

Strategic Marketing Plan for Angry Orchard: Expanding Our Competitive Advantage

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Angry Orchard Strategic Marketing Plan

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Executive Summary

Since 2012, Angry Orchard has built an empire within the hard cider industry through its unique flavors, strong brand reputation, and ability to connect with consumers in-person at the company's New York Cider house and online through engaging social media posts. Located in Walden, New York, Angry Orchard Cidery has opened its doors to customers and tourists by welcoming them to tour the cider house, learn about the ciders, and experience the products through tastings.

Angry Orchard is the leading hard cider producer in the market today. With an almost \$220 million advantage against its closest competitor, Bold Rock, Angry Orchard is the industry's leader in U.S. retail sales. However, with the craft beer market growing, Angry Orchard needs to ensure the company is capitalizing on the craft beer consumer market segment. To keep growing and maintaining their large market share, Angry Orchard needs to make sure that all beer consumers are excited about their unique brand and unique product mix.

Angry Orchard aims to differentiate their cider from competitors within the industry by strengthening their relationships with target markets, offering "limited edition" flavors to various market segments, and competing directly with the growing craft beer market. By increasing social media usage to promote new products, crafting specialty flavors unique to different geographic areas within the U.S., and producing hard ciders that have been finely tuned and carefully crafted, Angry Orchard will be able to sail through the waters of the blue ocean strategy and increase sales, strengthen the brands' reputation with craft beer drinkers, and continue to provide consumers with superior flavors at an affordable price.

Company Description

Angry Orchard was established in 2012 under its parent company, The Boston Beer Company. After having success with its other brands, such as Sam Adams and Twisted Tea, the Boston Beer Company announced its new hard cider brand. Using apples from the United States and Europe, Angry Orchard aimed to create a crisp and flavorful product that was reminiscent of traditional apple ciders. In its first year, Angry Orchard was available in three flavors and in a limited number of geographic areas. Maryland, New England, Colorado and New York were the only states and regions that Angry Orchard was distributed to.¹ Since its first year, Angry Orchard has expanded their distribution efforts, and the hard cider is now nationally known. Today, Angry Orchard holds the largest percentage of market share among competitors.

The brand has also introduced user-friendly activities for consumers to participate in. At Angry Orchard's Cider house in Walden, NY, the brand offers unique tours and tastings. In 2016, Angry Orchard partnered with Pete Nelson of Animal Planet's Treehouse Masters to build a treehouse tasting room on the orchard's property. In 2019, Angry Orchard announced their "Cider+Food App", which is an augmented reality experience where consumers can scan their phones over bottles of Angry Orchard beverages to learn which foods pair best with the different flavored ciders. This application gives the brand a competitive advantage because it shows consumers that Angry Orchard is working to engage personally with customers through an innovative and digital experience, which will surely capture the attention of the millennial generation.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angry_Orchard

Mission Statement

“We are committed to bringing traditional cider varieties and lost heirloom varieties back to the United States. As such, certain areas of the orchard are designated for new cider apple plantings and varietal research, in collaboration with local institutions and growers.”²

Angry Orchard’s mission is to collaborate with other orchards around the country to bring back the tradition of drinking cider. At the Angry Orchard Cider house, cider has been made for over 200 years. The company aims to innovate their offerings, while remembering the tradition on which cider drinking was founded. Angry Orchard is committed to funding research, planting more apple seeds, and expanding the cider market.

Situational Analysis

Product Overview:

Angry Orchard produces hard apple cider with 5% alcohol by volume. The company describes its products as “refreshing hard cider with an attitude”. The cider is made in Walden, New York. There are four main flavors: Crisp Apple, Pear, Rosé, and Easy Apple.

Fulfillment of Market’s Needs:

The hard cider is a casual drink. The flavors are lighter, and the cider is naturally gluten free. Angry Orchard appeals to and is targeted toward millennial and female consumers. Since 2016, Angry Orchard’s sales have increased.

Competition:

Today, the company is competing with White Claw, Truly, and the Craft Beer industry. In addition, the company competes directly with companies like Bold Rock, Woodchuck, Crispin, Redd’s, and Stella Artois.

