

THE MILL

— COFFEE & TEA —



**LINCOLN'S COFFEE SHOP
WITH STAYING POWER**



AN INTEGRATED MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

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Executive Summary

The Mill is a popular coffee shop with four locations across Lincoln, Nebraska. We wanted to develop an integrated media communications campaign that would help solidify the coffee shop as the best choice in the area. Starting with secondary research, we used online resources like MRI+ and online reviews to determine The Mill's strengths and what draws in their customers. We also conducted primary research with a focus group and ethnographic research to solidify findings from secondary research. After that, we analyzed our data and defined our perceptions of the brand image and decided on a target audience. To guide our strategies, we identified the problems and planned our tactics and message around them. By examining our findings, we decided on our big idea: "The Mill is Lincoln. The Mill is home." Our big idea was used to guide the development of campaign strategies and tactics that will establish The Mill the best coffee shop in Lincoln.

What should research reveal?

 **WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT THE MILL?**

 **WHAT MAKES FOR THE BEST COFFEE SHOP EXPERIENCE?**

 **WHAT COFFEE SHOP IS LINCOLN'S TOP CHOICE?**

 **WHAT OPPORTUNITIES COULD POSITION THE MILL AS LINCOLN'S TOP COFFEE CHOICE?**

COMPANY ANALYSIS

The Mill was founded in 1975 and is currently co-owned by Daniel and Tamara Sloan. It started up during the cold winters of the 1970's while some folks were hanging around in a bike shop. The founders wanted to create revenue during the cold months while working in their bike shop. They brewed coffee and called it "Shop" coffee. This started as a small project that created a ton of stir in the Lincoln area. With the growing popularity, the owners decided to open up a small gourmet coffee shop that we know today as The Mill, just a few blocks away from the original bike shop. The Mill now has four locations across the city of Lincoln. The Mill is passionate about insistence on quality, quality above dollars, and a commitment to doing it right or not at all.



CONSUMER ANALYSIS

Primary Research

FOCUS GROUP

Out of the consumers interviewed, the target coffee drinkers were busy, hard-working young professionals. Men and women, aged 18-34. They value good quality coffee without sacrificing the aesthetics and high quality for convenience. They are also fairly social people. Many use The Mill to arrange meetings or to catch up with old friends.

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

At The Mill, most customers generally spend their time working independently on their laptops, although it is not uncommon to notice groups of people meeting together. Most customers at The Mill are college-aged or adults, and The Mill locations are generally busy throughout the day.

Secondary Research

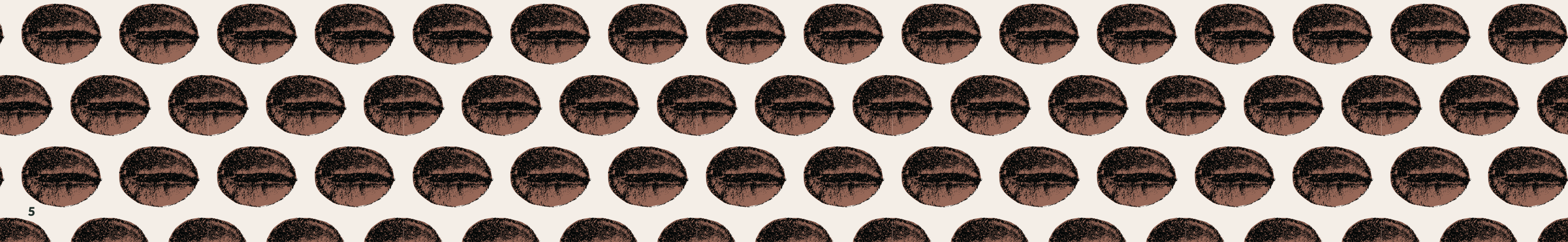
MRI+

The primary consumers of The Mill Coffee and Tea tend to be young professionals looking for a place to work, or older men and women looking for a spot to have a cup of coffee and connect with someone. MRI+ reported an index of 131 for the age group 25-34 in regards to “Ready-to-drink Iced Coffee / Coffee Drinks” with 27,413,000 adults out of the total adult population drinking iced coffee.

