



Marketing Plan For  
The Daughter's Inn  
Marketing 306 Spring 2014 Van Winter  
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## Executive Summary

A multi-faceted business, The Daughter's Inn will offer more than a simple bed-and-breakfast experience. With luxurious rooms, dedicated service, and a gorgeous and history-immersed setting, the inn will serve as a high-class getaway for guests looking to enjoy the beauty of Maryland's farmland and forestry. In addition, the inn is a perfect location for weddings and receptions, with a five-star restaurant and a large barn for events and corporate meetings. The talented management and planning teams, beautiful location, and unlimited options for additions and improvement will easily make The Daughter's Inn one of the most successful businesses in the region.

The inn aims to offer a high-quality experience well worth the \$300 to \$400 per night price tag. However, the steep price will make it difficult to reach a large market of customers. Targeting couples looking to get married as well as [these couples](#) who make \$150,000 a year or more, it will be necessary for the inn to make the experience far outweigh the price. Women (namely those aged 30 and older) will be the most important market to consider when promoting the barn as a wedding and reception venue as brides and the couple's mothers are often those most involved in selecting a location. Guests will come from Maryland, Virginia, southern Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and any of the surrounding areas to enjoy the luxurious, tranquil experience the inn offers.

The largest competition for The Daughter's Inn will come from other inns and hotels in the area, as well as other wedding and reception venues such as Morningside Inn and Stoney Creek Farm. However, The Daughter's Inn has an immediate advantage in that it has massive amounts of room for growth and will be able to sustain itself in different ways. It will not rely on only room rentals or reception bookings but will also have the restaurant and immense farm that

will both be capable of bringing financial success. The privacy and charm of the secluded location will be a large draw for those looking for a non-traditional wedding location, business retreat, or simple getaway.

To guarantee that the business flourishes, the inn should focus on two main goals when drafting its plans for marketing and continued operation:

1. Achieve specific profit and occupancy milestones.
  - Have rooms booked 160 days of the year.
  - Aim for 5,000 restaurant guests by the year's end.
  - Book a minimum of 15 weddings, receptions or corporate events.
  - Place 75 or more advertisements in wedding magazines, planning guides and other promotional materials to attract customers in our target market.
2. Create brand recognition through successful traditional and e-marketing campaigns.
  - Establish a strong social media presence on sites such as Facebook and Twitter to connect with customers. Have a minimum of 500 fans on Facebook and 500 followers on Twitter by the end of the first year.
  - Create and maintain an informative, accessible and effective website in order to easily share and provide information. Have a minimum of 10,000 unique page views within the first year of business.

By properly implementing the recommendations detailed in the marketing mix provided, it can be safely assumed that The Daughter's Inn will not only *meet* these expectations but also surpass them.

The difficulty in accurately marketing the inn comes from the fact that it is not one single

product but three separate products: the inn itself, the restaurant, and the venue. Separate methods of advertising must be considered for each. Booking a room or reserving the venue for an event is an expensive affair and often something customers do only one time; however, the restaurant could serve as a source of recurring revenue, attracting repeat customers from neighboring cities who may come to eat there several times a year.

While these services could be marketed separately, they should really be advertised as a package deal. The inn should not simply be a place to stay but a haven that provides respite and relaxation to any of those that walk through its doors. This is what customers in Maryland need and what sets The Daughter's Inn apart from the competition: other inns offer only one or two of these services, while The Daughter's Inn provides all three and much, much more.

Though The Daughter's Inn has numerous strengths and advantages that will benefit it in the competitive market it faces, it is simply not possible for it to be successful without an effectively organized and executed plan for promotion. E-marketing has transformed the way businesses are advertised and The Daughter's Inn cannot afford to be late to the technological revolution. Facebook likes, Twitter followers, and website page views will be critically important in tracking and continually promoting the inn. Social media allows for increased interaction with customers as well as nearly immediate feedback so difficulties or commendations can be communicated and replied to in a timely manner. The importance of an effective, readable website cannot be stressed enough and there are numerous services provided (such as Google AdWords and analytics) that can assist in calculating the effectiveness and reach of the site.

However, traditional media has not been entirely replaced. Print advertisements are still effective in catching the attention of potential customers; as of such, they cannot be ignored in

favor of entirely internet-based promotion. As the inn is an upper-class establishment, it should market itself as such, placing ads in upscale and luxury magazines while also creating newspaper, radio, and television advertisements. A strong, powerful advertising campaign that utilizes any and all available resources and channels will promise continued success.

With all of its planned amenities and features, it is possible that The Daughter's Inn will be able to beat out the competition on value alone. However, it is never enough to simply rely on the quality of the product—it is imperative for the inn to have a superior business strategy and promotion plan in order to give it a strong leg up on the competition. We believe that following the recommendations and guidelines detailed in our marketing plan will guarantee the future prosperity of The Daughter's Inn.

## **Introduction (Company Background)**

In 1989, Steve and Jeanne Robinson purchased The Cleaning Authority when it was a small operation (Green Home Cleaning Services). Today, The Cleaning Authority cleans thousands of homes across the United States and Canada.

The Robinsons are also involved with a number of nonprofits. Jeanne Robinson was the CFO of Share Our Strength, a nonprofit best known for their “No Kid Hungry” campaign. Steve and Jeanne Robinson purchased the 300-acre farm at 5219 Burkettsville Road in early 2013 with the hope of opening an upscale inn, restaurant and event venue in the existing home and barn.

In the early 1800’s Thomas Sim Lee, Maryland's second Governor, built the oldest part of the home for his daughter Elizabeth Digges Lee. She lived in the home with her husband Outerbridge Horsey. Their son Outerbridge Horsey IV produced “Horsey Pure Rye” whisky on the property between 1840 and 1900. “Horsey Pure Rye” was known as the best whisky during this time.

The Robinsons hope to preserve and celebrate the property’s rich history through the Daughter’s Inn.

## **Environmental Scanning**

The Daughter's Inn must understand where the market is at the time of opening their business. The world and the people in it change every day, which means that the inn will have to be as adaptable as its customers and competitors. This section details the five outside forces that The Daughter's Inn will have to consider and face in order to be successful.

