

Project 3, Part 1

Creative Brief

Art 337, Section 3

Cody Capella

About the Client

Background

Describe the business in detail

Linnaea's Café is long-standing San Luis Obispo coffee shop with a small food menu, serving more traditional coffeehouse foods like muffins, pastries and cookies, as well as homemade cakes, soups, breakfast burritos and scrambled eggs, and waffles. Their drink menu is pretty extensive, consisting both of standard coffee drinks (iced and hot mochas, lattes, espresso and the like) as well as a very large loose-leaf tea selection, which can also be ordered and brewed hot or iced. Each of the drinks is made-to-order, meaning that they're very flexible and customizable, with a range of milk and milk alternatives available, as well as daily specials and more seasonal drink specialities available during different days of the week and months out of the year. Linnaea's also serves lunch during weekdays, with each day's lunch made using ingredients that are local, in-season, and largely vegetarian or vegan — the meal served every day is different, so to get a taste of what's being served for lunch, diners need to simply show up and be ready to try something new.

Linnaea's prides themselves on having a very strong sense of character; aside from just being a local coffeehouse, they are a gathering place where all different kinds of people — community members, students, families, businesspeople, and everyone in between — come to relax, work, and connect with one another. In this sense, Linnaea's also sells an experience as one of their products or services: people keep coming back because they like the environment and the vibe that Linnaea's creates, as well as their food and drinks. Linnaea's is at the same time both homey and calming (with their soft music, warm interior and outdoor garden) and also creative and freeing (thanks to their rotating showcase of local artwork, performances by musicians and the types of people who regularly frequent the café), and it's for those unique qualities that people come to Linnaea's over one of their competitors.

Create lists of words

Words that relate to what they produce include coffee, tea, pastries, cookies, cakes, homemade, bake, brew, espresso, eggs, breakfast, café, comfort food, lunch, concerts, music, art.

Words that relate to positive aspects of the business include community-focused, open, inclusive, welcoming, warm, comfortable, homey, artsy, mellow, locally-minded, homemade, healthy, vegan, vegetarian, sustainable, organic, fresh, intellectual, wise, experienced, and balanced.

Positioning

Describe the current positioning of your business compared with other companies in the same business sector

The coffeehouse/café space is one with lots of competition in San Luis Obispo, but is interesting since there seems to be a market for each and every coffeehouse that opens up, largely thanks to the influx of students who head to them to study throughout the week and weekend during the school year. Linnaea's comes with the advantage that it's been a part of the San Luis Obispo community for such a long time, and it's relatively well-established, meaning that it isn't going anywhere anytime soon.

Relative to the competition, however, Linnaea's does have room to grow — there are a few limiting factors, some of which can be controlled relatively easily (like more effective marketing), and some of which can't (like its small size compared to competitors like Kreuzberg or Ascendo). A quick Yelp search for "cafés" in San Luis Obispo returns Linnaea's as the fourth result, behind both Kreuzberg and Scout, though all three have similar positive reviews, menu options and location.

Mission

What is the client's overall mission?

At Linnaea's, we strive to create a welcoming environment where everyone who visits feels at home. Our mission is to foster an open space that encourages creativity, calm, and connection, and to provide our guests with local, handmade food and drinks that present the best of who we are and connect them to the San Luis Obispo community. All of our coffee, tea, and food is made with the local community and our responsibility to live sustainably at its heart, and we pride ourselves on our support of local artists, musicians, and the guests who dine with us every day. Linnaea's is a small shop with lofty goals, but we hope that everyone who visits is able to find something here that makes them feel right at home.

Composition

Describe the business' internal structure

Currently, Linnaea's is comprised of right around a dozen employees, each of whom report to the two owners — the employees right now do a little bit of everything while they're on shift, including working the register, making drinks and food behind the counter, wiping down tables and countertops, cleaning dishes, and bringing food out to guests. The owners themselves have access

to a commercial kitchen outside of Linnaea's, which is where much of the food that requires more space or supplies to cook (like many of the cakes and pastries served) is prepared.

