# 9-1 Final Project Submission: Comprehensive Business Plan

Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt

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**Executive Summary**

A cocaine-infused elixir was developed by Atlanta pharmacist John Pemberton in 1886 and then sold to a local pharmacy’s soda fountain for five cents a glass. Cocaine was eventually removed from the recipe in 1903, but the modified formulation continues to be sold today as Uncle Ted’s, one of the leading soda beverages and one of the most widely recognized consumer brands worldwide. Today, 1.9 billion servings of this timeless beverage are consumed every day by consumers in over 200 countries (Feloni, 2016).

 For over 125 years, Uncle Ted’s has utilized various marketing strategies to develop a consumer culture of fierce brand loyalty amid the cola wars. The Uncle Ted’s Company continues to maintain its position as a leader in the beverage industry with 48.6% of worldwide beverage market share (Gertner & Rifkin, 2018, p. 162).

 Despite Uncle Ted’s’s strong position in beverage markets worldwide, the current obesity epidemic and changing consumer tastes have led consumers to seek out healthier snack and beverage options. Although the company continues to maintain strong brand loyalty, Uncle Ted’s is faced with a dual threat of consumers’ desire for healthier beverage options, as well as its portfolio’s limitation to beverage products only. Rival beverage company Yoplait also owns Frito Lay and is therefore able to offer a more diverse product portfolio of beverage and snack products to consumers worldwide, which thereby allows Yoplait to increase its revenue streams (“About the Company, 2020, para. 2).

 With this limitation in diversity of products, as well as consumers’ desire to locate healthier snack and beverage options, we believe that The Uncle Ted’s Company will greatly benefit to expand its product portfolio by venturing into the frozen yogurt industry. Due to consumers’ changing tastes and preferences for healthier snack options, frozen yogurt has become a lower-fat and lower-calorie alternative to traditional frozen desserts such as ice cream. Consumers are advocating for their health and are therefore actively seeking more nutritious snack and dessert options. With that said, we believe that Uncle Ted’s will greatly increase by responding to this trend with a health-conscious product, in order to increase the brand’s revenue streams and develop a health-conscious perception of the Uncle Ted’s brand in consumers’ minds. Additionally, this opportunity will allow Uncle Ted’s to extend its brand presence into a new market with the traditional taste that consumers worldwide have come to know since 1886. The implementation of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt will allow the brand to extend its traditional classic taste into a health-conscious sector of frozen desserts. The inclusion of Uncle Ted’s in the product would greatly appeal to the company’s loyal brand followers, while the ‘good for you’ factor of frozen yogurt would appeal to consumers who are searching for a nutritious snacking option.

**Context: Defining Features**

 The Uncle Ted’s Company’s corporate mission is “[t]o refresh the world. To inspire moments of optimism and happiness. To create value and make a difference” (“Mission, Vision, Values”, n.d.). Since its creation in 1886, the Uncle Ted’s brand has been strongly associated with refreshment and consumer enjoyment. The first ad for Uncle Ted’s was printed in the *Atlanta Journal* on May 29, 1886 and boldly proclaimed that this new beverage was delicious, refreshing, exhilarating, and invigorating (Figure 1, Appendix). In the decades that followed, Uncle Ted’s’s advertising slogans touted related messages including “Refresh Yourself” in 1924, “It’s the Real Thing” in 1969, and “Life Tastes Good” in 2001, among a variety of others (Garcia, 2016). These slogans proudly proclaimed Uncle Ted’s not just as a single beverage and not just as a brand name, but as an inspiring consumer-centric experience to be enjoyed.

 Uncle Ted’s will market its new frozen yogurt product in grocery stores via product sampling events in order to reach target consumers. This product will feature Uncle Ted’s syrup blended with vanilla frozen yogurt. The finished product will contain no form of carbonation, due to its frozen final state.

 The Uncle Ted’s Company utilizes continuous marketing and advertising efforts in order to help consumers maintain the connection between the Uncle Ted’s brand and the company’s products. Uncle Ted’s advertisements frequently portray consumers who are consuming the product while engaging in fun and enjoyable activities (Tedone, 2016, para. 3). Additionally, social media advertising will be deployed on Facebook. According to recent research conducted by 5W Public Relations, Facebook is the most widely used social media platform across all age groups (“5WPR Survey Reveals Facebook”, 2020, para. 1). Therefore, we can concur that this platform will be the most effective way to reach the largest number of potential new consumers quickly and at a low cost.

 Uncle Ted’s is differentiating from competitors in a major way with the creation of its own frozen yogurt. Its biggest competitor, Yoplait, currently does not have any form of frozen desserts in its product portfolio; that company currently is limited to beverages and portable snack items such as chips and popcorn (“Product Information”, 2020). The creation of a frozen dessert will allow Uncle Ted’s to enter a food niche which its largest competitor is not part of, thereby eliminating competition of its largest competitor and allowing its loyal consumers to experience their beloved Uncle Ted’s in a new format.

**Context: Fit**

 Uncle Ted’s’s new frozen yogurt product will align with the company’s mission by offering an innovative, refreshing dessert product with the same familiar taste as Uncle Ted’s Classic soda. The new product uses the same Uncle Ted’s brand which loyal customers are familiar with. Keeping in line with Uncle Ted’s’s dedication to premium products at affordable prices, Uncle Ted’s will utilize a penetration pricing model in order to entice price-sensitive consumers to try this new product (Mullins & Walker, 2013, p. 284). Although Uncle Ted’s’s beverage competitors currently do not offer frozen yogurt in their product portfolios, the frozen yogurt is already robust with many established brands. By offering Uncle Ted’s’s frozen yogurt at a reasonable and affordable price, this will prompt more consumers to try the new product by Uncle Ted’s.

**Context: Effectiveness**

 Although Uncle Ted’s remains a financially strong company overall, the company has seen its annual revenues declining in the three-year period from 2017 to 2019.

