

NEXTLEAF[®]

CANNABIS PROCESSING SOLUTIONS



IMC Plan Written Report

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Executive Summary

Objectives

NextLeaf Solutions' objective as a company is to increase its market share in the infused cannabinoid industry by increasing brand awareness and interest. They have heavy convictions in the cannabis industry and pride themselves on their top-notch quality within their oils as they see their company grow. This is done by their own innovation inside the industry, which has resulted in their target market increasing as they release new product types. Using the AIDA model, the two most important components to a successful response process are attention and interest. NextLeaf Solutions' focus should be on maintaining a desirable business that's geared toward innovation and prolonging being a recognizable company.

Creative Approach

NextLeaf Solutions have strategized multiple creative campaigns to coincide with the release of new, quality products. Across Instagram and Facebook, NextLeaf Solutions targets key demographics, psychographics, and geographics. Using the platform's insight feature allows them to track data on their customers to view what works and what doesn't. NextLeaf Solutions indulges in other various campaigns such as SEM (Search Engine Marketing), subscribing to their newsletter, improving their presence on LinkedIn, and entering trade shows to push the brand and promote new technology within their products.

Recommendations

NextLeaf Solutions should continue creating high-quality distillate whilst introducing new innovative product lines. Doing this and creating strong ad campaigns across different platforms will maximize the effectiveness of each campaign. The goal is to increase the user presence surrounding the brand and sustain customer growth on a larger scale. Maintaining these practices and developing more media/creative strategies will push the brand to its highest potential as the cannabis industry is rapidly growing.

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Introduction

NextLeaf Solutions provides some of the highest quality THC/CBD products across the market as they continuously develop their brand to become a household name in the cannabis industry. Their distillate is top of the line in quality as well as innovation, and there are many uses for their oils, such as beverages, edibles, creams, and vapes. Using innovative extraction processes, NextLeaf Solutions has found their niche in the Cannabis industry as they continue to develop and release new quality products that their client's consumers thoroughly enjoy. The difficulty comes with generating greater awareness and interest in the brand as they are relatively new to the market; however, the IMC plan investigates and solves these struggles by diving deeper into both digital and physical solutions.

Background

Market Analysis

NextLeaf Solutions is focused on manufacturers that produce cannabis oil products and wholesalers who will distribute them. They focus on a segment of medical products and recreational products to provide to consumers that use them for multiple needs and reasons. Using manufacturers and wholesalers in these segments will allow them to have greater success and provide products to their target market. Their major markets are manufacturing and wholesale of their high-quality, low-cost extract that aims to change the industry and become the main supplier to consumers in need of high-quality cannabinoid products at an affordable cost. The cannabis industry is a new and booming industry with lots of new brands and competitors. NextLeaf Solutions takes the cannabis industry to the next level with its technology and ability to be innovative. They are able to provide a high-quality distillate, which can be used to make beverages, edibles, creams, and vapes for clients who want to sell, manufacture and/or co-develop, and they always come back due to the quality and price of the product. NextLeaf Solutions has many competitors such as MediPharm Labs, Lithium Australia, Eden Labs, Borealis Exploration and many more. However, NextLeaf Solutions are still able to stand out among the rest, and their products speak for themselves.

Market Environment

NextLeaf Solutions has a great team that consists of executive officers, a board of directors, a science and innovation team, a strategic operations team, corporate services, and a regulatory and quality assurance team that helps keep the company running and providing quality products to consumers. They use “economical, effective high purity cannabinoid ingredients” (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e, Proprietary Technology section, para 2). They have “scalable, patented closed-loop extraction and distillation technology” (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e, Proprietary Technology section, para 2). Aside from that, “Nextleaf is focused on the development and acquisition of intellectual property and innovative cannabis processing technology” (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e, Proprietary Technology section, para 2). Not to mention, they “transform low-quality cannabis biomass and crude oil into high-purity distillate and cannabinoid ingredients at an industrial scale” where they produce up to 600kg a day (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e, Proprietary Technology section, para 2). Also, they distribute their products to wholesalers who sell high-quality products at a low cost to consumers for medical or recreational use. They have competitors such as MediPharm Labs, Lithium Australia, and Eden Labs, who are the main competitors.