CUSTOMER REVIEWS

The majority of the online product reviews are positive. The consumers seem to value the quality of the Mill’s products and the atmosphere The Mill provides for its customers. Here’s an example of a review on their Facebook page:

“The best part of the Mill is the fact that once you sit down, The Mill itself stops being important. The atmosphere is so perfectly comfortable, that the conversation that you have just started with your friend becomes all encompassing. There are no wait-staff hurrying you along. Time becomes a less dominant part of your life. Many relationships that are of great importance to me have been nurtured by a cup of freshly roasted Haymarket Blend.”



BRAND & PRODUCT

The Mill offers many locations located in convenient areas in Lincoln that are accessible to consumers, specifically the target audience. According to the focus group that was conducted, The Mill is best known for their atmosphere that is very “aesthetically pleasing” and a “warm” environment.

Focus groups and survey research suggest that The Mill is a brand whose image thrives largely on having a cozy, welcoming atmosphere. Customers can sit down and have coffee or other beverages in a quiet environment, while also having the ability to have a conversation with fellow customers in a relaxing and safe place.

The Mill has a very diverse selection of products. The Mill brews their own line of coffee beans that come in six different flavors that are available in house. They also offer their own line of merchandise that includes water bottles, mugs, and key chains.



Direct Competitors:

CULTIVA, THE COFFEE HOUSE, & OTHER LOCAL SHOPS

These shops are The Mill’s main competition because they offer similar products and environments to The Mill. Both provide specialty drinks, food and baked goods, and locally roasted beans. During the survey and focus group, these places were described using terms such as cozy, hip, and homey.

However, The Mill offers more locations and a wider range of beverages with their alcohol selection at select shops. The Mill can be more convenient than competitors because of its spread across Lincoln.

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Indirect Competitors:

STARBUCKS, DUNKIN' DONUTS, & OTHER LARGE CHAINS

The focus group showed that chain coffee stores appeal to many people because of the convenient customer experience they provide. People seek out these stores because they prioritize speedy service, consistency, and convenient locations. These stores offer competitive rewards programs, as users can gain points at stores nationwide.

CREATIVE ANALYSIS

The Mill's creative direction resonates with their shops' interiors: rustic, homey, and eclectic.

Social:

The company currently shares the same content on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, and generates similar responses between the different platforms.

This form of shared media is easy and free to The Mill.

The Mill hasn't produced much paid advertising, so there are many opportunities to expand on that. Most of their photos posted all fit with the company's rustic, cozy aesthetic, giving their profiles a cohesive look.

All posts generally feature their own products and information on their stores.



DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

Earned:

The Mill has earned much of its promotion through word of mouth. It also earns promotions every time a customer uses an item with The Mill's logo. The Mill sells merchandise in their stores complete with the store's logo. These items include reusable cups, take home coffee and tea, and clothing. When a customer uses or wears these items, they are acting as a promotion for the company towards others.

Shared:

Customers are who help share The Mill's promotions. When customers post to their social media with The Mill's products, this helps spread The Mill's name and brand. The Mill also partook in a summer concert/ community series with the Telegraph Mill and Allo. The combined effort helps to spread The Mill's name to more of the community.

Owned:

Along with its website, The Mill posts on several social media platforms. The Mill has an instagram account, Facebook page, and a Twitter account. On these accounts, The Mill can post new merchandise products, promotional events, or new menu items.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Mill sells custom versions of the brands Fifty/Fifty bottles, Silipint and Kleen Kanteen. Additionally, The Mill partners with Goodcents exchanging products to be sold. Additionally, the new location on University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Innovation Campus serves as another partnership with the university.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- The Mill offers a welcoming atmosphere and cozy aesthetic, which the audience is drawn to.
- The Mill's several locations makes it convenient to get high-quality drinks.
- The Mill is one of the most well-known local coffee shops in the Lincoln area.

Weaknesses:

- Competitor shops offer locations closer to UNL campus and with more parking availability.
- Drinks and beverages from The Mill are more costly than those from competitors.
- what is one more weakness

Opportunities:

- The audience enjoys participating in rewards programs, and The Mill could offer something unique to cater to their four Lincoln locations.
- All four locations stay consistently busy with new and regular customers, so the interior spaces may be utilized to get customers excited.

Threats:

- Competitors already have well-established rewards programs with high usership.
- National chains are more familiar to a larger audience.
- Lincoln offers many other local coffee shops with similar offerings.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

In the past, The Mill has had little to no advertising, and it lacks in earned media. The Mill needs to differentiate itself from other shops that may offer more conveniences. How can The Mill increase its top-of-mind awareness among the audience? The Mill's competitors are just as well known among the audience, so how can The Mill position itself as Lincoln's top coffee choice?

