example, Pakora, are strips of deep fried chickpea batter which are eaten as snacks during tea time and are often sold as street food in South India. This appears on the menu in the form of Curry Pot’s appetizer “Chicken Pakora”. This can be a great way to inform the audience on Curry Pot’s social media platforms, giving them a taste of the culture, and encouraging them to try out this menu item by making a purchase. This post should be accompanied by a photo of Curry Pot’s version of the food and a few useful hashtags such as #indiancuisine, #indianfoodchattanooga or #pankora to help users on these platforms to come across the post. These sorts of posts should continue weekly or bi-weekly as the managers see fit.

The second matter to take on is a campaign to share Curry Pot’s recently made adjustments during the COVID-19 situation. These sorts of posts and updates must be made in a timely fashion while the restrictions are still high and Curry Pot’s efforts will stand out against other establishments. If this campaign is not prioritized, it could lose its relevance and Curry Pot can miss out on an opportunity to connect and build trust with potential new customers. There will be a series of posts depicting adjustments made and Curry Pot’s resolution to continue safe

service during the restrictions. For example, the restaurant can confirm the closing of the buffet lines but formally introduce their new takeout menu and precautions that they are taking in the kitchen to ensure customer safety. As the state lifts restrictions in phases, Curry Pot can use its social platforms to update its customers and prompt excitement for things such as the return of the buffet bar. The third priority should be to partner with 3 local delivery services DoorDash, UberEats, and Dinner Delivered to contend with our competitor's accessibility to local customers in the Ooltewah/Apison/Collegedale area. This is also a timely issue as it is most advantageous during the COVID-19 restrictions in which restriction on travel and physical interaction make delivery services preferable. This task should be accomplished within two months.

The fourth priority to have would be reaching our one hundred followers on Instagram in a month and one hundred on Facebook as well with at least forty percent of our numbers being local college students. As we make posts and become known to the community, we will gain a larger social following, especially now during the quarantine time when individuals are spending more time online than ever. We will link our social media platforms on our website and print them on our takeout menus which are passed out at the physical restaurant and in various locations around the community. Once the students come back full time to campus we can enact a further plan to gain a following by beginning a contest on our social media platforms. Recently we have seen participation contests for businesses such as CashApp and UberEats become popular amongst Southern Students on social media. We can make a giveaway post that will instruct users to first like the post, follow the Curry Pot Express page, share the post on their Insta Story for their friends to see. After two days we will select and announce a winner of a prize (such as a one time coupon for two free menu items) on our Insta Story. This will

encourage participants to keep a close watch on our page and postings, raise views on our Insta Story, prompt engagement, and increase our following. Conducting contests like this a couple of times in a year will help us to reach and surpass our goal.

The fifth priority to have would be to get posted by Chattanooga Vegan Facebook, and Instagram groups. The reason that we listed this step last in the sequence is because increasing our general following and establishing our brand first will encourage this demographic to see us as a legitimate business and maybe our content will even naturally find its way into their online community. The second step would be to begin following these communities on social media in hopes that they will follow us back and try out our menu items. If we see a good review posted by one of their members or on our vegan products generally, interacting with their post and thanking them for their feedback will encourage future purchases.

## **VII. Evaluation and Control**

### Formal & Informal Controls

To help implement these strategies, the store managers will need to recruit employees. To facilitate the selection process, applicants should provide two or more examples of their work. Compensation should be determined before any work being done and provided after the final product. Marketing employees should report to Tom Chacko to avoid errors in communication.

Then our performance standard will be a designating percentage increase in sales and improvement in cash flow. There will need to be monthly checklists to understand better which marketing efforts are producing results. This way, we will immediately know if we need to alter an initiative in the strategy. Once hired employees will be given a set of standards and objectives and they will be rewarded extrinsically.

\*The determined marketing budget needs to be determined before implementation and closely monitored.

### Implementation Schedule and Timeline

The first thing to be implemented would be the rebrand. Adding consistent visuals to the social media as well as on the printed materials in the restaurant.

After that, content can be created to populate the website and social media. This part of the timeline will continue perpetually.

An update to the measures that The Curry Pot is taking to be safe during the Covid-19 pandemic should then be posted as soon as possible so that the community is aware of their efforts to keep them safe. This information should be updated that the restaurant makes changes and they are informed by the appropriate government regulators of changes for the city and state/country as a whole. All phases listed in this timeline so far can be implemented within the first month.

The next phase of the plan should be to then partner with as many delivery services as possible so that more customers in the community can get curry pot while being able to shelter in place and self isolate at their homes. This can be accomplished by the two month mark of the plan.

The next phase would be implemented as students return to campus, having contests and little promotions that can get the southern student community involved with promoting the restaurant to their friends.

The last phase would be that as the social media of The Curry Pot grows, to have the restaurant recognized and posted by other online communities especially the vegan community as well as other local groups. This will help link dedicated groups to the restaurant and spread knowledge of the restaurant farther than they could on their own.



### Marketing Audits

After implementing the plan, it will be good to do a marketing audit so that the following can be accomplished:

Curry Pot can realign their day to day marketing activities with their larger business goals.

They can figure out what isn't working.

They will continue to innovate with new ideas and strategies.

They will stay aware of competitors.

They will save time and money.

Marketing audits are necessary because if you do not check in every once in a while, you can become stale as a business and you will miss out on opportunities that may be right in front of you to improve. Competitors will also be able to take advantage and claim market share, loyal customers, and more. Different aspects of the audit can be done on a rotating basis. Social media can be checked fairly regularly with analytics that can be gathered weekly to see trends and growth. Customer feedback can be analyzed as it is given and products can be evaluated on how they performed that week and rotated as appropriate.