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# Uncork Your Creativity

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Honors Project – Event Planning

Uncork Your Creativity

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The University of Akron

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### **Overview**

Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe is a unique, redefined space in Strongsville that strives to create an artisan living experience by encouraging customers to shop, dine and be inspired. The cafe is a flagship location of Architectural Justice, an interior design shop in Medina. In order to showcase the diverse aspects of this new location and attract more customers to the business, the owners wanted to host another pop-up event in their space. Due to the fact that Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe is already known for their culinary and crafting classes, the owners requested that ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ be for profit to align with their current business model. For my honors project, I experienced the in-depth process of planning and executing a creative, hands-on pop-up event for a client within the restaurant and retail industry. Additionally, I collaborated briefly with the marketing director in regard to content and promotion for the event. Limitations for the event included budget, food and beverage, and upper-management requirements.

With the motto, “Shop, Dine and Be Inspired,” Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe embodies creativity through providing an experience for patrons — whether they’re taking a stroll through the gallery, dining in the cafe or participating in an event. This pop-up event created a new experience for their patrons and encouraged personal creativity while adding emphasis to the diversity and eccentricity of the business.

With this project, I experienced the intensity of planning an event and learned the ups and downs of event planning, including limitations and unexpected last-minute changes. I had the opportunity to interact with patrons and experienced collaboration with internal departments. Upon completion of this project, I successfully executed an event plan that incorporated a very small social media campaign. The event, ‘Uncork Your Creativity,’ provided customers with a

new and entertaining experience, while the company benefitted from an influx of customers and increased marketing. In the literature review, I discuss secondary research focusing on communication theories applicable to event planning and interpersonal communication including Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Exchange Theory, and Causality Orientations Theory. Next, the paper moves into the event's vision, proposal, goals and objectives. After an evaluation of goals and objectives, the paper moves into a detailed timeline of all steps and facets of the event. The process behind digital promotion, specifically social media posts, is discussed and related back to communication theories. At the conclusion, the paper focuses on the positive and negative outcomes of the event, followed by a personal reflection of the overall experience, from the early stages of planning to final execution. 'Uncork Your Creativity' was an engaging and unique pop-event at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe. Participants greatly enjoyed their experience and the event was one of few sold out classes for the month of November, classifying the event as a success.

### **Literature Review**

Event planning greatly involves interpersonal communication that occurs face-to-face, as well as mediated communication in online channels, such as social media and other digital communication. Within my Honors Project, I will be focusing on in-person and social media communication and messaging leading up to, during, and after the event. Communication is both psychological and sociological and is "comprised of symbols, messages, and meanings," in which meanings refer to an individual's understanding of the exchange (Keyton, J., 2011). To continue, communication is functional, social, and cultured. It allows us to create and maintain relationships with one another, which is the basis of event planning. As previously stated, event planning involves interpersonal, mediated, and digital communication, focusing on the

relationship between an organization or business and their target audience. When communicating with a target audience, it is important to acknowledge the needs and wants that will facilitate a positive and successful exchange. Communication can be broken down into distinct theories, such as theories relating to needs, the self, and decision making, that further explain the reasoning behind thoughts and actions that are common in society.

There are three main theories that focus on needs, motivation, and decision-making: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Social Exchange Theory, and Causality Orientations Theory. Based on the upcoming secondary research and case studies, these theories proved to be the most influential regarding an individual's decision-making process.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Psychologist Abraham Maslow identified five categories of human needs and motivations and represented these needs as a hierarchy. From bottom to top, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs includes physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization. The basic needs arrange themselves in this hierarchy on the basis of the principle of relative potency (Maslow, A. H., 1954). This means that the bottom level of the hierarchy — physiological needs — is the strongest and must be well gratified before one would move along to the next tier. In order to reach the higher-level needs, one must meet the needs at the lower levels. According to Maslow, "the higher the need the less imperative it is for sheer survival, the longer gratification can be postponed, and the easier it is for the need to disappear permanently" (Maslow, A. H., 1954, p. 98).

Therefore, a person facing an issue with a lower level need, or safety need, such as poverty or homelessness, is not the target for a for-profit, creative event, as that experience is considered a luxury, upper level need. It is not a need that is imperative to one's survival. As

previously stated, according to Maslow, if an individual's lowest level needs are not met, that individual will not be motivated to pursue any of the needs in the upper levels. As stated by Maslow, "higher needs require better outside conditions to make them possible" (Maslow, A. H., 1954, p. 99). Thus, individuals that have a stable income and a safe, secure space to live are within the target audience for such an event, as they have satisfied their lower level needs within Maslow's hierarchy.