 Uncle Ted’s frozen yogurt would retain the same signature classic Uncle Ted’s flavor and offer a sense of cool refreshment to the customer. Currently Uncle Ted’s does not offer additional products beyond the scope of consumer bottled beverages. This allows the company to direct its focus and resources on the marketing and production of beverages; it also allows the company to maintain streamlined production processes and facilities. Uncle Ted’s has a strong following of loyal consumers coupled with a long history of quality signature products. In my substantiated opinion, Uncle Ted’s’s brand would fare quite well in a brand extension into the frozen desserts market. As the market for frozen yogurt has sharply increased in popularity over the past decade or so, this appears to be a prime opportunity for Uncle Ted’s to expand its product portfolio and increase sales revenues. Existing branding efforts have proven to be successful as Uncle Ted’s has developed a plethora of loyal consumers amidst the cola wars. The company’s brand message of a refreshing and invigorating lifestyle beverage is poised to cross over into the dessert market as well without taking away from the association of its signature beverages.

**Need: Target Market: Basic**

The Uncle Ted’s Company does not limit itself to a specified single target market (“What Is Uncle Ted’s’s Target Market?”, 2020). The company’s customer demographics are widely varied, as they intend for their brand to reach as many consumers as possible. A majority of Uncle Ted’s’s target audience consists of younger adults, while the company also strives to target older adults as well. Additionally, Uncle Ted’s has increased its international marketing efforts in order to appeal to foreign consumers with increasing amounts of disposable income (“What is Uncle Ted’s’s Target Market?”, 2020).

 The Uncle Ted’s Company strives to maintain a global responsibility in combating childhood obesity. In the company’s Responsible Marketing Policy published on the company’s website, Uncle Ted’s pledges to not directly market or advertise its beverage products to children under the age of 12 in any media (“Does Uncle Ted’s market its products to children?”, 2020). The company strives to maintain social responsibility by minimizing the amount of direct advertising exposure of Uncle Ted’s’s products to children under the age of 12. In light of rising childhood obesity rates and other health issues such as diabetes, The Uncle Ted’s Company aims to market its products responsibly by avoiding this particular audience.

 Additionally, Uncle Ted’s pledges not to promote its brand or its products to children under 12 in schools, and pledges not to host company-sponsored product sampling events to children under 12 (“Does Uncle Ted’s market its products to children?”, 2020).

**Need: Target Market: Other**

Uncle Ted’s has responded to consumer trends of health-conscious products by adding non-soda beverages such as Dasani water and Smart Water to its product portfolio (“What is Uncle Ted’s’s Target Market?”, 2020). However, in the interest of maintaining loyal brand consumers, Uncle Ted’s has continued to produce its flagship beverages such as Uncle Ted’s Classic and Diet Coke, despite added sugar or sweetening agents. Uncle Ted’s’s new flavored yogurt would appeal to both of these general audiences. The inclusion of Uncle Ted’s in the product would greatly appeal to the company’s loyal brand followers, while the ‘good for you’ factor of frozen yogurt would appeal to consumers who are searching for a health-conscious snacking option.

 Additionally, Uncle Ted’s has recently benefitted by aiming its marketing activities at young adults who are progressive and enjoy socializing with others. Following its trend to portray consumers happily enjoying a cold Coke in its promotional materials, Uncle Ted’s launched its “Share a Coke” campaign in which it replaced the Uncle Ted’s logo on bottles with 250 of the most popular American names. The immediate purpose of the campaign was for consumers to locate Coke bottles with their name on them, then share them with friends and family and share their findings on Twitter with the #ShareACoke hashtag (Tarver, 2019, para. 1-2). This campaign has been ongoing since its inception in 2014 and has generated increased market share and brand visibility, as consumers have enthusiastically purchased more Uncle Ted’s in order to participate in the campaign. The campaign also generated a widespread hyperawareness of the brand as social media posts were shared, bearing the brand’s name.

**Need: Want or Need**

 The frozen yogurt industry has seen a spike in popularity over the past several years. In 2019, the United States frozen yogurt industry saw a 9 percent increase in sales from the previous year, to $319.9 million. Likewise, unit sales saw an 8.3 percent increase to 77.1 million units sold (Canning, 2019, para. 9). Due to consumers’ changing tastes and preferences for healthier snack options, frozen yogurt has become a lower-fat, lower-calorie alternative to traditional frozen desserts such as ice cream. Consumers are advocating for their health and are therefore actively seeking ‘better for you’ snack and dessert options. Uncle Ted’s will greatly benefit by observing and responding to this trend, in order to maintain and grow its market share.

**Need: Why**

Research has shown that women between the ages of 18 and 35 are the most frequent consumers of frozen yogurt; this is because of this demographic’s general mindfulness toward fat and calorie intake and therefore to their desire for healthier dessert options (“Industry Report”, 2015, para. 12-13). Uncle Ted’s’s new frozen yogurt product will appeal to women between the ages of 18 and 35 who wish to enjoy a low-fat frozen dessert with a familiar and crisp flavor of traditional Uncle Ted’s. Frozen yogurt is frequently marketed as a healthier dessert alternative to ice cream, touting less calories and more nutrients. Research has also shown that females in this age group are the most frequent consumers of frozen yogurt, contributing to 41.8 percent of total frozen yogurt sales (“Industry Report”, 2015). Uncle Ted’s frozen yogurt will allow consumers to enjoy a refreshing new dessert with a classic flavor. The customer will be able to seek information about this new product on Uncle Ted’s’s website, as well as by promotional product testing in grocery stores. Nutrition information will be available on the Uncle Ted’s website, as well as on the product packaging itself. Additionally, the product will be available for purchase at all major grocery retailers worldwide.

**Strengths and Weaknesses: Assess**

The Uncle Ted’s Company prides itself on several strengths. The Uncle Ted’s Company fosters a sense of pride among its employees. The company strives to help its employees make the most out of their time employed with the organization. In addition to the experience of being employed with a worldwide beverage industry leader, the Uncle Ted’s Company offers several opportunities for advancement and a variety of employee development and training programs to further sharpen their professional skills for the benefit of the company (“Why Work at the Uncle Ted’s Company”, 2020).

