

SWOT Analysis

Introduction

Session Cocktails offers a unique social experience that blends a vibrant atmosphere with mixology and themed events. As a key player in the Auburn downtown bar scene, Session serves a diverse clientele, mainly targeting the college demographic in a town dominated by Auburn University. This analysis will explore Session's strengths, such as its strong community involvement and solid online presence, as well as weaknesses, including limited seating and high drink prices.

Additionally, the analysis will highlight potential opportunities and threats that may affect the business in the future. By examining these aspects, Session Cocktails can continue to thrive in the highly competitive Auburn market while addressing areas needing improvement.

Internal Analysis

Strengths

Political

Session Cocktails works in compliance with the local and federal legislation. They can ensure that the business runs smoothly and follows all regulatory requirements. Sessions also works with the community and in doing so earns unpaid media. According to their website, Session has a campaign called "Cocktail for a Cause," which partners with local charities. They create a drink guests can order, and the proceeds are donated to the featured charity. This is a strong campaign that shows that Session is working to better their community, which gives an incentive for different audiences to support their business.

Social

One of Session's most beneficial strengths is the social aspect. They appeal strongly to a college town audience, using a downtown location and a social atmosphere. They use themed nights, trivia, and drinks to keep different types of customers interested throughout the year. Aside from their college audience, they appeal extremely strongly to a diverse crowd, specifically females.

Economic

Economically, Session Cocktails can thrive during the school year due to Auburn University's student body. The semester months bring more business because college students appeal to their atmosphere and themes. Having premium drink pricing also appeals to an audience with more disposable income. Customers with disposable income are more likely to splurge on costs and go to the Session.

Technological

Session has an online presence through its website, Instagram, and Facebook. The website is user-friendly. The Instagram page engages with its audience. Their online visibility strengthens brand loyalty, keeps loyal customers informed, and attracts new audiences. They are highlighted in Auburn-Opelika Tourism.

Weaknesses

Political

With Session being located in a college town, a political weakness that the establishment might deal with is underage drinking and mitigating things such as fake identification and alcohol being sold to minors. With a large population of students in college under the age of 21, Session has to be sure to adhere to the law and know how to avoid false identification, while adhering to Alabama's Alcohol Service Regulations.

Social

One of Session's social weaknesses is the lack of seating. The establishment gets very busy on the weekends but does not have enough seats and tables to cater to large numbers of people, which can hurt them. This then ties into another weakness, the wait time. On the weekends, the wait time for a table can get very lengthy, which can drive people away. Customers might be less inclined to go if they assume that Session has a long wait time, which drives away customer traffic.

Economic

Since Session is a cocktail bar, its drink prices tend to be higher than those of its competitors. Their primary audience is college students, which can be a significant weakness for Session. Students might not have the money to spend on pricier drinks, especially when there are other places to get a drink for less. College students are the primary audience for Session. Therefore, the summer months are much slower because most college students are gone.

Technological

While Session Cocktails has regularly updated its Instagram and Facebook pages, they are inactive on TikTok. With TikTok's popularity among college students and young adults, posting regularly on the app would allow them to reach more customers and advertise different events, such as themed drinks and trivia nights. TikTok has a feature where you can tag a particular city, and it will target people in that location by tagging the video on their page. Using this feature in TikTok would be highly beneficial to Session because it would specifically target those in Auburn, keeping them updated on what Session is offering, and targeting those who might be visiting Auburn, thus allowing Session to get business from a new range of customers.

External Analysis

Opportunities

Political

Because Sessions does not currently offer food options, they can receive their Food Service License. This would allow them to sell food through their business in the state of Alabama, which would be needed to make having food on the menu an option.

Social

Sessions has excellent social opportunities in Auburn because of the wide variety of customers in the area. There is also a Sessions location in Tuscaloosa that would have similar opportunities because of the college environment. Sessions can reach the younger college-age audience by promoting “Study Sessions,” promotions with college IDs, and more. There is also a large crowd of young adults and professionals in both cities, who are the primary customers for Sessions. Sessions can appeal to these crowds by focusing on weekend opportunities since that is most likely when this audience is attending. Also, many people will come to a bar after work for

social opportunities, or to discuss business matters, and sessions can cater to these types of gatherings in various ways.

Sessions also has the opportunity to reach the parents of college students because they may be in town during move-ins/move-outs, game days, weekends, and more. Another route that sessions could take with social opportunities is looking at the idea of expanding to other college towns. Many businesses take the opportunity to focus on schools within the SEC because it has a unified feeling to it. Sessions has done this on a small scale by opening locations in two SEC towns, but they could expand into cities like Athens, Oxford, Nashville, Austin, and more. If they took this opportunity, it would also open the door to the fact that when college students travel or graduate, they would recognize the name of Sessions in more places and go where they are familiar.

Economic

There is a plethora of economic opportunities for Sessions, including the fact that most people purchase multiple drinks so small deals could draw customers in to spend more money, they are in a college town full of people with a well-off socio-economic background and so this can be used to their advantage, there is room to expand on dining options to increase customers' spending and become more competitive with other bars, and more. First, we can look at the fact that most people are purchasing multiple drinks per visit. The average person will order 2-3 drinks while they are at the bar. If Sessions were to create a promotion stating that if you buy two cocktails, you would get the third one half off, this would generate more income than if the customer only ordered two cocktails.

Sessions could host a similar promotion with beer, wine, shots, etc., to increase sales. Sessions can also look at the fact that many Auburn students and residents come from financially

stable backgrounds and take this as an opportunity to improve or maintain the prices that they currently have. Another opportunity sessions could take is expanding their menu to include dining options. Sessions currently does not offer food, while many bars around Auburn do. Adding a small appetizer or snack menu would be an economic opportunity for sessions to take and make the Sessions more competitive in the Auburn area.

Technological

Sessions is currently very active on social media, but their social media has an opportunity to change the type of media they post. Currently, Sessions mainly relies on graphics, and because of this, there is an opportunity to use more pictures. This could mean more photography of the drinks and customers to engage people on social media. Sessions also uses Facebook, but mainly uses it to post the same content as they do on Instagram. It could be an opportunity for Sessions to post different material on Facebook to reach a different audience.

Threats

Political

There are no active political threats towards Sessions Cocktails at this time.

Social

Sessions' is surrounded by competing bars as well as restaurants, most of those being within a .5-mile radius. While Sessions has a great social environment, wait times can become long due to the small size of their venue. This allows customers to go elsewhere due to limited seating and longer wait times.

Economic

Inflation throughout the food and beverage industry is making cocktails more expensive by the year. College students, one of Sessions' primary demographics, cannot afford to pay for

multiple expensive cocktails every week. They may look elsewhere for a social scene that costs less money, such as Skybar or Moes Barbeque, both on the same block as Sessions.

Technological

Sessions does a great job keeping their social media engagement on Instagram high weekly, but they are not current on trending social media apps such as TikTok. Competitor, Radius Rooftop, in Knoxville, is in a similar market with college students and is consistently posting on TikTok. Losing engagement rates because of a lack of social media channels is a high possibility.

Conclusion

Session is in two highly competitive collegiate cities, and because of this, it has a wide range of opportunities for growth and some threats because of the vast number of other bars in each location. Their small size allows them to grow and expand within the business, while realizing that a small business has weaknesses because of its low number of team members.