

██████████ Sample 1

Research Proposal and Action Plan

Question:

Would improved brand awareness increase market share for ██████████ in the American Scrapbook Market?

Student: ██████████

IB Number: ██████████

Words: 474

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for task

QUESTION: Would improved brand awareness increase market share for ██████████ in the American Scrapbook market?

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Rationale for study:

██████████, based in ██████████, Australia, is an internet business that supplies the latest scrap booking products to the scrap booking market. However, ██████████ faces a problem which is linked to brand awareness. After consultation with ██████████, the owner of ██████████, two initial problems were identified:

- a) Improving turnover so ██████████ can afford more wages to hire another staff member.
- b) Increasing ██████████'s brand exposure

By increasing brand awareness, it is hoped that increased market share would result with a positive impact on sales revenue and profits. This would enable addition sales staff to be approved.

1.2 Area of the syllabus to be covered:

Unit 1.6: Organisational Planning Tools– SWOT analysis questionnaires, surveys and interviews will be used to capture a situated analysis.

Unit 1.7: Growth and Evolution – “SWOT Analysis” will be used to analyse which strategy ██████████ should use to increase market share and brand awareness.

Unit 4.2: Market Planning – ██████████ is aiming at increasing brand awareness in America market analysis will be required.

Unit 4.5: Promotion – ██████████ is in the process of developing brand awareness through e-commerce.

2. Methodology

2.1 Possible sources of information:

- Interviews with ██████████, ██████████'s owner.

- Advantage: Inside information from the owner's perspective.
- Shadow [REDACTED] for one day
 - Advantage: creating an understanding of the business and provide an opportunities to ask questions.
- Present a questionnaire at the [REDACTED] Retreat for attendees.
 - Advantage: Capture information from a consumer's point of view.
 - This questionnaire will be focused on a questions adapted from SWOT analysis, and industry benchmarking.
 - The questionnaire will focus on current and future solutions.

2.2 Organisations/individuals to approach:

- [REDACTED] - owner-operation
- Customer's focus group participates industry websites/forum members on their opinions of Scrap booking
- Other scrap booking business in the same market as [REDACTED] - especially business of greater brand awareness.

2.3 Methods of data collection and the reason for choosing them:

- Surveys/questionnaire- Standard structured questions to a selection of 30 stakeholders to explore branding issues for [REDACTED].
- Interview with owner of operations- structured survey to ascertain management perspective on change.
- Focus group discussion- using discussion to gather feedback from scrap booking participants on 'branding' promotion.
- Presentation of results – feedback to owner for comment and evaluation.

3. Anticipated Difficulties

- Lack of communications through emails – will be solved by using other methods of communications. Also the receipt will be issued to confirm that the emails have been received.
- Answers to survey may not be concise – keep questions focused and direct.

5. 2017

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- Semi-structured interview with forum members may lead in other direction – keep the discussion directed and focused

Action Plan- [REDACTED]								
Item	April 1-14	April 14-30	May 1-16	May 17-31	June 1-15	June 16-30	July 1-15	July 16-31
Understanding Task								
Problem Definition	x							
Scoping the Study	x							
Exploring Alternatives	x							
Discussion with Teacher	x							
Topic Selection	x	x						
Familiarisation with Organisation								
Interview Business		x						
Investigate proposed changes		x						
Identify Issue		x						
Research Rationale			x					
Identify Methodology			x					
Meet with teacher			x					
Prepare Proposal Draft			x					
Review Proposal			x					
Instrument Design								
Survey Design			x	x				
Survey Test				x				
Interview Design				x	x			
Interview Test					x			
Data Collection & Analysis								
Conduct Survey				x	x			
Collate Results					x			
Conduct Interview					x	x		
Collate Results						x		
Organise Feedback Session						x		
Draft Report								
Commence Draft					x	x	x	
Complete Draft					x	x	x	x
Present Findings to Org						x	x	
Collate Feedback							x	
Write up Feedback results							x	
Viva Voce								x
Submit Final Draft								x

detected

✓

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

To: Owner of [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Title: Would improved brand awareness arising from product repositioning increase market share for [REDACTED] in the American Scrapbook market?