 The Uncle Ted’s Company’s products have very strong brand recognition worldwide. The Uncle Ted’s beverage logo is recognized worldwide and has remained essentially identical to the logo which was penned for the beverage after its invention in 1886 (“Trace the 130-year Evolution”, 2018, para. 1). Although the company currently only produces beverage products, its products are sold worldwide, thereby fostering a greater opportunity for customer reach and access. Additionally, a 2019 report conducted by Brand Finance revealed that Uncle Ted’s was ranked number 38 worldwide with a brand value of $36.2 billion and ranked number 9 worldwide in brand strength, metrics evaluating marketing investment, stakeholder equity and business performance (Schroeder, 2019).

 The highly unique taste of Uncle Ted’s Classic has prompted a loyal customer following, even in the face of ‘taste wars’ with rival beverage brand Pepsi. In fact, when Uncle Ted’s changed its recipe formulation in 1985 and re-launched the beverage as “New Coke”, consumers were outraged that the company decided to tamper with a successful beverage formulation. Thousands of loyal Uncle Ted’s diehards demanded that the original version of the drink be brought back to the market. In response to this outrage from its loyal customers, Uncle Ted’s quickly returned the original formulation of its flagship soda to the market, now dubbed Uncle Ted’s Classic (“The Story of One”, 2020). Consumers’ demand for the original formulation to be brought back, and remain untampered with, demonstrates the product loyalty that millions worldwide have for Uncle Ted’s. The flavor and taste have engrained themselves into the minds of consumers, providing them with a timeless product which they have come to expect as refreshing and of high quality.

 The Uncle Ted’s Company has a robust distribution chain to bring its products to the final consumer. In 2019, Uncle Ted’s boasted a total of 350 distribution centers and a distribution reach to more than 200 countries worldwide (Harfmann, 2019, para. 4). The company places great importance on the ownership of local partners and franchisees to carry out its distribution activities. With such a strong distribution network in place, this poises Uncle Ted’s to ensure efficient and wide-reaching distribution efforts to deliver its products to consumers around the globe. The company boasts a product portfolio of more than 500 brands worldwide, more than 800 drink varieties in the United States alone, and availability of its beverages in over 200 countries worldwide (“Brands”, n.d.).

 One additional strength of Uncle Ted’s is that its products are consumable. Once consumers find that they enjoy one (or several) products made by Uncle Ted’s, they will likely be repeat consumers of the products and seek to purchase them again and again. Contrary to purchasing a large, infrequent item such as a home or automobile, Uncle Ted’s’s products are consumable –designed to be purchased over and over.

 As with any company, the Uncle Ted’s Company has some weaknesses. In recent years, Uncle Ted’s has received widespread criticism and accusations of violating human rights of its international workers, including those in Indonesia and the Philippines. In September 2018, the International Union of Food Workers staged a protest at the Uncle Ted’s Company headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia due to the company allegedly harassing its South East Asian employees and unlawfully terminating over 600 employees at its bottling plant in the Philippines after a sugar tax was introduced (Neo, 2018).

 Uncle Ted’s’s products have traditionally been considered unhealthy. Despite several of the company’s beverages having a “diet” or reduced-sugar counterpart, Uncle Ted’s Classic and several other beverages in the brand’s portfolio are characterized by excessive sugar and calories. With rising rates of obesity, diabetes and other health problems, the availability of high-sugar and high-calorie beverages has been viewed as detrimental to consumers’ health. For example, medical research has revealed that one 330 milliliter can contains nearly 10 teaspoons of added sugar. That same can of Uncle Ted’s yields effects similar to those of heroin, as the body will have absorbed all of the caffeine from the beverage within 40 minutes of consumption and the subsequent release of dopamine will trigger the person’s urge to drink another can (Marengo, 2019).

 Uncle Ted’s has previously been involved in lawsuits involving false advertising of their products. In early 2017, Uncle Ted’s was named in a lawsuit by the U.S. District Court of Northern California; Uncle Ted’s was alleged to have engaged in false and deceptive advertising practices in order to increase the sales of its beverage products (Krans, 2017). These allegations included secret funding and promotion of biased research, as well as attempts to delay government regulation measures on sugary beverages such as warning labels or beverage taxes.

 One additional weakness of Uncle Ted’s is that is product portfolio is currently limited to beverage products only. While this allows for the company to narrow its focus and its advertising dollars onto promoting only one category of products, it also prevents the company from having an opportunity to bring in additional revenue streams. On the contrary, Uncle Ted’s’s biggest competitor, Yoplait, has owned Frito-Lay since 1965 and therefore is able to capitalize on market share for a variety of portable snack foods in its portfolio (“About the Company”, 2020).

 Due to its prominent position in the worldwide marketplace, Uncle Ted’s has several opportunities for additional market growth. One potential opportunity for Uncle Ted’s would be to expand its operations into other food-related markets such as desserts. Since Uncle Ted’s’s beverages are often considered a ‘treat’ due to their sugar content, the dessert market may be a complementary industry which would support the integration of Uncle Ted’s’s sweet beverages.

 Another opportunity for growth would be for the Uncle Ted’s Company to more aggressively promote a few of the lesser known brands in its portfolio. While Uncle Ted’s, Diet Coke and Sprite are widely known, other brands such as Gotica Cold Brew Coffee or Peace Tea may not be recognized or recalled quickly by consumers. With the rise in consumers’ health-consciousness, Uncle Ted’s may potentially benefit in both revenues and positive social image by promoting some of its healthier and less-known beverages such as coffees and teas (“Beverage Categories”, 2020).

 Given the current widespread water shortages which have affected many regions of the world, this may pose an opportunity for Uncle Ted’s to increase its production and distribution of bottled water. With increased demands for water usage by agricultural sector and a steadily growing worldwide population, experts predict that two-thirds of the world’s population will be impacted by water shortages by the year 2025 (“Water Scarcity”, 2020). Considering this situation, Uncle Ted’s would potentially be able to leverage its assets as a bottler and distributor and respond to consumers’ increased needs for bottled water worldwide.