Customer/Consumer Analysis

NextLeaf Solutions' client's current consumers are cannabinoid product users, which can be split into two sub-groups. This can be split into medical users and recreational users. The medical users require a high-quality product that can help the recovery process for some treatments as well as help consumers cope with disabilities and disorders. The ability cannabinoid products have to aid people is very important and is a major focus for NextLeaf Solutions as they strive to provide/co-develop the best quality products at a low cost for manufacturers and wholesalers. Whether recreational users wish to use the product socially and creatively or if even experts are willing to give it a try, they want to provide high-quality products that allow their client's consumers to be productive and have a good experience. By doing so, they hope to decrease the global stigma towards cannabis products altogether.

Competitor Analysis

NextLeaf Solutions has some big competition in the cannabis industry. Their top competitors are MediPharm Labs, Lithium Australia, Eden Labs, Borealis Exploration, Precision Extraction Solutions, and The Valens Company. Each of these companies has an annual revenue of \$27 million, \$1 million, \$5 million, \$6 million, \$4 million and \$21 million, respectively, while NextLeaf Solutions has an annual revenue of \$4 million. NextLeaf Solutions is able to stand out from the rest with its technology and constant innovation that helps them provide top-of-the-class products for consumers.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

They are an up-and-coming haven for investors due to their 70+ issued patents and 50+ pending patents. Their patented extraction and distillery process puts the company at an ideal competitive advantage and differentiates the brand. They claim to be a low-cost, scalable extractor and bulk producer of cannabinoid oils. Their patents and ability to scale globally leaves the door open for licensing opportunities in regions where cannabis is legal (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021a). This intellectual property and technology will prove to be an even greater asset once cannabis is legal in all of the U.S., where they currently have 12 patents (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021a).

Weaknesses

After extensive research, there are few weaknesses within Nextleaf Solutions as the cannabis industry, and the company itself are so new. As stated in the strengths section, Nextleaf Solutions claims they are able to produce high-quality oil at a low cost. Their products and processes are safeguarded by a substantial amount of patents which protects their process. They also claim that their extraction process is more efficient and cost-friendly than their competitors; thus, their competitors don't have an advantage in regards to the extracting processes. A potential weakness could be resource limitations. Although currently there is a surplus of bud available, there is a possibility in the future that bud manufacturers can't keep up with the market demand if interest keeps growing at this pace.

Opportunities

The opportunities that Nextleaf Solutions has will always grow. With cannabis being legalized in May 2019 and in October 2019, edibles were made legal, and they are just getting the ball rolling. With the continuous increase in popularity for alternative ways to medicate from the traditional cannabis forms, Nextleaf Solutions is in a perfect spot to grow and create new opportunities. Their efforts to consistently improve their THC formulation can attract more and more customers and businesses with their faster-affecting products. There are new and innovative products that THC can be used with, increasing medicinal use of cannabis, and growing Government focus on the legalization of cannabis worldwide.

Threats

As cannabis use has just recently been legalized in Canada, there has been an influx of companies trying to enter the extractor and bulk producer of cannabinoid oils. Nextleaf Solutions Ltd. (2021b) mentions, "Canopy Growth is one of the only major industry players that has amassed a substantial portfolio of patents" (para. 4). To conclude, "seven of Canada's top ten cannabis-patent holders are multinational pharmaceutical companies, including Ciba-Geigy, Pfizer, and Merck" (BNN Bloomberg, 2020, Rooted in innovation and technology, patent development is driving Nextleaf's early success section, para 2). Also, like previously stated, because cannabis has just been recently legalized, uncertainty lies in the future implementations regarding laws and regulations as they will be consistently changing. Ultimately, this could alter Nextleaf Solutions' plans for the future.

Marketing Objectives

The overall business goal is to generate a greater market share in the infused cannabinoid market.

Marketing Strategies

Basis for Segmentation

Regarding the basis of segmentation, they are focusing on manufacturers that produce cannabis oil products and wholesalers. With that being said, it is strongly suggested that they use the benefit segmentation as cannabis oils can be used for a vast array of reasons. With the benefit segmentation, they can tailor their marketing strategies based on their two major segments. The segments are manufacturers/wholesalers of medical products and manufactures/wholesalers of recreational products. Doing so will allow them to target and attract their two main segments with better focus and success.

Target Market

They have two major target markets (manufacturing and wholesale) that can be broken into four submarkets. With one/ major connecting factor. The factor being they claim to be a low-cost, scalable extractor and bulk producer of cannabinoid oils. Cannabinoid oils can be produced in many forms, including crude oil, refined: distilled oil, cannabinoid ingredients, and formulations. This actively demonstrates that their primary target markets are manufacturers of products such as cannabinoid oil infused beverages, edibles, topical creams, and vapes that use crude oil, refined: distilled oil, cannabinoid ingredients, formulations in them as well as wholesalers that buy the oils in bulk.