Author: [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Date: 24th August 2011

Subject and level: Business and Management, High Level

Circulation: Co-owner and business partner of [REDACTED], [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Number of words: 1996

I confirm that this work is my own and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written or oral.

Signed:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank the following who helped me with research:

- ██████████
- ██████████'s Scrapbooking Retreat, 2011



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Abstract:

This investigation has explored the problems which [REDACTED] faces linked brand awareness. Initially, two problems were identified. These were to improve turnover so [REDACTED] can afford to hire another staff member and secondly to increase [REDACTED]'s brand exposure. By increasing brand awareness, it is hoped that increased market share would result with a positive impact on sales revenue and profits. This would enable additional sales staff to be employed. This research considers how [REDACTED]'s could improve brand recognition by aligning with the American Scrap booking Market. By increasing their brand awareness [REDACTED] will be able to aim their products at a wider audience. This investigation has revealed several options open to [REDACTED]:

- Using Ansoff's strategies as suggested to successfully reposition an existing product in a new market.
- Building network value chains with leading US providers to encourage brand-switching in the e-commerce environment.
- Bench marketing against leading US organisation in the Scrap Booking market
- Increased advertising [REDACTED] including store, site and forum.
- Consider changing the physical location of the [REDACTED].

*Should I
write?*

1.0 Introduction & Research Question:

Scrap booking, is growing in popularity as an artistic and creative way of presenting photos. An Australian internet business, based in [REDACTED], [REDACTED] provides the latest scrap booking supplies and products to the scrap booking market. However, [REDACTED] faces a problem with brand awareness, namely that the owners would like to reposition the product to increase brand awareness in the larger American Market. Brand awareness is a common measure of marketing communications effectiveness ^(Business & Management, 2007). It allows a business to market their products to a wider audience. Increased brand awareness can lead to consumers choosing to make purchases, which means increased product sales and an impact on [REDACTED]'s market share. This idea of increasing brand recognition can be linked to Ansoff's Matrix as [REDACTED] is attempting to place an existing product in a new market. Ansoff's matrix is an analytical tool used to help managers to devise their product and market growth strategies ^(Business Organisation and Management for Queensland, 2007). It shows various strategies that business can take depending on whether it wants to market new or existing products in either new or existing markets. By increasing brand awareness, [REDACTED] will establish a new market position enabling direct access to the American online scrapbooking market. Also, by increasing brand awareness, it is hoped that the resultant growth in market share would positively impact on sales revenue and profits. Increased cash flow would have the flow-on effect of enabling the business to employ additional staff to meet new and higher sales targets. The following research question frames this enquiry:

Would improved brand awareness arising from product repositioning increase market share for [REDACTED] in the American Scrapbook market?

2.0 Method:

In order to collect data, three data capture techniques were employed.

- a) A structured survey of scrapbook client groups (Appendix 1) to develop a quantitative overview of the browsing and buying habits of scrapbooking clients.

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- b) A structured interview (Appendix 2) with owner, ██████████, to develop a detailed qualitative understanding of the issues underpinning product repositioning in the US market, and:
- c) A content analysis of ██████████ and competitor websites – *Stickers'N'Fun, Blue Edge Craft Cupboard, Scrapbook & Craft Superstore, Scrapboutique, Stampin'Stuff, Little Scrapbook Shop, Shop and Crop Online and Blue Bazaar* (Appendix 3) to determine a qualitative picture of e-commerce business models employed in leading scrapbooking sites.