Financial Data

Market Share → Angry Orchard has between 58% and 60% of the hard-cider market

Revenue → In 2017, Angry Orchard saw a revenue of \$206.3M. In 2018, the revenue incurred was \$273.1M (increasing 10.2% from 2017). At the end of Q2 in 2019, Angry Orchard’s revenue was \$318.4M (which was an increase of 16.6% from Q2 2018).

Growth → Between 2017 - 2023 the cider market is expected to experience a CAGR of +6.1%. In 2018, 4% of legal-aged consumers say cider is their “drink of choice” (vs. 1% in 2007). Today, men and women drink almost equally. Women consume 1% more than men. Millennials consume the largest amount of hard cider out of each generation.

Margins → In 2018, Angry Orchard did \$245.5M in retail sales. Its closest competitor, Bold Rock, did \$25.7M in comparison.

² <https://www.angryorchard.com/our-orchard>

Internal Environment

Angry Orchard has several intangible resources such as its brand equity, brand loyalty, strong brand reputation, and majority share (58%) of the hard-cider market.

The company's core competencies include its ability to sell to both men and women and its ability to connect with and capture younger audiences, such as college students and millennials. As of 2019, Angry Orchard has created a well-established social media presence with a large following of younger audience members. This will help continue to attract and capture both college students and millennials. Finally, Angry Orchard has been able to leverage technology through their interactive website and app. The company's ability to innovate and use technology will prove to be beneficial, as it is useful and attractive to younger generations within the market.

External Environment

Recently, new competition within the market has emerged. This includes spiked seltzers, like Truly and White Claw, local cideries, and craft beer companies. Compared to low calorie and low carb options, like Truly and White Claw, Angry Orchard does not appeal to health-conscious consumers. Additionally, compared to bigger brands, like Strongbow, Stella Artois, and Redd's, Angry orchard has limited flavors and is priced higher. Finally, for consumers who favor craft beer options, they will most likely perceive Angry Orchard as being "too corporate" and not uniquely crafted.

Additionally, Angry Orchard is currently faced with several market trends. These include the social emphasis on low calorie/low carb beverage options, a desire for new flavors and product variety, and more specialized or customizable beverage options. Additionally, the craft beer industry has increased over 7% in the past year, which may take away some of Angry Orchard's market share. Consumers are also beginning to support local businesses, which makes Angry Orchard less desirable, since it is owned by the Boston Beer Company.

Customer Environment

Consumer Analysis → Angry Orchard attracts many different types of consumers. With their variety of flavors, gluten-free options, and New York-sourced apples, many consumers are willing to buy Angry Orchard products. However, since Angry Orchard only produces hard cider, all buyers must be over the age of 21, which means Angry Orchard must target their marketing efforts accordingly.

The primary target market includes millennials and college students. While less than 10% of Gen X and Baby Boomers state they consumer hard-cider three times or more a month, 24% of millennials consumer that amount or more per month. Angry Orchard has been able to capitalize on its well-established brand loyalty. As a part of the Boston Beer Company, Angry Orchard has been able to reach many loyal consumers of its parent company. Due to this, Angry Orchard has the largest percentage of market share compared to its competitors.

Additionally, a variety of flavors that Angry Orchard consistently sells allows the company to appeal to different consumers' preferences. Recently, the company has announced new flavors and product variation, such as "Rose Spritz", which is a sparkling 110-calorie alcoholic beverage.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS:

- Owned by the Boston Beer Company (parent company's net worth = \$225.2M)
- Active social media:
 - 895 Instagram posts, 62.8K followers
 - 7500 tweets, 19.1K followers
 - Almost 950,000 Facebook likes
- Engaging, high quality Instagram pictures → connecting with target market
- App: "Experience Cider and Food Pairing in Augmented Reality"
- "Mixology" page on website: showcasing cocktail recipes using Angry Orchard products
 - "Cider Roses Slushies"
 - "Southern Orchard"
 - "Orchard Rose Sangria"
 - "Angry-Rita"
- Website offers recipes that include A.O. cider as an ingredient AND offers a cider pairing suggestion → customer oriented
 - With easy options to share on social media, email and Pinterest
- Long history with cidery: Walden, NY → making cider for over 200 years
- Family ownership of orchard since 1963
 - Limited competition in NY
- Large variety of tours: variety of free tours and ticketed tours with \$20 fees
- Cider garden, Barrel Room Tours, Treehouse tours, Cider House Tours
- Wide product range with flavored ciders:
 - Easy Apple
 - Rose
 - Crisp Apple
 - Pear Cider
 - Stone Dry
 - Crisp Unfiltered
- New: "Spritz Rose Cider" → bubbly drink with only 110 calories: competes with Truly/White Claw
- "Responsibility" section of website: explaining risks of alcohol consumption and offering online