### **Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory argues that social behavior results from a process of exchange that maximizes personal benefits and minimizes personal disadvantages. According to this theory, individuals participating in an exchange compare their own rewards with their own costs in order to maximize their own benefits (Ekeh, P. P., 1974). This can be interpreted as an individual's comparison level. The comparison level represents how an individual determines the value of an interaction and focuses on two ideas: what an individual deserves and what alternatives are available. For everyone, there is a point where an exchange is no longer appealing. For example, an individual may be willing to attend an event for \$30, however when the price is \$50 or higher, the event is less appealing. According to Social Exchange Theory, regarding withdrawal from a relationship, "as soon as rewards drop below the comparison level, the individual will leave the relationship" (Chadwick-Jones, J. K., 1976, p. 183). Thus, if an individual believes that the costs outweigh the rewards, they will not follow through with the exchange.

This situation is where Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Social Exchange Theory go hand in hand. To review, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs represents the basic level of needs that an individual must meet in order to reach self-actualization, while Social Exchange Theory

focuses on the costs and benefits of a social situation to maximize personal benefit. If an individual's basic, lowest level needs are threatened, they will not seek out or engage in a social exchange catered to higher level, self-actualization needs. In this situation, the cost, or sacrificing fulfilling lower level needs, greatly outweighs the benefit fulfilling a higher-level need by attending an event.

Again, Social Exchange Theory greatly relates to an individual deciding to take an action, such as attending an event, in order to maximize personal benefits and minimize personal disadvantages. So, when applying Social Exchange Theory to virtual actions, specifically social media, users are more likely to engage in low-cost interactions such as an RSVP, like, or comment, because it only requires the click of a button. It is an acknowledgement of potential attendance, not a confirmation of attendance. An RSVP, like, or comment are the smallest acknowledgments one can partake in on social media, as these actions do not require a large expenditure of energy, time, or money from the individual.

For example, an individual comes across an event that interests them on Facebook. Based on the infrastructure of the social media platform, Facebook, in just one click, that individual can RSVP as interested, going, or not going to an event. Again, as previously stated, that one click is a low-cost action, as the individual does not have to expend a lot of energy or invest large amounts of time, money, or resources. On the other hand, actually following through with attending an event is a high-cost action. In order to attend an event, an individual is required to expend energy, time, and most likely, money. Days before the event, or the day of the event, there is a possibility that the individual does not want to partake in the high-cost action. Maybe the ticket price was no longer in their budget, something come up at work, or they simply do not have the time in their schedule to attend the event, which again, could tie back to the previous



example regarding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. In conclusion, based on the Social Exchange Theory, when the costs outweigh the rewards, it will most likely result in the end of the interaction.

### **Causality Orientations Theory**

Causality Orientations Theory (COT), a mini-theory within Self-Determination Theory, describes individual differences in people's tendencies in regard to environment and behaviors, and assesses three types of causality orientations: impersonal, controlled, and autonomous (Sheldon, K. M., & Prentice, M., 2019, p. 8). In autonomous orientation, a person seeks out situations in which he or she can feel ownership and control over their personal behavior (Sheldon, K. M., & Prentice, M., 2019, p. 8). This individual greatly values what is occurring and takes action due to interest. Control orientation focuses on intentional behavior based on the contingencies and constraints within the environment (Sheldon, K. M., & Prentice, M., 2019, p. 8).

When planning an event, it is extremely important to reference this theory, as it relates to the content, concept, and marketing of an event in relation to an individual's autonomous and control orientation. Primarily, a person needs to be interested in an event in order to decide whether or not to attend. Therefore, the content, concept, and marketing of the event needs to be attractive for that audience. When deciding whether to attend an event, a person usually will weigh the pros and cons of the event to determine overall value, known as autonomy orientation. In this situation, the individual is in control of their personal behavior. This orientation then results in a person understanding their decision, defined as control orientation. During this evaluation of value, an individual may take cost, expenditure of time, and potential experience

into consideration. Thus, these event attributes must fall into an acceptable category for the audience.

