
Persepolis

Iranian Restaurant



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Social Media Strategy Project

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Executive Summary

In order to create the loyal customer base that Persepolis Iranian Restaurant seeks, a comprehensive social media strategy is needed to engage with customers and build a stronger online presence.

This proposed social media strategy aims toward this objective by leveraging Facebook and Instagram to showcase the restaurant's menu items, highlight the human experience, and engage with followers. By implementing this strategy, we anticipate the following results:

- Increased brand awareness and reach through social media channels
- Increased engagement with followers and customers through comments and likes
- Improved customer loyalty and retention
- Increased foot traffic and sales at the restaurant

To execute this social media strategy, we recommend allocating resources towards content creation and community management. Content creation involves developing a content calendar, creating and curating visual assets, and planning social media campaigns. Community management deals with monitoring and responding to comments, messages, and reviews, as well as moderating user-generated content. Additionally, we recommend dedicating at least 10-20 hours per week towards social media management and allocating a budget for paid social media advertising.

Social media is an ever-evolving landscape and Persepolis will need to be flexible and adaptable to changes in the industry, customer preferences, as well as the digital world. Regular review and adjustment of this proposed social media strategy and objectives will be necessary to ensure it remains effective and aligned with the restaurant's goals and mission.

Mission & Vision

MISSION

Persepolis Iranian Restaurant seeks to provide customers with a **memorable** and **authentic** dining experience that transports them to the **heart of Iran**. We are committed to using **fresh, high-quality** ingredients to create dishes served in a **warm** and **welcoming** atmosphere that makes your every visit feel right at home.

This mission statement clearly states that Persepolis aims to be an authentic, nutritional, and welcoming place to dine. In its day-to-day operations, the restaurant seeks to encapsulate a true taste of Iranian cuisine and culture. The restaurant atmosphere is specifically designed with warmth and friendliness in mind.

VISION

Persepolis Iranian Restaurant envisions a future where it is the staple dining destination for lovers of Iranian cuisine as well as a beloved part of the State College community.

This vision statement is short and succinct, painting Persepolis as not just a restaurant for those in the State College community, but a to-go location for lovers of Iranian cuisine. It also states that the restaurant seeks itself being weaved into the long-standing fabric of the town in the long run.

Competitor Analysis

COMPETITOR #1: COZY THAI

Cozy Thai has been a dearly loved restaurant in the State College area for almost 16 years, specializing in Thai cuisine. Currently, their most prominent and active social media accounts includes Instagram and Facebook.

Cozy Thai's instagram (@cozythaibistro) is primarily used for the purpose of updating their customer base on any last-minute restaurant changes (closing hours, break hours, and more). It currently has 386 followers and 80 posts, averaging under 10 likes per post. In 2022, they posted a total of 9 times.

The restaurant's Facebook is slightly more active, with 3K followers and 3K likes. Amongst posts updating their clientele regarding open hours, the page has also reposted community events and holiday wishes in the past.

STRENGTHS

- Large following (particularly on Facebook)
- Long-standing history in State College; loved by many
- Great ratings online

WEAKNESSES

- Rarely post anything non-informational
- Lack of engagement with followers
- Don't leverage their following
- Pictures often pixelated

COMPETITOR #2: ALLEN STREET GRILL

Allen Street Grill is an upscale contemporary American restaurant on one of the most historic corners of downtown State College. They specialize in an elevated experience featuring a sophisticated bar program and small menu. The restaurant also currently only has Instagram and Facebook.

The Instagram (@allenstreetgrill) features high-quality pristine photos of food on the Grill's menu. It currently has 1,612 followers and 505 posts. They tend to post several times a week, whether it's a special wine, views of the restaurant interior, or a menu item.

Allen Street Grill's Facebook page is much like the Instagram -- posts are cross-listed between pages, making it cohesive. The page currently has 1.5K followers and 1.3K likes.

STRENGTHS

- Large following on both platforms
- Product photos are well-produced and professional-looking
- Posts and captions are well thought-out and draw in engagement (hashtags prominent)
- Community-minded

WEAKNESSES

- Low engagement compared to follower count
- Limited variation in content

COMPETITOR #3: OEUF BOEUF ET BACON

Oeuf Boeuf et Bacon is a relatively newer restaurant, having opened just last year. It identifies as a diner that serves French and American fare. The restaurant itself has a vintage aesthetic, with chrome details and red and white striped booths. The restaurant has both an Instagram and Facebook, but no other social media.

The Instagram (@oeufboeufetbacon) has 310 followers and 42 posts. It features a combination of menu items, news, French culture, and informational content. Posts average between 15-40 likes each.

The Facebook page is identical to the Instagram. However, it has significantly more engagement, with 768 likes and 1K followers.

