FROM RESEARCH TO THE POST

Community-first marketing for a queer, Filipino-owned Oakland cafe

TAYLOR HARDY — Microfinance at Berkeley

The Client

Cafe Gabriela

A Filipino and queer-owned cafe in Oakland, serving sandwiches, salads and coffee with a twist of Filipino flavor.

Penny Baldado, a queer Filipino immigrant who was formerly undocumented, founded it in 2010 and named it for Gabriela Silang, the Filipina revolutionary who led a revolt against Spanish colonial rule.

The cafe had deep community roots but little presence online: no branded content, no posting plan, and a website that was hard to find.

The ask: reach more customers through social media and smarter marketing.



The Team

A six-person consulting team

Microfinance at Berkeley · Spring 2022

Project managers

Deepta Jasthi ’24
Serena Ong ’24

Associates

Teddy Audley ’23
Yvonne Guu ’25
Taylor Hardy ’25
Soltan Jaberi ’25

My role

At the midpoint, I presented our website and search recommendations: the SEO audit, what the site should say and show, and additional website pages for catering, coffee beans, and vinaigrette. Additionally, I participated in the research, content plan, and building the social media templates.

“Reach more customers through social media presence and marketing techniques.”

One goal, four workstreams

SOCIAL MEDIA

Competitor research, content pillars, a posting calendar and branded templates

COMMUNITY AND PLACE

A storefront and an interior that make guests feel at home

WEBSITE AND SEARCH · MY SECTION

An SEO audit and a site that tells the cafe’s story

DELIVERY

What it takes to get the cafe onto delivery apps

The Process

From research to the post

The social workstream was built by the whole team, and we didn't start in Canva. The templates were the last of six steps, each answering a question the next one needed.

1

Audience

Who are we talking to?

2

Neighbors

What do nearby cafes do?

3

Rules

What must every post do?

4

Pillars

What do we post about?

5

Rhythm

When and where?

6

Templates

What does it look like?

Step 1 · Audience

Who we were posting for

Workers in downtown Oakland. Oakland's largest age groups in 2022 were adults aged 25 to 34: the lunch-break crowd, and Instagram's biggest U.S. age group too.

Used a delivery app in the past 90 days, by age

63%
ages 18–29

51%
ages 30–44

29%
ages 45–60

14%
over 60

Younger adults order on delivery apps far more than older groups, so being on those apps mattered too.
Sources: Oakland 2022 population pyramid; U.S. Instagram users by age; Zion & Zion (2019) delivery app survey.



The feed and the website work as a pair



Marketers in an industry survey rated websites, in-store promotion and mobile among the most effective channels. So Instagram became the main voice, backed by a cleaned-up website.

Delivery apps are part of the storefront



DoorDash led by a wide margin, which shaped the delivery plan later in this deck.
Sources: marketer survey via Statista; Second Measure via Statista (San Francisco, April 2021).

Step 2 · Neighbors

What two nearby cafes taught us

Cafe 15

WORTH COPYING

- Same template, colors and logo every post
- Named highlights, one for food prep
- Short mission line that says what's unique

WORTH AVOIDING

- Never shows the family it says owns it
- One long, hard-to-navigate web page

Oaklandia Cafe

WORTH COPYING

- Highlights that group its products
- Current Yelp page with the owner's story
- Listed on Grubhub, Postmates, Uber Eats

WORTH AVOIDING

- Random posts with no clear purpose
- Food photos that never name the dish
- A website that crashed every visit

Four rules every post had to follow

Give every post a job

Each post states a purpose: sell a dish, tell a story, thank a customer.

From Oaklandia's random, purposeless posts

Always name the item

A photo of food comes with its name, and its ingredients or flavor.

From Oaklandia's unnamed food photos

Look like one cafe

Same frame, colors and logo, so it reads as Gabriela at a glance.

From Cafe 15's consistent templates

Show the people

Penny, the team, the customers and the cafe's namesake belong in the feed.

From both cafes hiding their owners

Step 4 · Pillars

Eight things worth posting about

HAS A TEMPLATE

Sandwich of the Month

Show off the range of sandwiches, by name and ingredients

HAS A TEMPLATE

Drippy Drinks

Advertise the coffee line and new releases

Inspirational Quotes

Encouraging words, often next to the team, to build a bond with customers

Throwback Posts

The cafe's history: Penny, the early days, and the story of Gabriela Silang

HAS A TEMPLATE

Behind the Scenes

How the food is made, set to music, to feel closer to the kitchen

HAS A TEMPLATE

Saucy Salads

Launch the new vinaigrettes and show off fresh salads

HAS A TEMPLATE

Shoutouts

Customers and community causes, so the cafe is part of the neighborhood

End of Month Recap

What the month achieved, so customers see the impact of every order

A month on a calendar

April 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Posting day, 11 AM–1 PM
Month-end recap

Posting schedule

Instagram · Stories · Facebook

WK	DAY	DATE	POST	STORIES	FACEBOOK
1	FRIDAY	1	Sandwich of the Week	Sat 2	Repost
2	TUESDAY	5	Drippy Drink Feature	Wed 6	Repost
	FRIDAY	8	Shoutouts	Sat 9	Repost
3	TUESDAY	12	Saucy Salad Feature	Wed 13	Repost
	FRIDAY	15	Food Prep Reels	Sat 16	Repost
4	TUESDAY	19	Inspirational Post	Wed 20	Repost
	FRIDAY	22	Throwback Post	Sat 23	Repost
5	TUESDAY	26	End of Month Recap	Wed 27	Repost

Rebuilt from the team's spreadsheet, which planned March through May the same way.