WEAKNESSES:

- Consumer perception: "not a beer"
 - May deter some consumers from choosing Angry Orchard over Coors or Miller
- Between 190 and 220 calories → not as appealing to health-conscious drinkers when White Claw is only 100 calories and other "Lite" beers are 60-90 calories
 - Over 20g of sugar in Angry Orchard compared to 2g in White Claw
- Flavors: only four main flavors (Crisp Apple, Pear, Rosé, Easy Apple)
- Other flavors are not easily accessible (Stone Dry, Ice Man, The Muse, Strawman, Walden Hollow, Spritz Rosé Cider)
- Reputation: known as a big corporation (not appealing to growing market of craft beer consumers)
- Target Market: mainly appeals to younger consumers, older generations prefer other cider brands: Woodchuck, Crispin, etc.
- Low alcohol content → lacks an option for the consumer who wants a harder beverage

<p>resources with more information about consumption → CSR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gluten-free ● Low-alcohol content: easy to enjoy casually 	
<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cider market growth: CAGR of 6.1% from 2017 to 2023 ● Craft beer market growth: 7% in 2018 ● Utilizing Instagram more: Live-streaming events, Customer “take-overs” (customers sharing their testimonies about the cider), Live Q&A sessions to give more information about the brand ● More Twitter engagement: good content, but needing more impressions and engagement ● “Regional” flavors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peach in the South ○ Caramel/honey in the Midwest ○ Grape in California-area ● More “seasonal flavors” → offering ciders that have flavors related to fall, winter, spring, summer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Winter</u>: Cinnamon/Gingerbread flavoring ○ <u>Fall</u>: Pumpkin/Orange Spice/Cranberry ○ <u>Summer</u>: Blueberry/Raspberry/Lemon ○ <u>Spring</u>: Peach/Nectarine/Vanilla ● Establish additional stores/Cider-Houses around the east coast → working to expand nationally 	<p>THREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competition: Bold Rock, Woodchuck, Crispin, Redd’s, Stella Artois, other local craft beer breweries ● Many local, small-scale cider producers ● Market trends: cider may become less popular in the future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ (Today: there is a current spike in popularity in 2018-2019, but this spike is following the decline in hard cider sales that occurred in 2016-2017) ● Seasonal changes: increased sales in the fall, decreased sales in summer ● Cost of production increasing ● Increased prices of apples ● Droughts/blights negatively impacting growth of apples ● Not enough apples produced to account for the growing demand ● Climate change (warmer temperatures impacting growth rate) ● Expense of foreign imports ● Negative response/reviews from consumers (“poor quality”) ● Consumer preference ● Government regulation on alcohol

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nation-wide accessibility ● Working with vendors to establish partnerships ● Sponsorships: become the “beverage of choice” at a football stadium or concert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social shift towards environmental focus ● Social shift towards valuing healthier consumption
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Product Lifecycle

Angry Orchard is currently in the MATURITY stage of its lifecycle. To avoid a plateau in sales or even a decline of the company, Angry Orchard must find ways to capture new target markets, maintain control over the hard-cider market, and increase annual sales.

Problem Statement

In order to keep growing, Angry Orchard needs to engage with the craft beer mindset to make sure that consumers continue to get excited about their product.