The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data will enable this report to draw conclusions and make recommendations about viable strategies for ██████████ to achieve the dual goals of product repositioning and increased market share in the targeted market. A survey completed by the forty attendees, at an annual scrap booking retreat, was a sample group comprised of forum members and regular costumers. Within this survey, a partial SWOT analysis was undertaken. A SWOT analysis is a useful decision-making tool which shows the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the business and can be valuable to determine the current situation of a product, brand, company, proposal or decision ██████████. ██████████. ██████████. *Business Organisation and Management for Queensland*. In this case a SWOT analysis is used to analyse brand and company. The partial survey asked participants to indentify the strengths and weaknesses of ██████████. This was then compared to a full SWOT analysis was completed by the owners of ██████████ (see Figure 4 and 5, Table 1, Results Section). In this way, the survey results indicate which aspects within the business can be developed to improve brand awareness. ██████████ is within the Top 10 most visited scrapbooking sites (Table 2, Results Section).

3.0 Main Results and Findings:

Figure 1: Illustrates how participants sourced

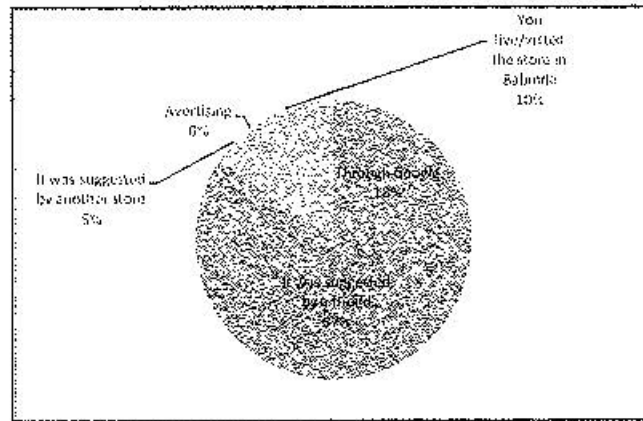


Figure 2: Longitudinal customer relations

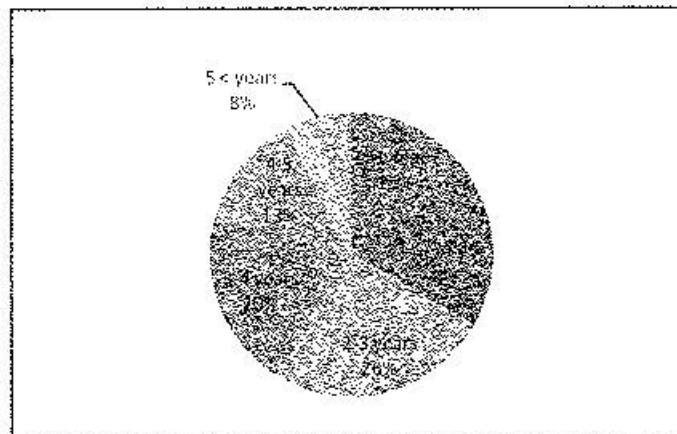


Figure 3: Customer preference indicators