Moving forward, much of the employee hierarchy and overall structure will stay similar, but we'll also be adding additional event staff who will work during heavy-traffic times (like when we have gallery openings and performances in the garden). Once we are able to grow beyond our current size (see Growth later in the brief, under Client Goals for an example), we'll hire an additional 2–3 servers, as well as a dedicated on-site cook to allow our current employees to focus on serving as baristas and helping customers. After the redesign is fully completed, responsibility for maintaining it will stay largely with the owners, who will work with a design agency outside of Linnaea's to make needed future changes to branding and keep tabs on the overall outcomes of the redesign. However, marketing and social media will be handled almost entirely by the owners and the employees, as keeping our image authentic to who we are and allowing employees to share their own experiences on our social media (whether that be through our blog on our website, our Instagram, or our Facebook page), will be a great way to do just that. After all, we're a local business and don't have aspirations to become sort of coffee-roasting empire anytime soon, so keeping our own people involved in how we represent ourselves is essential.

Culture

Describe the culture and personality of the business

Linnaea's focuses on cultivating a culture of creativity, connection, and warmth, and does so by focusing on the elements many of us have in common and can enjoy together, like art and music, as well as by bringing our guests closer to nature through things like out backyard patio garden. Overall, Linnaea's culture is at once both counterculture-esque, thanks to our openness and support of the arts, and also very approachable and welcoming to all due to our friendly atmosphere and comfortable, homemade drinks and goodies. We choose to treat everyone here — employees, first-time guests and regulars — like family, and want to make sure that Linnaea's is seen as a place of calm, a retreat from the hustle and strain of life's everyday stresses.

All of our communication will center on friendliness and approachability, as well as affirm our commitment to strengthening the San Luis Obispo community and our engagement with the local area and the people who call it home. Since we are focused on supporting local farmers and artists and sustainability, our tastes and image — from our decor to the food we serve — will be focused on simplicity, and our new brand will incorporate the natural wood, soft neutral and warm colors, and closeness to nature that are cornerstones of our business.

The interior of the café will feature these same elements, including live plants, open, airy spaces accented with natural wood and stone, and feature works by local artists, musicians and writers. We'll continue our practice of making the arts a key part of who we are by hosting more frequent events, including pop-up gallery showings and concerts, and expand the current amount of work displayed in our café.

Client Goals

Project

Summarize the project and what you want to achieve based on your new business strategy, vision and goals

This business should become a staple location in its customers' lives — we want them to feel as comfortable here as they do returning to their own home, in the sense that visiting is just seen as natural, as an escape from whatever else they might have to deal with outside of its doors: because of this, our size has become somewhat of a limiting factor, so we'd like to increase revenues from our food and drink sales enough to be able to expand to the business next door as well.

We'd also like for our business to become more of an integral part of the San Luis Obispo creative scene, including the network of artists and makers in town, and use our business as a gathering place to help the rest of the community connect with local art and music. By making our business a more integral part of the lives of our community members, our revenues will also increase, again making our expansion next door more likely.

Lastly, we'd like to expand our current menu offerings to include more food options, especially those that incorporate more produce from local farms. This will bring in more customers overall, who will now be able to dine with us for a full meal in a casual setting, rather than just visit for coffee and a snack. It will also free up our current baristas to focus on being only baristas, which will bring in additional customers who are looking for a richer and more dedicated "coffeehouse" experience.