### **Case Study: Young Living and Ketchum PR**

As my event for my project will be considered a pop-up event, in addition to communication theories, I incorporated a PRSA Silver Anvil Award Case that utilized a pop-up event to introduce customers to a brand in order to increase awareness, sales, and social engagement.

In the past few years, essential oils have moved from a niche category to broad availability through retailers, drug and grocery stores. However, research showed that consumers pay little attention to label names. For Young Living, this became an opportunity to become more widely known and distinguished for its therapeutic-grade purity while taking advantage of the rising popularity of essential oils in the market. After conducting a great amount of research, Young Living and Ketchum PR created The Lavender Room NYC, a pop-up visual and sensorial experience to connect customers with the brand of Young Living Essential Oils. The event was extremely successful, becoming PRSA's 2017 Silver Anvil Award Winner.

Upon reviewing the case, Young Living and Ketchum's, 'The Lavender Room NYC,' greatly reflected Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, specifically self-actualization needs. Again, as discussed above, self-actualization needs are the highest tier in Maslow's hierarchy. This tier is a higher-level need, as it is not imperative to survival, but rather personal growth and achievement. The event featured an artful pop-up installation in the heart of New York, offering consumers a centering and relaxing break from their day. The space was filled with fresh lavender and flowers, accented by Lavender essential oils. Young Living and Ketchum branded the event as a space to 'Find Your Center,' allowing customers to connect with the brand at an emotive and

sensory level. According to their research, many consumers reported that the power of scent — both personal and nostalgic — is like a portal to transport them to a different place, as it allows them to recall a favorite memory or remember a favorite person (Ketchum PR & Young Living Essential Oils, 2017). Individuals were allowed 90 seconds to experience the calming effects amidst the holiday chaos. Before and after their experience, individuals could test, and purchase select Young Living retail products, and were encouraged to take and share photos from the event. The case was extremely successful, as brand and product line exposure, awareness, and sales increased immensely (Ketchum PR & Young Living Essential Oils, 2017).

This case greatly relates to ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ due to the fact that it focuses on individuals reaching their higher-level, self-actualization needs. It was an event that enhanced an individual’s life outside of their basic physiological needs. It focused on creating an overall experience for the consumer — one of the main goals of the events that take place Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe.

Overall, these three theories, along with the PRSA case study, greatly influenced the creation and execution of ‘Uncork Your Creativity.’ The three theories encompass the main attributes of interpersonal communication regarding event planning and an individual’s decision-making process. Each theory focuses on a process that an individual typically follows in order to fulfill their needs, which helps create a structural guide to follow and pay attention to while planning an event. These theories, along with the PRSA case study, provided me with great insight and extensive knowledge relating to the principles surrounding interpersonal communication.

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**Vision**

Girl's Night Out with a twist — wine and crafts. Instead of the typical wine and painting event, guests will celebrate the holiday by creating a Christmas tree decoration made out of wine corks while chatting with friends. Due to the fact that Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe is already known for their culinary and crafting classes, the owners requested that 'Uncork Your Creativity' be for profit to align with their current business model. The event will be ticketed, as supplies are limited, with the price set at \$25. Each ticket will include the supplies to create the Christmas tree, one glass of house wine, and a shared charcuterie spread.

The pop-up event will take place in the test kitchen at Architectural Justice Gallery and Café and will be led by myself and my mom, Celeste. It will be specified in the event posting and in social media posts that the event is in benefit of a University of Akron honors project. Decor for the event will include pre-made Christmas trees and decorative items from the gallery — some which relate to wine and dine — that are available for purchase.

**Location**

Uncork Your Creativity will take place at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe on Saturday, November 3, 2018 in their test kitchen. The test kitchen is known for hosting cooking classes and large parties and events.

**Food and Beverage**

A shared charcuterie spread and one glass of house wine are included with a ticket purchase. In the middle of the event, the charcuterie spread along with small plates will be placed in the center of the test kitchen table for all attendees to share while participating in the event.

## **Goals and Objectives**

**Goal 1: To create interest for people to attend a creative event held at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe.**

- Acceptance Objective: To have an effect on acceptance, specifically to increase the average number of 'interested' people on Facebook events by 5% by November 3, 2018.
- Action Objective: To have an effect on action, specifically to attract 10 attendees to a craft night event at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe by November 3, 2018.

