

### **Client Selection and Approval:**

The Wakayama has been one of the best ramen places in Kamloops with authentic Japanese food for their customers. The person whose brains were behind this company is Danny, the owner of The Wakayama. Since 2019, they have been serving fresh ramen with their vision to become the most trusted Japanese ramen brand in the Kamloops area by ensuring high-quality food to their customers. The interview conducted with the manager of The Wakayama, information related to the company and their PR strategies were utilised as a reference for the presentation. The approval from the manager was taken for creating a campaign regarding the re-opening of the restaurant which is currently temporarily closed due to some plumbing issues and will reopen on 1<sup>st</sup> January.

### **Research and Analysis:**

Japanese food has gained popularity in North America, with ramen as their trendiest food. The market moved from focusing on sushi to embracing ramen, izakaya dining, among other forms of comfort food from Japan. Ramen has grown into a top contender in the quick-service and fast-casual dining sectors. The ramen industry highlights fresh ingredients, artisanal broths, and techniques for meal preparation authentically. This has made it a very competitive space because many restaurants currently vie for unique broth flavors, high-quality noodles, and even customize-your-own dishes.

The main targets will be the age group between 18 and 35 years, including young adults such as students, young working professionals, and families seeking friendly dining experiences with some semblance of quality. The target audiences include Japanese food enthusiasts and people who enjoy tasting any type of food.

**Direct Competitors:** Other Japanese or ramen restaurants in Kamloops include Tiger Ramen and possibly Sushi Valley. Each is unique in some way, regarding menu, price point, and dining experience.

**Indirect Competitors:** Fast casual and quick-service restaurants offering other Asian cuisine-for example, Korean, Chinese, or Thai-target the very same demographic that is looking for affordable meals served fast but with innovative flavors. Asian fusion and modern bistros also target similar audiences by offering international or fusion-inspired dishes.

Wakayama currently uses social media as its main form of public relations. Through Instagram and Facebook posts, Wakayama highlights its restaurant hours, seasonal discounts and menus, and special events to attract new customers. Additionally, current PR for Wakayama includes its general media coverage (restaurant reviews, food articles), crisis management (response to plumbing issues), and lack of community events or business collaboration. The strengths of Wakayama's current PR include consistency, a strong social media presence, and regular and unique menu updates. Weaknesses include their high standards/failure to meet rush hours, the lack of PR outside social media, and the recent plumbing issue. Opportunities are their chance for seasonal promotions, utilization of the closure time, and a chance to collaborate with local businesses. Finally, the threats to Wakayama from its PR, are competition in ramen restaurants, negative reviews, and rising costs.

### **Client Needs and Goals:**

Based on our research and analysis, the needs of Wakayama's public relations efforts are to improve brand awareness, respond to negative reviews, separate themselves from their competitors, and recover from their plumbing closure. Further, the goals built from these are to enhance brand awareness through increasing social media following, prompting user-generated content, and securing local media mentions. Secondly, to maintain positive reviews and increase Wakayama's overall rating on review platforms by sharing customer experiences online, incentivizing feedback, and monitoring efforts of other ramen restaurants in Kamloops. Thirdly, establish a unique brand identity apart from competitors by highlighting Wakayama's distinct menu and exceptional dining experience, sharing Wakayama's history/story, and building community connections. Finally, an identified goal of Wakayama's PR efforts is to spread awareness and create suspense for their re-opening while working to rebuild community engagement.

## **PR Plan Development:**

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#### **Research:**

1. An in-depth analysis of Wakayama's current PR efforts, including social media activity, customer reviews, and general brand awareness in the Kamloops market. Competitor analysis identified strengths and weaknesses relative to other Japanese ramen restaurants such as Tiger Ramen and Sushi Valle.
2. Wakayama has many followers on social media but lacks broader community engagement and media exposure beyond its online platforms. This research can help identify specific PR needs such as increasing brand awareness, addressing feedback, and strengthening the brand's presence in Kamloops.

#### **Objective:**

- Increase brand awareness: increase local awareness of Wakayama by 25% within six months through social media campaigns and local media coverage.
- Enhance customer experience: increase service satisfaction during peak hours by implementing feedback-based improvements, with the goal of increasing positive reviews by 15%.
- Unique brand positioning: solidify Wakayama's identity as an authentic Japanese ramen in Kamloops by sharing stories and values.
- REOPENING ENGAGEMENT:** Create buzz and energize the community for the January reopening with the goal of attracting 500 new followers and generating 100 user-generated posts within the first month.

#### **Strategy:**

- Storytelling and Community Spotlight: emphasize Wakayama's authentic Japanese ramen, exceptional quality and origin story through storytelling on social media and in local media.
- Community partnerships: partnering with local businesses and influencers for events that strengthen the brand's local base and encourage cross-promotion.
- Seasonal promotions and contests: use seasonal promotions and social media to drive interest and encourage user-generated content.

#### **Strategies:**

1. launch Instagram and Facebook targeted ads highlighting the reopening, new menu and promotional offers to engage residents and increase awareness.
2. issue a press release to local newspapers and food blogs and invite local food critics to an event prior to the reopening.
3. Hosted a "Share Your Ramen Moment" contest on social media, encouraging customers to post their Wakayama food experience using the brand hashtag to win a free meal or discount.
4. Update the website with reopening announcements, blog posts about Wakayama, and seasonal highlights; send bi-weekly emails with exclusive offers and updates.

**Implementation:**

1. Begin social media advertising and influencer promotions one month prior to reopening. Host an activity in advance, followed by a press release. Launch a “Share Your Ramen Moment” contest on the day of the reopening.
2. A member of the PR team will be responsible for social media and PR efforts, supported by local influencers and community business partners.
3. Real-time tracking of engagement rates, ad coverage and customer feedback, adjusting strategy as needed to achieve optimal results.

**Reporting:**

1. use social media analytics, customer surveys. Measure progress of follower growth, engagement rates, media coverage and platform ratings monthly.

**PESO****Paid media:**

1. Instagram and Facebook ads: targeted ads showcasing new menus, reopening events and seasonal promotions. These ads will target students, young professionals and families in Kamloops and are designed to increase engagement by 15%.
2. Paid partnerships with local food influencers to post about Wakayama's reopening and dining experience to reach their fan base and encourage visits.

**Earned media:**

1. a detailed press release announcing the reopening and the story behind Wakayama's authentic ramen will be sent to local newspapers, food blogs and news sites to attract media interest and attention
2. Invite well-known food bloggers to a pre-opening tasting event. Their posts and reviews will add credibility and expand the reach of the area.

**Shared media:**

1. Launch a “Share Your Ramen Moment” contest on Instagram and Facebook, encouraging fans to post about their experiences at Wakayama for a chance to win a free meal. This will increase user-generated content and create natural reach. Encourage diners to share their Wakayama cuisine using branded hashtags that will be highlighted on Wakayama's Instagram and Facebook pages to build a loyal community of fans.

**Owned media:**

1. update the website with new content about the reopening, a blog post series about the Wakayama story, and a seasonal menu highlights section. The site will become a hub for customers to access information.
2. send out a bi-weekly newsletter with exclusive offers, reopening countdown updates and previews of new menu items. This will keep customers directly informed.