Goals

List the client's three most important goals

1. To become a larger part of our customers' lives by providing a warm, comforting place where everyone feels welcome.
2. To become a more integral part of the San Luis Obispo creative scene, serving as a space for local creatives and makers to connect with other members of the community and showcase their work and talents.
3. Encourage the expansion of sustainable and locally-sourced food, as well as promote a more conscious lifestyle focused on connection, creativity, and nature

Growth

List and describe the greatest opportunities for growth

For the business, the greatest growth opportunity lies both in increasing our customer base (as our location is relative small and on a side street downtown, making the importance of effective marketing and branding clear), which will in turn grow our revenues, as well as in increasing the size of our current physical location. Should we be able to expand into the space occupied by the store next door (which is essentially a mirror of ours), it would effectively double the size of our café and allow us to more easily grow our menu thanks to more space to prepare food, as well as allow us to seat more guests at the same time and have our current guests stay longer, leading to more purchases.

For the image of the business, one of the greatest growth opportunities would be by strengthening our position as an integral part of the San Luis Obispo creative scene, as already mentioned — this will extend our values of promoting creativity and supporting our local community to people outside of our guests, meaning that people who have yet to visit already arrive with a positive image of our café and what we stand for. Continuing to expand our partnerships with local farmers when sourcing ingredients for our food will also contribute to bolstering our public image, as well as increase the value that customers place on being a “patron of Linnaea’s”.

In 5 years, we’ll ideally have expanded into the space next door and hired a full-time cook to help with our menu expansion, resulting in increased business revenues and the ability for us to effect a greater positive impact in the San Luis Obispo community. In 10 years, we’ll have expanded beyond our current location, ideally into multiple locations — our current location, remaining primarily a coffeehouse with curated food selections, and a larger restaurant that focuses less on coffee and more on serving whole meals throughout the day prepared with our same focus on sustainable, local, organic and vegetarian-friendly ingredients.

The changes and trends that affect our industry are relatively minimal, as common issues like the rise of online retail and chain stores opening that offer similar products don’t infringe much on the business outcomes of local coffeehouses. However, there are two worth noting: a dramatic increase in competitors, which would likely hurt our business at least a little; and large population shifts in the San Luis Obispo community — say, for example, if Cal Poly cut its admittance in half, effectively cutting away a third of our business’ potential customers over four years. However, since this seems extremely unlikely, neither of these concerns seem to be high-priority.

The biggest potential barrier for growth would be our ability to acquire the space next door to our current location — without either increasing revenues

to provide enough money to buy out the current business, or if the current business refuses to sell, our business will be forced to consider moving locations should we want to expand beyond our current size, which would force us to both leave an area in which we've been a staple for years, as well as give up on many of the features (like our backyard garden) that we're relatively well-known for.

Marketing

Describe the marketing objective

First and foremost, we want to communicate what it is we are: a café and coffeehouse. Making sure that our audience knows what we sell is paramount. However, we also want to communicate that we're an integral part of the San Luis Obispo community and are a space that is welcoming, warm, and open to all. We want our marketing to leave our audience with a good idea of our values — creativity, connection, and sustainability — as well as the impression that this is a place where they can see themselves, no matter who they are, and that we do our best to make sure our food and drinks are the best that we can serve, every single day.

Objectives and Strategy

Define the problem

Describe why a new strategy is needed for this business

While this business has become a San Luis Obispo staple in its own right, it's become fixed in how it has always done things — the customers that visit it now are often the same ones that always have, and its physical size, limited menu offerings and lack of effective promotion are limiting its potential for growth and its ability to expand its current customer base. By limiting the size of its customer base in this way, it's also limiting its ability to achieve its goals of expanding its influence in the SLO creative scene and strengthening its ties to the community, as more customers mean more ties and more artists coming in.

Objectives

List the project objectives

With this project, we are trying to achieve greater recognition in the San Luis Obispo community of what our business does and what values we represent, especially among those who haven't visited our business before. We want our space to serve not just as a hub for connection and a place for homemade, quality food and drinks, but also as a cultural, artistic and creative space for all kinds of people to gather and engage with art, music and one another.

