**BlueTickSocial**

**MKTG 494**

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**Company Description**

BlueTickSocial is a company located in Arlington, Virginia, just outside of Washington, DC. The company goes by BTS for short. BTS is a woman-owned and women-led digital marketing agency that helps customers increase sales, connect with audiences, or drive traffic to their website. To help their clients meet their goals, BTS provides multiple services. Digital consultations are one service provided by BTS and it includes one-on-one meetings with clients to talk about their digital marketing goals. The first consultation with a client is free. Another service that BTS provides is a digital strategy, which includes creating custom strategies that are based on the client’s target audience, industry, and marketing goals. Digital management is another service that BTS offers that involves managing a client’s online presence and the growth of their social accounts. PR & writing is a key service that BTS provides, this service utilizes keywords and SEO optimization to increase the publicity of a client’s brand. BTS also creates custom websites and social pages for clients that are just beginning or want a change in their online presence. Lastly, BTS manages clients’ ads and campaigns by maximizing the ad spend to reach their desired ROI. Overall, BTS provides six services that ultimately help build a brand’s digital presence. BTS works in over 17 industries and has grown by 200% each year (internally and externally). Most BTS customers are start-up companies that are trying to build their brand and increase brand awareness. BTS works with a variety of different clients, for example, BTS works with companies related to food, dentists, swimwear/clothing, real estate, and even medical practices. Almost all BTS clients want to grow their following so that they can increase their sales. The generic profile of a BTS customer would be a new business owner, that is aged anywhere from 23 – 50 that is in need of expanding their company’s brand and creating an online presence for the company (2).

**Job Description**

*Job Title and Place of Employment:*Social Media Marketing Intern in Arlington, VA (remote)

*Job Summary:* For this position, the intern will be using their digital marketing skills to create and schedule content. The intern should know how to use digital marketing tools, such as Canva. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Tik Tok, and LinkedIn. These are the main social media platforms that the intern will be utilizing. The intern will be given their tasks for the week every Monday at 9 am and will be expected to complete their work by Friday at 5 pm. Every Tuesday at 9:30 am there will be a marketing meeting to discuss the progress of the intern’s work and to clarify any questions the intern may have. At the beginning of the intern’s start date, the intern will be assigned a specific client(s) that the intern will be completing tasks to reach the individual client’s goals. Every month, the intern will send in an analytics report.

*Qualifications:* A hardworking individual who possesses creative thinking, the ability to work with Canva and other content-creating tools, a knowledge of social media platforms and trends, a well-organized individual who has the ability to multitask, and has knowledge of video-editing tools.

*Working Conditions:* This position is fully remote, but interns are expected to attend weekly meetings and dress professionally. Interns do not have a strict work schedule or a certain number of hours to be worked but are expected to complete all of their work by Friday at 5 pm.

*Salary and Benefits:* This internship is unpaid but class credit for a college course will be provided if the intern wishes

*Job Relationships:* The intern will report to the Digital Marketing Manager and submit their work to the Digital Marketing Manager

*Specific Duties and Responsibilities:*

* Create content that is relevant to the client’s goals and company values
* Research trends and practices on different social media platforms
* Schedule and post content for clients
* Communicate and collaborate with other employees to share ideas
* Report the analytics for content that is posted and a client’s social media platforms

**Marketing Audit of the Company**

**The Marketing Environment**

*The Macroenvironment*

BlueTickSocial will be affected by the increasing unemployment rate and material shortages. Although BlueTickSocial does not sell actual products, they provide digital services for companies that do sell tangible products. The material shortages will impact their business because if companies do not have materials to make their products, then they will not be selling as much of their product, which will result in companies not having enough money in their budget to pay for BlueTickSocial’s services. This issue will affect BlueTickSocial in the short run and intermediate run. However, it will not impact the company in the long run because if material shortages continue, then BlueTickSocial will need to adapt by lowering their prices or expanding their services.

