

Strategic Marketing Plan:

SONGS FOR STRANGERS

Organizational Content

Songs for Strangers is a custom song writing company that provides personalized music for occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, wedding proposals, and other specials at affordable rates with speedy turnaround times. *Songs for Strangers* provides talent and expertise to assure the customer's vision is portrayed through personalized songs. Additional options include providing custom music, vocals, or additional edits to songs already in conception.

Mission Statement

Songs for Strangers' market consists of consumers seeking unique gifts for themselves or for others. The industry is music. The market is different from the industry because the service *Songs for Strangers* is providing is a creative gift that happens to be presented in the form of music rather than a card, or other similar gift items.

Songs for Strangers has a Market Orientation. The entire process rests entirely in the consumers' hands. The consumer contacts the songwriter, explains the need for the song, what they would like in the song and any other relevant information. The songwriter creates a product completely unique to the customer, and allows for as many changes necessary until the customer is happy. *Songs for Strangers'* target market is individuals looking for a unique gift option, primarily for specials occasions. This competitive advantage of this gift item is that it is not only sentimental, but also personal in nature. Such custom work is usually not available at such affordable rates, with such quality and speed. This combination of attributes is difficult to find in other options within the gifting industry.

Marketing Objective

To build awareness of the company *Songs for Strangers* among our target market with the goal of increasing business for the firm.

External Environment/Market Attractiveness

Five Forces Framework

Force	Market Analysis
Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplistic Concept • Skill set required: creativity and musical knowledge • Access to internet, social media, and marketing - production software is only operational resources necessary • Only capital necessary is for software and marketing costs (very low budget) • New entrants may be attracted if interested in music production—most likely a hobby endeavor.
Rivalry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the moment, there are few competitors. • Overarching goals amongst the products are the same; however, competitors are segmented by price, desired usage, occasion and lesser so, age range. • Because it is a small industry, rivalry among competitors is low, due to little marketing, word of mouth and primarily online advertising. • Competition will change as music preferences change for the public.
Substitutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main threat of substitution is gifts other than a custom song, especially gifts that are as unique and individually focused. • Within songwriting options, other than customers choosing a company with a cheaper price there is little threat of substitution • As this industry is skill based to create unique products, there is little threat of automation.
Buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because the company is about customization, the value is based entirely on the consumer. • Low concentration of buyers • Because other songwriters exist, customers have bargaining power to an extent, but are still limited in their options. • Final product output is differentiated. • If the market eventually has more competitors, consumer bargaining power will most likely increase.
Suppliers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Not applicable</i>

Target Consumer Segment

Homogeneous

Songs for Strangers is targeted specifically for individuals who appreciate music, but may not be musically inclined. The industry is not based primarily on demographics, but more so on means for expressing creativity and admiration of a loved one.

Substantial

It is obvious that large numbers of people that enjoy music. It is more difficult to calculate exactly how many of those people are “serious” music users, and would be inclined to share their love for music, but may not have music skills or the time to create a song themselves.

Actionable

While it is difficult to quantify the exact number of people within the segment, these users can be reached cost effectively, primarily through internet marketing and word of mouth.

Involvement

This segment would be highly involved. As they are “serious” music users, this type of product would align with their passions and interests and fulfill a hole in the market. These customers are most likely to seek out products like the ones *Songs for Strangers* offers.

Unique Selling Position - WHY us?

Competitively priced, customizable, timely gifts for the music lover that lacks the musical skills or time to create a quality product. Our number one goal is to put your ideas into music.

Marketing Resources and Capabilities

SWOT Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Exploit: competitively priced and uses primarily social media to market the company; reach not only young but also an older market as social media marketing is becoming more effective for both segments; method of delivery has become easier through MP3 and iTunes format providing instant gratification; versatile product options	Develop: take advantage of marketing outside of social media to reach a broader audience as the industry grows; expand product base (i.e. competitors offering radio quality songs); give customers options rather than leaving the decision up to the customers (i.e. corporate jingles, live songs, etc as customers don't always know what they want)
Threats	Contend: the company should market their low prices as many competitors are priced significantly higher; emphasize the individualistic qualities of the product (a customized song offers more customer value than a bouquet of flowers)	Address/Avoid: the product should be marketed for its customization to differentiate it from store bought products; increase marketing as many people who appreciate music probably do not think to give a customized version as a gift

