

# STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

## GAM'D Public Relations & Marketing Agency

**DATE:** December 8, 2025

**CLIENT:** The Boredom Set

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Boredom Set is a craft, creativity-based coffee shop that fuels itself off of creative expression, experimentation, and the idea of “creating despite boredom.” Yet, despite such dynamic brains and expertise behind its craft, The Boredom Set is the “new kid in the square.” Surrounded by four successful, established coffee shops in Market Square alone, The Boredom Set holds little to no name in downtown Pittsburgh’s oversaturated coffee market. As Market Square’s reconstruction finalizes and the space becomes more accessible for walking patrons, The Boredom Set has the unique opportunity to maximize this new space and take up even more in the downtown coffee scene.

Currently, The Boredom operates in two locations: Market Square and inside *Heat Check* in Shadyside. With the overwhelming success of *Heat Check*, a vintage-clothing-and-coffee-shop hybrid, The Boredom Set struggles to differentiate itself, often getting buried by the store's identity.

The primary objectives of this integrated campaign are to increase overall brand awareness while attracting new customers from surrounding Pittsburgh universities. With a majority of the shop’s current demographic consisting of business folk and millennials that work downtown, The Boredom Set seeks the opportunity to expand its reach to untapped, yet accessible audiences. This strategic communication plan leverages the best qualities of The Boredom Set to break down the wall between itself and its future customers. Such a strategy works in creating memorable touch points between the business and target audiences, while establishing The Boredom Set as one of downtown’s *best* in craft and quality.

Proposed strategies and tactics are built upon The Boredom Set’s unique selling proposition: **its mouthwatering, house-made syrups**. Campaign messaging emulates the Boredom Set’s boldness and contagious creativity through the tagline: “Too bold to be boring.” With the business's great emphasis on expression and experimentation, messaging that is centric to its syrups provides consumers with the perfect taste of The Boredom Set’s craftsmanship and quality. Such campaign tactics include a limited-time “Too Bold” menu, “Bold Bus” installations at surrounding Pittsburgh universities, a “Boldened Benny” competition, a collaboration event with the Apertivo Club, as well as engaging, complementary marketing materials and content. Yet, proposed tactics not only emulate the bold flavors but the bold brains behind the brewing. All tactics simultaneously leverage the expertise and extroversion of the shop owners, through

diverse, eccentric experiences, making The Boredom Set valuable not only for its coffee, but the people crafting it.

**ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND:**

Tucked in the right wing of Market Square, The Boredom Set opened its doors in September of 2024. Built upon the foundation of hand-crafted espresso beverages and a selection that is far from ordinary, The Boredom Set prides itself on its originality and curated taste. Featured inside Heat Check, a one-stop shop for vintage clothing and fashion in Shadyside, The Boredom currently operates in two primary locations, with a majority of its recognition originating from its partnership with Heat Check.

The name, “The Boredom Set,” originates from the experiences of Q, founder of The Boredom Set, and his involvement in the 2023 World Barista Competition. Placing 13th in the state of Pennsylvania, Q presented a cutting-edge espresso experience built on the abstract ideas of molding boredom into experimentation, identifying ways to step outside of the ordinary. “Create despite boredom”, Q’s driving message in the competition, has continued to fuel all branding efforts and company progression, from the shop’s sophisticated, housemade syrups to experimental beverages.

Positioned as a coffee shop and vintage store hybrid, Heat Check has become the dominant brand that overshadows the individuality of The Boredom Set's identity. Now with its individual brick and mortar, The Boredom Set is paving the path to becoming a force to be reckoned with.

**Sources:**

<https://dailycoffeenews.com/2024/09/11/the-boredom-set-excites-pittsburgh-with-two-bars-and-a-roastery/> and interview notes from 10/9/25

**SINGLE KEY MESSAGE**

“Too bold to be boring.”