STRENGTHS

- Clever captions that engage audience and promote conversation
- Variety of content could potentially engage different audiences
- Substantial customer base

WEAKNESSES

- Pictures are often low quality, edited differently, or framed oddly
- A jumble of content -- no constant theme

COMPETITOR #4: INDIA PAVILION

India Pavilion is considered a staple Indian restaurant in the State College area. It is active on Instagram and Facebook.

India Pavilion's Instagram (@indiapavilion.psu) has 606 followers with 181 posts. The Instagram features pictures of menu items, dining room arrangements, announcements regarding closures and hours, as well as some funny holiday posts. Posts average around 10-20 likes.

The Facebook is exactly the same as the Instagram in terms of posts and captions. The page has around 1.9K followers, and posts average around 20 likes.

STRENGTHS

- Large following on both platforms
- Large variety of content, some of which inspires engagement
- Long-standing, trusted business

WEAKNESSES

- Posts are targeted towards different audiences; no consistency
- Photos and editing seem a bit dated
- Memes seem out of place for a restaurant's Instagram page

Objectives

The objective of this social media strategy campaign is for Persepolis to **build a strong customer base within the State College community**. These customers would hopefully be loyal to Persepolis and visit the restaurant on a regular basis, recommending the food and atmosphere to their friends as well.

This objective will be determined via **high engagement on social media**.

The key performance indicator for the objective of higher engagement on social media will be to maintain an average **engagement rate of more than 5%** on Instagram and Facebook posts over the course of the next 6 months. After that, we will re-evaluate the objective and adjust KPIs accordingly.

OBJECTIVE:
STRONG
CUSTOMER BASE

KPI: 5%+
Engagement Rate
on IG and FB

Target Audience

The target audience for this campaign for Persepolis is **millennials** living in the central Pennsylvania area.

This significant population can be defined as people aged 29-43. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, **55.5% of the State College borough is made up of ages 20 to 44.**

EMarketer reported in 2019 that **90.4% of millennials are active on social networks.** Additionally, Statista surveys show that Facebook is millennials' favorite social networking platform, accessed by over 78% of the generation. 54% of American millennials are active on Instagram. This social media campaign would seek to reach these active, engaged millennial users.

In terms of food habits, FoodNavigator reports that millennials choose their food options based primarily on **cost and nutrition.** Additionally, over half (57%) of millennials say that they follow a special diet (vegan, keto, plant-based, etc.). Persepolis can aim to target millennials who tend to place a high value on their health and nutrient consumption.

Our target audience also includes those who are open, educated, and have the financial stability to try out new ethnic foods (which can often be a bit more expensive). Since Iranian cuisine is still niche in the United States, it can be inferred that most Americans view it as a novelty. However, according to CustomCulinary's 2019 Ethnic Flavor Trend Report, **75% of U.S. adults have an affinity for trying new foods and flavors.** We aim to reach this majority sub-demographic.

Persona



Age: 34
Job: HR Director
Home: State College, PA
Status: Married, No Kids

Millennial Maddy

"Variety is the very spice of life, that gives it all its flavor." - William Cowper

Likes

- Trying new things
- Travelling
- Sunny days
- Pet dogs
- Community-building events
- After work happy hour
- Hiking new trails
- Taking photos and posting for friends and family
- Keeping in touch with old friends
- Chatting with strangers