What Needs to be Addressed →

1. Currently, the psychographic interests of craft beer drinks make this market segment not inclined to purchase into the “corporate” atmosphere surrounding Angry Orchard.
2. We want to make Angry Orchard a unique and engaging company that provides drinkers with an exciting experience every time they enjoy our drinks
3. Our priority is: a) to appeal to millennials and college-aged consumers, and b) to compete with craft-beer industry

Strategy Analysis

Market Segmentation

The primary age demographics for Angry Orchard’s cider are consumers between the ages of 21 and 24. This group is composed of college-aged consumers, who are both male and female. According to recent data, consumers between the ages of 21 and 34 consumed hard cider the most out of any other age group.³ 24% of consumers within this age group have stated that they have consumed hard cider several times a month or more. Whereas, only 14% of consumers between the ages of 35 and 44 have stated they drink hard cider several times a month, and only 5% of consumers within the ages of 45 to 65+ have also stated they consume hard cider several times a month. Additionally, over 70% of consumers between the ages of 45 and 65+ have stated they have never consumed hard cider; while 47% of surveyed consumers between the ages of 21 to 34 have never consumed hard cider. This segment of millennials is most likely to continue to invest in the hard cider market. Angry Orchard should continue to target this group in the future.

Additionally, both men and women compose the target market. However, according to recent research, more women consumer hard cider than men.⁴ Women make up ⅓ of the hard cider market. While Angry Orchard should continue to focus on attracting female consumers, the company should increase efforts to appeal to male consumers.

³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/878967/hard-cider-consumption-frequency-by-age-in-the-us/>

⁴ <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/hard-cider-is-having-a-moment/>

As for the psychographic characteristics of the segments, Angry Orchard drinkers are interested digital tendencies, as well as fun and recreational activities. Since the majority of the market is made up of millennials, this group of consumers will enjoy using technology and will be attracted to brands that can leverage technological capabilities. Additionally, Angry Orchard drinkers are also active and enjoy time outside. The company has been able to appeal to outdoor enthusiasts, as well as consumers who want to relax and enjoy a casual event with friends and family.

The socioeconomic composition of Angry Orchard consumers are people from the upper-middle class. The hard ciders are priced slightly higher than competitors' ciders. For instance, a six-pack of Angry Orchard cider sells for about \$11, while a six-pack of Strongbow cider sells for about \$9.⁵ Consumers of Angry Orchard have enough funding for their alcohol consumption; however, as the majority of the market is composed of millennials, these consumers do not have a large amount of disposable income.

Finally, Angry Orchard is sold and distributed on a nationwide scale. Most liquor stores and grocery stores around the country carry Angry Orchard cider. Many sporting arenas, bars and restaurants also have Angry Orchard on tap and available for purchasing. However, hard cider is more popular in the northeast region of the country, and Angry Orchard is located in Walden, New York.

Target Market

Angry Orchard's current target market is millennial women. Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of hard cider drinkers are women within this age cohort. While Angry Orchard should continue to target and reach millennial audiences, the company should focus on attracting more millennial men. The company should also expand their target market to include men and women who are in their 30s. While Angry Orchard should continue to appeal to college-aged buyers, the company should focus on retaining these consumers well into their 30s.

Angry Orchard should also continue to expand their market to include middle-class consumers by lowering their prices by \$1- \$2. The target market for Angry Orchard should continue to include college students, graduate students and the younger generations within the workforce.

Positioning

Angry Orchard hard cider is positioned as a refreshing drink for consumers who want to continue the American tradition of cider drinking. Moving forward, the company should continue to position the product as a casual drink for hardworking consumers who are looking to relax. By emphasizing their "outdoorsy" brand image. With a website that highlights the beauty of upstate New York, it is apparent that Angry Orchard aims to appeal to drinkers who also appreciate recreational activities in a scenic outdoor environment. Angry Orchard should position their cider by emphasizing that it should be enjoyed with friends and family in a casual and fun setting throughout the entire year. This can be done by creating new, seasonal and regional flavors. It can also be achieved by adding a sense of fun and excitement to the drinking experience. Angry Orchard should include collectible prizes, like stickers and coupons, in select six-pack packages. When consumers buy a pack of Angry Orchard cider, they will be given the chance to win a collectible item. Even if consumers do not find a collectible item within the package they purchased, they can still be given a chance to win by scanning the newly-placed

⁵ <https://www.totalwine.com/search/all?text=angry%20orchard>

QR codes on the bottles of cider. When a consumer uses his or her smartphone to scan the code, they will be taken to an online “Spin the Wheel” webpage. This wheel gives all consumers a second chance to win additional Angry Orchard products.