**Goal 2: To improve awareness of the versatility of the offerings provided by Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe.**

- Awareness Objective: To have an effect on awareness, specifically to increase comprehension of the versatility of Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe by November 3, 2018.
- Acceptance Objective: To have an effect on action, specifically to increase the number of positive Yelp / Google reviews for the cafe by 2 people by November 10, 2018.

## **Timeline**

### ***August 2018:***

- Create and submit event proposal.

### ***September 1, 2018:***

- Review event proposal with owners.
- Discuss goals for the event, as well as potential issues to avoid based on reviews and previous experience from other culinary classes / large events.

### ***Week of September 2, 2018:***

- Create a detailed supplies list to begin to purchase, as well as a brief event outline.
- Make corrective edits to proposal based on owner feedback.
- Create different styles of the wine cork Christmas tree to discover which process runs smoothly. These trees will be used as physical examples in the class, in addition to being props for the promotional photoshoot for the upcoming event.

### ***Week of October 1, 2018:***

- Complete the promotional photoshoot in the test kitchen. The wine cork Christmas tree examples, a glass of wine and a charcuterie board will all be included in the photos. Photos from this shoot will be included on the event page on <https://www.architecturaljustice.com/culinary-classes-events/>, as well as Instagram in order to promote the event.

### ***October 1, 2018:***

- Create event name and write copy for the event description and instructor bio so it can be posted and promoted on the website.

### ***One month prior to event, October 3:***

- Send all promotional photos and event copy to AJ Marketing Director, Jordyn, to upload to the website in order to begin selling tickets.

### ***October 31, 2018:***

- Contact the store manager to confirm with the chef that 5 charcuterie boards will be prepped in order to be placed at the start of the event.

### ***October 3, 2018 - November 3, 2018:***

- Promote the event on Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe and personal social media accounts (Instagram and Facebook).

***Week of October 28 (leading up to event):*** Purchase final supplies and prep all supplies for the event, including creating individual supply baggies for each attendee.

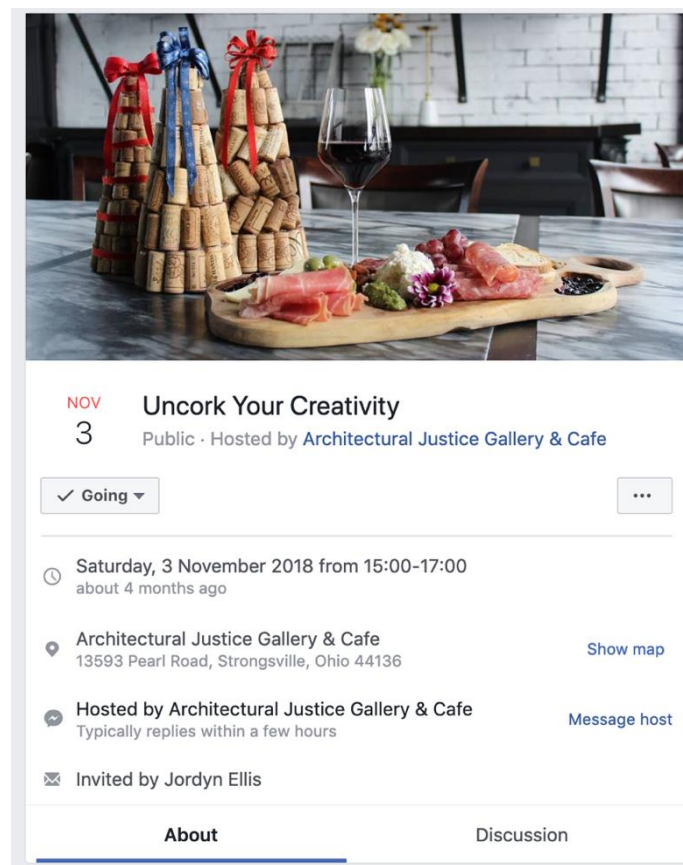
### ***November 3, 2018:***

- Uncork Your Creativity pop-up event at Architectural Justice Gallery & Cafe.