### *Competitive Forces:*

The Daughter's Inn will face the most competition from other inns or bed and breakfast establishments. Many of these establishments have prices significantly lower than the inn's proposed cost of \$300 to \$400.

There are a few bed and breakfast establishments in the area. One such establishment is the Hill House Bed and Breakfast. The bed and breakfast has four bedrooms: the Chesapeake Room, the Victorian Room, the Mexican Room, and the Steeple Room. The rooms are all themed to their respective names. The Hill House is similar to the Daughter's Inn because it also utilizes the idea of themed rooms. The business is within walking distance of downtown Frederick, giving customers the opportunity to explore Frederick's rich culture. The Hill House Bed and Breakfast's prices vary from \$145 to \$195 a night (Hill House Bed and Breakfast). Another popular bed and breakfast is 10 Clarke place. The building is a renovated Victorian House, which offers two rooms. The Lace Room has a queen bed and its own private bath. The second is the Turret Room, which also has a queen bed and a private study. 10 Clarke Place is also located near Downtown Frederick. 10 Clarke Place allows the customer to book a room for a long period of time. One night is \$125, a week is \$700, and a month is \$1,931. (10 Clarke Place)

Stoney Creek Farm in particular will be a major rival for the inn, as it is also set on



historic property, lauds its rustic atmosphere, and targets couples in the same financial bracket as those that are likely to stay at The Daughter's Inn. It is located in Washington County and is a mere 20 miles or so from The Daughter's Inn.

The other local bed and breakfast establishments will no doubt be the most difficult challenge The Daughter's Inn will face, but Frederick also holds a good number of hotels that will attract potential customers. While this is an indirect competitor, the features these different hotels offer can prove to be more problematic than one might originally anticipate. Two popular hotels in the area are Best Western and Hampton Hotel. Each place has reasonable prices and offer outdoor pools, complimentary breakfasts, fitness centers, meeting rooms, satellite television, and wireless internet. Best Western is listed at \$75 per night and the Hampton is listed at \$107. (Stoney Creek Farm.)

Most bed and breakfasts and hotels have significantly lower prices for a night's stay. Many of these establishments have all the necessities while staying close to downtown, attracting customers. The Daughter's Inn offers more to do on the grounds with venues, pools, and a restaurant, which will help differentiate itself from its competitors. However, there is the risk of losing customers that are not willing to spend \$300 to \$400 a night. While The Daughter's Inn has the advantage of having its own restaurant and wedding venue, there is a large amount of driving involved in simply reaching the location. Some customers will want to stay near downtown Frederick or another urban area and may not appreciate the idea of driving 25 minutes to get to town.

Local restaurants are also a strong secondary source of competition. One such restaurant is Volt. It is one of the most popular restaurants in Frederick and reservations must be made weeks in advance to get in. The restaurant is a sophisticated setting and the food is made to look

like abstract art. Their food varies from \$10 for pasta and salads to \$95 for their six course meals. (Volt.)

Another secondary source of competition comes from wedding venues. One example of a popular wedding venue is the Ceresville Mansion. The venue itself is a historic mansion built in 1888 that is used to host weddings, corporate events, and parties. It has the option for an indoor or outdoor event. The mansion owns the “Ceresville Meadow,” a 10-acre space next to the house which can be used for picnics or other events. (“Welcome to Ceresville Mansion.”)

#### *Economic Forces:*

The main problems that The Daughter’s Inn will face economically are results of the 2008 financial recession. The majority of the people on the Eastern Shore were hit hard by the recession and are still trying to recover today. Workers lost their jobs and therefore had no sources of income. The economic downturn further restricts the number of potential customers in The Daughter’s Inn’s target market. The inn could be too expensive and customers will try to aim for something cheaper in the area. The Daughter’s Inn will have to keep a reasonable price so customers will not be scared away by the cost.

#### *Political Forces:*

The first issue politically is that the inn stands on historic grounds. There will be many laws and regulations that will have to be respected at all times. The Daughter’s Inn sits on an agricultural reserve and is historical property. The original owners wanted to make sure that the property stayed a reserve and could never be used commercially or for any other purpose. The Daughter’s Inn will have to make sure that they can get the land they need to make the business thrive.

*Legal and Regulatory Forces:*

We assume that the owners of The Daughter's Inn have followed all legal requirements before opening the establishment.

*Technological Forces:*

The technology that The Daughter's Inn uses must be up to date. Most bed and breakfast establishments and hotels offer luxuries such as Wi-Fi and cable. With pricing at \$300 to \$400 a night, having these is essential. No customer will pay a high amount of money and not have the amenities that are now considered basic. The inn will also have to be up to date on the software it uses for its computers. The computers will need to organize customer information and venue booking. The inn will also need to use the proper equipment for growing and harvesting crops. Competitors of The Daughter's Inn will most likely buy their ingredients for their food from a farm or butcher. This means that The Daughter's Inn will need to buy their own equipment to harvest and butcher their meat and produce.

Other companies are using technology for promotion. They have email coupons, text deals, and web ads. They use analytics and metadata to increase search engine visibility. The Daughter's Inn must also do so on their website and in e-marketing campaigns in order to keep up with changing and evolving advertising methods.

*Sociocultural Forces:*

The Daughter's Inn will have to make sure that they are meeting the needs of the customers at all times. Nowadays, people are trying to live more healthy and active lifestyles. Because of this, some may come not wanting to eat any unhealthy food. It is important that The Daughter's Inn always have fresh, organic foods that are free of any pesticides. The Daughter's Inn's method of using ingredients from the farm and putting them right on the table is an

excellent way to attract customers because of the increase in the popularity of organic food.

## **Situational Analysis (SWOT)**

The Daughter's Inn has a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) that need to be considered. The Daughter's Inn has a very rustic and old time feel that is difficult to come by in other inns. The atmosphere of the inn will attract a wide range of guests who will be able to indulge in the richness of history. The history of The Daughter's Inn includes a background of whiskey distilling, which is a major plus to those guests interested in the manufacturing and procedures involved in making the drink. Another strength is the amount of capital the Robinsons are willing to invest in the inn. Due to this large investment, the Robinsons are able to expand their horizons and create a customized and unique setting for their customers. The Daughter's Inn lies on historic property, and since it is surrounded by historic battlefields like Antietam, this establishment will likely draw customers visiting other historically important locations.