The increasing unemployment rate will greatly impact BlueTickSocial since it is a small company with under ten employees. The unemployment rate will affect the company more heavily in the intermediate and long run, than in the short run because right now BlueTickSocial is thriving with their key employees, but in the future when they want to expand, the unemployment rate will make that difficult. For BlueTickSocial, the process technology has not recently changed. Since BlueTickSocial is a technology-based digital marketing company, the process is consistent. A substitute that could potentially replace BlueTickSocial’s services, is consumer knowledge. For instance, the next generation of business owners will be more technologically advanced than the current business owners, which could make the company obsolete.

The current laws and regulations about equal pay for women and men, will not negatively impact BlueTickSocial since it is a women-owned and women-led company (11). The regulations will only make BlueTickSocial more desirable for people who are looking for jobs, especially women looking for employment. The recent privacy laws in Virginia regarding advertising could affect BlueTickSocial (8). BlueTickSocial does run advertisements for companies as one of their services and the privacy laws will make it more difficult to target a specific audience with advertisements.

Due to COVID-19, most people have changed their lifestyles. Instead of work being the main focus of their life, people are focusing more on doing what makes them happy and taking care of their mental health. Consumers have also adapted to the virus’s implications by shopping online more frequently than in-store. “When it comes to shopping, 55% are making online purchases more frequently during COVID than they did before, and 50% are shopping in person at stores less frequently” (11). Therefore, BlueTickSocial’s business is even more relevant to potential clients because businesses that did not have an online presence before COVID-19, have had to change their style of marketing.

*Task Environment*

 The market size for digital marketing advertising agencies has increased every year since 2015. According to an IBISWorld report, digital advertising agencies in the US, have increased by 8.1% from 2017-2022. The market size has grown by 4.6% in 2022 (7). Geographically, the United States is responsible for over 20% of the global market size for digital advertising and marketing. China, the second largest economy in the world, is estimated to reach a market size of 139.3 billion in 2027 for the global market of digital advertising and marketing (6).

Compared to its competitors, BlueTickSocial’s prices are fairly expensive. In an interview I conducted with the marketing manager, Lane Tower, we discussed how BlueTickSocial’s reputation was compared to its competitors. Tower explained how even though BlueTickSocial is more expensive than their competitors, there is a good reason they are a bit pricey. She basically said it was due to the outstanding quality, effort, time, skills, and services that BlueTickSocial provides for their clients. Once clients see how much work the BlueTickSocial team puts in for their clients and the quality of the content, then they understand the pricing (10).

Clients that work for a larger company and have a larger marketing budget will pay for more of BlueTickSocial’s services than clients with a lower marketing budget. BlueTickSocial offers one free consultation to discuss the clients' goals and then the client can decide which services they would like to pay for. BlueTickSocial also offers several different packages that the customer can choose from to better meet their needs. The packages with more services included will obviously be more expensive, and therefore, more attractive to larger companies. The buyers in this market are seeking services that will increase their online presence so that they can ultimately increase their sales. Some buyers need websites or social media platforms created, while others are looking for their social media platforms to be managed. To satisfy the buyers, the digital marketing agency must meet all of their goals by the desired time period, or the buyer will find another digital marketing agency to fulfill their needs and wants.

 Tower was not allowed to discuss with me the names of the company’s competitors but through research I found BluShark Digital LLC, Plush Marketing Agency, and WebFX to be three key potential competitors for BlueTickSocial. The strategy BluShark Digital utilizes is based on four fundamentals of search engine optimization including technical optimization, sophisticated optimization, authoritative link-building, and local optimization (4). The Plush Marketing Agency uses video production, social media advertising, website design, search engine optimization, and photography sessions as their strategies (5). WebFx practices search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, social media marketing, and email marketing to meet their clients’ goals (3). BluShark Digital specializes in marketing for local law firms in the Washington, DC area because the founder was an accomplished attorney (4). A strength BluShark Digital has that BlueTickSocial does not have is the number of employees. BluShark has roughly three times as many employees as BlueTickSocial does. The Plush Marketing Agency focuses most of their efforts on video production. They have about the same number of employees that BlueTickSocial has, the only advantage that they have over BlueTickSocial is that they provide more services, such as video production, photography sessions, and WIFI marketing (5). WebFX has been established for more than 25 years and they have approximately 450 award-winning online marketers. Since WebEx has been an established business for about 20 years longer than BlueTickSocial, their website has way more content, which makes the business look more professional and reliable (3).