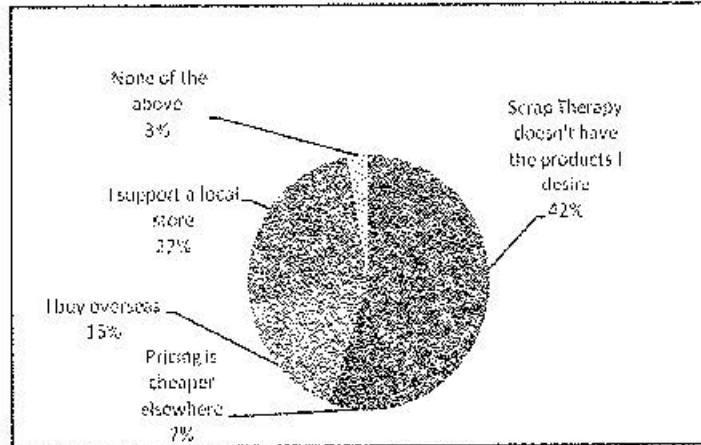


Figure 4: Perceiver strengths of [redacted] from the customer's point of view

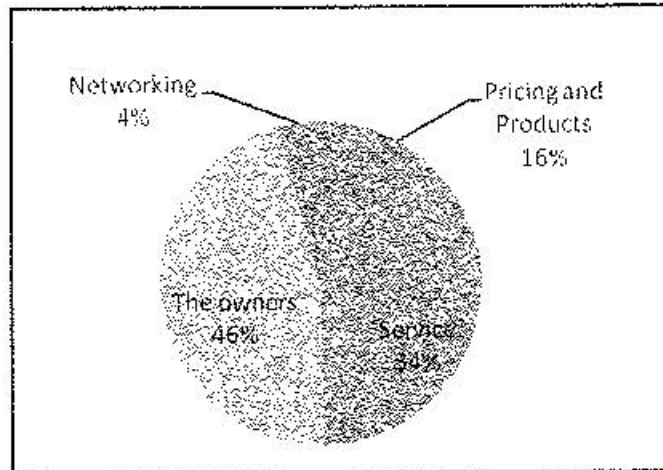


Figure 5: Perceived weaknesses of [redacted] from the customer's point of view

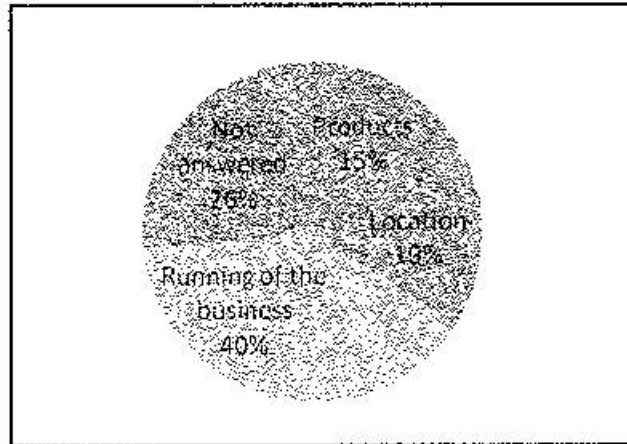


Table 1: A SWOT analysis of the [redacted] from a manager's point of view

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fantastic Customer Service - Friendly staff - Good pricing - Location – beneficial as shoplifting is low, rent is cheaper, more room to expand store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Future plan is weak- business is unsure in what direction to go in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop competitions to promote [redacted] such as “Big Budget Scrap booking Layout Challenge” – competition which each month a selected layout would win a prize of \$200 - To expand brand awareness of business - To develop locally as more businesses are closing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor location – small population therefore smaller market exposure - The low American dollar is one of the biggest threats as many online customers are directly purchasing products from the states. - If the economy continues to decrease, less people are spending money on luxuries such as scrap booking

Figure 6 : Top 10 Scrapbooking websites by visitor frequency ([redacted] placing in 10th place).

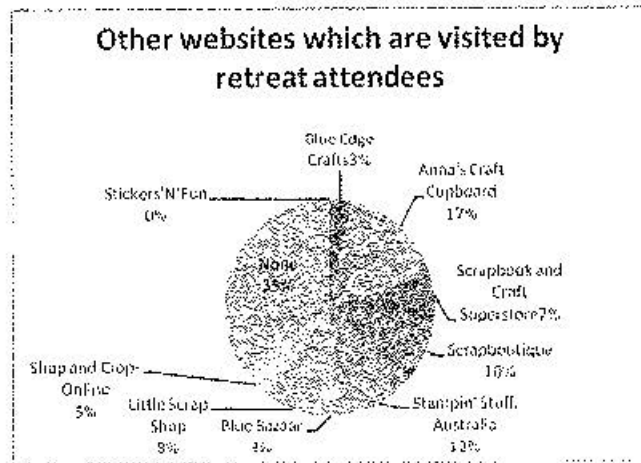


Table 2: Top 10 rankings in the Scrap booking websites by pageviews (see appendix 3 for exact pageviews)