One weakness of the inns is that it is not child friendly. Through using up a small area of land, the owners of the Daughter's Inn can supply activities for children and meet their needs and as well as the needs of their parents. Another weakness of The Daughter's Inn is that the location is out of the way. Although the area is set around acres of gorgeous farmland, there is limited access to other restaurants and shopping areas. The Daughter's Inn will also have a barn that specifically tends to weddings. However, there are no churches or places of worship within reasonable miles of the property, which may be an issue for many couples. The Daughter's Inn is also weak in the aspect of pricing. Many neighboring inns offer the same services but are cheaper in price. The Daughter's Inn should consider adjusting their price to a more reasonable value so that they can obtain more customers in the area. Also, the restaurant business is a very risky one with a high rate of failure. In order to successfully open and maintain a restaurant, they

would need to hire a professional planner to manage the restaurant and make sure that it meets the standards of its guests.

The Daughter's Inn has many opportunities to grow through its large, spacious acres and its rustic charm. As stated earlier, The Daughter's Inn has a very large and vacant barn within walking distance. Barn weddings have increased in demand and so the option of a barn wedding will attract many couples that wish to have their weddings in different locations. Also, due to the large acres of land they own, the owners of The Daughter's Inn will be able to grow their own fruits and vegetables, providing their customers with fresh produce. They would also have the option of starting a farmer's market during the spring or summer. The Daughter's Inn could also propose other attractions such as a spa, hot tub, various crafting classes, nature walks, and horse trails that can guests can enjoy to keep them entertained while on the property. With such a rich history, The Daughter's Inn could connect itself with other historical locations in the area; in addition, the re-opening of the whiskey distillery could be an attraction in itself, giving guests the chance to observe the whiskey-making process.

Threats to The Daughter's Inn include other nearby inns and the overwhelming amount of work and planning that goes into creating and maintaining these establishments. A neighboring competitor, Stoney Creek Farm, also offers many of the same amenities as The Daughter's Inn. It provides its customers with a rustic and charming location and also has a wedding venue and rooms to stay in ("Stoney Creek Farm"). Although The Daughter's Inn is heavily funded, it is an ongoing process that may take more time than estimated because of the enormous amount of work. The fixing of the house as well as updating the property may delay the opening of the Inn.

In order to excel, it is crucial to transform the weaknesses into strengths and the threats

into opportunities. The weaknesses can be transformed into strengths by providing more activities for children (although this inn is more focused on couples), adjusting the price of staying at the inn by comparing prices amongst other inns, and giving the guests the experience the true rustic appeal of the area through nature trails and other outdoor activities. The threats can be then be transformed into opportunities by performing better than the competing inns. The Daughter's Inn provides more services than the other inns and venues in the area, and it has the land and resources to continue to add features that will attract additional customers. See Appendix B on page 43 for a visual.

## **Market Segmentation/Target Market Selection**

The “perfect customer” for The Daughter’s Inn will not necessarily fit into one particular profile. Slightly different markets need to be considered for each service The Daughter’s Inn provides.

The main target market for The Daughter’s Inn will be couples looking to escape to the countryside for a relaxing vacation. Couples will likely travel to the inn from Maryland, Delaware, the District of Columbia, southern Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia. Maryland will be the largest source of customers. These couples will have a combined income level of \$150,000 or greater per year. See Appendix C on page 44 for a visual. (“Income.”)

Customers interested in The Daughter’s Inn’s restaurant will not only be couples, but also may include families, individuals, and other businesses interested in having a meal at a unique and upscale venue.

People will likely travel from Maryland, the District of Columbia and Virginia to host or attend an event at The Daughter’s Inn’s barn. Such events could include corporate team-building retreats, music and arts festivals, classes, bazaars, or other mid-sized conventions. However, the inn should mainly market itself as a venue for weddings and wedding receptions. With this role in mind, the inn’s venue-related services should be marketed toward women aged 30 and older within the financial bracket discussed previously. Often, the job of wedding planning not only falls to the bride and the couples’ mothers but is actually demanded by them. These women will be looking for an ideal location for the wedding; venue selection is rarely left entirely up to the groom, and so the brides are the customers that must be won over.



## **Problem (Need) Statement**

There is a need for an upper-end inn, restaurant, and event venue in Frederick County, Maryland. No other inn or venue offers all of these features in one convenient location or does so with the high standards and quality provided by The Daughter's Inn.

The inn will offer a unique high-end experience that preserves the history of Frederick County. There are no similar inn locations with as much land and privacy as The Daughter's Inn. This luxurious home offers eight bedrooms and eight baths, which is also the most offered number of rooms in the region. While other bed and breakfasts only have limited rooms to offer, this inn also has an attached 72-seat restaurant run by a renowned chef. The only other restaurant in the area with a well-known chef is Volt in downtown Frederick, far enough away to not have much customer competition. The restaurant will continue to use the farm land, which is known to be the best in Maryland, to create a farm-to-table experience by using their own fresh produce, beef, and chicken which other restaurants do not offer.

The barn seats 150 to 200 people and is great for weddings, corporate events, or even concerts. The only other resort that has rooms and host events of this scale in Maryland is on Tilghman Island, which is over two hours away from Frederick County.

The Daughter's Inn will offer a separate home that will be reserved as the bridal suite. The inn will also have small homes on the property for employees to live in as well as an administrative building. The old silos will be used and turned into hot tubs with decks around them. No other inn in the Frederick County region can offer these attractions all in one convenient location.

## Marketing Objectives

The marketing objectives for The Daughter's Inn have been broken down into three categories: inn reservations and drop-ins, the restaurant, and the barn venue. See Appendix D on page 44 for a visual.

Within ten years, The Daughter's Inn will begin to yield a profit from the Robinson's investment. By the first year of operations, we hope for the average number of customers for the restaurant to be 60 people on weekdays and 100 people on weekends. This average is expected to rise from 60 to 65 and then 75 for the following two years and 100 to 110, then 120. Each meal costs the restaurant \$20, while the price is \$80 a person.