**SWOT/PESTLE ANALYSIS:**

**SWOT**

<p><b>Strengths:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Homemade syrups</li><li>- Seasonal flavors</li><li>- Aesthetic, modern branding that caters to a younger demographic</li><li>- Sources beans from a wide variety of locations, with greater diversity in espresso and flavor palettes</li><li>- Leverage from <i>Heat Check</i></li></ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Marketing leans towards <i>Heat Check</i></li><li>- Lack of awareness of the Market Square location</li><li>- No emotional tie to Pittsburgh History/smaller brand recognition compared to longer standing/legacy businesses</li><li>- Exterior signage needs updated</li></ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High visibility location in Market Square</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Heavy foot traffic in the location</li> <li>- Nearby Universities</li> <li>- Mixed audiences: college students and local professionals</li> <li>- Aesthetic branding to connect with younger audiences</li> <li>- Market Square Revamp</li> <li>- Bold, dynamic menu and flavors</li> <li>- Need for better exterior signage</li> <li>- Potential for partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Various successful historical/legacy coffee shops in the surrounding area</li> <li>- (Nicholas Coffee and Tea- direct competitor)</li> <li>- Over-saturated location (four coffee shops in Market Square alone with a few more just outside)</li> <li>- Rising costs for products and ingredients</li> <li>- Shifts in consumer habits, making coffee at home</li> </ul>

***PESTLE***

**Political:**

Trades and Tariffs: Pressure with inflation and tariffs, raising the price of coffee products and other ingredients. Coffee is globally traded and imported: rising tensions affect supply and pricing.

**Economic:**

Consumer Spending: People are less likely to spend money at this moment/ entering a recession.

**Social:**

Changing consumer beliefs: Health concerns with caffeine, along with a growing demand for ethically sourced coffee beans, making coffee at home

Coffee Culture: Coffee is a social beverage and meant to be a shared and valued experience. Gen Z looks to coffee shops as a place to study and meet with friends.

**Technology:**

Delivery methods: high demand for mobile ordering, pickup in store or doordash delivery services.

Brewing technology: improved brewing tech with newer machines

**Legal:**

Regulations: Compliance with food and beverage regulations, strict standards for roasting and cafe operations.

**Environmental:**

Climate Change: Coffee crops are very sensitive. Current weather concerns (global warming) reduce quality.

Sustainability Demands: consumer push for eco-friendly/ethically sourced beans, eco friendly packaging, etc.

**INDUSTRY(CDI):** With the large number of coffee shops in the Pittsburgh area, the industry is oversaturated. In Market Square alone there are four coffee shops with the surrounding streets also filled with coffee shops. What makes a coffee shop stand out in a market like this? When Googling “Coffee shops in Pittsburgh” the top results are articles listing all the best coffee shops in the area. With all of these coffee shops in such a dense area it can be hard for TBS to stand out, especially when other legacy brands like Nicolas are right next door. Even if the other stores are not attracting the same target market as TBS they still make it difficult to stand out and gain attention.

**Sources:** <https://downtownpittsburgh.com/your-guide-to-downtowns-coffee-shops/> and <https://nicholascoffee.us/>

**PRODUCT(BDI):** The Boredom Set focuses on quality coffee brands, often finding new local roasts to try. They stand out in the coffee industry through their housemade syrups and the quality of their product. To them, coffee is an art, rather than a product which can be seen through Q’s work. The company also has a focus on matcha and fun mixes between coffee and other beverages that aim to reach outside of consumers' comfort zone. Finally, they often sell local baked goods to go along with their beverages.

**TARGET MARKET ANALYSIS:** The store’s location in Market Square gives it the advantages of being in downtown and close to two colleges and central to many businesses. It also comes with being located next to other coffee shops, including Starbucks, Dunkin, and Nicolas. Each of these coffee shops has its own established audience, and The Boredom Set wants to reach a different group.

Another part of the challenge that comes with being so close to competitors is finding what makes you stand out. With so many options in one location, it can be hard to stand out, but The Boredom Set has untapped potential to stand out. Their syrups that are made in-house are one of their standout features. By highlighting their high-quality homemade syrups and leveraging their downtown location, the target market for this campaign is Pittsburgh-based college students. This demographic is not only close to the coffee shop but also is often more open to bold flavors in their coffee.

### ***PRIMARY***

The **primary audience** for this campaign is Pittsburgh-based, 18-22-year-old college students of all gender identities. These individuals are full-time undergraduate students at Point Park University or Duquesne University and remain heavily integrated in the downtown environment. This audience favors local coffee shops and is enthusiastic to try new, innovative espresso beverages, often gravitating towards revolving/seasonal menu items. This audience perceives purchasing coffee as an experience, rather than a necessity, and finds simple pleasure in making a trip to their favorite local shop. With a somewhat expendable income, this audience is not

opposed to purchasing quality coffee at a quality price. Yet, they will undeniably take advantage of every student discount they can find.

