To: Starbucks Canada

From: Steven Lee, Store #3067

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Subject: *Proposal for Determining the Feasibility of Customizable Printed Order Stickers – A Mobile-First Strategy*

**Introduction**

Since Starbucks introduced the practice of writing an individual’s name and orders on cup, there has been positive support from the public. Many claim that it helps the company connect with the individual customer by making their drinks special. However, the practice also caused inefficiency within the work by consuming extra time to write individual cups and putting orders in the cash register. The practice also hinders many baristas from making the drink correctly when the writing is near illegible.

**Statement of Problem**

The practice of writing on cups by hand creates unnecessary problems that are avoidable. During peak hours, a drink remake due to illegible writing is frequent. This in turn wastes precious time and resources that could be allocated to other productive actions. There is also the matter of Starbucks employees writing down orders when it is beneficial to the company to look at the customer in the eyes and suggesting sales items. There is a need to find a middle ground between connecting with the customer while finding ways to deal with inefficiency from taking down orders to making the drink. There are possible solutions being tested in the US markets as well as the Starbucks at UBC. The practice of directly printing out orders eliminates the buffer time between the order taking and having the barista making the drink. The solution also eliminates the need for baristas to find the customer waiting in line to reconfirm the drink order so a remake is avoided. However, the printing solution as of now goes against the human connection that Starbucks as a corporation wants to promote.

**Proposed Solution**

One possible solution to the problem is to have a printing system with customizable fonts and comment section with a design that blend into the overall design of the cup. Having witnessing the UBC Starbucks and others in the US, it is clear that the printed orders have a big advantage over the handwritten system in terms of time saving and accuracy of the orders. To address the company’s intention to connect with the customers, a well-designed printing system would be cost effective by eliminating inaccurate orders, employees can sell more items, and it will allow the employees to connect with the customer by actually looking them in the eye. This solution takes in consideration of existing infrastructure and the resources at hand, which is cost effective and increases consumer satisfaction.

**Scope**

To discover the feasibility of creating customizable printing system, I plan to investigate the following five areas:

1. Does the practice fit with our consumer culture?
2. Does the practice fit with the corporate culture well enough?
3. How much time and costs will be saved?
4. What will be the cost of upkeep of the practice?
5. How does the practice positively differentiate itself from other coffee franchises?
6. How to diminish environmental challenges the stickers may impose

**Methods**

The majority of the data will be collected in a survey and personal interviews amongst coworkers, frequent customers, and managers. Data will be also collected via in person observation of UBC Starbucks for efficiency and Internet sources for estimated costs of printing solutions.

Secondary sources will include Starbucks fan website forums for opinions regarding the shift from handwriting to digital order taking, and corporate resource articles if possible to use regarding the switch.

**Qualifications**

I have been a shift manager at Starbucks for the last 4 months, as well as running a personal business in the past. I am keen on boosting productivity in a cost saving manner wherever I work at. I’ve noticed the chaotic scene that Starbucks becomes when it reaches peak hours and small changes like the one proposed would save the company unnecessary costs, increase employee satisfaction, and would be ahead of the competition in terms of productivity. In the past I have done such maneuvers to save my company from losing employee morale, while locating what the company was struggling at.

**Conclusion**

The issue at hand is not an urgent one. However, with the shift of consumer demography towards the Millennials, speed and accuracy of service needs to be increased without losing the integrity of personalizing the Starbucks experience. By investigating the five areas mentioned above, I could figure out the feasibility of having customizable sticker printing on cups. With the approval of the Starbucks management board, I will begin my investigation right away.