The average numbers found on the chart for weddings and events are based off of expecting three events a month and costing The Daughter's Inn \$20,000 per event.

The three main marketing objectives for The Daughter's Inn are to:

1. Achieve profit and occupancy milestones within the first year.
  - Have rooms booked 160 days of the year.
  - Aim for 5,000 restaurant guests by the year's end.
  - Book a minimum of 15 wedding receptions or corporate events.
  - Place 75 or more advertisements in wedding magazines, planning guides and other promotional materials to attract customers in our target market
2. Create brand recognition through successful, traditional, and e-marketing campaigns.
  - Establish a strong social media presence on sites such as Facebook and Twitter to connect with customers. Have 500 fans on Facebook and 500 followers on Twitter by the end of the first year.
  - Create and maintain an informative, accessible and effective website in order to easily

share and provide information. Have a minimum of 10,000 unique page views within the first year of business.

## **Marketing Mix**

In promoting a business, a number of important criteria that will guide the growth and prosperity of the company must be considered. How will the company price itself? What promotional methods will it use? What is the company's place within the market? By utilizing E. Jerome McCarthy's "Four Ps"—product, pricing, placement, and promotion—we can construct an effective and ideal method of leading the company to success.

### *Product:*

Naturally, the product in consideration is The Daughter's Inn, though it is necessary to define exactly what The Daughter's Inn is. With numerous pieces, it can be difficult to accurately tabulate all of the strengths and opportunities the inn as a whole possesses. The inn can be broken down into its three main parts: the restaurant, the venue, and the inn itself. The restaurant is focused on organic and sustainable agriculture with a farm-to-table approach to its food, setting it apart from numerous other five-star restaurants that are not as eco-friendly. Some restaurants have a chef's table: a table that is in the kitchen of the restaurant and hosts VIPs and special guests. Customers at The Daughter's Inn could pay to reserve the table and would receive more individualized service than a regular restaurant guest. The chef could also host cooking classes or other food-and-wine tasting events to attract new customers and keep old ones coming back.

As the inn has a great venue at its disposal, there are numerous events (outside of weddings and receptions) that could be hosted there to attract guests and spread information about the inn via word-of-mouth. The venue could host classes such as painting classes or events like wine tastings—events that exemplify the upscale image of the venue. Other possible

attractions could include concerts, wedding or baby showers, or larger dinner parties than the restaurant can hold.

In order to attract customers to the property despite it being far from major shopping centers or other attractions, The Daughter's Inn must not be a location as much as it is a destination. It is not merely an inn to stay in or a restaurant to eat at, but a full retreat with all of the amenities expected of a rustic get-away. This could include features such as: a swimming pool and hot tubs (such as those proposed for the silo); a spa with services such as hair, make-up, massages, and facials; guided history and nature tours of the property to describe its rich history and explore the land; sporting events including niche, traditionally upper-class sports like polo to promote the unique nature of the inn; and other attractions that will keep customers on the property instead of wishing to spend time elsewhere. Keeping customers on the property means there will be more sales at the restaurant as guests will be less likely to travel somewhere else to eat. Customers will enjoy being able to stay at a place where they can fully relax and know that all of their physical and entertainment needs will be provided for at one location.

*Price:*

At \$300-\$400 a night, the price of a room at The Daughter's Inn is more expensive than what most other inns in the area charge. For some customers, this could be a deal-breaker. As discussed in the Competitive Forces subsection of the Environmental Scanning section above, competing inns such as Hill House charge prices in the \$100-\$200 range, leaving The Daughter's Inn in a position where it will be extremely difficult to compete. However, as stated in the Need Statement, the inn fills numerous niches that other inns and reception venues do not provide by offering all of their services in one location. By including additional attractions such as those

described in the Product subsection above, the \$400 price tag could easily become a great value.

Though the inn has room to be more expensive than its competitors, the food pricing at the restaurant should be close to other local restaurants that are similar in quality. The average entrée at Volt in Frederick costs \$15-\$30 (“Volt”) while the average entrée at Grapeseed Bistro in Bethesda costs \$25-\$38 (“Menu – Grapeseed American Bistro and Wine Bar”). Both are considered to be five-star restaurants, similar to what is expected of The Daughter’s Inn’s restaurant. Thus, prices for entrées at the inn should be close to these.

With high-dollar items and services, it will be difficult to adjust costs without upsetting customers. While restaurant prices (especially those for seafood) change and fluctuate frequently, the prices for renting a room at the inn should only vary depending on the season and the inn’s popularity at the time. The same goes for the venue—weddings are especially popular during the summer, so higher summer prices and lower winter prices will not upset customers too much. That being said, raising prices too much or setting too high of a base price would cause customers to happily take their business to other, cheaper venues.

*Placement:*

Placement of promotion should stay relatively close to the location of The Daughter’s Inn. The broad location of promotion will be within southern Pennsylvania, Washington D.C., West Virginia, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. Due to the rapidly-increasing usage of the internet as opposed to traditional means of advertising, we strongly recommend using electronic media and placing advertisements on websites, in databases, and on search engines to ensure maximum visibility. Through various online advertising tools, it is possible to electronically distribute advertisements only in particular geographic ranges or to change which advertisements

are used in which region (Google AdWords).

Reverse flow channels will probably be the most beneficial in marketing The Daughter's Inn. Those in need of a wedding or reception venue will go looking for it themselves and will seek out a suitable location. Often, those planning a wedding pick a general location first and then select the venue that most appeals to them. By having a readily accessible website and by utilizing intermediaries such as wedding venue database sites (as further explained in the Promotion subsection below), The Daughter's Inn's potential customers will have access to information about the inn almost immediately at their fingertips.

Non-electronic placement of advertising could include visits to bridal trade shows. For example, Wedding Experience is a trade show in Baltimore, Richmond, and Washington, D.C. where vendors working in any of a number of wedding-related enterprises can set up a table and directly sell their product to interested brides and network with other vendors (Wedding Experience). There are a number of other potential trade shows to advertise in and attending at least a few of them per year would provide increased awareness as well as networking and partnership opportunities with other businesses.