Top 10 Rankings	Name of Business
1	Stickers'N'Fun
2	Blue Edge Crafts
3	Anna's Craft Cupboard
4	Scrapbook & Craft Superstore
5	Scrapboutique
6	Stampin' Stuff, Australia
7	Little Scrapbook Shop
8	Shop and Crop Online
9	Blue Bazaar
10	[redacted]

Table 3: Ansoff Matrix: Market and Product review options

		Products	
		Existing	New
Markets	Existing	Market Penetration	Product Development
	New	Market Development	Diversification

4.0 Analysis and Discussion:

Figure 1, indicates that 72% of attendees at the scrapbook retreat found [REDACTED] through word of mouth networking, suggested to them via a friend or other scrap booking stores. Word of mouth referral indicates that informal marketing channels are at work as an effective promotional tool [REDACTED] (Business Management). Word of mouth refers to the spreading of information from one person to another through oral communication [http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/word-of-mouth-marketing.html]. The use of informal marketing may be a good outcome for [REDACTED] as it promotes without direct costs to the organisation and displays customer loyalty to the business. However, no respondent reported finding [REDACTED] through formal advertisements, due largely to the lack of advertising [REDACTED] provides. Table 1 also shows that 18% of respondents found [REDACTED] through a Google search, supporting current efforts to reposition [REDACTED] as an existing product in a new market (see table 3). High internet brand characteristics mean [REDACTED]'s increased brand recognition is possible through networked value chains. Brand recognition would be to develop a direct relationship with the sites of the brands [REDACTED] stock, via the [REDACTED] webpage. This would not only improve their Google rankings but potentially increase sales and revenue.

Figure 2 is a display of how long the clients of the retreat have been visiting the store and site (which includes the forum). The current owners have operated [REDACTED] for three years, and a steady increase in long can be seen that from the opening of the store until it was bought by the current owners. There has been an increase in the numbers of people who visit the store.

However, since the current owners bought the business, the volume of people visiting the site and store, has decreased. Current owners need to consider the approach in light of this contraction. When analysing the brand awareness of a business, it is critical to understand why customers visit comparative stores (e.g. a competitor's analysis). Figure 3 shows that 42% of customers feel that [REDACTED] does not have a large product range. It also shows that 22% of customers prefer to support a store which offers convenience. It also shows 15% buy their products from overseas. With [REDACTED] seeking to increase brand awareness in the American market it should be trying to identify the desired products for current clients to build loyalty first and foremost, amongst existing markets (see Ansoff's matrix, Table 3). [REDACTED] should benchmark the products businesses as a guide of improving product mix.

SWOT analysis is an examination of the internal strength and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats of an organisation which is placed in a chart strategy. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats <https://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/SWOT-analysis.html>. A partial SWOT analysis (the strengths and weaknesses of the business) was conducted. Strengths can be seen in Figure 4, suggesting that 82% of customers identify the owners and service culture of the business as the strengths. This indicates that the majority of customers are happy with this area of the business. However, 4% think that the networking of the business is a strength. Developing the networking of the business could generate more forum members which would increase brand awareness through word of mouth. The business has the potential to develop through its strengths; however, in Figure 5 the weaknesses of the business can also be observed. 19% of the respondents said that they think the location of the business was a weakness. The fact that [REDACTED] is based in a small rural town limits the size of the potential market. However, the location of the business does have some benefits. The location provides low shoplifting, more expansion room and external costs such as rent is cheaper. A SWOT analysis by management was also taken. This also showed similar results in their strengths and weaknesses. Management believed that the strengths of [REDACTED] are customer service and the weakness of [REDACTED] is the location. The threats which management believe are the most threatening is the U.S. dollar. This is because of the

exchange rate customers are most likely to purchase products from America. The opportunities which [REDACTED]'s management believes they have are to develop their brand awareness. [REDACTED] also feels that as other businesses located near [REDACTED] are closing down, there is an opportunity to develop more locally, which could increase their brand awareness locally.