### ***SECONDARY***

The **secondary audience** consists of millennials of all gender identities working and residing in Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle. A part of the middle to upper-middle class, they can comfortably invest in quality craft beverages. As avid coffee drinkers, this audience values both craftsmanship and quality in their daily caffeine fix before work or on their lunch break. This audience greatly appreciates aesthetics and is often motivated by public-facing factors of an establishment, like attractive packaging and branding, and the aesthetics of a coffee shop. This audience takes pride in their refined taste and style when it comes to fashion and material items, often gravitating toward second-hand and vintage styles. As working professionals, they are attracted to local businesses as opposed to corporations like Starbucks.

### ***BUYER PERSONAS***

#### **Evan**

- Evan is a junior at Point Park University studying PR/Ad (concentration in Advertising). He is 21 years old and travelled to Point Park for the programs offered and the urban environment. In his free time, Evan enjoys photography, hanging out at the Point with his friends, and finding new study spots off-campus. Evan is employed at the local Target and spends his money on coffee, vintage clothing, trinkets, jewelry, trendy items, and food. He considers it "retail therapy". When it comes to a fun beverage, Evan values the flavor and quality of coffee and will choose small, local shops over franchises like Starbucks or Dunkin.

#### **Cece**

- Cece currently works in a corporate office within PPG Place, located in Downtown Pittsburgh. She is 31 years old and lives with her boyfriend and her college cat right outside of the city (she always gets stuck in traffic on Ft. Duquesne Bridge). She has a master's degree in Business Administration and loves her 9-5 lifestyle- prioritizing her hobbies outside of the workplace. With her income, Cece spends her money on higher quality products and is mindful of where her money is going. She shops small and local, but will splurge on a fun home decor piece. She values the experience of a cup of coffee and loves trying new flavors. Whether it's a quick stop during her coffee break or taking meetings outside of the office, Cece and her office friends love exploring nearby places to socialize and catch up about the workplace drama.

### **CURRENT STRATEGIC POSITIONING:**

The Boredom Set's current strategy fosters both humor and craft through their social media presence on Instagram. With frequent, humorous videos featuring the store owner, Q, and eye-catching visuals, the shop has a strong grasp on social media content.

Yet, as of right now, The Boredom Set's content often filters through the scope of Heat Check and the Shadyside location. With Heat Check's overwhelming popularity in the Pittsburgh region, The Boredom Set has leveraged such virality to

### **OBJECTIVES:**

To **increase brand awareness** of The Boredom Set's Market Square location through the implementation of bold flavors and bold experiences in the span of six months.

To **attract new customers from the surrounding Pittsburgh universities/schools** by creating diverse, unconventional experiences and offerings over the next six months.

### **PROPOSED STRATEGY & TACTICS:**

#### **Strategy:**

Differentiate The Boredom Set through a rollout of **bold flavors** and **bold experiences** through the "Too Bold to be Boring" campaign.

#### **Tactics:**

##### **In-Store Promotions/Exclusive Offerings**

- **Introduction of the "Too Bold" Menu**

Introduces 5 limited-time, sophisticated beverages to The Boredom Set Market Square location, using house-made syrups that combine flavors that you would never expect to go together, but they do, *effortlessly*.

##### *Flavors include:*

- Honey Habanero: a sweet burn. Wildflower honey steeped with habanero pepper.
- Lavender Lemon: bright and cozy. Lavender cold foam with lemon zest
- Brown Butter Banana: like your aunt's banana pudding. A mix of banana, caramelized brown butter, and wafer cookie crumble
- Mocha Orange Spice: A citrus twist on a classic mocha. Dark chocolate with orange zest and a hint of cinnamon.
- Rosemary Brown Sugar: earthy, herbal, and slightly sweet.

- Branded cup sleeves that say, “CAUTION: Beverage contains dangerously bold flavors.”
- **“Too Bold” Flights**  
A “sampler” tray of all 5 bold menu beverages, made with the milk of your choice

### **Brand Installations**

- **Downtown College Campus Tour: *The Bold Bus***  
A repurposed, or rented bus touring Pittsburgh college campuses serving the “Too Bold” menu, with great emphasis on Point Park University and Duquesne University, through the Back to School season, August 20-September 30th
  - Deck out a repurposed bus to be the Boredom Set’s official “Bold Bus”, an eye-catching, eccentric way to get The Boredom Set into the Pittsburgh zeitgeist
  - A white van that is professionally graffiti-ed with red and black, including The Boredom Set logo
  - Mobile coffee van/bus

### **Picklesburgh Soft Launch**

- Picklesburgh brings over 250,000 people downtown to celebrate a love for pickles.
- The Bold Bus will make its debut at Picklesburgh 2026 as a vendor.
- This is where Pickles and Coffee collide with the Boredom Set’s housemade Pickle Juice Syrup and bold pickle beverages.
  - ***Pickle Matcha***- A salty yet smooth combination that will confuse your taste buds
  - ***Chamoy Hibiscus Tea***- Tajin rim with a tart and tangy tea
  - Cups will read “Something bold is coming... It’s a big dill”
- An alternative to being a vendor, The Boredom Set could set up their storefront and still do the flights while offering a cool-down zone for Picklesburgh visitors.
  - With their location, visitors are going to be curious about the new Market Square renovations, and their storefront falls in the bridge between the heavy traffic areas of this event.