The priorities of these objectives include increasing the awareness of community members of our business and encouraging first-time guests to stop by and see what exactly it is that we're all about; working with farmers, coffee and tea suppliers and our cooks and baristas to expand our current menu offerings in a way that makes sense with who we are; and establishing ourselves as a major player in the San Luis Obispo creative arts and cultural scene through our in-café gallery, live performances, and engagement with other San Luis Obispo artistic and cultural events, like Art After Dark.

Components of the project

List what is needed to achieve your objectives for your particular business

Since one of the major objectives focuses on increasing awareness of who the business is and what they do, a cohesive brand experience that works hand-in-hand with marketing is essential to our success. This should include renaming the business and new identity materials (logo, printed materials like posters for

events, business forms, and the like), a new website and blog, and a coherent strategy around social media use and general marketing.

Finalizing our business plan and establishing how we want to structure ourselves moving forward with a focus on growth is also essential, as is preparing for an increase in customers after our rebranding and marketing efforts. Lastly, making a plan for reaching out to more local artists, musicians and cultural organizations to establish partnerships with will be our next step once rebranding is complete, which will put us on track towards increasing both our presence in the community, as well as our customer base over the long term.

Our Audience

Primary Audiences

Describe the business' primary audiences

We have two primary audiences, and we'll cover each in turn: college-aged individuals who attend Cal Poly or Cuesta, and local creatives, largely in the age range of 25–40.

College-Aged Individuals Attending Cal Poly or Cuesta

Our first primary audience makes up the majority of our customer base, as well as a number of our regular visitors: college students attending either Cal Poly or Cuesta here in San Luis Obispo. The people in this audience are college-aged (roughly 18–23 years old) and use our café as both a break from the hustle and bustle of their school or work lives, as well as a place to sit down and work on homework, studying or projects. They regularly buy coffee or tea, and often a pastry or piece of cake, but don't attend our performances very often and don't typically visit us just because of our values, but rather because they like our food and like the environment we create.

Their perception of our business is one that's geared towards a young, artsy crowd, but that's open to everyone and is slower-paced than competitors like Kreuzberg. We're seen as one of those places that students "just always go" in San Luis Obispo, and we're often seen as one of the more progressive of the coffee shops in the area, likely because of our focus on art, our healthy food choices, and our backyard garden. The people in this group do see us as a place to go and relax with friends, but more often see us as a place to study or to find some inner calm with some time alone, as mentioned earlier, as students in this group tend to frequent places with more energy when they want to go out with friends or socialize.

This group's interests and beliefs tend to vary by each person's background and goals for the future, but overall, they tend to focus on school — they typically are very passionate about what they're studying, are motivated, and future-oriented, though they are also anxious about what lies ahead. They dislike the stresses that college life brings, and also dislike the image that many of San Luis Obispo's residents have of them, as it tends to cast them in a more negative light. Their friends are typically the center of their time spent outside of class, so they jump at any opportunity to socialize and connect with them, and also love opportunities that are catered to students. They also tend to share a common set of values that resonate with people of their generation, notably that they want to support businesses who are sustainable, focused on giving back to the

local economy, youthful in what they do and how they run their business, and that make them feel like they matter.

This group is very technologically savvy and is constantly communicating through channels like Instagram, so reaching out through social media is the best way to get our message across to them. They also have a better eye for design — and supporting or wearing something that looks “well-designed” matters more to them — than other generations and groups tend to do, so beautiful printed materials, apparel and a functional website that looks just as good as our Instagram will also be essential elements of reaching this audience. Lastly, word-of-mouth is very powerful with this audience since this group tends to place a big emphasis on social connections, so making sure that our café encourages people to talk about what we’re doing after they leave will be another important element here.

Local Creatives (Largely 25–40 Years Old)

Our second primary audience group is what we’re deeming the “Local Creatives” group: those who live in SLO or nearby areas, are not college students (though are young, in the age range of 25–40 years old), and are employed as either working creatives (designers, artists, writers, musicians, freelancers) or spend significant time pursuing a creative field as a passion. This group loves the creative, artsy side of our café and it is their primary reason for dining with us rather than another of our competitors.