KEY INSIGHTS

- Customers of The Mill felt at home in the welcoming and cozy environment that the shop provides to all customers.
- Primary research indicates that The Mill's customers prefer the quality of its drinks and products compared to its competitors—they are willing to sacrifice convenience for quality when it's worth it.
- The audience already has prior knowledge of The Mill, but it is not always top-of-mind.



TARGET PROFILE

The ideal target is...

- A young, hard-working professional.
- Aged 18-34.
- Social and driven.
- Living in Lincoln, NE.
- Uses social media as their primary source of media consumption.
- A regular coffee drinker, often getting more than four coffees a week.
- Busy, but doesn't sacrifice quality and comfort when it comes to their coffee choice

MEET SAM, A LOCAL LEADER



Sam is a 21-year-old, white, male college student in his senior year at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is double majoring in business and finance because he has a dream to start his own nonprofit to help teach personal finance to impoverished families in Lincoln, NE. He was born and raised here, and he loves this city. His dream is to make it better. Sam comes from an upper-middle-class family and he has some savings built up for college. He makes less than \$10,000 a year with his part-time job at Ernest Young, but he accounts for a weekly coffee budget because he uses coffee to keep him focused and energized. He also just loves coffee. Sam often jokes about how he might be “addicted to coffee,” but he knows he probably is. He drinks about 3-4 cups of coffee a day (on weekdays): one in the morning, one when he stops at The Mill in between classes to get some work done, and one in the afternoons when he’s working on homework.

Sam loves rock-climbing and water skiing in the summer. He also likes to listen to music and says he knows a little bit of guitar, meaning he only knows three chords. Sam spends most of his screen time on Instagram and Snapchat: talking to friends, keeping up streaks, and looking at memes. He likes to look at news websites every once in a while to keep up with current events. Sam’s favorite TV shows are Mindhunter, Breaking Bad, The Office, Game of Thrones, and Parks and Recreation. He likes going to The Mill to get work done, grab some coffee to get him out of his afternoon slump, and to meet up with friends to grab a beer after a long day.

OBJECTIVES



Develop an integrated media communications campaign that aligns with The Mill's brand image to differentiate it from its competitors.



Use paid advertising to promote top-of-mind awareness among the target audience living in Lincoln.



Amplify The Mill's current social media presence to foster engagement and growth. Utilize short-form video content for users to share and interact with.



Create hype among the Lincoln community to generate shared and earned media.

BRANDING

Brand Associations:

Rustic and eclectic
Cozy and comfortable
High quality and detail-oriented

Brand Personality:

Community-based and welcoming
Sophisticated and sincere
Open-minded and cooperative

Brand Identity:

Audiences enjoy The Mill's established brand identity, so all future executions should adhere to those brand guidelines