### **“The Boldened Benny” Contest**

- Each cup comes with a Benny keychain that reads, “The King of Bold” in mystery, blind bag packaging

- Throughout the duration of the campus tour, 10 random students will receive the “Boldened Benny” keychain, a gold version of the classic design
  - Students who receive the “Boldened Benny” get one free seasonal beverage of their choice every month for a full year!
  - Signage and graphics that read “Have you seen this Benny?” fit for print and digital platforms, simultaneously explicating the contest available throughout the campus tour
- **Aperitivo Collab: Bold cocktails with The Boredom Set**
    - TBS and Aperitivo share a building! Why not collaborate on cocktails? Coffee during the day and cocktails at night: boldness in your cup before and AFTER work
    - Bold Bar Installation for one night only!
    - Espresso-centric cocktails that emulate the flavor combinations of the Too Bold menu
    - A night full of BOLD: bold music, bold lighting, and even bolder flavors

### **Traditional**

- **OOH Advertisements: Bus Stations**
  - 24”x 36” Posters
  - At all **PRTX Bus Stations** across Downtown
  - Music festival-style artist line-up poster breaking down the “Too Bold” menu
- **Print Advertisements**
  - 24”x 36” Posters scattered across high-traffic areas downtown
  - Locations:
    - On the wall outside of The Boredom Set
    - On Third Avenue and Wood Street, across from Point Park University’s Academic Hall
    - Under the bypass bridge on Forbes Avenue (Right next to Duquesne University)

### **Public Relations**

- **Pittsburgh Today Live (PTL) Feature (Earned Media)**
  - On the Bold Bus Tour’s first stop, Point Park University, have PTL send a reporter for a live feature story. “The Boredom Set is going back to school with a bold bus serving even bolder flavors.”
  - Explicate the exclusivity of the bus and its rather unexpected, mysterious arrival

- **Website Update with Menu**

- Website needs additions: add an about section, menus for both locations, and general information about locations.
- Reflects the rollout of new menu items

## **Digital Advertising**

- **Social Media Posts: Syrup Spotlight & Takeover**

- Reels highlighting the syrup creation process or general posts that spotlight new flavor additions
- Individual posts for each Too Bold flight flavor and a post revealing the full flight lineup (music festival style)
- Throughout the duration of the college tour, The Boredom Set's Instagram profile picture will feature red caution tape that says, "Too bold."

- **Instagram Story Digital Ads**

- Paid native content that appears on Instagram stories
- Aesthetic Instagram reels featuring each of the "Too Bold" menu items
- Quickly features the process of making the drink, stirring in the syrup, and pouring in the milk

## **BUDGET/ TIMELINE:**

### ***Campaign Timeline:***

#### **Mid-July 2026: Social teaser launch of involvement with Picklesburgh (Instagram)**

- Teasing the Bold Bus
- Teasing new, exclusive Picklesburgh flavors

#### **July 2026: Soft Launch of The Bold Bus at Picklesburgh**

- First introduction of The Bold Bus
- Exclusive Picklesburgh flavors, as listed above
- Picklesburgh-exclusive plastic cups that say, "**Something bold is coming... It's a big dill: August 20.**"

#### **August 20 - September 30: Official rollout and execution of the "Too Bold" tactics**

##### **August 20:**

- "Too Bold" menu wheatpasting posters are put up

- “Too Bold” menu items (individuals and flight) available in-store and for mobile ordering
- Official social post on @theboredomset Instagram
- Bold Bus pop-up outside of the store for foot traffic and “opening” day purchases
- Begin to roll out promo for Bold Bus Tour stops