Positioning

The brands positioning will remain the same as they have previously positioned themselves as a premium brand that serves those wanting to learn more about cannabis and those who are experts. Their previous position held well with having a consumer expectation of high-quality products and high brand loyalty, with proven success.

Competitive Approach

They will continue with their current competitive approach, and they feel that it is important to emphasize the low-cost, high-quality product. As well as the distinctive differences in their manufacturing process compared to their competitors. This will allow them to distinguish themselves from their competitors and attract customers.

Target Audience

Their preferred target audiences are their current customers, which consist of manufacturers and wholesalers. Investors are a secondary audience that will be vital to Nextleaf Solutions' success as well.

Proposed Budget

Percentage of Sales method (for B2B)

Total Annual Revenues (2020-09-30)	\$690,684
Marketing Cost (%)	x <u> (.05)</u>
Annual Marketing Budget	= \$34,534.2

The rationale for choosing the percentage of sales method is that it is fairly straightforward to calculate (Guolla et al., 2020). Also, it is within attainable means seeing as it is based on past year sales revenue (Guolla et al., 2020). Lastly, the approach is relatively consistent unless, of course, there are significant fluctuations in future year actual sales (Guolla et al., 2020).

In contrast, the reason for not choosing the competitive parity method is that competitors' financial spending and goals are difficult to predict in advertising (Guolla et al., 2020). Furthermore, although the objective and task method are effective, it is better suited towards larger companies with more analysts and resources that can determine what costs correspond to each specific objective (Guolla et al., 2020). Lastly, ROI was not chosen as it is not an ideal or common method in determining a budget (Guolla et al., 2020).

Overall Communication Objectives

Nextleaf Solutions' core communication objective is to increase brand awareness and interest in the business. Looking at the AIDA model, the first two components to a successful response process are attention and interest (Guolla et al., 2020). Therefore, Nextleaf Solutions, at this phase in their business's life cycle (that being growth), needs to focus on not only innovating but continuing to make a recognizable name for

themselves while also generating interest. If done correctly, the interest develops into a desire, likely leading to purchasing behaviour (Guolla et al., 2020).

Overall, Nextleaf Solutions want their customers to recognize their brand identity and how they set themselves apart from their competition with their proprietary extraction and distilling technology.

Overall Creative Strategy

Their campaign's primary message or slogan will be "A burning desire for quality" simply because they have a strong inclination for quality and are known for overachieving by delivering beyond expectations (Nextleaf Solutions, n.d.). This has the potential to be exhibited in the creative execution by flaunting their overachievement in proprietary technology. E.g., Acquiring 70+ issued patents and 50+ pending patents for their extraction and distillery processes (Nextleaf Solutions, 2021c). Not only that but demonstrating that their technology is of the highest quality and standards, which is disrupting the cannabinoid industry as a whole. Finally, regarding the slogan, it is effective in that quite literally, in their purification process (decarboxylation), they use high levels of heat, which relates well in a figurative sense to their "burning desire for quality" (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e).

Creative Executions

Execution 1: Create frequent scheduled content as well as run Instagram and Facebook Ads targeting their key demographics, psychographics, and geographics.

Figure 1 Social media post mock-up.

NEXXTLEAF®

CSE:OILS

A **BURNING** DESIRE FOR QUALITY

“WE PRIDE OURSELVES ON OUR PROPRIETARY **EXTRACTION & DISTILLING TECHNOLOGY**”

Paul Pedersen, CEO

CONCENTRATE ON THE FUTURE
NEXXTLEAF

X CSE:OILS OTCQB:OILFF

Figure 1 depicts a mock-up for social media communication (Instagram or Facebook post). A post like this can be boosted as an Instagram and Facebook Ad. This can be done after establishing audience demographics, psychographics and geographics, whether by analyzing Facebook/Instagram Insights, a Facebook Pixel or by trial and error. Also, sorting out a call-to-action will be necessary, which in this case, will most likely be visiting a page of their website. If there is a call-to-action on Instagram, it may be easiest to set up a linkin.bio for Nextleaf Solutions, in order to generate a copy of their Instagram page with different links for each post.

Execution 2: Run Search Engine Marketing (SEM) campaigns to advertise their services and investment opportunities through web traffic ads.

Figure 2 SEM campaign mock-up.

Ad · www.nextleafsolutions.com ▼

Nextleaf Solutions | (CSE:OILS) | True Scalability™ | Patented

Nextleaf Solutions - a burning desire for quality. The world's most innovative **cannabis extractor** developing patented technology for **distilling THC** and **CBD oils** for the **wholesale** market.