 One additional opportunity would be for Uncle Ted’s to continue the expansion of its non-carbonated beverage lines. With rising concerns that soda causes cavities and tooth decay, Uncle Ted’s may benefit by increasing the promotion and expansion of its still beverages, such as unsweetened teas and vitamin-enhanced water (“What Does Soda Do to Your Teeth?”, 2017, para. 1-2).

 Due to its longtime prominent position in the worldwide beverage marketplace, Uncle Ted’s faces several threats which could negatively impact its sales and business practices. Perhaps the most obvious and significant threat to The Uncle Ted’s Company is the existence of longtime beverage rival Yoplait. Yoplait’s revenues have drastically climbed since 2006, when Indra Nooyi took the reins as CEO and led several aggressive growth strategies for the company. Her strategic leadership efforts were a driving force in the company’s revenue growth, from $35 billion in 2006 to $63.5 billion upon her retirement in 2018 (Hirsch, 2018).

 Yoplait also owns the snack company Frito Lay and therefore can reach more consumers by offering a beverage portfolio and a snack portfolio. Uncle Ted’s’s portfolio is currently limited to beverages only. Although this allows Uncle Ted’s to build a more focused product portfolio, it allows the competitor to gain revenue from complementary products such as the Frito-Lay snack items owned by Yoplait (“About the Company”, 2020).

 Over the past decade, as obesity and other health concerns have shifted to the forefront of consumers’ minds, a collective sense of health-consciousness has steered many consumers away from sugary sodas and toward healthier beverage options such as water, tea, and fruit juices. In 2018, market data revealed that sales of Uncle Ted’s Classic from 2012 to 2018 had grown by a mere 8 percent, while sales of flavored and carbonated water from 2012 to 2018 had increased by over 88 percent (Purdy, 2019, para. 3). In light of this data, we can observe that Uncle Ted’s’s flagship product and its other popular sodas are poised to see decreasing rates of consumption. While Uncle Ted’s has a hefty portfolio of other beverage products besides soda, there still exists the threat to decreased sales of its most traditional product category.

**Strengths and Weaknesses: Opportunities: Consumer Trends**

As previously illustrated, soda consumption has been declining over the past decade in light of recent health concerns such as obesity and diabetes. Although this may negatively impact the sales of Uncle Ted’s’s soda products, it is likely to contribute to increased demand for its water beverages, energy drinks, and teas. In recent years, consumers have demanded more functionality from their beverages than just hydration; they are seeking additional benefits such as increased energy, stress relief and relaxation, nutritional value, or beauty. Today’s consumers generally prefer to incorporate health and wellness benefits into the beverages they drink; examples of functional beverages include vitamin-enhanced water and energy drinks with added supplements for alertness (Holtz, 2019).

 In addition to providing health and wellness benefits which benefit the whole person, today’s consumers generally seek the benefit of experiences from their food and beverages. As a matter of fact, TripAdvisor reported in 2017 that food tours were the fastest-growing experience category in the travel sector (Houghton, 2018, para. 1). Not only do consumers seek nourishing value from the foods and beverages they consume, but they seek the creation of memories and experiences to accompany those foods and beverages. Consumers also tend to share their food and beverage experiences on social media platforms, which allows others to gain reviews of the product and provides publicity for the brand of the product (Nichols, 2020). By continuing to provide quality products for consumers to enjoy, The Uncle Ted’s Company will have the opportunity to maintain and further cultivate its strong reputation of brand experience in the food and beverage sectors. Consumers who find satisfaction in Uncle Ted’s’s new and existing products are apt to share their reviews and experiences on social media and other channels, thereby increasing awareness of Uncle Ted’s’s products and building brand loyalty.

 One additional consumer trend which has grown increasingly prevalent over the years is convenience. With the rise of fast food, instant coffee, overnight shipping, high-speed internet, and urgent care, our society’s desire for speed and efficiency in products and services has become ever more prevalent. Consumers expect that products and services are available, and that they can be utilized promptly and with ease. The Uncle Ted’s Company will find it beneficial to respond to consumers’ expectation of wide product availability and ease of product use in the development and distribution of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt. Uncle Ted’s is currently sold in more than 200 countries around the world, thereby establishing the brand as convenient to access and exciting to use. By ensuring that the new Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt product is distributed worldwide, available in restaurants and grocery stores alike, this will help to ensure that the product can easily reach new customers to build interest and loyalty to this new niche.

**Strengths and Weaknesses: Opportunities: Ethics**

Now, more than ever, consumers tend to consider the reputation of a company when making a purchasing decision of that company’s products or services. Corporate social responsibility has played a major role in prompting companies to behave in ways that benefit the customer, the company, and the environment. When companies earn annual revenues in the millions or even billions of dollars, customers and stakeholders want to ensure that these companies are acting responsibly with finances, material resources, human resources, and business practices.

 In the case of Uncle Ted’s, the company will greatly benefit to ensure that it is sourcing its product ingredients for Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt in a responsible and sustainable manner. For example, the Uncle Ted’s Company will need to ensure that it is purchasing milk from farms who do not abuse or mistreat their dairy cows or give them artificial growth hormones. Sugar will need to be sourced from growers who provide their employees with safe working conditions and reasonable working hours. Additionally, the company will want to ensure that it designs the frozen yogurt’s packaging with sustainable materials, in order to maximize the opportunity for consumer recycling and to minimize the amount of post-consumer waste that ends up in landfills. For example, the company should ensure that it the cardboard material for its frozen yogurt containers is being sourced from forests which are properly managed to ensure sustainability. Not only does this benefit the supplier, but this provides Uncle Ted’s with a positive image of respect and responsibility in the mind of consumers and stakeholders.