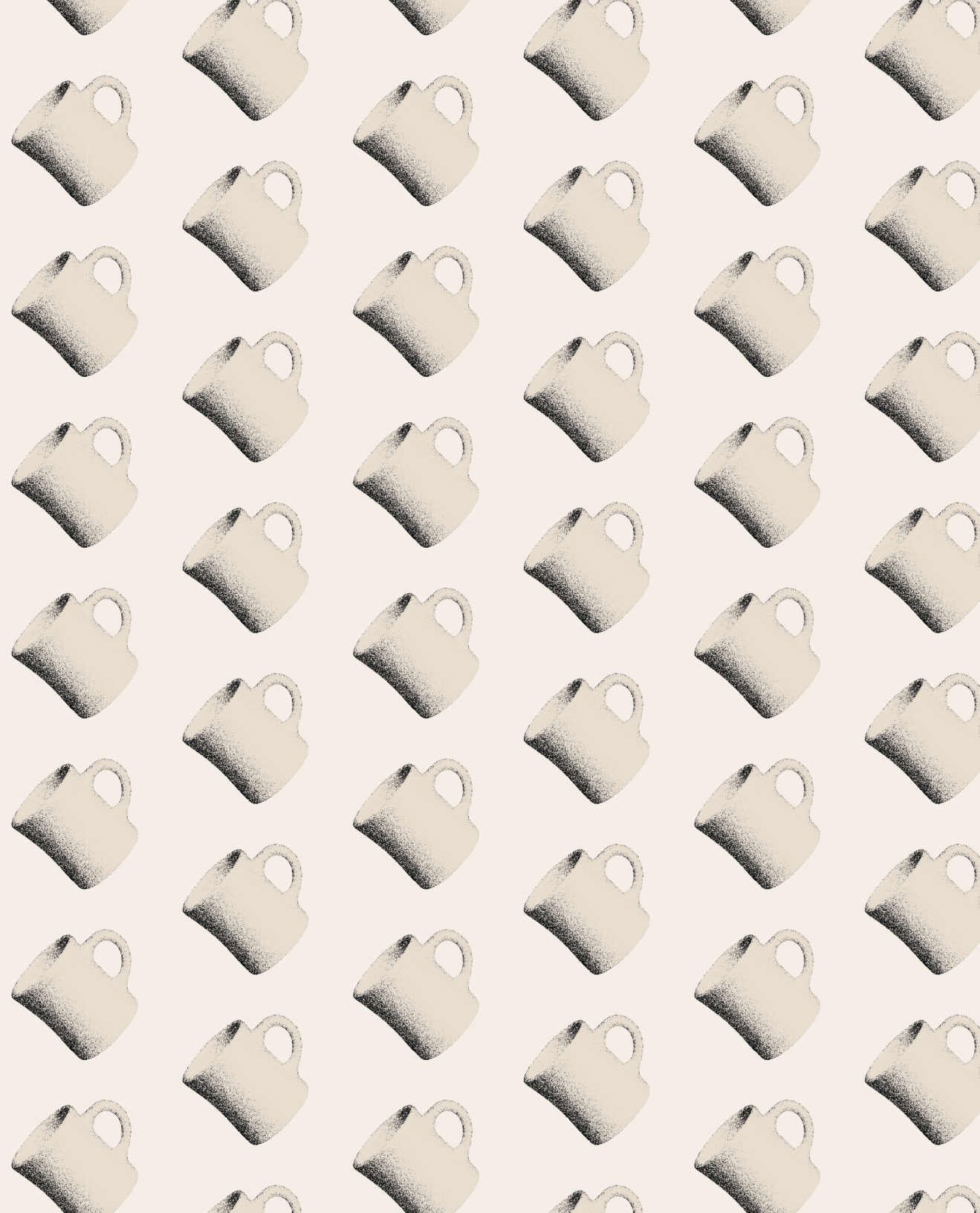


UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

The Mill is Lincoln's only coffee shop that has an established history in the Lincoln Haymarket. Opening in 1975, The Mill has been around for every moment of your life. The Mill has been here through it all, growing and changing with its city. The Mill is Lincoln. The Mill is home.

POSITIONING STATEMENT

To the young adult community of Lincoln, The Mill is the city's only coffee shop that has been here since the beginning. It's the coffee shop you grew up loving and the one you go back to every day. The Mill is where you go to get some work done but end up staying to hang with friends. It's where you find your community. It's where you find your home.



WHY THEY'LL BELIEVE IT:

The target market for this campaign consists of regular coffee drinkers who feel connected to their personal circles and general community. The idea revolves around creating a clear link between Lincoln and The Mill, so when a person wants a pick-me-up, they'll think of the local staple. According to primary research, The Mill gains much of its business from its cozy, eclectic, and homey interior and characteristics. Playing on these features and emphasizing their locality will increase the success that these aspects already bring The Mill, while also increasing top-of-mind awareness. The Mill is a local brand that's a staple of Lincoln—by emphasizing this concept, more that customers will keep coming around for the environment The Mill provides.

THE BIG IDEA

The Mill has staying power. It has a history with Lincoln. It's a community center that is dependable and homey, and it's a familiar staple of Lincoln. The Mill is positioned as a coffee bar, one of the most historic coffee shops in Lincoln. To young professionals, The Mill is the only coffee bar in Lincoln with a historic background that has a unique staying power and sense of community that other coffee shops in Lincoln haven't established. Since 1975, The Mill has served Lincolniters through long winters and sweltering summers as their go-to spot. This message will unify the campaign strategies by focusing on a sense of community and home. Throughout social media, print ads, TV ads, and other media, the tagline "The Mill is Lincoln. The Mill is home" will create a cohesive campaign.

During the qualitative research process, the words "cozy" and "welcoming" kept coming up in reference to The Mill. The public already thinks of The Mill as a homey coffee shop, but through the Big Idea, the message is amplified and tied into the history that The Mill already has with the Lincoln community. By associating The Mill more closely with the idea of "home," the audience will be more inclined to spend a cozy afternoon at The Mill with their friends or finishing up some work there instead of doing it inside their physical homes.