Social media platforms are the trade channels that are bringing the BlueTickSocial services to the consumer. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Zoom are the main trade channels that BlueTickSocial utilizes to get their service to their client. In 2020, Facebook’s growth rate was estimated at 8.7% and will continue to increase on average, by 2% every year until 2024 (1).

**Marketing Strategy Review**

The mission statement of BlueTickSocial is clearly stated on the home page of their website. It states, “Whether you want to connect with audiences, increase sales, or drive traffic to your pages, we help to leverage social media platforms with a customized strategy to meet your social media goals” (2). The slogan and corporate objective for BlueTickSocial is “Let Us Take You Beyond The Social” (2). Both of these statements correspond well with each other because the mission statement goes into depth about BlueTickSocial’s goals for their clients and the corporate objective is a quick, big picture of the company. The marketing objective for BlueTickSocial is, “We help businesses amplify their digital presence, discover their brand voice, and become more influential in the online market” (2). The marketing objectives are clear enough to guide marketing plans, but they are not clear enough to complete a performance measurement. To be able to complete a performance measurement with the marketing objective, BlueTickSocial needs to be more specific with their goals. The marketing goals are appropriate given the resources BlueTickSocial has and its competitive position. The objective is fairly vague because it reflects the company’s resources, which are not abundant due to BlueTickSocial being a small, new company. The core strategy that BlueTickSocial uses to accomplish its marketing objectives is, “We utilize a comprehensive approach that includes analysis, identification, strategy, execution, and ongoing cultivation – all applied to help you achieve success with your social media marketing” (2). This strategy is very clear and sound. It demonstrates that the marketing objectives are measured and accomplished through analysis, identification, and constant cultivation of the BlueTickSocial team members. The marketing resources are mainly allocated to the services that the company provides. Through training their employees, content creating websites, and boosting their content, most of their resources go to the services portion of the company. Some marketing resources are allocated to the sales force but that is mainly encompassed in the employee salary.

**Review of Marketing Organization and Management Structure**

BlueTickSocial is managed by Yasmine Khosrowshahi, the founder and CEO. She attended Wake Forest University and founded BlueTickSocial in 2019. BlueTickSocial was established in Arlington, VA, which is where Khosrowshahi is originally from. Since BlueTickSocial is a fairly new company, there is no parent organization or other locations (2).

The company's organizational structure follows a functional structure (Appendix 1). There is a marketing manager, Lane Tower, who oversees the marketing team and conducts research on new marketing techniques. The marketing team reports to Tower and Khosrowshahi, but they each have their own clients and responsibilities. Lauren Rowe is the Senior Editor and PR Specialist, and she works with the marketing team to create content wording. The CEO, Khosrowshahi, oversees the growth of the company, both internally and in clientele size, and makes sure that all operations are working soundly.

The marketing team, including the BlueTickSocial interns, are assigned weekly tasks that have to be completed by Friday for their specific clients. On Tuesdays, content that is created by the marketing team is sent to Rowe, the Senior Editor, for approval. Meetings with clients are conducted a few times a month by the marketing team. Tower and Khosrowshahi usually join the client meetings as well.

When I was first applying to BlueTickSocial, I communicated with the marketing manager through email and expected that to be the main source of communication throughout the internship. However, the main way employees communicate at BlueTickSocial is through an app called “Slack”. Slack is similar to just texting in a group chat. There are different Slack groups employees are in that are categorized by the clients the employees work with and the different teams in the company, like the marketing team. Slack can be both informal and formal, but for BlueTickSocial, that is the only way the team members really communicate. Compared to my past internship and other organizations I have worked with, the communication style at BlueTickSocial is very different. In the past, I have strictly communicated with my employer and employees through email or phone calls. I prefer the informal communication that BlueTickSocial uses because it is easier to use and more efficient. The different departments communicate smoothly through the Slack app. Each department has to work together for every piece of content and task completed. The marketing team creates the content or manages a social media platform, and the editor and PR department check the content wording and approve the final submission.