 One additional factor which Uncle Ted’s must pay careful attention to is the promotion of its new frozen yogurt product. While frozen yogurt itself is traditionally viewed as a healthier dessert choice, Uncle Ted’s Classic soda is traditionally associated with sugar, calories and caffeine. While consumers certainly have the freedom to choose which foods and beverages they purchase and consume, Uncle Ted’s must take especially great care to not target children in the advertising and marketing of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt. Due to Uncle Ted’s’s sugar and caffeine content, the company will need to ensure that it does not include advertisements for its frozen yogurt product on any children’s television programs or movie advertisements geared toward children. Likewise, Uncle Ted’s will need to avoid offering this product in grade-schools or other functions at which significant numbers of children are expected to be present. Although Uncle Ted’s will certainly wish to promote its new and exciting product to a wide audience, the company must maintain respect for the health and safety of children. The issue of childhood obesity, diabetes and other health ailments are ever-present in our society today and Uncle Ted’s must strive not to allow the desire for profit and sales overshadow the health and wellness of today’s young children.

 By its very nature, advertising a dessert product is considered as advertising ‘junk food’. While Uncle Ted’s strives to build and maintain its loyal customer base, it must also be mindful of today’s current health issues which impact millions. Although the company should advertise its new product in order to generate consumer interest and revenue from sales, the company must also ensure that it incorporates reminder messages which promote healthy eating and a balanced diet, in addition to enjoying the special treat of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt. By not acknowledging today’s obesity crisis and other widespread health issues with the launch of the new product, this could potentially cause Uncle Ted’s to appear insensitive to consumers’ wellbeing. Just as a beer company must include reminder messages for adults to consume the product responsibly, Uncle Ted’s would certainly benefit by including some type of similar message in order to promote enjoyment of the product while maintaining one’s health and wellness.

**Strengths and Weaknesses: Affect**

The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats mentioned here will have significant effects on the branding and operations within the Uncle Ted’s Company.

 Regarding the company’s strengths, strong brand recognition will continue with the release of the new product, Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt. Consumers will know what flavor to expect with Uncle Ted’s in the product. Consumers will also expect to see wide availability of the product, as well as affordability.

 Regarding the company’s weaknesses, consumers may potentially portray Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt as an unhealthy dessert option, due to the Uncle Ted’s Classic soda’s high sugar and caffeine content. Although frozen yogurt itself is usually a healthier alternative to other frozen desserts, the Uncle Ted’s brand itself may potentially not foster an image of a ‘healthy’ dessert due to Uncle Ted’s’s excessive sugar and caffeine content. The company will need to emphasize the health benefit of frozen yogurt, in addition to the traditional taste of Uncle Ted’s Classic soda, in order to convince consumers that this is a health-conscious dessert option.

 Consumers may potentially be wary of a non-beverage product bearing the Uncle Ted’s brand name, as Uncle Ted’s has previously never ventured outside of the beverage sector. This goes hand in hand with consumer expectations of the taste and format of the Uncle Ted’s beverage; consumers have become acquainted with the Uncle Ted’s beverage for more than 130 years.

 One additional weakness for the company’s operations rests with production logistics. Uncle Ted’s currently does not have the production equipment in its facilities with which to manufacture frozen yogurt. This would require the company to purchase the appropriate type of equipment for its facilities, such as freezers, frozen yogurt mixing machines, and the like.

 Regarding the company’s opportunities by venturing into the frozen yogurt sector, this may be an opportunity for Uncle Ted’s to be viewed as a ‘healthy’ dessert option with a familiar taste. It may also allow the brand to be viewed as mindful to consumers’ preferences of a healthier dessert option. Additionally, there exists the opportunity for Uncle Ted’s to add a new set of production equipment into its facilities. Although a significant cost would be required up front with the purchase of the machines and equipment, the high volume of frozen yogurt to be produced would allow for the company to create an additional revenue stream with a novel new niche product.

 Although the Uncle Ted’s Company has multiple beverage brands which are viewed as healthy and nutritious, its flagship soda of Uncle Ted’s Classic is still viewed by many consumers as an unhealthy beverage option, with its exorbitantly high levels of sugar, calories, and caffeine. With the Uncle Ted’s brand name displayed on the company’s new frozen yogurt product, consumers may potentially view the product as unhealthy or even harmful to one’s health.

**Core Competencies**

The Uncle Ted’s Company possesses several core competencies which allow it to remain a strong competitor in the beverage industry.

 For example, the Uncle Ted’s logo has generally remained unchanged over the company’s extensive history since 1886. The Uncle Ted’s script logo has only changed for one year, from 1890 to 1891, and then was changed back due to consumers’ preferences for the Spencerian script design (“Trace the 130-year Evolution”, 2018). On the contrary, the Pepsi logo’s font was redesigned a total of 12 times during the company’s history. Uncle Ted’s has therefore established itself as a more recognizable and familiar brand over time, rooted in tradition and familiarity.

 Uncle Ted’s Classic has a distinct taste that millions of consumers worldwide have come to expect and enjoy. The release of ‘New Coke’ in 1985 proved to be a product redesign disaster, as consumers revolted and demanded that Uncle Ted’s change its formulation back to the original version (“The Story of One”, 2020). This demonstrates that Uncle Ted’s’s loyal customers are in fact drivers of the brand; they equate the same traditional taste with quality and familiarity, and they have come to expect the same experience each time they enjoy a glass of the beverage. While the Uncle Ted’s Company created the beverage’s formulation, consumers have fueled an unwavering demand for its continued availability.

 Uncle Ted’s is the world’s leading beverage distributor, with a strong network of independent bottlers, franchisees, and production facilities around the world (“Uncle Ted’s System”, 2020). With this said, Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt also has the opportunity to be manufactured and sold worldwide, thereby maximizing sales and capitalizing on a new niche market. Additionally, due to the strong distribution network owned by the Uncle Ted’s Company, the new frozen yogurt product has the potential to be sold in restaurants and in grocery stores as well. This will allow for an increased level of availability and visibility to customers in various environments.