THE MILL IS LINCOLN
THE MILL IS HOME



Messaging Strategy

The Mill is a Lincoln staple—it has always been here, and it will always be here. It's where you go to study, catch up with friends, read a book, and even go for a first date. When you walk into The Mill, you feel right at home, away from home.

Tonality & Manner

The campaign is to be sentimental and welcoming to those from Lincoln and those just visiting. It should give the feeling of familiarity, as The Mill is an integral part of the Lincoln culture. The Mill serves a diverse group of consumers, but greets all with midwestern kindness.

Mandatories

In all campaign assets, The Mill logo, colors, and fonts must be present and accurate. The creative direction should adhere to The Mill's established brand identity and voice.

OUR TACTICS



SCAVENGER HUNT

The Mill will host a social media scavenger hunt in early September, right when school gets back in session. To promote the hunt, every other week The Mill will post clues about a historic landmark, where a \$25 gift card to The Mill and some merch will be hidden- the first person to find it wins! Potential landmarks would include: Memorial Stadium, the State Capitol, PBA, the Sunken Gardens, and the Haymarket. This

fulfills our objectives of creating hype and increasing social media engagement. In addition, the scavenger hunt giveaways ties The Mill to landmarks around Lincoln, showing that The Mill is rooted in the city. The scavenger hunt would cost about \$45 each week, and would ideally go on during academic semesters, costing roughly \$720.



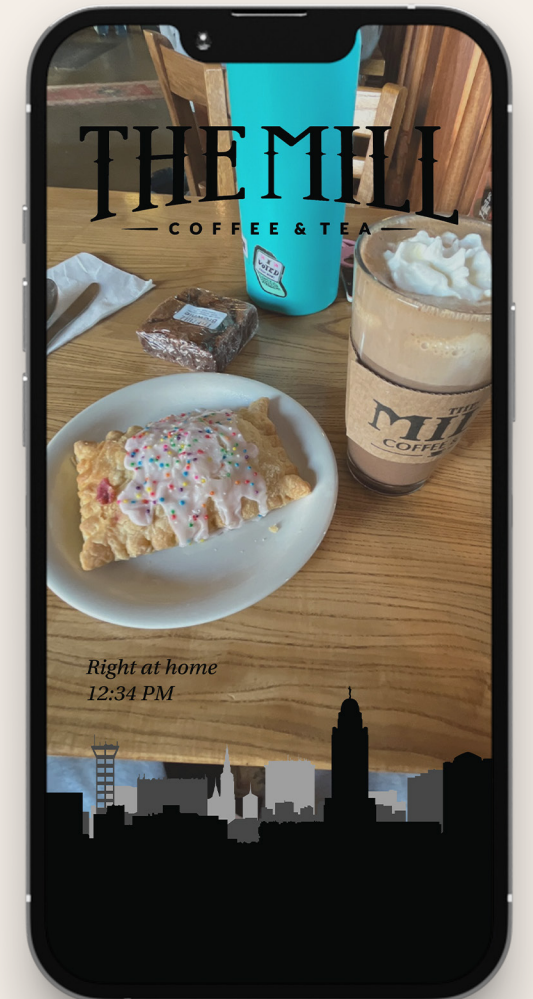
REWARDS PROGRAM

The rewards program will be an online program through the registers. After making a purchase, customers will be able to enter their phone number so purchases can be virtually tracked. After purchasing 9 drinks, they will receive the 10th drink free. This will work across all 4 stores so that they can purchase at all locations and still have their rewards tracked in one location.



SNAPCHAT GEOFILTERS

A geofilter is a filter that will show up on a user's Snapchat account if the user is within a certain "fence" set up by an advertiser. For this campaign, the geofilter "fence" will be set up around The Mill in the Haymarket. According to Hootsuite, Snapchat reaches 41% of all 18-34 year olds in the United States every day, and 76% of all millennials are on Snapchat - this puts Snapchat as the app with the sixth highest concentration of millennials. These age ranges, for the most part, is the target age range for the campaign.



ADS ON STREAMING SERVICES



Ads running on streaming service platforms will aim to reach the target audience that lives in the Lincoln area. The young adult target audience actively and passively consumes media on streaming platforms, and Hulu and Spotify offer the capability to reach a very wide range of users in the Lincoln-commuting area. This advertising execution aims to meet the objective of increasing top-of-mind awareness.