The marketing department seems well trained and supervised, but there seems to be a lack of motivation when it comes to client meetings and content creation. I think the marketing team would feel more motivated and eager to complete their work if the manager would remind them why their work is important and show them how they have helped the client’s company grow.

Although my position is remote, the work environment in the BlueTickSocial office seems to be pleasant and laid back. The remote work environment is also pleasant because the managers check in with the interns frequently and give feedback regarding the content submissions. Since all of the BlueTickSocial employees are young, the work environment they have created is very progressive. The work is still completed, and the deadlines are still met, but their workload is not overwhelming, and they have fun in the office, like when they make Tik Toks together. The managers welcome any suggestions, even from the interns. In our weekly marketing meetings, the marketing manager reminds us to send her any new ideas we may have or share with her areas we want to gain more experience in.

**Review of Marketing Functional Areas**

*Services*

The service objectives for BlueTickSocial are to increase awareness of a client’s brand, amplify their digital presence, increase sales, and drive traffic to websites/social media platforms (2). These objectives are specific and attainable by the BlueTickSocial team. These current services are meeting the service objectives. One of BlueTickSocial’s clients stated, “I have had the pleasure of working with BlueTickSocial for my dental practice. They have maximized my presence on social media in innovative ways. They have increased my exposure in the community (users) and professionally. They are consistently looking for new content and working to highlight and promote my practice. Without hesitation, I highly recommend their services" (12). The only services that BlueTickSocial could consider phasing out is website design and digital management. Since the next generation of business owners will be more tech-savvy than the current business owners, there will not be as much of a need for website design or digital management because most people will know how to do it and will not need to pay for those services.

*Price*

 The prices for the services at BlueTickSocial depend on the amount of services that the client is looking for or needs. “We offer several packages to our clients because each client’s needs are different. We offer special media, consulting, website, paid campaigns, blog writing and PR packages. The more services that are needed, the higher the price” (10). BlueTickSocial’s prices are more expensive when compared to their competitors. However, Lane Tower, the marketing manager at BlueTickSocial explains that “Once our clients see our quality of work and responsiveness, they understand why we price the way we do. We make our clients a priority - whether that means going the extra mile or responding to emails at unorthodox hours. Most agencies offer the posting of social media content, and we create, post, and manage the social media accounts”. The company uses various price promotions, such as the first consultation for a new client is free. This is to entice a potential new client to meet with our marketing team and discuss their ultimate goals to see how BlueTickSocial could help them accomplish those goals.

*Distribution*

 BlueTickSocial’s services are distributed through digital means. Since the company does not sell products, they do not need an actual distributor. The consultation service is provided through zoom meetings or in-person meetings. The digital strategy service is distributed to the client through a google document or slideshow to exemplify the various strategies the team created based on the clients’ goals, target audience, and industry. The digital management service and the PR/ Writing service are distributed directly through the clients’ social media platforms and websites. The ads and campaigning that the company provides are all digital advertising that is created through various platforms, like Facebook and Instagram. To create websites for clients, the company mainly uses WordPress, Webflow, Wix, and Shopify (BlueTickSocial). The digital distribution of the company’s services allows for maximum market coverage. For instance, BlueTickSocial has clients in the local DC area, in different countries, and in various industries, which the digital distribution of their services makes possible.

*Advertising, sales promotion, and publicity*

 The organization participates in advertising for their company to gain new clients, spread awareness about their brand, and to increase sales of their services. BlueTickSocial does not spend too much of their budget on advertising because the main way they promote their business is through social media platforms, like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Tik Tok. The company pays to “boost” their content on the social media platforms so that it reaches more people and each link click the ad receives after it has been boosted ranges from $1.25 - $3.00, on average. The managers can set a budget for the maximum amount of money they want to spend on the ad so that they do not go over budget. The ads that the company runs are informative about the services BlueTickSocial provides, testimonials from current clients, and persuasive to sign up for a free consultation. The company uses the same fonts, color scheme, and style for all of their advertisements and content so that it is consistent with their brand and easily recognized by others. The main advertising media the company utilizes is digital advertising. This type of advertising is effective for the company since they are a digital marketing agency, but BlueTickSocial could also benefit from print advertising in the local DC area, and broadcast advertising on the radio.