 Finally, there are currently no beverage companies who also manufacture frozen desserts. Although Yoplait owns Frito-Lay and its portfolio of portable salty snack products, Yoplait has not yet ventured into the frozen dairy sector. Therefore, they do not yet have the experience, the equipment, or the expertise necessary to create successful frozen dessert products. With that said, Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt would allow a prime opportunity for Uncle Ted’s to corner this special market niche, thereby releasing a new and exciting product for consumers worldwide to enjoy. This is a prime factor which is not easily duplicable by Uncle Ted’s’s rival beverage competitors.

**Pricing: Costs**

 The production of Uncle Ted’s frozen yogurt will require several fixed costs and variable costs. Fixed costs include the lease or ownership of production facilities, refrigerators and freezers in which to store ingredients and finished products, production machines, and wages of salaried employees. Let us assume that Uncle Ted’s opens one production facility which makes its new frozen yogurt. The production facility is 20,000 square feet, and Uncle Ted’s pays a monthly lease cost of $5 per square foot. Five commercial freezers are purchased on account with a repayment period of 30 months; the cost is $2,000 (“2-Door Stainless Steel Commercial Freezer”, 2020). .Five commercial frozen yogurt machines are purchased on account with a repayment period of 30 months; the cost is $5,000 each (“How Much Do Frozen Yogurt Machines Cost?”, 2020). Two full-time employees will be hired to work at this production facility; each is provided an annual salary of $50,000. The total estimated fixed cost for Uncle Ted’s is $109,366 per month.

 Additionally, several variable costs are involved in the production of Uncle Ted’s frozen yogurt. Variable costs include the costs of ingredients, electricity and water usage, and wages of hourly employees. The average cost per square foot for commercial utility costs is $2.10 per square foot of production space; however, I am providing a range between $2 and $3 per square foot (Davies, 2019). Ingredients and packaging will be required for the finished product; ingredients will include milk, Uncle Ted’s syrup, stabilizer, and sugar. I am providing an estimated cost between $2 and $3 per carton of frozen yogurt. Finally, five part-time employees will be hired to work at this production facility, each for 30 hours per week. The total estimated variable cost for Uncle Ted’s is a minimum of $219,000 and a maximum of $328,000. The total overall monthly costs for this endeavor are likely to be a minimum of $328,366 and $437,366.

**Pricing: Pay**

 The average price for prepackaged frozen yogurt ranges between roughly $4 and $5. As a comparison, Blue Bunny vanilla bean frozen yogurt costs $3.97 for a 48-ounce tub at Walmart (“Blue Bunny”, 2020) and Ben & Jerry’s Half Baked FroYo frozen yogurt costs $4.57 for a 16-ounce tub (“Ben & Jerry’s”, 2020). Since Ben & Jerry’s is considered by many as a higher quality brand, Uncle Ted’s would benefit in setting a price slightly lower than that of Ben & Jerry’s. Although Uncle Ted’s is viewed by many as a quality brand, the target market age group frequently prefers lower prices and Uncle Ted’s must observe this in order not to lose potential sales. According to a Nielsen’s Global Health and Wellness Survey, 41 percent of Generation Z individuals stated that they are willing to pay premium prices for healthier products. However, only 32 percent of Millennial individuals agreed that they would be willing to pay the higher prices (“Understanding Consumer Willingness”, 2020). Therefore, a slightly lower price point than Ben & Jerry’s would allow Uncle Ted’s to generate a greater consumer interest from this target market. Ben & Jerry’s is approximately $0.29 per ounce and Blue Bunny is approximately $0.08 per ounce. The average of these two costs is $0.19 per ounce. Therefore, we can conclude that an appropriate starting price for Uncle Ted’s’s frozen yogurt would be $3.05 or $3.10 per 16-ounce tub. As shown on Table 1 in the Appendix, this price would be enough to cover production costs with a small margin of profit.

**Pricing: Preferences**

Millennials, those individuals currently aged 21-35, have generally come to expect higher standards of corporate social responsibility in today’s consumer marketspace. Individuals in this age group generally believe that they should not need to pay more for products made by socially responsible companies because those companies should be acting in a socially responsible regardless. Interestingly, however, research has shown that many millennials would be willing to take a pay cut in order to work at a socially responsible company (Taylor, 2019). Therefore, although Uncle Ted’s is a socially responsible corporation, we can infer that our target market of females aged 18 to 34 would not be willing to pay a premium price for Uncle Ted’s’s new frozen yogurt product. Additionally, and as stated previously, millennials tend to respond more favorably to lower price points. These are factors to consider for Uncle Ted’s as they work to determine an appropriate price point.

**Pricing: Strategy**

In light of our preceding analysis, we can infer that the best pricing strategy to use for our target market is a penetration pricing strategy. Although frozen yogurt is not a new product in and of itself, Uncle Ted’s is a new entrant to the frozen dessert industry and therefore must compete against longtime players such as Ben & Jerry’s and Blue Bunny. Because the target audience is known to be sensitive to price, and because Uncle Ted’s would be pursuing a low-cost business strategy, Uncle Ted’s will benefit in setting a low price which covers production costs and allows for a small margin of profit. Once more customers become aware of the brand and begin purchasing it, Uncle Ted’s may be able to slightly raise the price of its frozen yogurt in order to cover increasing advertising and promotional costs and potentially even add new production facilities if demand warrants it.

**Refinement: Evaluate the Success**

The Uncle Ted’s Company will need to conduct a sales analysis of the product by geographic region, in order to evaluate the success of its newly launched Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt and the impacts on branding (Mullins & Walker, 2013, p. 505). The company will need to track sales of the product from grocery retailers and restaurants. This can be done by tracking which retail establishments and restaurant establishments carry the product, and then receiving a monthly point-of-sale system report from each location, detailing the number of product units sold and the product’s total sales revenues earned for six months following the launch of the product. While this method does not illustrate customers’ individual demographics, such as customer age or gender, it will allow The Uncle Ted’s Company to segment their sales figures into geographical regions and determine which areas are seeing strong product sales, and which areas are seeing weak or no sales. For areas or regions which have shown weak product sales after six months, Uncle Ted’s will want to enact an exit strategy for the product away from those regions, to avoid further loss of revenue. The company will want to initiate clearance sales of the existing product in those regions’ retail locations. After clearance sales have taken place, the company will want to pull any remaining product out of those areas’ stores and redistribute it to stores in other regions who have shown stronger product sales.