Voiceover:

“We went around town and asked people what Lincoln is to them, here’s what they said.”

“Lincoln is... where I grew up”

“Lincoln is... the home of the huskers”

“Lincoln is... where I found myself”

“Lincoln is... the place with the best sunsets”

“Lincoln is... local”

“Lincoln is... a growing little city”

“Lincoln is... where I can always see the state capitol in the distance”

“Lincoln is... the historical haymarket

“Lincoln is... where I fell in love

“Lincoln is... where I’m never too far away from The Mill

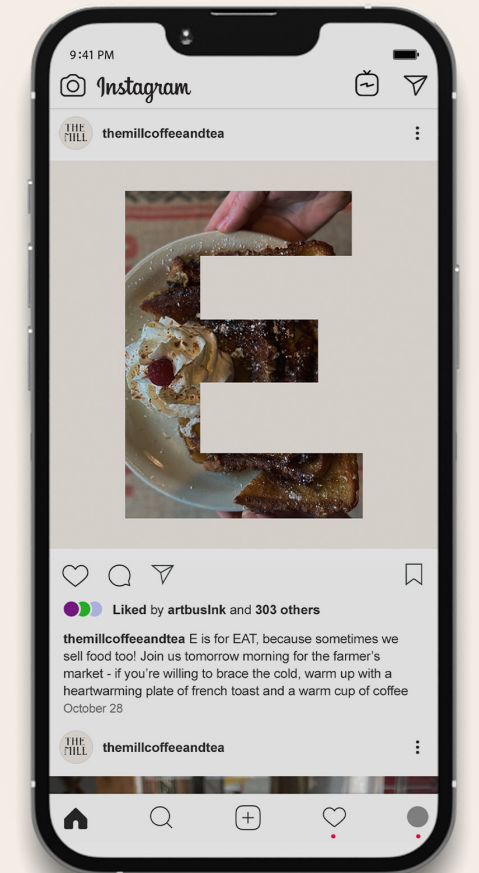
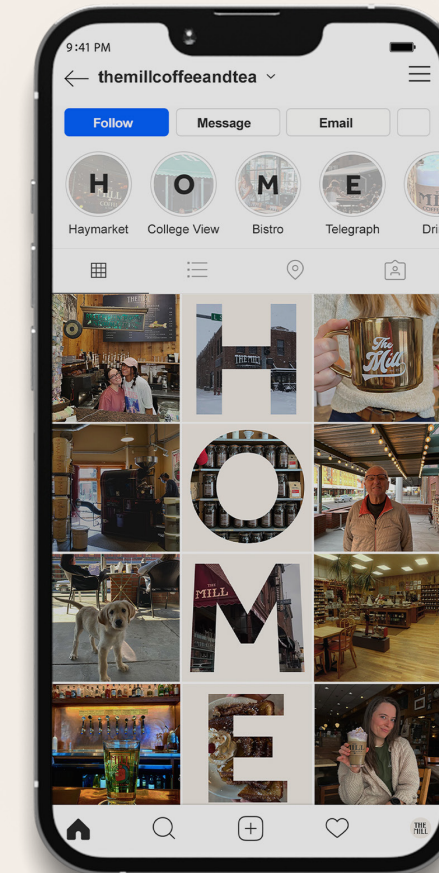
“Lincoln is... the place where work gets done

“Lincoln is... home.

And at The Mill, we power Lincoln.
The Mill is Lincoln, The Mill is Home.