*Sales Force*

 The company focuses more on quality than quantity. Therefore, there are not that many employees, which is also because BlueTickSocial is a fairly new company. The employees that BlueTickSocial does have are all experts in certain areas and have a great amount of training and experience in their field. The sales force is large enough to accomplish their tasks and objectives, but I think the company would run more efficiently if there were a few more employees added to the team. The sales force is organized into different departments based on what they are experienced and educated in. There are just enough managers to guide the sales force. The marketing manager, Tower, guides the sales team, along with Rowe, who is the Senior Editor and PR Specialist. The sales force shows incredible morale and effort because the sales team is made up of members of the marketing team and other departments. Therefore, the employees try their best to gain new clients so that they will have more tasks to complete and ultimately make more money for the company.

**Personal Assessment**

 Throughout this internship, I have learned very beneficial time management skills. Time management has been an element that I have always struggled with during school and work activities. This internship taught me how to organize my work by completing a couple of tasks a day so that I did not get overwhelmed at the end of the week, when my final work was due. The content wording being due every Tuesday, really helped me with my time management skills and guided me through the rest of the week. It motivated me to get started on my tasks as soon as possible so that I did not have to rush on Tuesday morning to get my content wording figured out.

 My career goals have been somewhat reinforced because I definitely want to pursue marketing and I think it is something that I will excel at. However, this internship did make me realize that I do not necessarily want to work in the social media marketing field. I have enjoyed my internship and my managers have really liked my work thus far, I just think in the future I would rather be creating actual advertisements rather than creating content for social media platforms. I am still going to follow my original education plan, which is majoring in Business Marketing with a concentration in Digital Marketing and a minor in Computer Information Systems. I am going to continue to concentrate in Digital Marketing because there are other aspects to digital marketing than just social media, so I think that concentration will still benefit me in the long run. This internship also made me realize that there are potential job opportunities for me to work full-time remotely, which I would really enjoy.

 Last semester at JMU, I learned about Canva and how to use it. My internship really helped me strengthen my skills with Canva. I use Canva every day during the work week to complete my tasks for my internship. I have learned how to use new tools on Canva that I did not even know existed until this internship. My artistic skills have also greatly improved. For the content I create at BlueTickSocial, my manager does not give me an outline she just lets me create whatever I want. This was difficult for me at first because I used to struggle with creativity, but now my ideas and work are unique and innovative. Before my internship this summer, I did not know what Meta Business Suite was, but now, I constantly use the platform tool to schedule content and analyze how my content is doing. My communication skills have significantly improved throughout my internship because for my position it is vital that I am communicating with the other interns to discuss new ideas, and to communicate with my managers frequently.

 I have learned the technique of being a progressive manager. Meaning a manager that does not sit behind a desk and bark orders, but a manager who works with his/her employees and knows them on a personal level. That is the technique that the BlueTickSocial CEO exemplifies, and I can tell it makes the employees in the office feel relaxed and welcomed. I think that people do their best work when they are relaxed, instead of stressed and uptight. So, in the future if I am a manager, I will be using the technique that Khosrowshahi uses at BlueTickSocial.

 My internship experience was overall very fun and enlightening. I think it could have been beneficial to me if I had more than one client, because since my one and only client was BlueTickSocial, I never really got the chance to work with other companies/clients. My favorite parts of this internship was creating and scheduling content for BlueTickSocial. I loved being able to design the content however I wanted to and to be able to pick the days and times that my content was posted. The only negative part of my internship was that I did not get the opportunity to work with other clients, besides BlueTickSocial. To improve this internship experience, I would suggest having two marketing meetings a week, instead of just the one so that the interns have another chance to ask questions face-to-face on Zoom. I would also suggest that the wording content be due on Wednesdays instead of Tuesdays, since Wednesday is in the middle of the work week, I think it would be less stressful for the interns to complete their wording if they had one more day to get it done.

**Appendix**

**1.**

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