Becky Plaza

CSIT 146

9/1/13

**SWOT Analysis**

Ever wonder how busy working moms keep their households running smoothly? [www.commonsensecountrygirl.com](http://www.commonsensecountrygirl.com/) answers the question, providing quick and easy solutions to common domestic conundrums.  Our website covers easy weeknight cooking, simple gardening tips, effortless travel prep, and arts and crafts shortcuts.  On our main website, readers have access to extensive free content, and partners have the opportunity of purchasing targeted banner ads.  For busy moms interested in even more help, our website offers a subscription service, featuring weekly meal plans, gardening projects, travel planners, and arts and crafts activities, all with step-by-step photographed instructions and customized shopping lists.

**Strengths:**

1.  High quality writer:  I have extensive writing experience in a variety of formats and styles, and am quite comfortable writing to my targeted audience of busy working moms.  I identify with them, and have gotten positive feedback from blog readers.

2.  Marketing expertise:  Through previous work experience, I have over 12 years of marketing experience, having done everything from designing promotional brochures to large marketing presentations.  Working for a community college meant doing all of these things on a shoestring budget, and I have been able to carry this knowledge with me and apply it to my own website.

3.  Resourcefulness:  Because [www.commonsensecountrygirl.com](http://www.commonsensecountrygirl.com/) is a one-person operation, with limited funding, being able to find answers, develop products, and market those products on my own is a critical skill that I have developed over the years.

4.  Multimedia experience:  My background is in radio and television production, so I am able to produce, film, and edit my own videos for the website.

5.  Extensive family cooking experience:  I’ve been cooking large family meals and developing recipes since my teenage years.

**Weaknesses:**

1.  Lack of time:  I currently have a full time job which curtails my ability to post frequently enough to the blog and develop recipe plans.

2.  Lack of web design experience:  I only know the basics of web design, and my current website needs to be personalized, updated, and reorganized.

3.  Lack of business management knowledge:  My background is not in business, so I feel I’m at a disadvantage when it comes to knowing the business culture and vocabulary.

4.  Lack of financial backing:  I have no capital of my own to invest in the business at this time.  Everything I do must be done for a very, very low or no cost.

5.  Lack of formal culinary credentials:  I have never attended formal culinary training, which may be important for some uses.

6.  Website name:  My current blog name does not reflect what I intend to do with it, which could make it difficult for users to remember.

**Opportunities:**

1.  Hire web designer:  I recently found a well-qualified web designer who will set up my website for $1,000, which is very economical compared to others.  It would be wonderful to find a way to take advantage of this opportunity.

2.  Take classes on web design:  Training on web design could help me implement my own website and save me the $1,000.

3.  Take classes on business administration:  Taking classes in business management will help me better plan and manage my business and my finances.

4.  Leverage family and friends:  I have an MBA and CPA in the family, so consulting with them on business matters for no cost is a possibility.

5.  Take culinary classes to establish credentials:  Look into potential certification classes that come with an affordable price tag.

6.  Utilize the new technologies I learn about in CSIT 146 to launch an e-commerce connection to my site.

**Threats:**

1.  Easy market entrance:  It costs nothing to establish a blog, and sign up for Google AdSense, which enables paid advertising on your blog.

2.  Many existing competitors:  Many successful food and lifestyle blogs already exist, such as [www.thesteamykitchen.com](http://www.thesteamykitchen.com/) and [www.thepioneerwoman.com](http://www.thepioneerwoman.com/)

3.  Economic downturn:  With the economic downturn, people have less disposable income to invest.

4.  Pirated materials:  When information is place on the Internet, it is incredibly easy for others to copy your work and represent it as their own.  You have to be constantly vigilant, and follow-up with web servers to have the stolen material remove.

5.  Sponsorship difficulties:  It’s difficult to get advertisers to support a blog without a large audience, but it’s difficult to build a larger blog without having advertisers to support you.

In order to mitigate some of my weaknesses and threats, I could to:

* Focus on doing most of my work on holiday breaks and summer vacation.  I have a month off for Christmas break and two months off for summer, so I could stockpile blog entries and recipe plans during those times for publishing during busier times.
* Continue to take MAT, BUS, and CSIT course at MiraCosta.
* Ask friends and family for microloans to finance my initial web design project.
* Look into formal culinary training opportunities.
* Study my competition to analyze what truly differentiates me from them, and then focus on that difference.