## Promotion


Throughout the month of October, the event will be promoted in the cafe by the cafe managers, Gina and Brittany, as well as by all client-facing employees: servers and baristas. Additionally, the Architectural Justice website will be updated by their in-house marketing director, Jordyn, to reflect ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ on their events page. Jordyn will also post ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ as an event on the company’s Facebook and share a post on Instagram. This is the standard process for all Architectural Justice culinary classes or creative events. The website is updated to reflect upcoming events, which are then promoted in-store by employees, and via Facebook events. Typically, a few days before the event occurs, one additional social media post is shared via an Instagram post or story.

- *October 3, 2018:* Uncork Your Creativity event to be posted on AJ Gallery and Cafe Facebook and website. See below: Facebook event page and details, followed by a screenshot of the website the morning of the event.





9 went · 35 interested [See All](#)



Celeste, Emma and Sam went

**Details**

Grab your girlfriends for a GNO craft event in support of a University of Akron Honors Project. Ticket includes materials for creating one wine cork Christmas tree, a glass of house wine and hors d'oeuvres to share.

[Crafts](#) [Christmas](#) [Wine](#)

ARCHITECTURAL JUSTICE  
440-268-8646

register for a culinary class using a gift certificate please call  
register in-store at the Gallery & Cafe.

ABOUT SHOP MENU

CULINARY CLASSES & EVENTS  
test kitchen for a small private event

CONTACT

please contact us.

[Learn More](#)

**NOVEMBER, 2018**

<b>02</b> NOV EVENT OVER <b>HAWAIIAN LUAU</b> CULINARY CLASS 6:30 pm - 10:00 pm	<b>03</b> NOV SOLD OUT! <b>MACARON WORKSHOP</b> CULINARY CLASS 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
<b>03</b> NOV SOLD OUT! <b>UNCORK YOUR CREATIVITY</b> CRAFT & WINE EVENT 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	<b>09</b> NOV SOLD OUT! <b>TASTE OF ITALY</b> CULINARY CLASS 6:30 pm - 10:00 pm EST
<b>15</b> NOV	<b>16</b> NOV

**GIFT CERTIFICATES**

Give the gift of a culinary experience in our beautiful Sub-Zero Wolf demonstration kitchen. Gift certificates are available for purchase at the Gallery & Cafe. Recipients may register for a class in-store or by calling us at 440-268-8646.

**Meet the Chefs**

Our Chefs and Culinary Educators provide us with delicious recipes to prepare and enjoy together.

[Learn More](#)

- *October 3, 2018:* Share event on personal Instagram story to increase awareness. This story received approximately 200 views from followers.

- *Week of October 28, 2018:* Share an additional post on AJ Instagram and Instagram stories to inform customers that were interested or may not have known about the event that the event is almost sold out.

Unfortunately, only access to co-host the event was provided. Access to detailed analytics for Facebook and Instagram were not provided.

### **Supply List**

- Wine corks (40/person x 16 people = 600)
- Papier Mache cones (1/person x 16 people = 16)
- Hot glue guns (1/person x 16 people = 16)
- Extra glue sticks
- Ribbon
- Bowdabra, bow making tool
- Brown bags
- Tissue paper
- Scissors (1/station x 4 stations = 4)
- Extension cords
- Event Assistant/Server
- Wine / 16 people
- Charcuterie / 16 people

**Budget and Pricing**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Vendor</i>	<i>Price/Unit</i>	<i>Total Price</i>
Wine corks	400 / half	Etsy	\$60.00 (Donated by AJ)	60.00 (Donated)
Papier Mache cone	16	Michael's	\$1.99 + tax	\$34.39
Hot glue guns	4	Michael's	\$3.00	\$12.00
Hot glue guns	6	Pat Catan's	\$2.67	\$16.02
Glue sticks	4 packs	Various	\$2.47 - \$5.00	\$12.93
Ribbon	11 rolls	Michael's	\$3.00	\$33.00
Bowdabra	1	Michael's	\$5.99	\$5.99
Brown bags	2 packs	Hobby Lobby	\$6.48 + tax	\$13.85
Tissue paper	1 pack	Walmart	\$3.98	\$3.98
Scissors	4	Walmart	\$1.77 + tax	\$9.18
Wine / glass	15	AJ	\$7.00	\$105.00
Charcuterie	16	AJ	\$12.00	\$192.00
Extension Cords	8	Home	\$0.00	\$0.00
Server	1	AJ	\$10.00/hour	\$20.00
<i>Donation</i>	-	-	\$30.00	+ \$30.00
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$488.25</b>

Tickets Sold	16/16	\$25.00/Ticket	<b>\$400.00</b>
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While the costs for the event did outweigh the profits, including donations, the event attracted participants to stay for dinner and shop in the gallery. A few participants stayed for dinner and dessert, while approximately half of the participants shopped in the gallery with their class discount. Due to the discount, many of these participants made larger purchases, including artwork. These profit numbers do not account for the greater awareness attendees now have about the gallery — a unique feature of the business that many in the general public do not

understand. Additionally, there is an increased likelihood for attendees to attend future events or share their experience with friends and family.