#### *Promotion:*

Promotion will be one of the most important factors in the success of the business. Promotion for the inn should be done in multiple ways, with different focuses and strategies for each method.

#### *E-Marketing:*

A large focus should be placed on e-marketing. More and more consumers are researching and booking online—in fact, 57% of restaurant customers view a company's menu

online before deciding if that is a place they are interested in (“Restaurant Industry Statistics”) and 57% of hotel bookings for the top 30 hotel chains in 2010 were made online (“HFTP Connect – Hospitality Blog”). The number of small businesses with websites is growing every year—compare the 45% of small businesses that had websites in 2009 with the 53% of small businesses with websites in 2014—and if the company does not have a website, it is losing customers to other companies that do. This is especially true of wedding venues. Booking a wedding can be an extremely stressful process, and anything that makes these labors easier will be seen as a boon.

The website is not only informative, but also promotional. In addition to providing photos of the location and describing the inn’s amenities, the website can also host a blog or guestbook so that inn employees can post about recent events and guests can leave comments or reviews. Since online bookings are growing in number and importance, having an online booking service would also be extremely beneficial. Some websites have services that allow customers to chat online with a staff member in order to ask questions; however, this would not be a necessary service, as the telephone is an equally effective mode of communication.

Again, the importance of website quality must be stressed. The Daughter’s Inn is a high-end establishment and this must be reflected by the website. A webpage that is broken, underperforms, has a poor design or is lacking in information is a webpage that will leave a bad impression on potential customers. Businesses greatly underestimate the value of a high-quality website; those that understand have a greater chance of reaching and retaining customers. The design of the site should fit with the image that The Daughter’s Inn wishes to reflect, as described in the Product section above. In addition, considering responsive web design when building the website is key. With more and more people accessing information via smart phones,



tablets, and other non-PC devices, web sites need to adapt in order to be maximally efficient on the device of the viewer's choosing. Many businesses have a desktop site as well as a mobile site so that information is always easily accessible no matter where consumers are browsing from.

Having a professional looking and informative website is little good without understanding the concept of Search Engine Optimization. The website should come up when someone searches for terms such as "bed and breakfast" or "Maryland wedding venues" on Google, but there is a process involved in making the website come up in the most searches and appear closest to the top of the results page. It is necessary to optimize the site through the use of tags within the site's code, as well as by submitting the site to search engines. In addition, services such as Google AdWords would advertise the inn's site whenever certain terms were searched ("Ads").

Social media is another hugely important aspect in today's marketing and promotion campaigns. There are now hundreds of social media sites populated by thousands upon thousands of users, and having a "web presence" can multiply the business's potential reach. However, it must be noted that spreading oneself too thin can create more problems than it solves; rather than signing up for every social media site possible, choosing two or three to concentrate efforts on would be a far better course of action.

With social media, as with every type of media, the company must have a specific objective in mind. As The Daughter's Inn is a budding business, it is recommended that the primary focus for the time being should be based on page views and website visits. While profits are a fine aspect to focus on, emphasis on promotion and "getting the name out" will be much more beneficial. In the future, objectives can shift to more specific goals such as increasing

reservations by a certain percentage or increasing the number of bookings made online, but for the time being, attention should be placed on getting the customer to simply look at the page. Though only a fraction of potential customers that see the page will make a booking, they will have the business in mind and may share a recommendation to someone else.

Facebook must be one of the sites used in the social media campaigns. With millions of active users, a business with a functional and well-maintained Facebook page would easily be able to connect with guests and promote itself. Facebook also offers a number of plans for promoting posts based on different criteria. Advertising bids can be placed monthly or be done over a lifetime and prices can be based on page views or a number of other options. Examining the various options for this form of advertising is recommended (What Is an Advertising Objective?). The Facebook page can hold pictures of the location as if to give a virtual tour of the property, giving customers a “first look” at what they can expect from The Daughter’s Inn. The page can also be used to connect with customers, posting information about upcoming and recent events to inform and further raise awareness. Consider methods of enticing viewers to share photos and posts; this way, those in their networks on the site will also be exposed to The Daughter’s Inn and more people will be led to the website.

Twitter is another site that allows businesses to easily access customers and tweet information and offers. Promoted tweets draw attention to the business. By having most-to-all of the posts include a link to the inn’s website, page views would increase and more customers could be reached.

While Pinterest is also a popular social media site, it is relatively informal and unprofessional by comparison. As of such, we do not find it to be an appropriate marketing platform for the inn and that time would be better spent developing a strong presence on

Facebook and Twitter.

There are numerous databases for wedding and wedding reception venues. Brides-to-be will often turn to these databases first in search of reviews and general information on what to look for. Registering with these kinds of sites is occasionally free, though some require paid subscription memberships. Though the price may be a slight deterrent, their value cannot be stressed enough. Entering the word “wedding venue” into a search engine does not yield the webpage of one particular venue. Instead, these databases are returned. Not advertising in a database as a vendor would severely limit access to information about The Daughter’s Inn by new and untapped customers. Some databases include CelebrationsAtTheBay.com, WeddingWire.com, and FrederickWeddings.com, though there are multitudes to choose from. Some, such as Wedding Wire, have free memberships as well as “Pro” memberships, with additional features available to “Pro” members. Subscriptions can be purchased for as low as \$40 per month.

Naturally, there is a lot of work involved not just in creating these features, but also in maintaining them. It is recommended for there to be an employee solely in charge of maintaining and continuing e-marketing campaigns.

*Traditional Marketing:*

The methods of traditional marketing will predominantly rely on print media and partnerships. There are a number of local and national magazines and papers in which The Daughter’s Inn could advertise; however, the focus will likely be on local publications. Such publications include newspapers such as The Frederick News-Post (starting at \$25.50 per inch) (“Advertise With Us”), The Washington Post (starting at \$736) (“Washington Post Ads”), or The Baltimore Sun, as well as local magazines like The Washingtonian (\$200 to \$800) (“Advertise

With The Washingtonian”), Modern Luxury DC, and Gorilla (\$195 to \$2,900 for a one time back cover ad) (“Advertise”). Other luxury and bridal magazines (i.e. Baltimore Bride, a part of Baltimore Magazine) would also be excellent locations to advertise in. Full-page and half-page advertisements in Baltimore Magazine can be purchased for \$1,300 to \$4,000 (Lyles).