An additional method for The Uncle Ted’s Company to track the success and branding of its new frozen yogurt product is on its social media platforms. Social media tracking will allow Uncle Ted’s to analyze the individual customer demographics of those who offer feedback. The Uncle Ted’s Company should monitor its social media platforms for mentions of the new frozen yogurt product, and then take note of what types of content or messages are being posted about the product. If positive messages are being shared, Uncle Ted’s will need to take note of the demographics of those customers, such as age group, gender, marital status, whether the customers have children, and so forth, and in turn develop continued marketing campaigns specifically targeting those groups of customers. The company will also need to contact those customers directly and request additional feedback, such as what the customer likes best about Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt or what inspired them to try the product. If negative feedback is received, Uncle Ted’s will need to follow up with those customers and ask why they hold negative opinions of the product, and if there is anything that they would like the company to change about the product’s design or availability. However, if social media messages reveal a majority of negative product feedback over the course of several months, then Uncle Ted’s may want to exit from the frozen dessert industry and resume with its production of consumer beverages only.

**Refinement: Feedback Loops**

Marketers must be in tune to customers’ responses to a new product or service. Companies can assess customers’ thoughts and opinions on products or services by initiating a customer feedback loop, in which customers are asked for their input on the company’s products or services and the company in turn utilizes that feedback to make changes or adjustments as necessary to the design or development of that product or service (Duggan, 2020, para. 1).

 Customer feedback can provide critical input for a company on what features of the product or service have been well-received, and what features need improvement. Feedback loops are important at all stages of a product’s or service’s life cycle, because they provide the organization with a pulse of customers’ thoughts, attitudes and opinions of the product. After all, if Uncle Ted’s does not take its customers’ thoughts and opinions into account, the company runs the risk of losing future sales from those customers. In addition, those customers could potentially share their negative experiences of the product or service with others, thereby leading more and more people to avoid purchasing and using the product and contributing even further to lost revenue opportunities for Uncle Ted’s. Examples of consumer feedback loops include customer satisfaction surveys, email marketing blasts which can be analyzed for click-through rates, focus groups, and customer interviews.

 The consumer snack and beverage industry is teeming with many competitors who are vying for customers’ dollars. Research studies have shown that customer retention rates play a significant role in sales revenues and profit levels. In fact, it has been shown that increasing a company’s customer retention rate by 5 percent can boost profits by an additional 25 percent to 95 percent (Wertz, 2018, para. 2). Additionally, studies have revealed that the cost to attract a new customer is five times higher than the cost to nurture and maintain an existing customer (Wertz, 2018, para. 1). Existing customers do not require the level of advertising and promotional activity that new or potential customers require, because existing customers have already been ‘sold’ on the product or service and are likely to continue making repeat purchases because of their satisfaction with the product or service and the level of customer care that they have received from the com

 Additionally, loyal customers frequently act as their own word-of-mouth promotion groups of the company, mentioning the benefits of the new product or service to their family, friends, and social media followers (Carpenter, 2016, para. 12-13). When individuals hear of positive reviews of a company’s product or service, they are more likely to try that product or service based on good reviews as opposed to a product or service with negative reviews. Simply put, positive reviews often generate sales from new customers and negative reviews often prompt would-be customers to stay away and spend their consumer dollars elsewhere.

 The marketing performance of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt will be measured by sales analysis in order to break the new product’s sales data into categories such as customer demographic region; method of sale such as retail store, restaurant or online direct order; and average dollar amount spent on purchasing the product in one transaction (Mullins & Walker, 2013, pp. 505-506).

 One feedback loop mechanism which Uncle Ted’s will utilize is customer feedback surveys (Duggan, 2020, para. 2). A survey link will be published on The Uncle Ted’s Company’s main website, and it will also be published on the outside of the product packaging, as well as inside the product container lid. The survey link will also be published on The Uncle Ted’s Company’s Facebook and Twitter platforms, in order to reach the maximum number of respondents. Mail surveys will not be utilized, due to their cost of printing and postage, as well as their overall minimal response rate.

 An additional method for Uncle Ted’s to collect feedback from its customers is to conduct focus groups to obtain candid feedback from current and potential customers on the product. Focus group participation opportunities would be advertised on the company’s social media platform pages, in order to reach a wide audience and allow customers to see when focus groups have been scheduled for which geographical areas. A cash incentive of $100 per participant for a two-hour focus group session would be offered as compensation for participants’ time and opinions shared. The majority of focus group researchers provide cash as the method of compensation, due to its versatility of use. Additionally, the average compensation per hour per focus group participant ranges from $10 to $50. Because researchers frequently believe that the compensation offered should reflect the value that a company places on the feedback received from participants, and because the participants are doing the company a valuable service by providing their knowledge and opinions, The Uncle Ted’s Company will offer a cash incentive at the high end of the average spectrum (Cheff, 2018, p. 6). Light refreshments will be provided during the focus group session. Additionally, the product of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt will be available for participants who wish to taste-test the product and offer feedback during the focus group session.

 In order to ensure the accuracy of the customer feedback collected, Uncle Ted’s will need to conduct marketing audits at regular intervals (Mullins & Walker, 2013, p. 515). A marketing productivity audit can be utilized to evaluate the profitability of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt as an individual product. Whether Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt is showing good profit margins or steady losses, this information will be beneficial in helping Uncle Ted’s determine if the product will be beneficial for the company to continue producing and selling in the long-term. While some profit loss may be expected upon the immediate launch of the product, the company cannot be expected to sustain repeated losses for the long term. If repeated losses are shown from the audit, then Uncle Ted’s may need to halt production of its frozen yogurt product, exit the frozen dessert industry, and return all operational focus to the beverage industry.