This group perceives our business as one that’s geared for people like them: in their mind, our quirkiness and values are a result of our support of local artists, and they see us as both a place to connect with other creatives and to work on their own projects. They also see us as very progressive, and resonate strongly with our values; overall, they too are very community-focused, and perceive us as a business with an investment in the San Luis Obispo community. However, they also don’t perceive us as so much of a gallery or exhibition space, likely due to our small size, but rather as a place where non-creatives can come face-to-face with art in a casual setting. They appreciate our long history as a SLO staple, and are hesitant of any expansion because they don’t want our café to lose the qualities it has that they value.

This group’s likes are more coherent than our other two audience groups: they are very art- and maker-focused, and think that local businesses supporting each other is the cornerstone of what makes San Luis Obispo unique. They dislike large chain stores and want to preserve the elements of “small-town” San Luis Obispo, while opening it up to include people from more diverse backgrounds and an overall younger population. They are more liberal than most of our other groups, and like progressive causes that support the environment, while they tend to dislike tradition and the rigid lines of the

business and tech worlds. They also like the slower pace of our café, and actively dislike the stresses and what they see as the ephemerality and lack of true meaning of the lifestyle of many college students in San Luis Obispo.

This group is relatively well-adjusted to using technology, but their use of social media isn't as frequent or as enjoyable on their part as the college student group. Facebook is probably the best way to reach them through social media (as they regularly use it to keep up with what people from their past are doing now), though updates posted to a website are probably more effective. This group will also be much more effectively reached through long-form pieces on our blog, especially those that cover upcoming events, local artists, and the stories behind our employees or what we do. This group will also resonate a lot more with printed materials hung up in the café, especially since they're already frequent visitors, though it's worth noting that these printed materials must be very well-designed and well-produced, since this community is involved in producing creative work themselves. In our communications, it's also important to make sure that we aren't dramatically changing our language to reflect our first primary audience, as doing so or coming off as too casual might alienate this group — the best communication strategy would be to meet in the middle, and use language and messaging that is friendly and approachable, as well as clear to people of all ages.

Secondary Audience

Describe the business' secondary audience

Our secondary audience makes up the smallest portion of our current customer base, but one that we feel has the potential to grow significantly: young working adults who live in the San Luis Obispo community, but aren't involved in the art, music, or creative scene. This category is quite broad compared to the other two discussed as our primary audiences, but it differs in that it's made up of people who visit only briefly to enjoy a coffee or maybe dine with a friend once in a while, but don't take attend any of our shows or performances, and don't stay long in the café to work on creative work or relax.

Their perception of our business, by and large, is that we're cute, quaint, or quirky, and that they enjoy our food and drinks but our business either isn't memorable enough or relevant enough to them and their lifestyle to justify them coming back more frequently. Demographically, this category, as already mentioned, is more broad, but includes young people (under 40) who live in San Luis Obispo and work in the community, but don't currently attend college and Cal Poly or Cuesta. These are adults with busy lives centered around a job — and, in some cases, maybe a young family — who don't have very much extra time to spend exploring the side streets of downtown and poking their heads into coffeeshops. Instead, they want a place where they can go and decompress

for a half hour or so and enjoy a cup of coffee or a simple meal, and then move on with the rest of their day.

This group has varied interests, but their likes usually center around their job, their friend group, and their off-time. They like and regularly use technology like smartphones, tablets, and even smartwatches, and are typically fans of the outdoorsy, active lifestyle that San Luis Obispo offers. They vary in terms of what they believe, but they like businesses that use buzzwords like “local” and “sustainable” to describe themselves. They dislike the fact that they don’t have as much free time as they could if they didn’t have a regular job, but they also feel the need to keep themselves busy, even when they don’t have much to do. They also are anxious about the future and dislike time spent alone.