Some specific luxury magazines that will also help promote The Daughter’s Inn include: Saveur, which shows all of the world’s best foods; Unique Homes, which shows high-end real estate across the country and around the world; and Upscale Living, which is a luxury lifestyle magazine. Parenting magazines would be good promotional placement since new parents and newlyweds could always use a little vacation time. Other magazines that would fit for advertising The Daughter’s Inn would be historical magazines to promote the history of the location.

Strong business partnerships can be the cornerstone of a successful company and this should be no different for The Daughter’s Inn. The inn could affiliate itself with local companies such as Flying Dog Brewery or other microbreweries, as craft beers are still rising in popularity (“Craft Beers Brew up Booming Business across USA”). In addition, forming partnerships or connections with bridal studios and connecting with wedding planners would be extremely beneficial. Offer wedding planners a night’s stay at the inn and discuss all of its benefits so that the planners may then pass their stories of their personal experience on to their customers. Another recommended business partnership is with local hair salons. Some salons offer on-site wedding services for hair and makeup. The stylists go directly to the location to do their work and will often take pictures to post on their own websites. The photographs would be mutually beneficial, as they would promote both the salon’s page and the inn.

In addition, some radio and television campaigns could be conducted. Advertising on

Pandora, iTunes Radio, or local radio stations could draw attention to the inn. News stations occasionally will profile new businesses; as it is on a historical property, The Daughter's Inn has a very workable angle for journalists and broadcasters. It is also possible to sponsor local news channels, which would get The Daughter's Inn's name on the air and give it a wide potential audience.

An open house could also be a great source of promotion. This would give interested people the opportunity to see the house in person before they book their stay. If the open house visitors like what they see, they could choose a room and make their reservation for a future date or for the same day if there are any open rooms.

## **Product Differentiation, Positioning and Branding**

### *Product Differentiation:*

The Daughter's Inn is much more than a conventional inn or bed and breakfast, offering a unique experience that is unlike any other. The inn will provide a restful getaway for couples old and young. Parents can have a weekend away from the hectic life of having a full-time job while raising children and will have time to enjoy each other's company while experiencing all the Inn has to offer.

The inn itself is located on a historic farm, which offers a classic American feel. Unlike other hotels or inns, The Daughter's Inn offers more than just a place for couples to sleep. There will be a barn, a restaurant, whiskey distillery, and many other exciting activities that make The Daughter's Inn one of a kind.

The barn itself will be used as a location for many different kinds of events. First and foremost, it will be used as a wedding and reception venue. The barn has a rustic feel that will make any wedding or reception look vintage and beautiful. It can also serve as a place where businesses can meet for corporate events, meetings, or celebrations. The barn is also an excellent place for birthday parties, anniversaries, christenings, and any other event that a customer may desire.

Not only is The Daughter's Inn an event venue and an inn, but it will also include a five star restaurant. The food will be grown and raised right on the property. The inn will serve its own organic produce and meats. Guests can enjoy a delicious, skillfully prepared five star meals from a name chef.

The Daughter's Inn will not only make its own food to serve to the guest, but they also offer their own whisky for couples to enjoy. The whisky is brewed right on the property at a

reasonable price.

While the inn has so much that separates itself from other establishments in the Frederick area, they go one step beyond. The inn can host its own craft shows and festivals with bands and games. Carriage rides would give the couple a tour of the Inn and its unique history. The inn can also have its own produce stand where they sell their organic produce to guests and customers.

The Daughter's Inn provides a unique experience that separates itself from its competitors, making it one of the most individual and high-quality places in Frederick, Maryland

*Positioning:*

In order to make a trip to The Daughter's Inn a memorable getaway, it is important to establish the inn's position. Our target market of vacationing or engaged couples are looking for a place to get away from their busy lives so it is important to give them a memorable retreat. The Daughter's Inn promises to fulfill the needs of its guests as well as provide various activities and services that each guest can enjoy in a comfortable and relaxing-- yet upscale-- environment.

In order to achieve success, it is crucial for the inn to have unique and desirable features. The Daughter's Inn is different from its competitors in that it offers similar services but additionally offers much more. The Daughter's Inn should have a reception desk that is opened 24 hours as well as a multilingual staff who will be able to communicate with individuals from various backgrounds. There should also be a doorman service as well as valet parking, in order to provide each guest with the royal treatment they are expecting from such a lavish location. Once the guests reach their rooms, they will receive a personalized greeting along with fresh flowers and a customized present to their liking. Through room service, there will be a 24-hour minibar, food, and beverage service. At night as each guest prepares for bed, the inn can offer a turndown service where each guest's bed will be prepared for sleeping.

*Branding:*

The Daughter's Inn's mission is to make each guest's stay as unique and unforgettable as possible. In order to accomplish such a task, The Daughter's Inn must obtain qualities that will set it apart from local and surrounding inn's. We recommend a slogan for The Daughter's Inn such as "The Daughter's Inn: Like No Place You've Ever Been." In order to live up to this slogan, The Daughter's Inn must adhere to specific service values. The employees must place emphasis on customer service and hospitality above everything. Employees must also be dressed in uniformed attire in order to identify themselves as employees of The Daughter's Inn. As far as logo design goes, we suggest choosing specific colors coordinated for use within the inn and on promotional materials. We recommend some combination of: black, white, periwinkle, burnt umber, maroon, pink, and yellow or gold. We also suggest creating a logo that will exemplify The Daughter's Inn's rustic image, with icons such as a carriage or a simplified house.



## **Marketing Implementation and Timetable for Completion**

In order to get The Daughter's Inn the public recognition required, the inn will need to embark on a huge marketing endeavor. To build brand awareness, we recommend that The Daughter's Inn host an open house as a way to introduce the inn to the community. The open house would highlight the inn's many amenities and unique qualities.

As soon as possible, we recommend for The Daughter's Inn to create a logo and marketing color palette. Once this has been developed, a website should be constructed with a well thought out and cohesive design.