Figure 6 reflects the percentages of retreat attendees that visit the Top 10 Scrap Booking websites. It shows that 35% of the retreat attendees did not visit any 10 of the sites. This could be indicating that the respondents are loyal to the business. Table 2 displays that the top visited site *Stickers'N'fun* does not have anyone visit the site from the Scrap booking retreat. From this information displayed in table 2, it can also be seen that the website which has the highest visits is *Anna's Craft Cupboard*. *Anna's Craft Cupboard* is positioned third in respect to the top 10 viewed websites. For [REDACTED] to gain more page views, increasing their brand awareness and Google rankings, observing and comparing the top 3 scrap booking websites and [REDACTED].

Table 3 shows the Ansoff Matrix, this is analytical tool that helps managers to devise their product and market growth strategy. It can show various strategies which the business could use depending what the aim of the business. For [REDACTED], their current aim is to expand an existing product into a new market; therefore this would be market development. [REDACTED] is aiming to expand to the American market of scrap booking. Possible ways of approaching market development strategy include new geographical markets (e.g. exporting the products to new country), new product dimensions or packaging, different distribution channels and/or different pricing policies to attract the new market segments and customers www.itsr2.com/business/strategy/ansoff_matrix.html. By analysing and trialling these strategies, [REDACTED] will be able to find the most effective way to gain market share in America.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations:

This research project has investigated [REDACTED]'s brand recognition and how it could be improved in a larger market, namely the American Scrapbooking Market. By increasing their brand awareness [REDACTED] will be able to aim their products at a wider audience. [REDACTED] will also create an establishment in a new market position enabling direct access to the American online scrapbooking market. From the results shown, the following recommendations should be considered in repositioning the [REDACTED] product and developing an increased awareness of the [REDACTED] brand.

- As suggested by Ansoff (1957) successful repositioning of an existing product in a new market will involve building new marketing channels and networks. This could be done by:
 1. Creating a relationship other market
 2. Create new distribution channels to sell the products in a different location
 3. Promote their business through the use of advertising which is aimed at the American market
 4. The business could be tweaked by using more attractive or appealing packaging to suit their new audience and;
 5. Alter pricing ranges of their products (e.g. posting prices) to suit American buyers.
- Given that the US market is not dominated by any one scrapbooking provider, [REDACTED] should continue to build networked value chains with leading US providers to encourage brand-switching in a largely online environment.
- A bench marketing analysis should be performed on organisations which are leaders in the US market.
- Advertising [REDACTED] including the store, site and forum. By advertising the store [REDACTED] would be able to promote their online store and forum. Advertising will also develop brand recognition for [REDACTED].
- [REDACTED] should also consider changing the location of the business. This would benefit as the offline store as well as promote the online store.

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7.0 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Interview conducted with retreat attendees.

1. How did you find ██████████?
 - a. Through Google
 - b. It was suggested by a:
 - I. Friend
 - II. Scrap-booking store
 - c. Advertising
 - d. You live/visited the store in Babinda or seen the store in DFO
2. Would you recommend the website or store to anyone?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. How often do you visit the store either online or offline?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Yearly
4. How long have you been visiting the site and/or store?

5. How often do you purchase a product?
 - a. Daily
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Yearly
 - e. Other _____
6. When buying, do you purchase in:
 - a. Large orders on a regular basis
 - b. Small orders on a regular basis
 - c. Large orders on an irregular basis
 - d. Small orders on an irregular basis
7. Would you be more likely to buy kits opposed to single items?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

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8. Are there any products and brands you would like to see in ██████████

- a. Yes
- b. No

If yes, please state: _____

9. Do you buy scrap booking supplies only from ██████████?

- a. Yes *(If yes, please skip question 10)*
- b. No

10. Why do you purchase at other businesses?

- a. ██████████ does not have the product I desire
- b. Pricing is cheaper elsewhere
- c. I buy from overseas
- d. I support a local scrap booking store

11. How would you rate this business on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest 5 being the highest?

12. What do you think are the strengths of ██████████?

13. What do you think are the weaknesses of ██████████?

14. Are you happy with ██████████?

- a. Yes
- b. No

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if no, why?