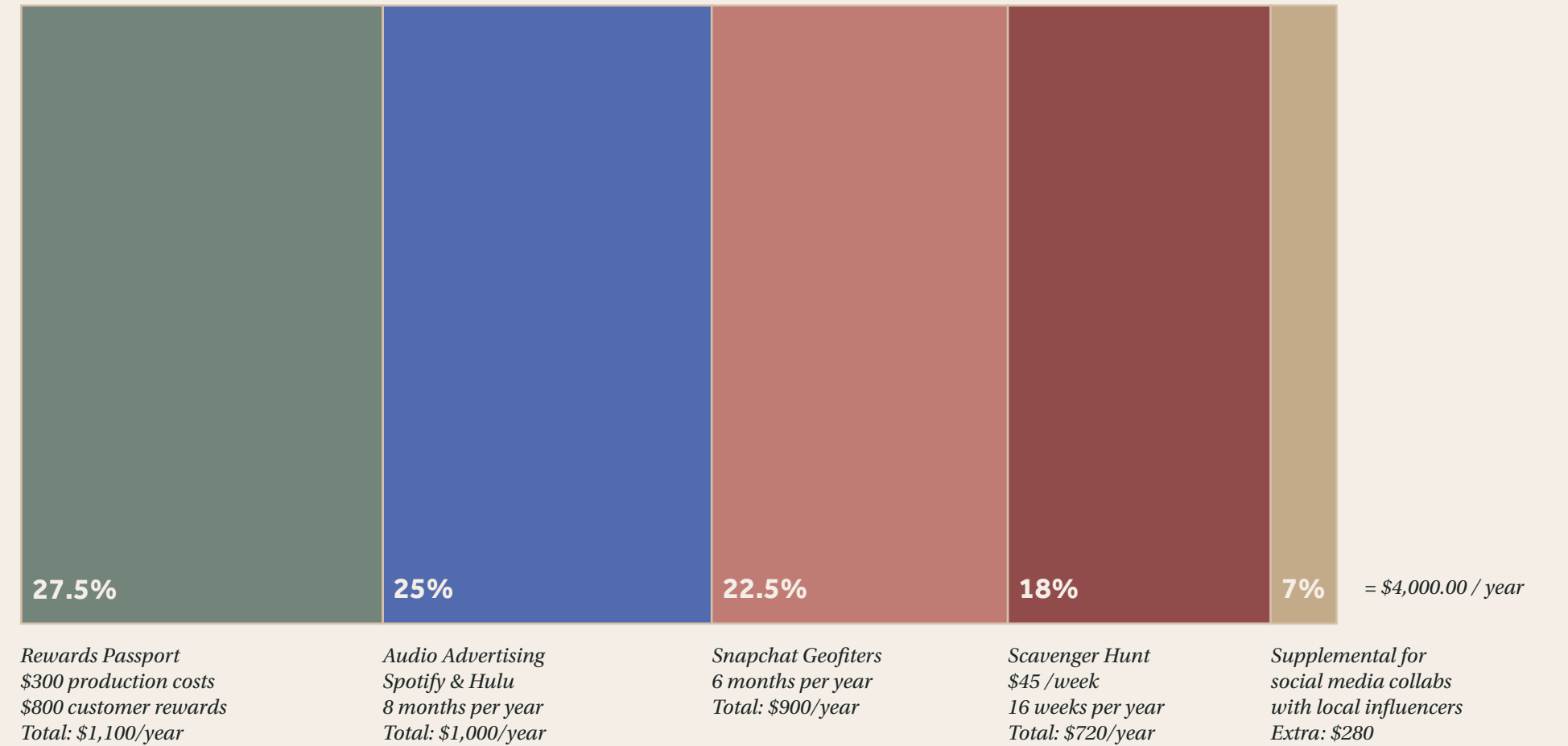
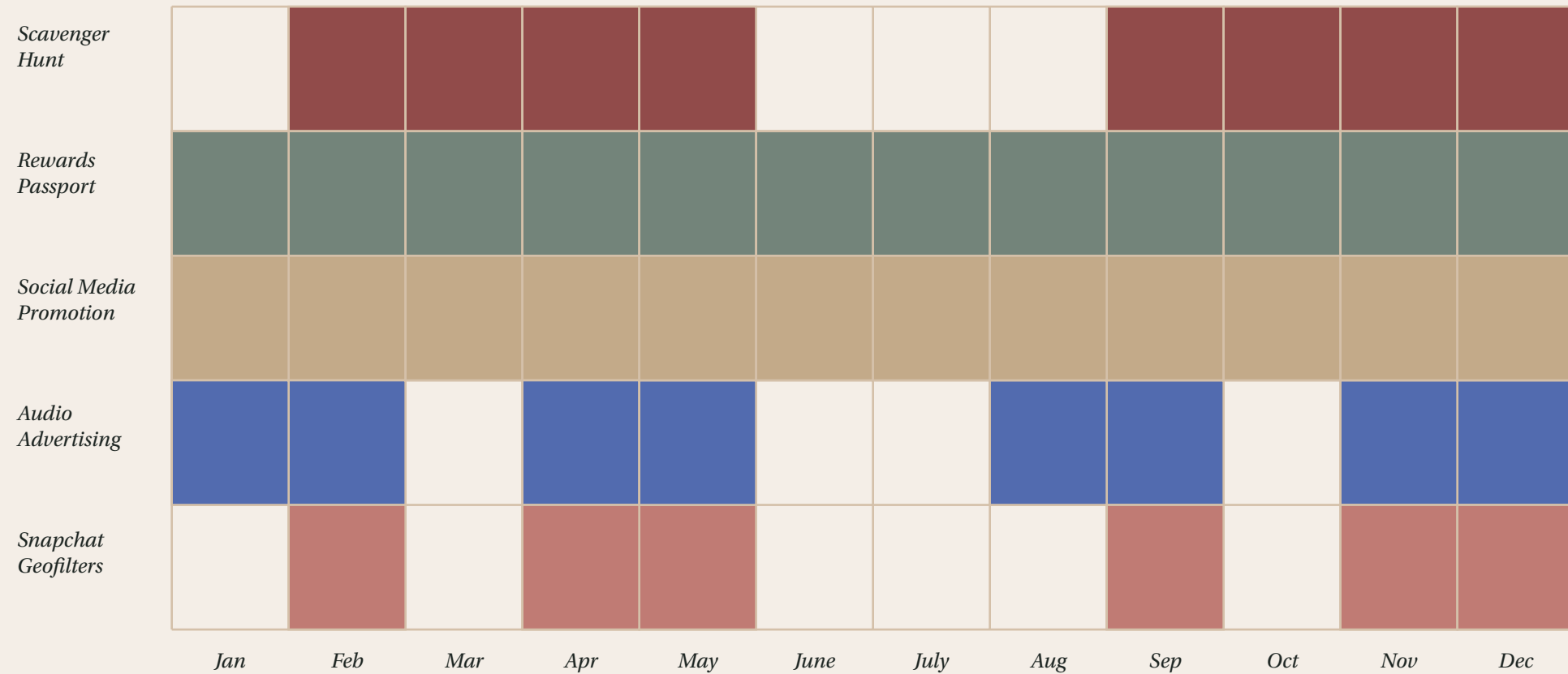
SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