To communicate with this audience, it’s clear that medium is important: since they’re so technologically-savvy (similar to the college student group), social media like Instagram is going to be one of the most effective avenues for reaching them. Messaging-wise, placing an emphasis on both our business serving as an open, welcoming space focused on fostering connection among friends, as well as on how we incorporate our values of sustainability and supporting the local economy into all of our food and drinks, will be most effective at bringing the members of this group in more regularly.

Audience Goal

Describe the audience goals for the business

As mentioned previously, one of our goals is to expand our current audience across the board, both to increase revenues and also to strengthen our ties to the San Luis Obispo community. By and large, our biggest goal is to expand the creative-artist-musician segment of our audience, especially because of our moves towards repositioning ourselves as an integral part of the San Luis Obispo creative scene. However, as any business can likely relate to, we’d also love to expand to audience segments that don’t yet frequent our business, as we feel there are entire segments that we aren’t reaching as well, especially those belonging to older age groups, and families with young children.

Perception

Describe the current audiences’ perceptions of the business

Both of our primary audiences — college students and local creatives — tend to have very positive perceptions of our business. Both see us as an existing hub for quality food and drinks, but also as a part of their regular routine — students see us as a place to go where they can focus and study or relax and enjoy conversation with friends, whereas local creatives see us as a place to see what

other artists are working on, work on their own projects, and meet with other creatives. Outside of those two main audience groups, our perception differs a little bit – our secondary audience shares the perception that most of the public has of us, the aforementioned view of us “quaint,” “cute,” and “quirky,” but also relatively small-scale and not memorable enough to become a part of their everyday lives. Instead of seeing us as a creative and cultural hub, they see us simply as a run-of-the-mill coffeehouse, similar to SLO’s half-dozen other ones within just a few blocks.

Desired Perception

Describe the desired perception for the business

While we do want our audiences to perceive us as a place with great-tasting and responsibly-sourced coffee and tea and homemade food (which many of them do already), we also want to be known across audiences as a place where anyone can feel like they belong and where people come to relax, work and connect with one another in meaningful ways. Our focus throughout much of this plan has been on our values – creativity, sustainability, and supporting our local community – and we want these images to become an integral part of our brand perception across audiences as well.

Promises & Response

Describe the promises made to the audiences

Our biggest promise, first and foremost, is to serve quality, homemade food and drinks that are the best that we can possibly make, every time someone steps through our doors and places an order. However, we also promise an experience and environment that allows everyone to be themselves, no matter who they are or where they come from, and to foster an environment where they can work, relax, and connect with the people that matter to them. We also promise to do right by our values, since they’re one of the biggest aspects of our business that we focus on: as much as we can, we operate sustainably, support our local farmers and our community, and encourage expansion and development of the arts – our customers know that when they visit our café, they’re holding us to our values and we promise to act on them.

We want our customers to leave feeling connected, refreshed, and that their time spent with us was valuable. We also want them to feel like they’re always welcome back, and that there’s something about us or about our café that they can relate to personally, whether that be those same values, our food, or the memories they made there. Especially, we want our customers to leave feeling like we didn’t let them down – we want them to walk away with more faith in us than they had when they walked in, each and every time: we want our audience

to know that we care about them and their experiences, and that our café is just as much theirs as it is ours.

Mediums

Describe the best ways for the business to reach their audiences

For all three of our audiences discussed above — both of our primary audiences, as well as our secondary audience — technological savvy is relatively common across the board, so reaching out through social media channels like Instagram and Facebook will be especially important at reaching them where they're already at. However, for our frequent visitors (our two primary audiences), in-café posters and promotional materials for upcoming events, as well as a frequent customer rewards program or other incentives (like the coffee and tea punch cards already in place), will be effective ways to both inform those groups about what's new with our business, as well as keep them coming back.