Strategy Development

Our team has developed a three-part plan to achieve our goals. First, we will increase the creation and distribution of “Limited Edition” flavors. Keeping craft beer competitors in mind, Angry Orchard should also aim to create uniquely crafted beverages that are one-of-a-kind. We want our consumers to feel as if they are having an exclusive experience when drinking our cider. Instead of feeling like they are drinking a generic hard cider that any consumers above the age of 21 could buy at a local liquor store, we want our customers to feel like the cider has been uniquely crafted with their interests in mind. Flavors will appeal to various U.S. geographic areas, as well as specific holidays and seasons. For example, a “Blood Orange” flavor will be created using hints of oranges from Florida. A “Cranberry Apple” flavor will be released around Thanksgiving as a tribute to the upcoming holiday season. We want the ciders to be consumed during every point of the year by consumers throughout the entire country.

The second part of our plan is to change the packaging of Angry Orchard six-packs by placing collectibles within the cardboard packages. Select packs will have exclusive stickers and magnets placed within the packaging. This is especially appealing to millennial drinkers and college-aged drinks. Being able to have tangible items like stickers and magnets is exciting for this age group. When you look around a college classroom, more than half of the class will likely have one or more stickers on their laptops, tablets, or phones. We want our target market to be representing the Angry Orchard brand in this same manner. The collectibles will serve as an incentive for consumers to buy our cider packs over a competitor who does not offer any kind of collectible or prize with their packaging.

Finally, the third part of our plan will consist of placing QR codes on the sides of Angry Orchard bottles. This code gives consumers a second chance to interact with our brand by winning exclusive merchandise through a “Spin and Win” webpage. We hope this tactic will increase brand loyalty, as it leverages technology to connect with younger generations of consumers.

Product Strategy

We recommend adding to Angry Orchard’s existing product line. We will introduce 15 new “Limited Edition” cider flavors over the course of two years. Currently, Angry Orchard is threatened by the growing hard cider industry and by the increasing numbers of craft beer creators. Many consumers enjoy having uniquely flavored and specialty beers, and craft beer has become popular in the past five years. Many consumers who drink craft beer, now consider Angry Orchard to be too commercialized. However, with the introduction of new flavors that appeal to various geographic and psychographic market segments, Angry Orchard will be able to attract maintain their control over the hard cider market.

Pricing Strategy

Currently, a six-pack of Angry Orchard ranges from \$8.99 to \$11.99 depending on the distributor and flavor pack. For example, a six-pack of their original “Crisp Apple” flavor from Walmart sells for \$8.99, while a pack of their variety blend from Total Wine & More sells for \$11.99. On the other hand, most six-packs of craft beer sells for \$8.00-\$12.00. Due to the close and

competitive pricing, we are proposing that Angry Orchard lowers their price, as a way to incentivize consumers to purchase their cider over a competitor's cider or craft beer, which will most likely cost more. Angry Orchard should standardize their six-pack pricing by making all packs \$9.99.

Place Strategy

Currently, Angry Orchard is available on a nationwide scale. However, we want to continue to ensure that Angry Orchard is easily accessible to all consumers within the United States. While hard cider is more popular in the Northeast region of the country, we believe that through our product strategy, we will be able to attract more consumers in the South, Midwest, and on the West Coast.

Promotion Strategy

Our primary tactic for increased promotion will be through word-of-mouth marketing done by our satisfied and excited consumers. By hiding stickers and magnets in select packaging, consumers will be excited about their chance to win exclusive merchandise. Because of this, they will tell their friends to buy a pack of Angry Orchard to see if they will also be winners. Even if their pack does not include a sticker or magnet, they will be given a second chance to win exclusive apparel, coupons, or even a free tour of the Angry Orchard Cider house. Finally, we will be using micro-influencers within the age cohort of 21-35 to sponsor on our brand through social media posting, which will serve as another incentive to persuade millennials to purchase our brand of hard cider over other alcoholic beverages.