Connection between Strengths/Opportunities

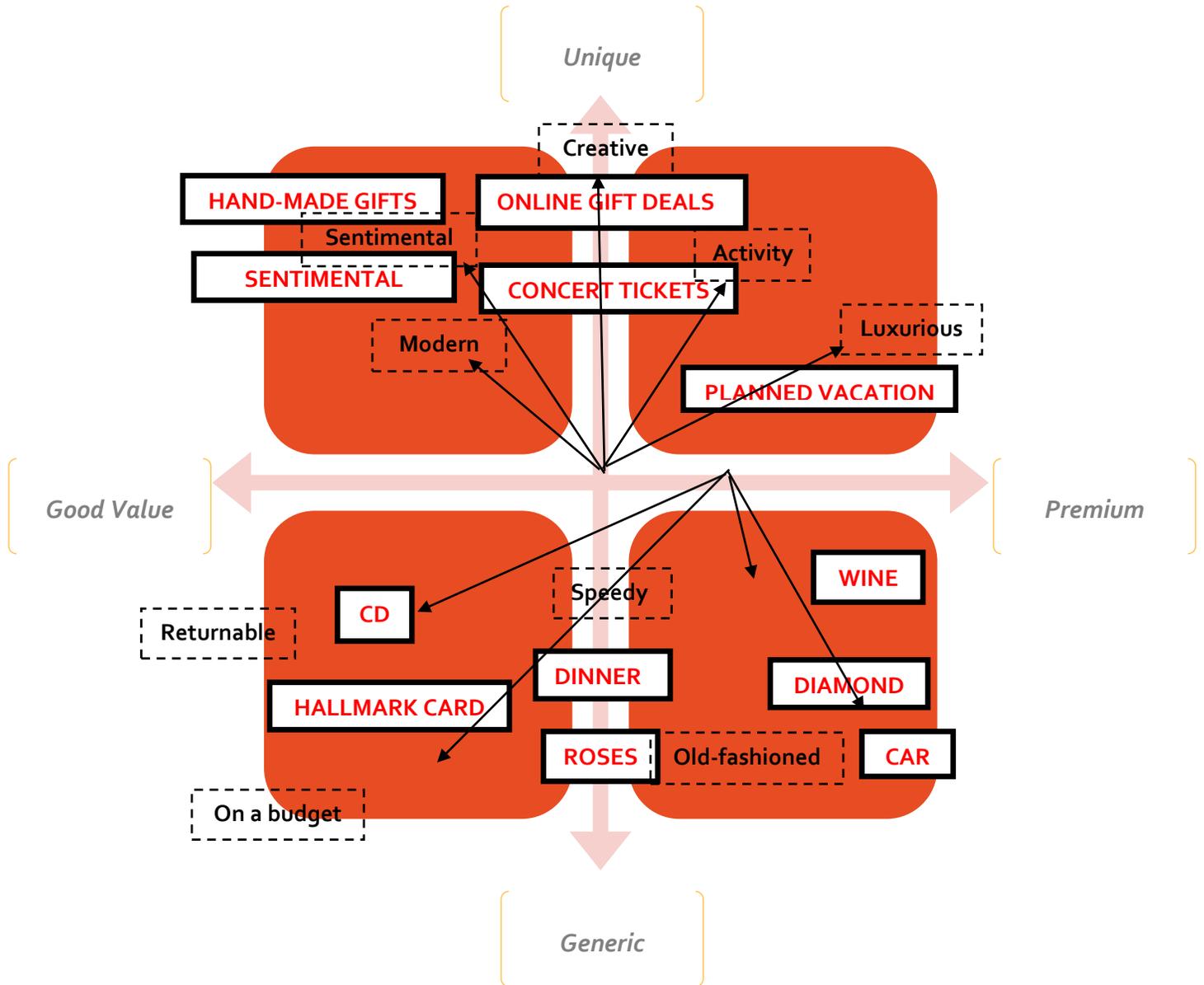
Songs for Strangers offers versatile products for its customers for a very competitive price. Its use of advertising is effective given the market, but they should market strengths elsewhere to take advantage of the opportunities they present over their competitors' higher price and specific product lines.