Two posts a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays between 11 AM and 1 PM, when Instagram and Facebook engagement runs longest (Sprout Social, 2021). Each post is reposted to Facebook the same day and shared to Instagram Stories the next day, so two posts become six touchpoints. Every pillar gets its turn across the month, and the recap closes it.

Five templates, built in Canva

Each template belongs to one pillar. They vary in layout so the feed doesn't feel repetitive, but they share the cafe's reds, browns and creams, and most carry the cafe's skyline logo.



Sandwich of the Month

Brick-red frame, the dish named under the photo



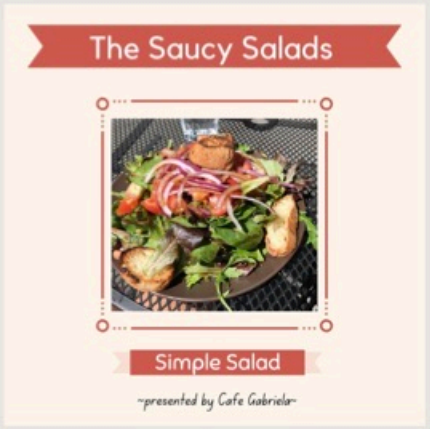
Drippy Drinks

Coffee browns, the roast named in the caption



Behind the Scenes

Cream and red, a window into the kitchen



The Saucy Salads

Ribbon banners, the salad named on a tag



Customer Shoutouts

A snapshot frame that puts customers first

Step 6 · Templates

The rules, in one post

01 **Give every post a job**

One sandwich, featured for a month

02 **Always name the item**

“Fried Egg Sandwich” sits right under the photo

03 **Look like one cafe**

Brick-red frame, the skyline logo at the bottom

04 **Show the people**

That job belongs to Customer Shoutouts



Community and place

Three places to welcome a guest

01

Outside

A warm, informative storefront that tells people walking by who the cafe is.

02

Online

An online experience that feels like the cafe on any device.

03

Inside

An interior that makes every guest feel at home.



Community and place · Outside

A storefront that says “come in”

CREDIBILITY

- Celebrate 12 years in business
- Show off the Indie Rewards win
- Put top Yelp reviews on the glass

COMMUNITY

- A collage of staff and guests
- A screen looping videos of the cafe and its history
- Game-day specials for Warriors and 49ers games

INFORMATION

- A printed menu hung on the window
- Call out the organic coffee beans
- Feature the 4.5-star Yelp and Google rating



CAFE GABRIELA

Why guests choose to stay

80%

of North Americans want to know where their products come from

Switch to eco-friendly packaging and takeout boxes

37%

average sales lift when brand-fit music plays instead of random music

Curate a playlist, with an outdoor speaker to draw people in

Signs

Sidewalk signs raise sales and profitability, per the New York State Small Business Development Center

Advertise rotating specials on a sidewalk sign

Figures as cited in our midpoint research.

Getting found: the search audit

85%

of reviews are on Yelp

But the cafe doesn't rank in the top three results.

Fix: add the keywords "Breakfast & Brunch" and "Cafe," and respond to reviews.

15%

of reviews are on Google

The Google listing is missing key details.

Fix: claim the listing, fill it in, tag it as queer- and Filipino-owned, and add Google Maps ordering.

66%

SEOability score

No meta description, and pages load in 1.14 seconds.

Fix: add a meta description, use one H1 heading, and aim for a 0.4-second load.