At six months before completion of the inn, The Daughter's Inn's website should go live. At the same time, we recommend building a strong professional presence on Facebook and Twitter. Web advertisements should also begin to run at this point to attract traffic to the site. Doing so six months before opening will give time for word to spread about the inn.

Two months before opening, advertising should begin in local high-end magazines. A representative from The Daughter's Inn should start attending regional bridal expos such as Wedding Experience to promote the venue for weddings and receptions. In addition, ads should begin airing on local radio stations. Online booking of reservations for the restaurant, inn, and barn venue should open around the same time.

A month before opening, brochures and other publications should be placed in local businesses to promote both the inn and the upcoming open house.

Two weeks before opening, we recommend sending personalized open house invitations to people who have supported the inn thus far, as well as to VIP guests (such as local government officials and local business and restaurant owners).

We think the night of the open house should be the first night the inn, restaurant, and barn

venue are officially open for business. See Appendix E on page 45 for a visual.

## **Evaluation**

By following the advised promotion methods above, The Daughter's Inn is guaranteed to meet and exceed the goals outlined within the Marketing Objectives. A business's first year is always the most difficult; as a result, the majority of our objectives are relatively low estimates and we are positive that with careful marketing and well-maintained customer relationships, the inn will soar past those numbers and secure a place within the market.

*First Objective: Achieve profit and occupancy milestones within the first year.*

During its first year, it is extremely difficult for a business to profit. Losses from the daily cost of advertising, maintaining and running the inn are to be expected. However, we expect that the inn will have entirely paid off all of the costs of these losses and of the inn's initial construction within ten years. Earnings should be checked on a quarterly basis and graphed in order to track the inn's financial growth.

Keep a daily record of the number of restaurant and inn guests. As described in the Marketing Objectives, we hope that at least 5,000 guests (approximately 95 guests per week) will eat at the inn during its first year of business. This number should increase in each following year, with a goal of 8,000 guests (approximately 150 per week) by its third year of business.

By offering a free stay at The Daughter's Inn in radio or sweepstakes competitions, it would be possible to scout potential customers for the inn. Those entering any sort of contest usually do so because they are interested in the prize; even if this is not the case, the entries would provide email addresses and other contact information which can be used to send out promotional emails or flyers. Continuously running similar contests would further stimulate interest, while tracking entry rates could display the number of potentially interested customers.

*Second Objective: Create brand recognition through successful traditional and e-marketing campaigns.*

As we have stressed before, an effective, usable, high-quality website will be crucial not only in promoting the inn but also in determining awareness. It is possible to use analytics programs to track page views and see the frequency of views, the number of unique vs. repeat viewers, and the areas where views are coming from. Not only does this show how many people are seeing the site, but it also may show which areas in particular contain large markets to focus advertisements on.

For example: if there are few advertisements directed toward the Urbana area but a large number of unique views are coming from that area, we then know that Urbana contains a sizable number of potential customers and further marketing efforts can be focused on the area. Checking and analyzing the views on a bi-weekly or monthly basis would not only track progress toward our goal of 10,000 unique views by the end of the first year of business but would also show which areas need to be focused on or which markets could be tapped in the future, allowing advanced planning of the locations for upcoming advertisements.

It is also possible to see how many views to the website come from outside sources. By tabulating how many views come from each of the sites our advertisements are located on, it will be possible to see which are the most effective in routing traffic to The Daughter's Inn's website. If the inn advertises regularly on a site but finds that the site provides only a few-to-no incoming views per month, the inn can then stop running ads on that particular site and use the resulting surplus of advertising funds to advertise on a different site. Doing so will also show which webpages provide the most incoming traffic, supporting future promotion on that site.

Chart the monthly numbers of additional Facebook likes or Twitter followers, as well as

the numbers of unique site views. This can be done on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. The purpose of this is to track when the most views or followers are gained and to see the progress being made toward our objectives. In future years, this information will be beneficial in determining when the site receives the largest and smallest volumes of traffic, helping to calculate expected sales and reservations.

Businesses are never built on permanently steady financial grounds and this instability must be anticipated and prepared for. The inn must be willing to adjust, increase, decrease, or entirely drop advertisements and features in order to maintain profitability. Careful tracking and charting of viewership and customer purchases will help to predict and decide which actions to take in the future. Despite the potential difficulties, the inn has all of the tools it needs to be an extremely successful and highly profitable enterprise.

## **Conclusion**

Running a business of any kind is never easy. Each day brings new challenges, some of which are impossible to prepare for. Markets are inconsistent, and consumer tastes and trends change almost as often as the wind changes direction. Skepticism is rampant; consumers know that a better value can be just a click away, and bad publicity from the biased nature of online reviews makes it difficult for businesses to attract customers and even more difficult for them to retain them.

The Daughter's Inn's strengths lie almost wholly in the quality of its location and its service. Other inns and event venues may have cheaper prices, but they cannot match the inn's luxurious rooms or the natural beauty, history, and rustic charm of its grounds. The inn puts everything a customer could desire into one convenient location. Its lavish and creative themed rooms offer an interesting and unique experience. Its versatile venue can serve a number of different purposes and thus fill a variety of needs. It prides itself in its history and utilizes its land to the fullest, providing guests with a healthy, natural farm-to-table restaurant experience that competing inns and restaurants cannot best. With owners that are no strangers to the challenges and difficulties of building a business up from nothing, the inn's future is in good hands.

But businesses are fickle, and a company can have all of the right qualities and still not succeed. To secure a place in the market, The Daughter's Inn must connect with customers, creating and maintaining strong relationships and reassuring the customer that their needs come first. In order to connect with those customers in the first place, it will be crucial to use all resources to the fullest. Social media opens channels of communication that print media cannot match, but that is not to say that print media should be disregarded entirely. Emphasizing that The Daughter's Inn is a destination with numerous features, amenities and activities and not

merely a location to eat or rest one's head will set it apart from competitors and attract the interest of customers from all over Maryland and the surrounding areas.