Lastly, and perhaps most important for our Local Creatives audience and the general public, is our website. In the case of the Local Creatives section of our audience, hearing about updates in long-form on our blog, and diving deep into details about gallery shows, featured artists and our work in the community is something that will resonate with them more so than brief updates on Instagram. And to the general public and those who have yet to visit our café, having current, clear and friendly information about who we are, our menu, how to find us, and our upcoming events on a site that works wherever they are — on the laptops or on their phones, visiting us directly or looking for us on Google Maps — will dramatically boost our brand and messaging.

Competition

Competitors

Thoroughly describe each of your business' competitors

We have identified three main competitors to our success as a business, each a local coffee shop in San Luis Obispo (as online competitors aren't very relevant to our business at this time): Ascendo Coffee, Kreuzberg, and Scout Coffee. We'll examine them each in turn below.

Ascendo Coffee

Ascendo is one of our biggest competitors for a number of reasons — they're also located in downtown just a few blocks away, they too pride themselves on similar values — sustainability and the arts — and they've recently undergone an entire rebrand, name change and expansion themselves. Ascendo — which used to be known as Bello Mundo Café — is located on Monterey Street and specializes in serving coffee, tea, and pastries and other small snacks. On the one hand, the fact that we serve more substantial meals is a plus in our favor, though Ascendo's location and larger space make it both more inviting and more easily-seen by people who have never visited before.

Ascendo brews coffee from different locations around the world that it rotates through periodically. Inside, their café is outfitted using natural wood, stone, neutral tones with handmade touches, accents and live plants (again, very similar to our café), and features open, airy spaces with plenty of natural light. Ascendo does an excellent job at outreach and marketing through their social media, adopting a friendly and approachable tone throughout their messaging, frequently tying their posts back into events in or features of the San Luis Obispo community or Cal Poly. Their brand is also very consistent (especially after the rebrand) with high-quality photography that has a very “modern” look to it (light and bright, with warm tones and a focus on the people that frequent their business or work there) and a graphic style that references the outdoorsiness of much of the San Luis Obispo community, utilizing humanist sans-serif type and soft greens and coupled with hand lettering and natural materials (like unbleached paper and cardboard) as accents.

Lastly, Ascendo also takes place in Art After Dark, which places it as a major competitor when it comes to trying to become a driving force in the artistic and creative communities in San Luis Obispo. Adding to this the fact that they're clearly doing well — they just opened a second location in nearby Los Osos — and, looking on Yelp, are the first result for cafés in San Luis Obispo, make Ascendo our strongest competitor.

Kreuzberg

Kreuzberg would be another of our major competitors, though their business is much less similar to ours than either of the businesses of our other two competitors are, making them less of a worry overall. Like Ascendo, they're located downtown, just two blocks away right on Higuera Street, and, even more than Ascendo, have a massive space with lots of outdoor seating, big windows and open, airy spaces inside. Whereas Ascendo goes for more of a homey vibe, Kreuzberg markets itself towards what could be called a "hipster" crowd — essentially, those who are artsy and creative, but not as community-minded as those who frequent our café. However, Kreuzberg has capitalized on its location, size, and popularity very well, and for many is the go-to coffeehouse in San Luis Obispo.

Their drink menu is quite expansive, and they have a full-sized breakfast and lunch menu throughout the week too with items ranging from pancakes, eggs and burritos to burgers, sandwiches, salads and pasta. They too brew coffee from different locales, and are excellent at outreach, offering different classes about coffee and hosting events several nights out of the week featuring local musicians, comedians, and other artists. One other distinctive feature of Kreuzberg is its Lounge, at which they serve beer and wine, which helps them attract a very wide audience that spans age ranges and interests, from college students (who, similar to our café, are their main patrons) to local working people.