[Our Team](#) · [Investors](#) · [News](#) · [Extraction Technology](#)

Figure 2 is a mock-up search ad using Nextleaf Solutions current H1 and a slightly modified meta description below. There are also some bolded words to depict certain keywords that could be used to target potential clients. These include words like “cannabis,” “extractor,” “distilling,” “THC,” “CBD,” “oils,” and “wholesale.” If the marketer chooses to run the keywords as a broad match, they can be combined in a Google Search, and the ad will appear. However, the ones mentioned earlier are strictly examples. To truly determine appropriate keywords, the marketer would have to do keyword research through Google Keyword Planner and Trends to determine relevant keywords with a high search volume, low competition, and low cost per click (CPC).

Execution 3: Increase lead generation by implementing a Mailchimp account and newsletter pop-up on their site upon entering.

Figure 3 Newsletter sign-up form mock-up.



Figure 3 is an example of lead generation by accumulating an email list to later send out relevant newsletters. In this example, it is performed using a mock-up pop-up message (which would usually occur once users enter the site). Doing so can be beneficial for the future since you will be able to specifically target users with promotions as well as recent news about the business, partnerships, patents, technology, etc. This would be of interest to manufacturers, wholesalers and investors that have a stake in the company. See Appendix A and B for Mailchimp email newsletter mock-ups.

Execution 4: Research and enter trade show events in order to push the brand, as well as introduce products and technology.

Figure 4 Trade show line drawing.