The Mill will launch a social media campaign on its Instagram and Facebook pages featuring posts about community members who frequent The Mill. Each story will focus on a different letter of the word “HOME”, and they will be posted once a month, spelling out “HOME”. The baristas will talk with people and collect the stories to post on social media, with each story being no longer than 50-100 words. This will also promote a stronger sense of community because the baristas will get to know the customers better, and people who follow The Mill on social media will become familiar with people in the community. This fulfills our goal of connecting The Mill to the feeling of home, because home is where people know your name—the campaign will bring the community closer together.



SCHEDULING

BUDGETING



APPENDICIES

Focus Group Questions

What is your name, age, and occupation? Where are you from?

Are you a coffee drinker?

If not, do you drink tea or energy drinks?

If yes, how much do you drink a week?

What's your coffee preference?

What's you're go-to order when you're not home?

Do you ever go to a coffee shop to get work done?

What is your go-to coffee shop, and why?

Have you ever heard of The Mill? What have you heard?

Have you ever been to The Mill? If so, what's your opinion of it?

What do you do in a coffee shop?

Do you usually go with a group or go on your own?

Do you ever study or read in coffee shops?

Do you usually get multiple drinks or just one?

What makes a good coffee shop experience?

What do you think The Mill could improve on?

What can coffee shops improve on as a whole?

Is there anything else that you would like to add about the Mill or coffee shops in general?

Ethnographic Research

The Mill at Telegraph; Thursday 9/26/19, 8:00-9:00 am

The Mill at Innovation Campus; Friday 9/27/19, 12:10-1:10 pm

The Mill at Collegeview; Sunday 9/29/19, 3:00 - 5:00 pm

The Mill Downtown; Sunday 10/6/19, 2:30-3:15 pm

The Mill Downtown; Tuesday 10/8/19, 2:00-3:00 pm

The Mill Downtown; Tuesday 10/8/19, 6:00-7:30 pm

The Mill at Innovation Campus; Friday 10/11/19, 3:15-4:15 pm

THE TEAM

Fall 2019

Account Executive: Adam Estergaard

Account Planner: Sydney Rau

Creative Director: Lauren Frankforter

Copywriter: Olivia McCown

Designer: Caitlin Steiner

PR Director: Mariah Elser

Media Director: Isabel Woolway

Fall 2022 Re-write

All creative elements and strategic tactics

were updated by Lauren Frankforter

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