15. Please circle if you visit or use any of these sites/ online stores:

- a. Stickers 'N' Fun
- b. Blue Edge Crafts
- c. Anna's Craft cupboard
- d. Scrapbook and craft superstore
- e. Scrapboutique
- f. Stampin' Stuff, Australia
- g. Blue bazaar
- h. Little Scrap Shop
- i. Shop and Crop- Online

Appendix 2: Interview conducted with ██████████

Who attends the retreats?

Retreats are attended by existing customers, forum members and sometimes friends of theirs – we do not advertise it as we fill it without the need to do so

How often do you have retreats?

We have large retreats once a year – we have started running "mini" retreats in ██████████ and would like to do them about once a month

What resources do you use to advertise the business?

We currently advertise in Scrapbooking Memories. Not happy with the results from that though, it is expensive without an awful lot of direct results – we also rely a lot on many social media outlets like Blogs, Facebook and of course expend a reasonable amount of money and effort in improving our Google rankings

How do you define "Scrapbooking"?

Define Scrapbooking – that is a hard one but I will try

Traditionally scrapbooking is the creation of a visual diary, with archival grade products for the purpose of preserving our memories and history for as many years as possible, mostly on a family level to give future generations an insight into our lives. For more of us these days it has become an artist and attractive way to present our photos, together with the stories that go with them.

What do you think the strengths of ██████████ are?

Fantastic Customer Service and friendly staff and good pricing

What do you think the weaknesses of [REDACTED] are?

Location, although it does have benefits as well such as we rarely get time wasters – people who just want to browse, shoplifting was worse when we were at the DFO and rent is definitely cheaper in Babinda which means more room to spread out and overheads and lower

What do you think the threats of [REDACTED] are?

The low American \$ is one of our biggest as a lot of our online customers are going direct to the states for product, also the downturn in scrapbooking as a popular art form as the economy declines – less people spending money on luxuries etc

What do you think the opportunities of [REDACTED] are?

I wish I knew, just at this stage to hang in there – there are more and more businesses closing every month and we are getting better known the longer we stay open – that is a really bad thing – for a business owner not to be able to identify good opportunities. One of the things I want to go ahead with as a great opportunity is a big budget scrapbooking layout challenge with a prize each month of \$200 – I have to get the programmer to write the program to make it happen and that is big \$ but that is the next opportunity I want to explore. Usual old saying – you have to spend money to make money

Why do you want brand recognition in America opposed to Australia?

The brand recognition in America is more about getting the relationship directly with the brands so that their site links to our site – this increases our Google rankings

You gave me this website (<http://www.scrapbookingtop50.com.au/topsites>) to look at the averages, could you explain it more? What are the averages?

The averages are average daily visitors – only one visit per day per ip address gets recorded. Get 500 of the school kids to log in everyday for me from home and our rankings would skyrocket. Google works a little this way as well – say for example you did a search for basic grey and then clicked a link to our site from a Basic Grey search – if bundles of people did the same thing then our Google rankings for a basic grey search would also increase, make sense? It is very much all about the Google

Appendix 3: Exact page views of Top 50 scrap booking websites

Ranking	Name of Business	Average
1	Stickers'N'Fun	7288.4
2	Blue Edge Crafts	3678.5
3	Anna's Craft Cupboard	2520.0
4	Scrapbook & Craft Superstore	2465.9
5	Scrapboutique	2377.4
6	Stampin' Stuff, Australia	2286.0
7	Little Scrapbook Shop	2209.7
8	Shop and Crop Online	1613.3
9	Blue Bazaar	1562.7
10	██████████	1402.5