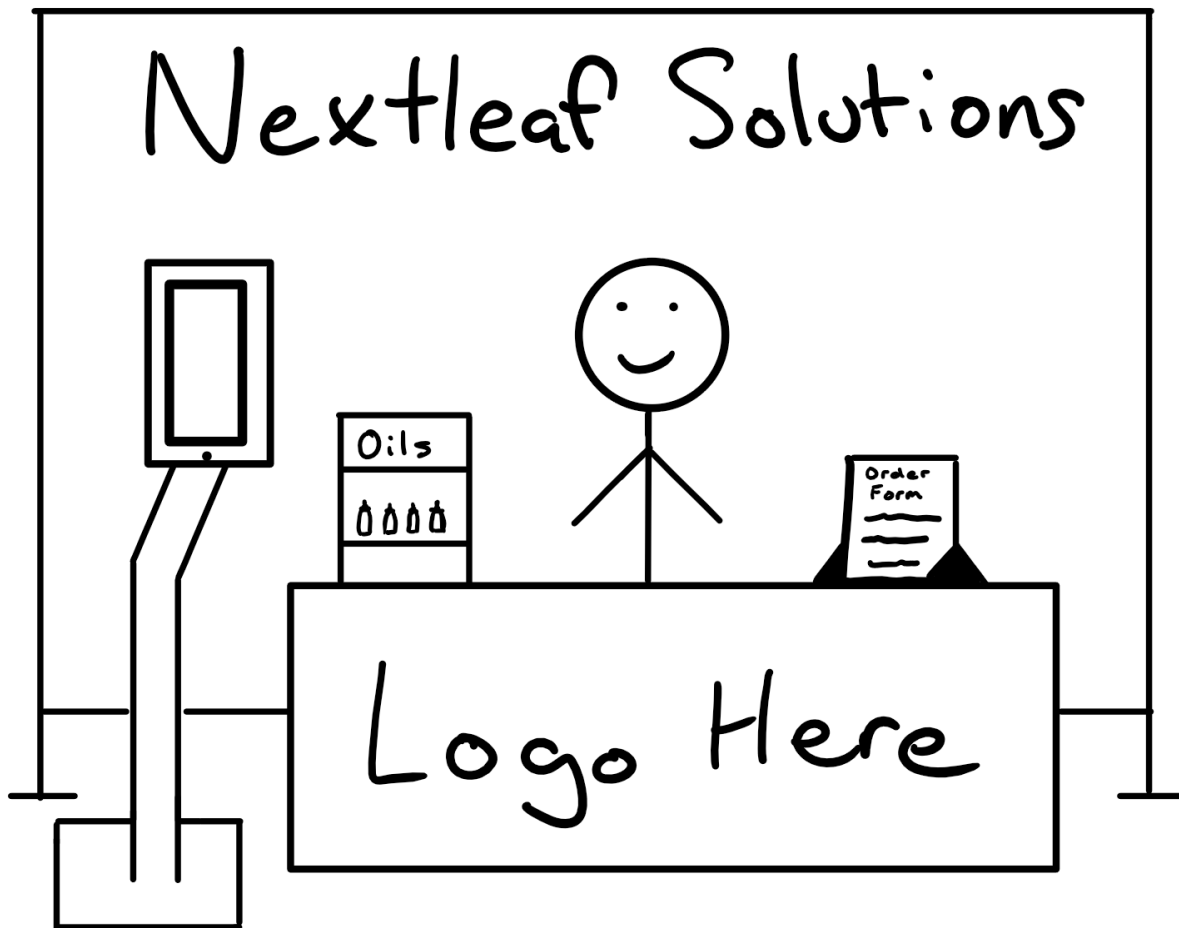


Figure 4 depicts a line drawing of a potential trade show booth for Nextleaf Solutions. The booth would consist of a tablet on a stand so that potential clients could submit their email addresses to Nextleaf Solutions' newsletter email list. There will also be a display case with the oils and finished products to show interested customers and clients. Also, there will be a stack of order forms that wholesalers or manufacturers can fill out as either a trial purchase (with a discount or rebate included) or regular order if a previous client. Lastly, there will be a sales table with the company logo on it along with a large banner placed behind the sales table with the company name and some graphics.

With Covid-19 being a factor in how events can be run nowadays, there is great potential for virtual trade shows, which can lower the cost of expensive in-person booths and direct clients directly to the site.

Execution 5: Improve presence on LinkedIn to connect with potential buyers such as managers, professionals, and manufacturers.

Figure 5 LinkedIn post mock-up.