Objectives

Our objectives are specific, measurable and time-bound:

SPECIFIC: We want to attract college-aged and millennial consumers between the ages of 21 and 35. Through social media sponsorships, packaging changes, and increased promotional tactics, we aim to maintain our market share of 60%, even against an increase of craft beer competitors. We will utilize the “4P’s” promotion and product strategies by 1) leveraging technology through the QR codes placed on bottles, 2) increasing excitement through packaging changes that include hidden collectibles, 3) creating limited release flavors, and 4) increasing Angry Orchard’s social media presence by connecting with consumers online.

MEASURABLE: We aim to increase Angry Orchard’s hard cider sales each year. From 2019 to 2020, we want to increase the sales from \$318M to \$350M (by the end of 2020’s Q4). We aim to have the sales increase by approximately 10% by the end of 2020. By the end of 2021, we want the sales to have reached \$375M, which will be an increase of approximately 7%. Finally, by the end of 2022, we want our sales to have reached \$400M, which is an increase of about 7% from 2021. By 2022, we will have introduced 15 new “Limited Edition” flavors. We will also have formed at least 5 strategic partnerships and sponsorships with major college and professional sports teams, which will continue to attract younger consumers. Finally, by 2022, we will have increased the millennial drinkers’ market share from 24% to approximately 65%.

TIME-BOUND: Our plan will span two years-- from January 2020 until December 2022. Our plan will have benchmarks (or “checkpoints”) every six months. These benchmarks will review 1) what has been achieved, 2) what needs to be adjusted within our plan, and 3) what still needs

to be completed. In January 2020, the “Research and Development Stage” will commence. This includes our packaging change, the insertion of collectibles into packaging, and the creation of QR codes for individual bottles. The company will also work to ensure there is enough cider and merchandise to meet the growing demand of Angry Orchard products. Six months later, in July 2020, the “Outreach Stage” will begin. This includes an increase on social media, a social media announcement of the “Spin to Win” challenge, consumer interaction online with the company, media mentions and public relations, and increased word-of-mouth marketing done by our excited customers. In January 2021, the sales will have hopefully met the \$325M goal for the 2020 fiscal year. By this point, at least five new flavors will have been released, and 2 strategic social media sponsorships will have been formed. In July 2021, we will continue outreach, marketing and advertising efforts. The company will be on its way to achieving the \$375M goal for FY21. Finally, by January 2022, the company will be reaching \$400M in sales, the final five new flavors will be released, Angry Orchard will have maintained its control of the market share, and the market share of millennials will have increased from 30% to 65% as a result of our product, pricing and promotion strategies.

Implementation

With all strategic marketing plans, communication between top-level planners and front-line executors is essential. Without communication, the strategy will fail. To ensure communication is consistent and clear, we have placed benchmarks that will occur every six months during the two-year plan. The benchmarks will consist of meetings between management and front-line employees to ensure the marketing plan is on track, and that our objectives are being met each step of the way during the two-year plan.

During the implementation stage of our marketing plan, there is a potential for challenges to occur in the areas of communication, distribution, finance, and within the external environment. Challenge to communication occurs when there is a lack of communication across manufacturers, company leaders and suppliers. Challenges to distribution occurs when there are worker safety concerns, lack of supplier and retailer consolidation and manufacturing challenges. Financial challenges occur because the industry is faced with changing prices due to supply, taxes, imports/exports costs, and competition. Finally, the external environment surrounding Angry Orchard poses potential challenges because a decline of apple growth will negatively impact the amount of cider that can be produced. Additionally, competitors will challenge Angry Orchard in the future. Competitors will continue to try to take away the company’s market share by adjusting their own pricing, product, placement, and promotion strategies.

Conclusion

However, through our proposed marketing plan, Angry Orchard will surely achieve the objectives that have been set for the next two years. Our team is looking forward to working closely with the senior management and front-line employees to ensure Angry Orchard creates an extraordinary drinking experience for consumers by consistently delivering superior value to our consumers through the improved packaging, exclusive product lines, and increased social media promotion. Thank you for your time, and we are excited to see Angry Orchard succeed over the next two years and beyond!

Thank you for a great semester, Professor Peake! We have truly enjoyed learning from you, and we all feel as if we have taken away a great deal of information from your class-- information that we will be able to apply to both our work and personal lives after graduation and into the future. Have a wonderful holiday season and a very happy new year!

Sincerely,
Team 4

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