Connection between Weaknesses/Threats

There is not a clear connection between the weaknesses and threats; *Songs for Strangers* does not properly acknowledge the fact that they offer product alternatives to the threat of potential customers opting for generic gifts (i.e. flowers, chocolates, cards, etc).

Appropriate Marketing Strategies

Positioning / Perceptual map



Product/Market Opportunity Matrix

The company currently has very low market penetration. The public is unfamiliar with not only *Songs for Strangers*, but also with the concept of what it offers as this is an upcoming service in the gifting industry. There are related products in the sense that the gifting industry has many options to show loved ones you care; however, there are few similar gifts like the ones *Songs for Strangers* offers. While a consumer can go out and purchase a CD or iPod as a gift, this does not offer the uniqueness that custom songs provide. To increase the knowledge of our company, we plan to penetrate the market through heavy advertising of *Songs for Strangers*. The first step to bringing the company to its full potential is to increase public knowledge, which is what we plan to do.

Our goal when penetrating the market is to use a market development strategy that targets not just anyone who is looking for a gift for their loved one, but a person who has an appreciation for music. We believe that not everyone will be drawn to the products *Songs for Strangers* offers, so we are choosing to develop our market based on the existing consumers in the music industry. We believe that by not flooding the public with our market development initiatives and instead only targeting those with music understanding, the value and benefits that *Songs for Strangers* offers will remain high and appreciated.

Although there are not many, there are some existing companies that offer radio quality songs such as the ones *Songs for Strangers* create/produce; it is unnecessary to start in the beginning stages of new product development. We are choosing to focus more so on the market analysis to decide where we will advertise the products/services that our company offers. It is important to determine what customers to target when ramping up advertising from solely social media and the company's website to displaying our company on external websites. When analyzing the markets, we must find answers to the follow questions: what genre of music lovers will most appreciate the products offered, do people who take to certain genres prefer to buy a CD with a known artist, what customers have an appreciation of live music, etc?

Considering the fact that the concept of the gifts *Songs for Strangers* offers to its customers is innovative and new, we believe this is diversification enough in itself. If the company were to market its products any more diversely, we don't think the outcome would be an increase in sales, as consumers typically don't do well with extreme changes. We believe that the company has enough potential and diversification to stimulate the gifting industry and have a successful outcome.

Appropriate Strategic Modes

We already believe that *Songs for Strangers* has an advantage in price leadership in the gifting industry; if a consumer wanted to get something for their loved one that really shows they care, the typical go-to would be to purchase something that is expensive. *Songs for Strangers* offers the same level of thoughtfulness that would come along with a piece of jewelry or an expensive dinner, but for a smaller cost. This also incorporates the company's product differentiation. Although this is an innovative and new idea that is being offered to customers looking to purchase gifts, we still believe that *Songs for Strangers* is market driven. The goal of the company is to create and produce custom made songs with the customers' ideas in mind. Although this is not something a customer would be

able to say they want or need, *Songs for Strangers* was able to identify the lack of unique, affordable, thoughtful, gifts and fulfil the need with its custom songs.

We plan to continue to focus on the brand's product leadership when marketing *Songs for Strangers* by focusing on the added value and benefit you can get from the company's products over a store bought item off the shelf. One problem we expect to see once the custom song industry is more established is "copy cats." Because the production and distribution costs of MP3s are low, it is easy for other gifting/music companies to copy *Songs for Strangers'* innovative ideas. With this being said, it is important for *Songs for Strangers* to continue to emphasize its competitive edge; that is, the authenticity of their products, and the company's strong desire to create their products based on customer's ideas in a short period of time.

Marketing Mix Elements

Product

The service *Songs for Strangers* offers is the help of professionals to create the personalized songs. The company offers song writing, producing and even live music with quick turnaround of no more than one week. One of the options emphasizes that "the sky is the limit," as they are willing to work with their customers to assure they get exactly what they want with a satisfaction guarantee. The aspiration of *Songs for Strangers* to translate customers' ideas into a custom made song is the competitive advantage that will allow the company to see positive results.