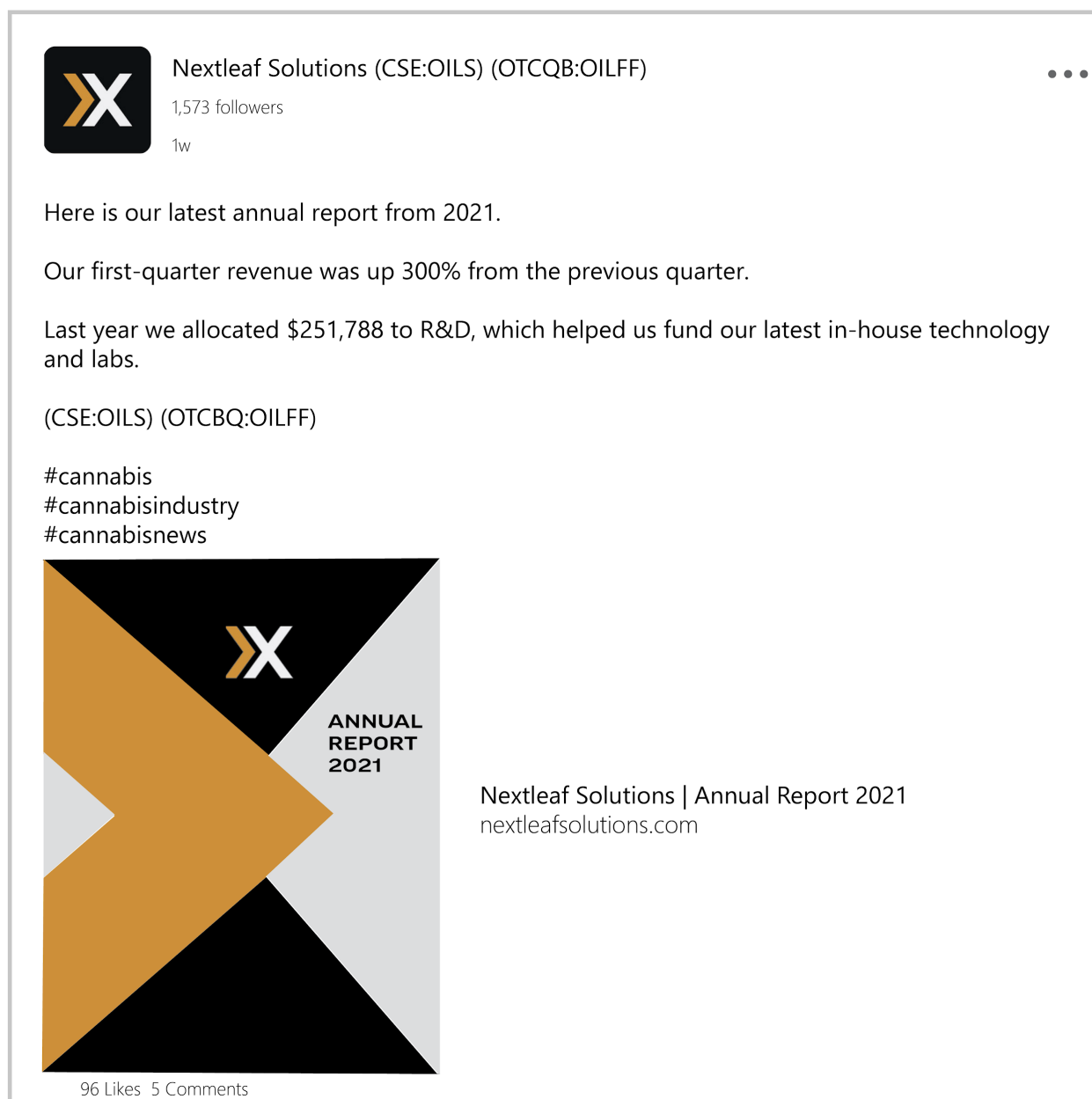


Figure 5 shows a LinkedIn post mock-up with a clickable link to a mock 2021 annual report. With that, Nextleaf Solutions needs to utilize LinkedIn as both a social media and networking app. The social media aspect can be achieved by posting news about quarterly/annual financial reports, new opportunities, patents, technology, etc. By

posting more, there is the expectation of likes, comments, and shares, which will automatically repost on other people's feeds, leading to more awareness. More awareness can lead to interest, inquiries, and connections from potential clients. Nextleaf Solutions can also try and connect with resellers and manufacturers themselves. Lastly, they can join groups that share similar interests, which may help as well.

Additional Implementation

A fundamental yet less creative option is to generate a better organic search ranking (SEO). This can be done by signing up for press requests to build backlinks (cannabis being a relatively hot topic should be of interest to journalists), as well as regularly update and write relevant content. SEO is important since it determines where your site ranks on Google. And to add to that, if the site has poor authority and relevance, then there is a good chance it could end up on the second or third page, which is not ideal for any business.

Requirements

Graphic Designers

- Create social media posts in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, or InDesign.
- Create any other web graphics, effects, or videos in Adobe Creative Cloud.

Digital Marketers

- Increase presence on LinkedIn and connect with potential buyers.
- Schedule and boost social media posts.
- Perform keyword research using Google Keyword Planner.
- Run SEM campaigns with Google Ads
- Assist CopyWriters with Mailchimp Newsletters and SEO work.

Salespeople

- Research and enter trade shows in order to push the brand, as well as introduce products and technology.
- Create awareness and strong interest for wholesalers looking to stock their shelves with the latest products (Guolla et al., 2020).

- Push trial purchases through sampling the products and mention discount/rebate offers (Guolla et al., 2020).

CopyWriters

- Enhance the website's overall readability.
- Content should be able to be understood by a knowledgeable audience (remove unnecessary jargon).
- Writing should follow The Canadian Press style guidelines.
- Help marketers with Mailchimp newsletters and SEO improvements.

Web Developers & UX/UI Designers

- Set up a Mailchimp account and embed a Mailchimp link in the code.
- The website's current user interface and experience look great; however, the Web Developers and UX/UI Designers should look for ways to improve certain pages and functionalities.
- Create customer journeys, user task flows, and wireframes before generating code.

Media Strategies

The communication methods recommended are social media (primarily Instagram, Facebook, & LinkedIn), Google Ads, and trade shows. The media characteristics will be almost all online (i.e., digital) other than trade shows. Although, there is also potential for virtual trade shows.

In terms of target audience coverage, manufacturers and wholesalers are the primary targets. Geographical coverage will be focused in Canada, focusing on businesses in an area such as British Columbia, where connections are already very strong. Nextleaf Solutions does have patents in the US and Europe; however, with those areas not having cannabis legalized on the federal level, it makes it difficult to have any sort of commercial success. Therefore a focus in Canada will be most important.

Moreover, this plan's duration will be for a year, as the budget is based on last year's sales. Continuity will be essential in order to maintain a consistent message over the

year. This will be done by following a brand book, which is essentially certain brand colours, font sizes, tone, etc.

Looking at some quantitative measures and milestones, the reach will have to be high (250'000 - 300'000 people/year) to attract new customers since Nextleaf Solutions is a relatively newer business. Unfortunately, being that reach is the focal point of the IMC Plan, the tradeoff is frequency. Frequency, however, will still be sufficient as there will be one SEM campaign per month, two boosted posts per month, one trade show per year (where you could be exposed to the booth multiple times), twelve LinkedIn posts per year, and expected two-hundred newsletter subscribers getting a newsletter once a month. This means that there is a good chance that target audience members will see or hear Nextleaf Solutions again.