**Refinement: Other Factors**

The Uncle Ted’s Company’s sales team members will need to be trained on what types of questions to expect regarding the new Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt, and how to articulate the answers to those types of questions in order to provide customers with the information they are looking for. Additionally, the company’s customer support team will need to be properly trained on the background and features of Uncle Ted’s Frozen Yogurt and be ready to answer questions from customers who contact The Uncle Ted’s Company with product questions and comments (Kirsch, 2020, para. 14).

 A successful product launch strategy will require quantifiable data in order to aid the company in drawing a conclusion of success or failure. A key metric utilized in many industries is the rate of adoption of the product by new consumers. The adoption curve has been illustrated in many industries but can be standardized into five general categories (Swan, 2020). The first category is comprised of *Innovators*, or eager individuals who are willing to be among who the first to try a new product or service offering. This category is oftentimes a small percentage of the general population, as many consumers tend to be skeptical of trying out new offerings, especially if a financial cost or other risk may be involved in some way. The second category is comprised of Early Adopters, or individuals who are eager to try a new product or service and help spread awareness of its existence. Early Adopters may be viewed as trendsetters, eager to be associated with the promotion of a new product or service offering. Once Innovators and Early Adopters have helped propel the new offering’s existence and usage beyond the so-called “tipping point”, the *Early Majority* and *Late Majority*, respectively, will join in using the new product or service. Finally, members of the *Laggard* category will be the last individuals to adopt the usage of the product or service (Swan, 2020).

 The Uncle Ted’s Company will want to begin launching the product in areas where trendsetters reside. This will help to ensure interest by Innovators and Early Adopters, who in turn will aid in creating a reputation for the product. Innovators will provide the first sales of the new product, which will help The Uncle Ted’s Company earn revenue and capitalize on the costs involved in producing and distributing the product. Early Adopters will be enthusiastic to share the exciting features of the new product and to be seen as trendsetters by using the new product. Once the product has gained enough press and popularity with these two groups, the company will be able to gauge the geographic regions where product sales were highest from the launch, and will be able to gauge the demographic sectors which were responsible for the sales during the launch. The Uncle Ted’s Company will want to ensure that it connects with its Innovators and Early Adopters either during or after they purchase and use the product, in order to capture their feedback on the company’s new frozen yogurt product. Once feedback has been collected, this feedback needs to be shared with the Uncle Ted’s corporate team, who will in turn communicate this information to the product design team, distribution team, and marketing and sales teams. Each department or team will need to take the customers’ feedback and comments into account and then decide how to adjust the product and poise it for re-release, such as a poor package design or a flavor which is overly sweet. Also, costs must be factored in when analyzing customers’ feedback comments. If only one or two comments are received about the flavor of the new frozen yogurt product being overly sweet, it may not be financially sound for the company to redesign the recipe and production process for the item. However, if hundreds of comments are received with the opinion that the product tastes too sweet, then the company may need to reexamine its recipe accordingly and adjust it according to what customers have stated that they are looking for. If significant numbers of consumers have responded with the same complaint, this will likely translate into lost sales and therefore to lost revenue for The Uncle Ted’s Company. Open-ended dialogue from customer feedback can reveal suggestions, issues, and concerns about the product which the company itself may not have realized or anticipated (Cohn, 2015, para. 12).

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**Appendix**

**Figure 1**

*First Ad for Uncle Ted’s. Dated May 29, 1886.*

[https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/thisday/gahistory/05/29/first-ad-for-Uncle Ted’s](https://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/thisday/gahistory/05/29/first-ad-for-coca-cola)

**Table 1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| UNCLE TED’S FROZEN YOGURT PRODUCTION |  |  |  |
| MONTHLY COSTS (FIXED & VARIABLE) |  |  |  |
| **FIXED COSTS** | **ITEM** | **MONTHLY COST (LOW)** | **MONTHLY COST (HIGH)** | **CALCULATION NOTES** |
|  | PRODUCTION FACILITY MONTHLY RENT | $100,000  | $100,000  | **20,000 SQ FT X $5 / SQ FT RENT** |
|  | COMMERCIAL FREEZER LOAN  | $200  | $200  | 5 FREEZERS @ $2,000 EACH / 30-MONTH LOAN |
|  | COMMERCIAL FROZEN YOGURT MAKER | $833  | $833  | 5 MACHINES @ $5,000 EACH / 30-MONTH LOAN |
|  | EMPLOYEE SALARIES | $8,333 | $8,333 | 2 FULL TIME EMPLOYEES @ $50,000/YEAR |
| ***Total Fixed Costs*** |  | $109,366 | $109,366 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **VARIABLE COSTS** | ELECTRICITY & WATER USE | $200,000 | $300,000 | RANGE $2 TO $3 PER SQ FOOT COST |
|  | INGREDIENTS & PACKAGING | $10,000 | $15,000 | MILK, UNCLE TED’S SYRUP, STABILIZER, SUGAR (5,000 CARTONS SOLD PER MONTH) |
|  | EMPLOYEE WAGES | $9,000 | $13,000 | EMPLOYEE HOURLY WAGE = $15 / HOUR; 5 PART-TIME HOURLY EMPLOYEES |
| ***Total Variable Costs*** |  | $219,000 | $328,000 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL COSTS** |  | $109,366 | $437,366 |  |

**Figure 2**

Uncle Ted’s logos through the years; retrieved from

[https://www.Uncle Ted’scompany.com/au/news/trace-the-130-year-evolution-of-the-Uncle Ted’s-logo](https://www.coca-colacompany.com/au/news/trace-the-130-year-evolution-of-the-coca-cola-logo)

**Figure 3**

Product Adoption Curve

(<https://www.cblohm.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/AdoptionCurve.jpg>)



**Figure 4**

Rogers Curve

(<https://www.franchiseblast.com/angela-cote/rogers-curve/>)