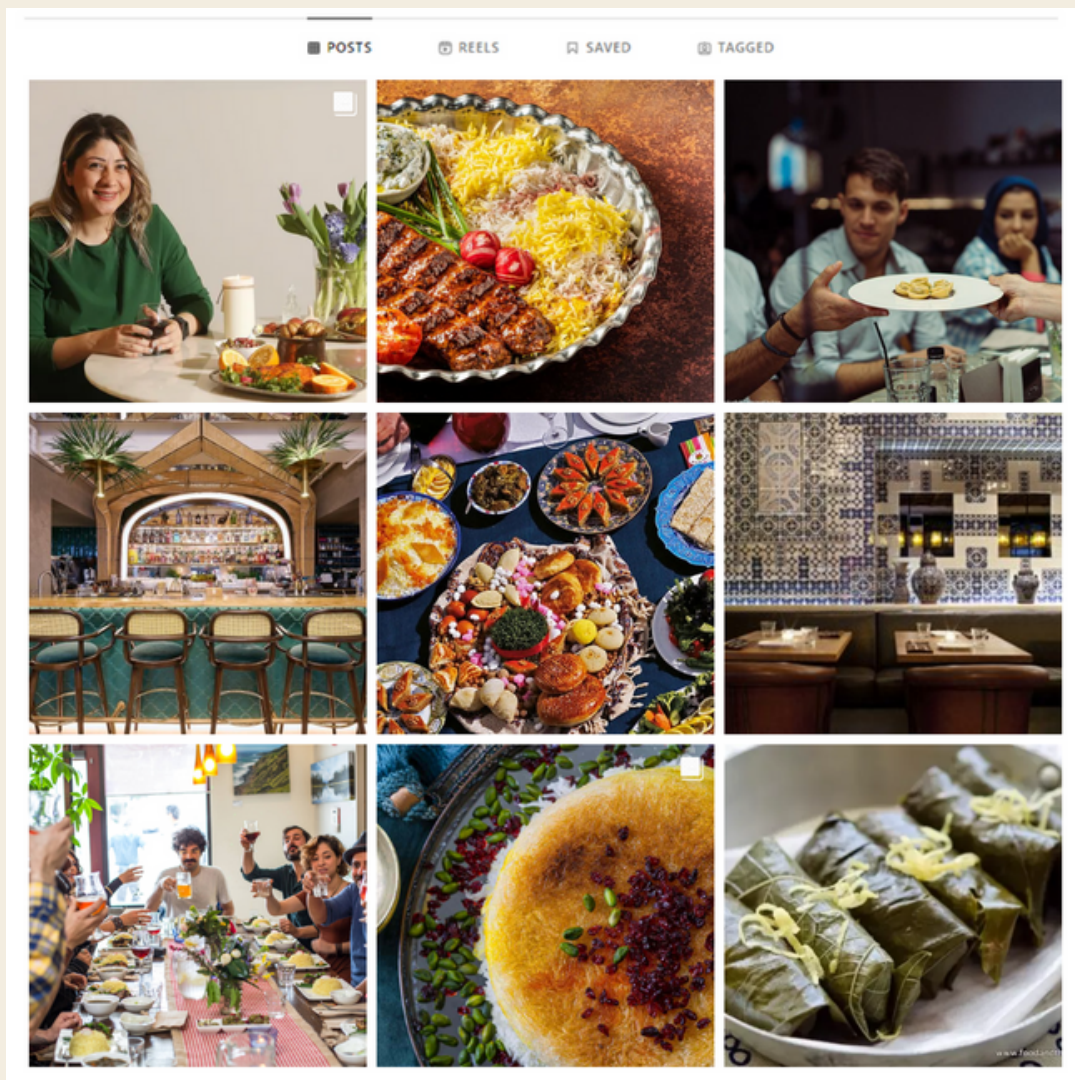
Dislikes

- Laziness
- Monotony
- Rainy days
- Doing the same thing, day after day
- Rowdy people
- Being late or disorganized
- Being alone for an extended period of time
- Being bored
- "Live to work" mentality
- Excessive spending

Maddy is someone who represents our target audience. She is a millennial, working a mid- to senior-level job, who is financially stable. She enjoys going out, always has a new recommendation in mind when you ask for one, and can be the life of the party. She loves living in State College for its small-town feel coupled with the opportunities that come with the big-school environment. On weekends, she especially enjoys taking hikes in the morning, and traversing some of the upscale restaurants and bars in the area in the evening. She is easy-going, extroverted, and open-minded.