### **Detailed Day of Itinerary**

1. Test kitchen will be cleared from the previous event by 2:00 PM. Kayla and Celeste will arrive to cafe approximately an hour before the event to begin set-up.
  - a. All prepped craft bags will be placed at each seat for all attendees.
  - b. Extension cords and glue guns will be plugged in and prepped at all 4 of the stations around the table.
  - c. 16 Plates and 16 sets of rolled silverware will be prepped in the middle of the table.
  - d. The table with the stove attached will be decorated in a holiday theme and will include the premade examples of the wine cork Christmas trees.
2. The manager scheduled for the day (either Gina or Brittany) will check attendees in at the front desk.
  - a. As attendees are checking in, the server will bring out waters and take the wine order for each. A complimentary glass of house wine will be served; there will be a charge for any additional beverage purchase.
  - b. Kayla and Celeste will greet in the test kitchen.
3. After all attendees are checked in, Kayla will give a brief explanation of the event and what The University of Akron Honors Project entails.
4. Next, Kayla and Celeste will walk attendees through the process of the craft.
5. About an hour into the event, charcuterie boards will be placed in the center of the test kitchen table for all attendees to share.
6. Throughout the event, Kayla and Celeste will monitor the attendees and aid and answer any questions. A server will attend to all additional beverage requests throughout the event.
7. Kayla will take photos throughout the event.
8. At the end of the event, attendees will place their finished craft in their supply bag to take home.
9. Kayla will encourage attendees to submit a positive review on Yelp or Google and thank everyone again for attending.

**Event Reflections**

The months spent planning and preparing for ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ completely flew by. There were slight ups and downs throughout, but overall, from the first proposal to execution, everything ran smoothly. When deciding on what type of path to follow for my Honors project, I had a few ideas in mind. I knew I wanted to dive into event planning because it was a topic I was not completely comfortable in, so I knew that it would be an opportunity to challenge myself. In everything I do, I always gravitate toward projects that will allow me to learn and grow. I began working on this project in my junior year, when I started to look for internships. I was at the point of transition between my job as a barista into the communications field. I decided that a blend of the two would be a perfect way to begin my transition.

Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe was not only my home as a barista but is very close to my heart because it is a family business. My aunt and uncle, Darlene and James Justice, are the owners, so as an employee, everything meant so much more. I am extremely passionate about the success of the business as a whole and I wanted to base my project around helping the business succeed. With culinary classes being a hit at the cafe, I came up with a few class ideas that I believed would be attractive and entertaining to customers. Being an almost full-time AJ barista since opening, I had a great amount of experience with what customers liked and disliked when visiting the cafe. Upon discussing with Darlene and James about my project, we decided that a creative route in comparison to a culinary route would be more beneficial.

***Objectives Reflection***

After reflecting on the event, I looked back on my goals and objectives to determine if they were met, exceeded or if there was a place where something may have fell through. I

exceeded my first goal, acceptance objective and action objective, however I struggled with my second goal and objectives.

**Goal 1: To create interest for people to attend a creative event held at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe. — EXCEEDED**

Acceptance Objective: To have an effect on acceptance, specifically to increase the average number of 'interested' people on Facebook events by 5% by November 3, 2018.

- On average, regular class events posted on the Facebook page for Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe receive around 25 'interested' people.
- 'Uncork Your Creativity' received 35 'interested' people, resulting in a 28% increase.

Action Objective: To have an effect on action, specifically to attract 10 attendees to a craft night event at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe by November 3, 2018.

- 'Uncork Your Creativity' was a sold-out event, consisting of 16 attendees, a 37.5% increase when compared to the original goal of 10 attendees.

**Goal 2: To improve awareness of the versatility of the offerings provided by Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe.**

Unfortunately, this was not properly measured. However, attendees toured the gallery after the event and many purchased gallery items. Throughout the event, many asked about future event offerings.