Price

The price of a songwriter is \$50, a producer is \$100, and the company's "Sky is the limit" feature which could include anything from custom songs to live music costs \$150. In comparison to the price of an expensive dinner or diamond bracelet, these prices are competitive and reasonable, offering a lasting, heart-felt gift for loved ones.

Place

Songs for Strangers is based in Baltimore, MD, but because they produce their products in MP3 version, this allows the company to sell to customers anywhere. Baltimore has a wide variety of live music venues, which makes this a great place for the company to reside in. Music lovers in the mid-Atlantic may be more likely to choose *Songs for Strangers* over the other custom song companies because of its location.

Promotion

The company currently can only be recognized solely through visiting Facebook and its website, but there is no motivation/marketing to drive potential customers to these locations. *Songs for Strangers* has great potential and should be promoted through other forms of marketing, such as through online advertisements on related music websites.

The company should promote on websites where music lovers will typically visit, and on any other website that someone would be looking to purchase a gift for a loved one. If prospective customers

are familiar with the innovative ideas *Songs for Strangers* offers, they will keep this in the back of their minds, and ideally it will resurface during a special time that calls for a special gift.

Key Consumer Insight

Target consumers for *Songs for Strangers* want a tangible gift for their loved ones that shows the thoughtfulness that typically comes along with an intangible gift. They lack the creative insight, however to create these gifts themselves, so they look to a professional for help. They are unwilling to pay large amounts of money for this gift, say that one would pay for diamonds, but still want something they can give their loved one to show they care. For a customer that would say “I want to tell someone I love them without spending an arm and a leg.”

Key Brand Benefit

Songs for Strangers' unique selling position is the fact that they offer a gift with a deeper meaning for a low price and speedy turnaround. The company's products/services aren't like most gifts. *Songs for Strangers* respects that creative gifts have a lot of meaning, but not everyone is able to produce this kind of material.

Key Consumer Insight + Key Brand Benefit + Creative Leap:

“ALL OF THE HEART, HALF OF THE PRICE.”

“All of the heart, half of the price” displays how *Songs for Strangers* recognizes the need consumers are looking to fill without jeopardizing their wallets or the thoughtful nature of a gift for someone they care about.

Marketing Mix

We are choosing to keep the products that *Songs for Strangers* offers simple, and avoiding complexity; this is because the custom song industry is new, and we don't want our target market to be overwhelmed by presenting them an excessive amount of options. If someone lacks creative skill, they are unlikely to take to a simpler layout of products and services, which is what *Songs for Strangers* offers.

The product is currently in the introduction stage. Although the gifting industry is thoroughly established, the custom radio quality song industry is very new. As previously mentioned, it is important to recognize that this is a new product and to not overwhelm customers with exceptionally complex ideas, but rather to keep it simple. *Songs for Strangers* currently does a great job with simplicity by only offering three straightforward services to its customers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the overall goal of this marketing plan is simply to increase awareness of the company *Songs for Strangers*, as they are not currently pursuing any marketing strategies outside having a company website and Facebook page. We believe that the company has great potential to take the gifting industry by storm, and to really “wow” people looking to purchase thoughtful gifts for people they care about. It has the potential to fill a need for affordable and speedy gifts that

don't jeopardize the heartfelt feelings that should come along with gift giving. We plan to market on websites that are related to the music industry and the gifting industry.

Songs for Strangers' website relays to its customers: "Personalized songs crafted with your vision in mind, written and recorded with our expertise and talent at your disposal!" This slogan is somewhat generic and more informational than inviting. We believe that a slogan comprised of pieces of the testimonials *Songs for Strangers* has on their website would better encompass the meaning behind the company's products. We propose: "Helping you to bring your words and dreams to life by creating beautiful, unique personalized songs for the ones you love."

We believe that with the company's willingness to please their customers, affordability, quality, and speed, *Songs for Strangers* will be very successful once they implement the proposed marketing plan.

Works Cited

Hallett, T. (2013). Retrieved from *Songs for Strangers*: <http://songforstrangers.com>