Activity Schedule

Figure 6 Activity schedule

Activity Schedule 2021												
Creative Execution	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Boosted Social Media Post	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
SEM Campaign	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Newsletter	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Trade Show							1					
LinkedIn Post	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Figure 6 is an activity schedule for 2021 (assuming this IMC Plan's duration would've been based on a calendar year starting from January 1, 2021, until December 31, 2021). Each creative execution is colour-coded in the schedule and has a number (either 1 or 2) based on the frequency per month that it will occur. When a month contains a creative execution, it is filled with the activities' designated colour and frequency. For example, "Trade Show" has a frequency of once per month, but it only occurs once per year (in July), which is around the time of Canada's largest cannabis event, the Toronto Expo 2021 - Lift Co (Lift & Co. Cannabis Expo, 2021). In comparison, "Boosted Social Media Post" occurs twice per month for all twelve months.

Plan Assessment

The IMC plan is able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of NextLeaf Solutions and everything in between. It allows one to understand the company and how it operates. NextLeaf Solutions targets manufacturers that produce cannabis oil products as well as wholesalers that manufacture/sell to consumers. Their main focus is on medical and recreational products for consumers to use, and they provide low-cost and high-quality distillate to create those products.

In a new industry, NextLeaf Solutions is a leader in innovative techniques and highly technical methods to get the best product possible. They have a high-level team consisting of executive officers, a board of directors, a science and innovation team, a strategic operations team, corporate services, and a regulatory and quality assurance team that helps keep the company running and providing quality products to consumers. With that, they use economical, effective and high purity cannabinoid ingredients. Not to mention, they have “scalable, patented closed-loop extraction and distillation technology” (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e, Proprietary Technology section, para 2).

As mentioned earlier, “Nextleaf is focused on the development and acquisition of intellectual property and innovative cannabis processing technology” (Nextleaf Solutions Ltd., 2021e, Proprietary Technology section, para 2). They have some big competition in the cannabis industry. Their top competitors are MediPharm Labs, Lithium Australia, Eden Labs, Borealis Exploration, Precision Extraction Solutions, and The Valens Company. NextLeaf Solutions is able to stand out amongst the pack by using its technology and innovation to create such high-quality products and at such a low cost.

Evaluation

To determine if the plan will work, tests will be done before, during and after the campaign is over. Before the campaign starts, the marketers can analyze Google Analytics to determine user demographics, psychographics, geographics, and behavioural patterns amongst website visitor data. This can be used as a stepping

stone to determine who to target for SEM campaigns and how to formulate email newsletters to appeal to them. Not only that, but they can analyze those statistics as well through social media analytics tools such as Facebook and Instagram Insights. This will help when initially boosting social media posts.

Also, pre-testing will be essential in order to display mock-ups of potential designs and trade show layouts before implementation to get a feel for ideas that have potential and ideas that need to be scratched. (Guolla et al., 2020).

Throughout the campaign, it will be necessary to analyze reach, frequency, engagement, and so on. This can be done by monitoring SEM campaigns analytics, social media campaign analytics, LinkedIn engagements (likes, shares, comments), trade show sales, etc.

Lastly, post-tests will be implemented to determine the campaign's success and whether it met its marketing objectives and gave insight into its situational analysis (Guolla et al., 2020).

Conclusion

NextLeaf Solutions prides itself on the quality and effort that goes into their products as well as their marketing/advertising campaigns. As a company, they have found what works, and they continue to implement these strategies to give the company an increasing amount of longevity. As demonstrated, NextLeaf Solutions have formulated their own analytics plan to successfully track their campaigns to get the most out of their demographics, psychographics, geographics, and behavioural patterns amongst website visitor data. A strong suit of theirs is the numerous different campaigns they run. Ad campaigns across social media, search engines, newsletters, or showing off their product at trade shows are some of the many ways NextLeaf Solutions promote their products. With capturing more market share as a primary objective, the company is well on their way as cannabis is a new and growing industry. They have set themselves apart with their sheer commitment to quality. Moving toward the future,

NextLeaf Solutions will position themselves nicely amongst competitors and continue to innovate their products, so they differentiate from their competitors.