**August 28:** Kickoff Bold Bus Tour Stop: Point Park University  
 -Coverage from Pittsburgh Today Live

**August 29:** Bold Bus Tour Stop: Duquesne University

**August 31:** All-day Bold Bus Tour: *First Day of Class* -  
 Point Park University & Duquesne

**September 5:** Final Bold Bus Tour Stop: Outside of TBS

**September 25:** Aperitivo Collab: Bold Bar, one night only

***Budget Breakdown:***

- Bus Costs:
  - Bus
  - Wrap
  - Aesthetics
  - = about \$8-10k
  
- Physical Media/Materials
  - Keychains
  - Cup Sleeves
  - Print
  - = \$500

**KPIS/EVALUATION:**

- Instagram Follower count for @TheBoredomSet
- Online orders for in-store pickup
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Digital engagement (comments on social posts, reposts, UGC, reach, and frequency)
- Attendance at installations/number of purchases

**RESEARCH:**

**PRIMARY: Survey Questions for customers and sent to local colleges:**

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbTgsgN2sMvghLiMg00tViTDSgbL-tRZ3SMqW8sbbOeqK7HQ/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

1. How many times a week do you visit a coffee shop?
  - a. Never
  - b. 1-2 times a week
  - c. 3-4 times a week
  - d. 5-7 times a week
2. What factors are most important when visiting a coffee shop? (Select all that apply)
  - a. Coffee bean quality
  - b. Flavor options
  - c. Alternative dairy options
  - d. Option variety
  - e. Price
  - f. Atmosphere
3. Which, if any, promotions would draw you into a new coffee shop? (Select all that apply)
  - a. Loyalty program
  - b. Student discounts
  - c. Free samples
  - d. Seasonal menus
  - e. Other:
4. How do you find coffee shops to try?
5. How important is the price of your coffee?
  - a. Very important
  - b. Important
  - c. Kind of important
  - d. Not really important
  - e. Not important
6. What prevents you from coming to The Boredom Set?
  - a. Location
  - b. Lack of awareness
  - c. Inconvenient hours
  - d. Cost
  - e. I already came!
7. What type of syrups do you use the most?
  - a. Seasonal (pumpkin spice, gingerbread)
  - b. Floral
  - c. Fruit
  - d. Unique flavors
  - e. I don't like flavoring

8. Give us a flavor combo you want to see!

***Secondary:***

The Boredom Sets' current website does not provide much information on the company or what they have to offer in their coffee shop. They have product listings for brew gear as well as coffee beans, but they have no information about their menu or their homemade syrups. Their website includes a link to their Instagram, where there is more information.

**Source:** <https://www.theboredomset.com/>

TBS already has an Instagram with 2,974 followers as of November 2025, and posts receive varying amounts of engagement. They do post consistently about new flavors or coffees that they are making that week. While they do also have a Facebook page, they only have 31 followers and get little engagement on the posts they make.

**Sources:** <https://www.instagram.com/theboredomset?igsh=a3VhaTZrMWN2Zmk=> and <https://www.facebook.com/share/1Aa5VkdJwW/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Q presented “Create Despite Boredom” at the 2023 World Barista Competition, which got him 13th place in the competition. This competition showed his creative side and the inspiration behind the Boredom brand. It also highlights the high quality of his work and the ingredients that are used in the store.

**Source:** <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=7iXW-SH3O9w&pp=0gcJCRsBo7VqN5tD>

In the Downtown Pittsburgh area, there are a plethora of coffee shops to choose from. When you search “coffee shops in Pittsburgh,” there are multiple articles listing all of the shops. With all of these coffee shops in such a small area, it can be hard to stand out or find a niche. It can also overwhelm someone who is trying to find a new coffee shop and does not know where to start.

**Sources:** <https://downtownpittsburgh.com/your-guide-to-downtowns-coffee-shops/> and <https://www.discovertheburgh.com/pittsburgh-coffee-shops/>

Not only do college students consume a lot of caffeine, but 92% of them do. While they have varying reasons that include taste, social interaction, or an energy boost, it is a very popular drink among the demographic. With the price of everything on the rise, many are being more conscious about the money they are spending, and coffee is often the first to be cut.

**Sources:** <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29680166/> and <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/mje/2025/04/03/mental-accounting-the-behavioral-economics-behind-student-coffee-spending/>

While Starbucks is a well-known brand, it has been scrutinized by the public for the last few years over its actions. Internally, the workers have gone on strike multiple times and received

support from the public through boycotts. They have also faced backlash over their alleged support of Israel in the ongoing Gaza conflict. Since late 2023, they have had a decline in profit that has impacted the company.

**Sources:** <https://sbworkersunited.org/our-strike/> and [https://www.cjpme.org/fs\\_241](https://www.cjpme.org/fs_241)