Kreuzberg's branding is also very cohesive, focusing on incorporating natural materials like wood, stone, and metal throughout their store, but also bringing in elements that are quirky, vintage, or at times just plain odd — however, that quirky aesthetic has helped them create a solid image of being a place for creative folks, as well as helped draw people outside of that audience in just because it's so interesting. They also feature curated items for sale, including branded merchandise, and market themselves relatively well. The biggest way news spreads about Kreuzberg is probably through people bringing their friends with them when they visit, who then bring their friends, etc., though they also show up as the third result when doing a quick Yelp search for cafés in San Luis Obispo. Their Instagram focuses less on the people and the product and is more used as another avenue to display their branding and imagery, though it doesn't include updates about events or who they are as much. Similar to Ascendo, they too utilize hand lettering, but incorporate more grunge and rustic accents into their image versus the light, modern touches Ascendo uses.

Scout Coffee

Lastly, Scout Coffee would be our third biggest competitor, for many of the same reasons listed above — their size (they are slightly larger than us space-wise) and their location, as they are, quite literally, right next door: the original Scout location

is also located on Garden Street on the corner intersecting with Marsh. Like Ascendo, Scout also has two locations, with the other being on Foothill close to the Cal Poly campus, so it's evident that they're doing very well. Scout serves similar coffee and tea drinks to us and our other two competitors, as well as handmade pastries, cookies, and other treats like milkshakes, but doesn't have a very large food menu at all. Instead, Scout markets themselves as a place where people who value a premium coffee experience go: they are a popular study spot, but instead encourage their guests to focus on having conversations with one another instead of getting lost in their devices or in whatever they might be working on.

Scout's locations both feature a very clean, minimal and modern look, with bright, natural lighting, industrial touches like cement floors and metal machinery bumped up against natural materials like wood and stone, and live plants. Scout also sells a collection of curated goods, ranging from drink ware to apparel to books and home goods, and packages and sells their own coffee both in-store and online. They too market themselves as a place for creatives, but don't focus as much on displaying art or music in-store or connecting with the local artist community, instead choosing to cater more towards their college-aged audience and what would be considered our business' secondary audience (working people who live in SLO and don't want to spend a ton of time in a coffee shop working).

Of our three competitors, Scout's brand image and marketing is the most comprehensive and also the best-looking: their website is fantastic, with tons of information about who they are, where they come from, and what they sell, as well as an online store where guests can buy merchandise branded with the Scout logo. Their website also features a blog with long-form updates, and their social media is heavily used on a regular basis. Their imagery focuses on the space and the products they sell, and their photography style is, much like the rest of their branding, light, airy and warm, with golden tones and natural elements always playing a role in each image. Scout also makes use of neutral colors throughout their branding, as well as hand lettering, and use sans-serif type paired with display serifs to create digital and printed materials that are very well-designed, friendly in what they say and how they say it, and nearly beg you to look at them and see what they're about.

Who we admire most

We admire Scout Coffee the most of our three main competitors, thanks to their cohesive brand system, their similarities to us, and their remarkable ability to build a following that brought them so much success that they were able to expand to a second location, despite being founded only in 2014. However, there are elements that we admire in each of our competitors, and there are also similarities between all four businesses, including our overall aesthetic and the messaging we want to put out, that will be very helpful to examine as we restructure our brand and decide how we move forward as we start growing more as a business in the future.

Messaging

Message

If you could get one sentence through all of the clutter, what would it be?

At Linnaea's, we believe that homemade food and great coffee have the power to connect people, strengthen our community, and create a space where everyone is free to work, play, be creative, and feel comfortable, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Project Goals

Produce 2–3 short sentences that sum up the project's goals.

This project aims to create a cohesive image of Linnaea's in the minds of both our regulars and those who have yet to stop in of our café as a place where all are welcome and that leads with its values of openness, creativity, sustainability and connection. We want to convey the care that goes into all of the food and drinks we make, and the consideration that we take with each interaction we have with our customers. Lastly, we want to position ourselves both as an integral part of the San Luis Obispo creative scene, as well as a strong supporter of others in our community, from farmers to makers and everyone in between.

Communication Objectives

List 2–5 words (in order of importance) that are your communication objectives

Welcoming, homemade, local, creative, connected