Website and search · my section

A website that tells Penny’s story

Lead with the story

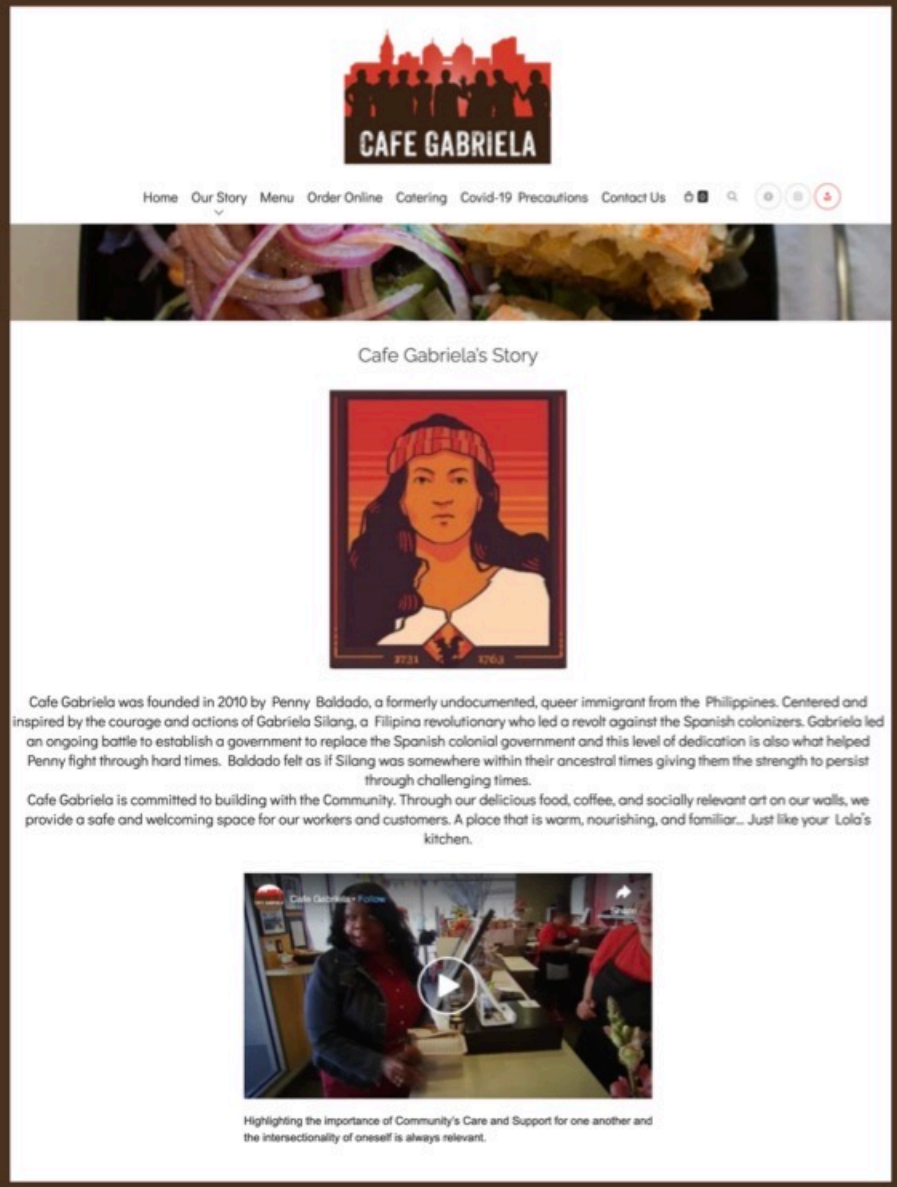
Who Gabriela Silang was, Penny’s journey, and a clear mission statement.

Make ordering easy

A clear menu button, real food photos, customer reviews, bigger type and one design across every page.

Add pages that sell

Catering, coffee beans and the cafe’s vinaigrette.



What it takes to get on the apps

App	How to sign up	Fees	Setup time
DoorDash	Apply online, activate, then confirm menu and pricing	15% or a $2.40 flat fee	3–5 days
Uber Eats	Apply online; a rep follows up. Optional pro photo setup ($350)	6% pickup; 15, 25 or 30% per delivery, by plan	4–7 days
Grubhub	Apply online; a rep finishes setup and a contract is signed	10% delivery; 5–20% marketing	About 1 day

DoorDash first: it held 74% of San Francisco delivery orders. And on the menu itself, add pastries that pair with the coffee.

AFTER THE MIDPOINT

Next: products beyond the counter

The second half of the project turned two of the cafe's favorites, its vinaigrette and its coffee beans, into products people could buy and take home.

Packaging

Sustainable and affordable

Launch plan

Step by step, for the vinaigrette

Distributors

In and beyond the Bay Area

Shipping

Rules for mailing coffee beans



Skills

What this project shows

Community research

Knowing who the neighborhood is before deciding what to say to it

Competitive analysis

Turning two nearby cafes into four clear rules

Content strategy

Eight pillars, a posting rhythm and five templates

Brand storytelling

Putting Penny’s story and Gabriela Silang’s legacy at the center

Community relations

Shoutouts, game-day specials and a storefront that invites people in

Digital presence

An SEO audit and stronger Google and Yelp listings

WHAT CAFE GABRIELA WALKED AWAY WITH

8

content pillars, each with a purpose

5

branded Canva templates

3

months on the posting calendar

3

delivery apps compared, side by side

One story from six separate project files. Microfinance at Berkeley, Spring 2022. Since then, Cafe Gabriela has stayed open, added a website page on the heart and story of the cafe, and started selling its coffee beans and vinaigrette in person, echoing our recommendations.