Awareness Objective: To have an effect on awareness, specifically to increase comprehension of the versatility of Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe by November 3, 2018.

- This objective should have been addressed with a survey or review at the conclusion of the event. Unfortunately, I did not take that into consideration and therefore can only base my observation on conversations with attendees.

- Based on my conversations, approximately one quarter of the class was unaware of the classes offered at Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe, as well as the items available for purchase in the gallery.

Acceptance Objective: To have an effect on action, specifically to increase the number of positive Yelp / Google reviews for the cafe by 2 people by November 10, 2018.

- Again, as stated before, none of the ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ class attendees left a Yelp, Google or Facebook review about the event.
- While encouraged verbally in class, handing out a small paper or flyer thanking customers for attending and reminding them to share a review would most likely have a stronger impact.
  - When planning future events, I will definitely incorporate a post-event survey.

### ***Communication and Social Media Reflection***

One of the biggest aspects of my project was communicating with the Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe management and staff. Every idea had to be approved by Darlene and James in order to preserve brand identity and the overall aesthetic and offerings that their business provides. Originally, ‘Uncork Your Creativity’ was going to focus on a craft to create wine cork coasters. We tested out the project, and it was such a challenging craft to make. Therefore, we decided to relate the class to an upcoming holiday, which was Christmas. Upon making this decision, I ran through test trials of creating the wine cork Christmas trees with my class assistant, and mom, Celeste. I explained the process to Darlene and James, and it was approved.

After the event was approved, we discussed the final pricing of the tickets. I utilized Social Exchange Theory greatly when deciding on the price for the event. While the price of the

crafting supplies influenced the event price, after reading about Social Exchange Theory, I paid close attention to what price would be appealing to consumers. I researched what similar crafting classes cost within our local area, calculated the cost of the supplies and came up with a happy medium.

Next, we focused on social media promotion and marketing for the class. Here, I worked with Architectural Justice's marketing director, Jordyn. Jordyn manages all marketing efforts for the Architectural Justice brand. Her tasks include but are not limited to running all social media channels, updating the Architectural Justice website, coordinating class lists for culinary, creative, and personal events, and planning and executing product photography.

This was a bit challenging at times, as the company already follows a routine for posting on social and has a particular method for how they share events on social. Due to this, I did not have a lot of control over when social was posted or how often. While I completed the photography for the event promotion, Jordyn decided on the final photo that would be shared and was in charge of updating the website and all social channels.

At this point, I reflected a lot on Social Exchange Theory. Social Exchange Theory argues that social behavior results from a process of exchange that maximizes personal benefits and minimizes personal disadvantages. As discussed in my literature review, according to this theory, individuals participating in an exchange compare their own rewards with their own costs in order to maximize their own benefits (Ekeh, P. P., 1974). For everyone, there is a point where an exchange is no longer appealing. For example, an individual may be willing to attend an event for \$30, however when the price is \$50 or higher, the event is less appealing. According to Social Exchange Theory, regarding withdrawal from a relationship, "as soon as rewards drop below the comparison level, the individual will leave the relationship" (Chadwick-Jones, J. K., 1976, p.



183). Thus, if an individual believes that the costs outweigh the rewards, they will not follow through with the exchange.

Additionally, Social Exchange has been applied to virtual interactions, specifically those that occur on social media. This theory states that users are more likely to engage in interactions on social media because it is associated with a low personal cost. To RSVP to an event on Facebook, all someone has to do is click a button. This is classified as a low-cost action, as it requires a small expenditure of energy and effort. However, actually attending an event expends more time and energy, and in the case of ‘Uncork Your Creativity,’ money.

Looking back now, I compared the list of individuals that stated they were ‘interested’ or ‘going’ on the Facebook page to the official class list from AJ. There was a significant difference. 35 individuals elected that they were interested in the event, while nine of the class attendees stated on the Facebook page that they were going to the event. The gap between ‘interested’ and ‘going’ clearly reflects on the Social Exchange Theory. It was a low personal cost to be ‘interested’ in an event, while actually purchasing tickets for the event, confirming your space on the Facebook page, and attending the event requires more action and energy.