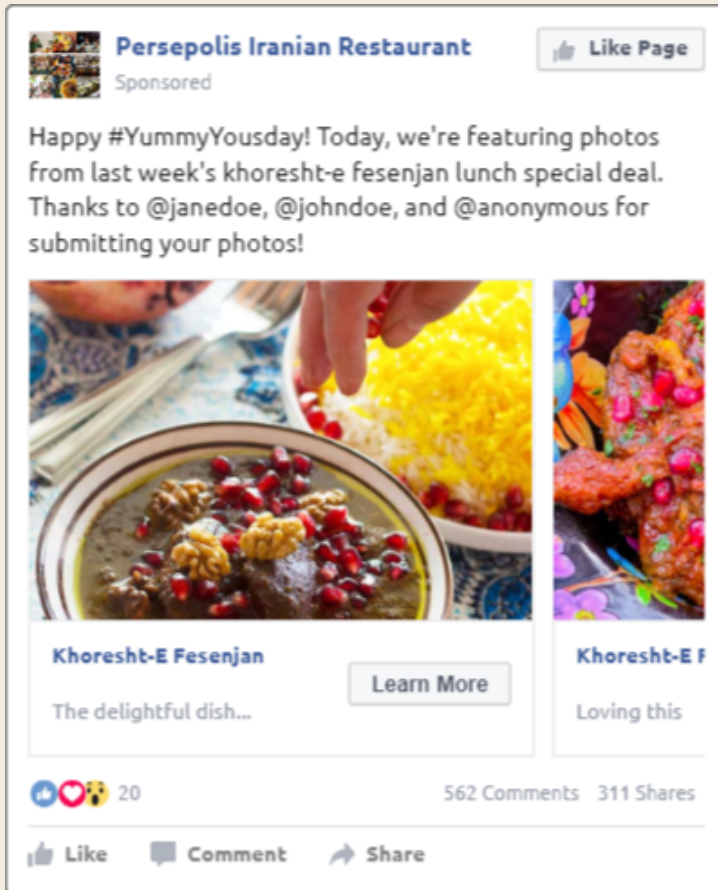
Content

The primary platforms chosen to fulfill the objective of building a stronger customer base are **Facebook and Instagram**. Since these two platforms are so closely intertwined (and pictures are able to be cross-posted on both instantaneously), I've chosen to group them together. Though more older millennials are on Facebook, the younger millennials tend to be on Instagram. This strategy can cover both bases and drive engagement on both.



Since Persepolis is a restaurant, the content will be similar to that of its competitors -- **photos of the restaurant interior** and **menu items**. However, to further push the idea of Persepolis as a community base, there will be more pictures of human beings interacting with and eating at Persepolis.

An approach to consider could be incorporating **user-generated content** into the social media strategy by encouraging customers to send in photos and stories from their dining experience at Persepolis. This approach not only generates (free!) content, but also fosters a sense of engagement and loyalty among customers.



Another idea would be to share **behind-the-scenes photos and videos** that give followers a glimpse into the inner workings of the restaurant, such as the kitchen, food preparation, and staff interactions. This content could potentially help build trust between the restaurant and its followers, as well as showcase the dedication and hard work that goes into creating the Persepolis experience.

A final idea for content could be **Instagram and Facebook Reels** detailing the process of making a certain menu item. Similar to @chewchewbun's approach to Reels, this will be a dynamic, sensational type of video that can draw attention to certain foods on the menu and how they're made.

An extra secondary platform we chose was **SMS text messaging**. According to TrueList, 75% of millennials prefer SMS communication for surveys, promotions, and deliveries. Although not social, we believe the addition of this platform will provide a much cheaper, quicker, and effective way to reach customers. This piece of owned media can be a conduit through which updates about menu items, special deals, and potential closures can be pushed. Loyal customers can get deals straight to their phones, and a customer base can be slowly built through this text messaging service.



The combination of these two platforms, Facebook/Instagram and SMS texts, can help Persepolis build a community. With Instagram and Facebook, there's a community and social aspect built in. With SMS texts, it is more likely for customers to return based on certain sales or deals, or even just to get informed of something that is going on.

Schedule

Instagram and Facebook

To stay consistent and garner engagement, we will be cross-posting on Instagram and Facebook 3-4 times a week. This will be throughout the week on unique days.

An idea for a unique weekly segment would be a Tuesday post called "Yummy You-sday." This would be similar to @psubarstool's "Good Boy Friday" posts, where they post followers' dogs that they send in. "Yummy You-sday" would also showcase user-generated content, mostly with pictures of food and testimonials.

The other 2-3 posts of the week could be the lunch special of the week (posted on Monday morning before opening), a behind-the-scenes look at the kitchen, or an interior shot of the restaurant on a particularly nice day of the week.

As stated previously, this schedule will roll for about 6 months, after which we will re-evaluate the strategy and adjust KPIs accordingly.

SMS Text Messaging

To avoid over-saturation of texts, SMS messages should be sent approximately two or three times a week, maximum. Since there aren't that many rolling deals on a weekly basis, there won't be that much information to push out to customers either way.

Monitoring

Since monitoring can be a very time-consuming yet crucial task, it is important to hire a designated person or team to tackle it. Persepolis could potentially leverage students at Penn State looking for social media internships to find a staff member to monitor the social media. As for how often the social media should be monitored engagement, it would be good to check social media accounts at least once a day and respond to comments and messages within 24 hours. However, during busy times, such as during special deals or events, it may be necessary to monitor more frequently.

From a **proactive perspective**, the people responsible for monitoring and community engagement can develop and adhere to a content calendar and schedule regular posts that align with the restaurant's brand and objective. They can also actively engage with followers by responding to comments and messages promptly and authentically. These actions can help build a strong sense of community around the restaurant and create a more meaningful connection with followers.

From a **reactive perspective**, the social media manager must be prepared to respond to negative comments, particularly bad reviews, promptly and professionally. They should be trained in knowing how to respond, and the actions that can be taken to de-escalate a situation. Since negative feedback can be detrimental to the restaurant, it should be a priority to monitor and respond to these comments promptly and respectfully to demonstrate the restaurant's commitment to customer satisfaction.