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Appendix A

Mailchimp Desktop Newsletter Mock-up



NEXTLEAF
CSE:OILS

Deal of the month

**Get 15% off your next order
when you order 10 kilos of
THC or CBD distillate**



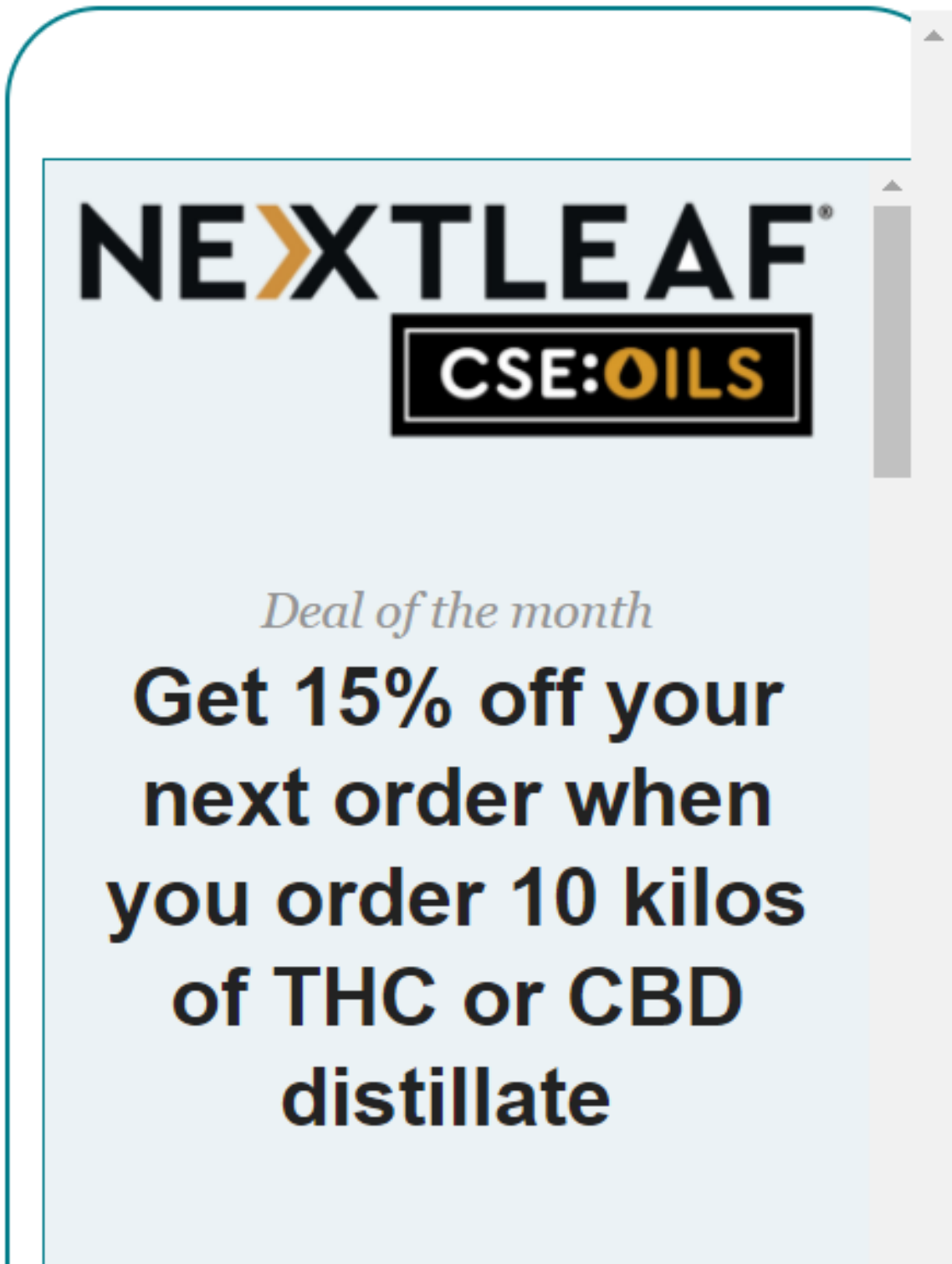
Use our oils to make your vapes, beverages, edibles, and topicals! The opportunities are endless!

[Find Out More](#)

The mock-up features a light blue background with a dark grey footer. The main content is centered, with the brand name at the top, followed by the offer details. Below the text is a photograph of two black vape pens with yellow accents and two clear glass pipes. A prominent orange button with white text is located at the bottom of the main content area.

Appendix B

Mailchimp Mobile Newsletter Mock-up



NEXTLEAF[®]
CSE:OILS

Deal of the month

**Get 15% off your
next order when
you order 10 kilos
of THC or CBD
distillate**