### ***Execution Reflection***

Uncork Your Creativity was a huge success. The morning of the event, the last two tickets were sold, causing this class to be one of four sold out classes during the month of November. While this was extremely exciting, it was also very nerve wracking. Going into the project, I believed that most of the participants attending the event would be family, friends and colleagues. I only knew five of the sixteen names on the list of attendees. Looking back now, this was great. I had the opportunity to introduce a facet of Architectural Justice Gallery and Cafe to not only my friends, but new and returning AJ customers.

My mom and I arrived about an hour before the event to set up the test kitchen space and the four craft stations. Set-up ran smoothly, but again, I became nervous when check-in began. While I practiced multiple run throughs of creating the cork Christmas tree, was prepared with extra supplies and worked in customer service for years, the small sea of strangers entering the room was intimidating. Most participants came with family or friends; however, a couple of participants came as individuals. While we waited for the class to begin, my mom and I chatted individually with a few attendees. Approximately one quarter of the attendees either previously dined at the cafe or participated in a cooking class. Many others were first-time customers. One customer actually attended the event because she was scouting for activities for a company team bonding.

Once all attendees arrived, I introduced myself, my mom and Holly, our class assistant, and explained my Honors project, the supplies on each station, and the craft we would be creating. The class started out a bit slow and quiet because a couple of larger groups had to be separated due to station size. However, this resulted in more people mingling together. One specific individual brought some of her own supplies — mainly decorations, including miniature Christmas lights and ornaments to add to her tree. When I first noticed them, I was a bit frustrated. Bringing your own supplies to a crafting event is pretty odd. This action could have been completed at home after finishing the basics of creating the tree in the class. Her gesture easily could have resulted in other's disappointment in the overall class or thinking that the company skimmed, which was something I was nervous about. AJ was not only my previous place of employment, but a family member's business. I did not want to tell her no, especially because she was already using them, so she used them openly. This ended up being a small but

influential blessing. Her extra supplies sparked a happy conversation between other groups and even developed a new friendship when she shared her extra supplies with other participants.

A situation that was not necessarily taken into consideration prior to the event was the speed of certain individuals to create the craft. During practice runs, we tracked approximately 30 minutes to complete the tree. These practice runs did not include any distractions such as food, other people or alcohol. We made the assumption that people would take a bit longer to finish their craft when in a class environment, and while some did take more time than others, we did have specific individuals that finished in the speed of light. Fortunately, we prepared extra materials and tended to these individuals by allowing them to make the bow for the top of their tree using the Bowdabra tool. When the event came to a close, the attendees that came as individuals left almost immediately. However, those that came in pairs or groups stayed and chatted for a while before heading to shop in the gallery.

Throughout the event, many attendees complimented me on my project and expressed that they “will vouch for me to receive an A,” which made me laugh, but was greatly appreciated. Two attendees even asked if I would be doing a similar event in the future for other holidays, such as Easter. To me, that was one of the most memorable and important comments from the event. Not only did they love ‘Uncork Your Creativity,’ they wanted to come back for more. Hearing the positive feedback directly from the attendees was a great feeling.

Overall, while a lengthy experience, I learned a lot about event planning throughout the process of proposing and executing my Honors project. I had the opportunity to apply important communication theories to an event and project outside of the classroom, which was beneficial real-world experience. I experienced the hiccups that can occur in event planning, such as a bit of pushback and valuable suggestions from the client, scheduling and finding the correct amount of

supplies at a valuable price. When executing the event, I led the class, allowing me to practice interpersonal communication skills with class attendees. This experience really helped me understand the amount of effort put into every single event I attend. A successful event is not something that comes together overnight; it consists of working with others as a team, making decisions and being adaptable to any hiccups or changes.

## Event Photos



Posing with supply bags prior to the event. The bow on the bag would be the bow for the top of their Christmas tree.



A combination of decor created for the event, as well as gallery items.





My mom, Celeste, helping one of our attendees with wrapping ribbon around her tree.



Friends working on creating the cork base of their Christmas trees and enjoying the wine.





An attendee's finished product while another adds finishing touches.



Mom and daughter adding decorations to their Christmas trees.



Another mother daughter duo working on their Christmas trees.



Enjoying her house wine and her finished Christmas tree with a bow she made herself using the Bowdabra tool. She wants to come back for an Easter cork class!





My 'Uncork Your Creativity' class with their final creations! Unfortunately missing a few individuals that left before the picture was taken.