The Daughter's Inn has extremely high potential for success, but as of now, it is only in its infancy. It will take careful planning and prudent marketing decisions to transform it from a completely unknown enterprise into one of the strongest in all of Maryland. Consideration and application of the strategies outlined in this plan will help the inn achieve high levels of popularity and profitability while cementing it as one of the state's premier resorts.

## Appendix

### Appendix A

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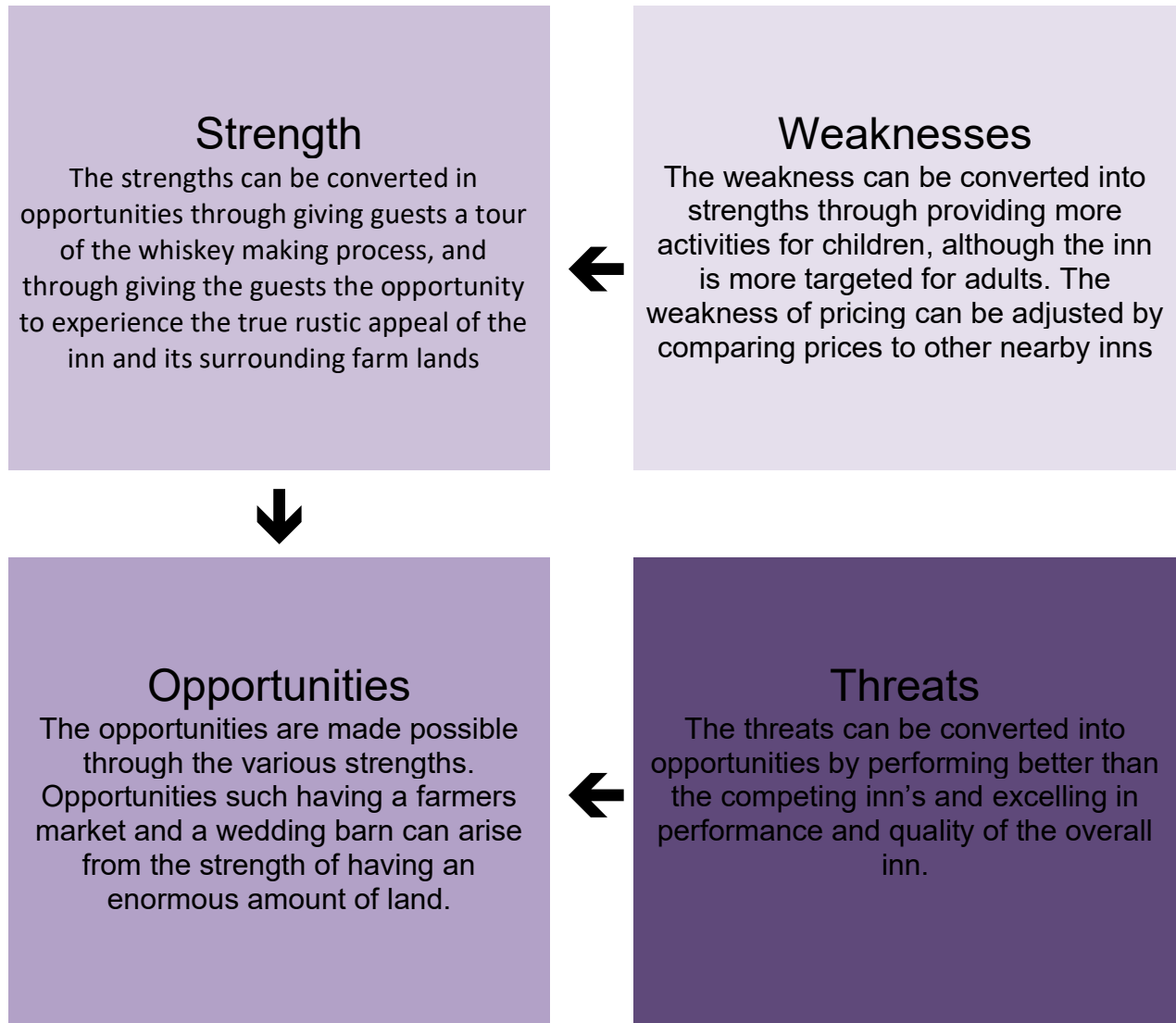
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Appendix C

(Households as of March of the following year. Income in current and 2012 CPI-U-RS adj (29))

Year	Number (thousands)	Upper limit of each fifth (dollars)			
		Lowest	Second	Third	Fourth
<b>CURRENT DOLLARS</b>					
2012	122,459	20,599	39,764	64,582	104,096
2011	121,084	20,262	38,520	62,434	101,582
2010 (37)	119,927	20,000	38,000	61,500	100,029

Appendix D

		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Sales	Reservations	\$576,000	\$633,600	\$696,000
	Dining	\$2,080,000	\$2,267,200	\$2,558,400
	Weddings/Events	\$1,440,000	\$1,680,000	\$1,920,000
	Total Sales	\$4,096,000	\$4,580,800	\$5,174,400
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Costs	Reservations	\$20,000	\$16,000	\$18,000
	Dining	\$520,000	\$566,800	\$639,600
	Weddings/Events	\$720,000	\$840,000	\$960,000
	Total Cost	\$1,260,000	\$1,422,800	\$1,617,600
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Profits	Profits	\$2,836,000	\$3,158,000	\$3,556,800

## Appendix E

Date	To Be Completed
As Soon As Possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Develop a logo and marketing color palette</li> <li>&gt;Build the website</li> </ul>
6 Months Before Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Website goes live</li> <li>&gt;Have a strong presence on Facebook and Twitter</li> <li>&gt;Begin web ads</li> </ul>
2 Months Before Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Magazine ads</li> <li>&gt;Have a presence at regional bridal expos</li> <li>&gt;Radio ads</li> <li>&gt;Offer booking for Restaurant, Inn, and Barn Venue</li> </ul>
1 Month Before Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Put out brochures and other publications in local businesses to promote both the inn and the open house.</li> </ul>
2 Weeks Before Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Send personalized open house invitations to VIP guests</li> </ul>
Opening Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Open House</li> <li>&gt;Inn, Restaurant, and Barn Venue are officially open for business.</li> </ul>