

SAULT STE. MARIE

DUTY FREE

MARKETING

AWARD SUBMISSION:

*Capturing the Canadian Spirit
Beyond all Borders:
Partnering for growth*



Capturing the Canadian Spirit Beyond all Borders: Partnering for Growth

What an exciting and profitable marketing year the Sault Ste. Marie Duty Free Store has had capturing the Canadian spirit in partnership with “Strong & Free Canada.” We were so excited about the introduction of “Strong & Free Canada” gear in the Duty Free industry and how it could benefit and build a valuable identity for the store as well as fill the need for a Canadian made fashion line of the highest quality. Our initiative was to implement a plan to engage and target the younger retail consumer to open their eyes to duty free shopping. True growth comes from looking inward first. That being said, we gave “Strong & Free Canada” a prime floor space in the front of the store and a “store within a store” was born! Using this retail concept and new approach offers us the opportunity to attract customers who were eager to learn more about the “Strong & Free Canada” line. Utilizing this prime floor space energized the store environment and increased the flow of customer drawn to the area, as well as giving the store a fresh new look! It also created an element of exclusivity of the brand that shoppers cannot find anywhere else locally. Canadians and international visitors love the quality of the clothing line and the fact that it is “Made in Canada” is truly a selling point. Giving Strong & Free a “place within a place” has definitely impacted sales positively and made a great first impression to customers as they enter the store.

The store in partnership with “Strong & Free” on Canada Day gifted each staff member with a Canada t-shirt from the fashion line to show their Canadian spirit. The staff was easily identifiable in the beautiful red Canadian t-shirts; needless to say, we sold a variety of their merchandise that day. Our staff was super excited and truly embraced the company and became fashion brand ambassadors promoting the line. To further our marketing initiative from product awareness to customer engagement in order to drive in new customers, our enthusiastic staff modeled the fashion gear on our social media platforms.

This allowed our store to humanize the brand and aided in meeting our target audience. Social Media is a very powerful and effective way to target potential customers and using photos of students played an important role in connecting with and reaching a new following. An employee's uncle contacted the store who resides 300 km away wanting to purchase a shirt from the "Strong & Free" line.

This further demonstrates how persuasive photos on social media can be.

To bring more awareness to our target audience, we held a contest to win a "Strong & Free Canada" Hoodie on our Instagram account to spark excitement in our younger demographic and other age groups. Our contest was a huge success and the winner was thrilled with her "Strong & Free" gear and took to her own personal social media profile to showcase herself wearing the hoodie, which also benefited our marketing agenda in targeting the younger demographic.

This year in collaboration with Canada Customs, U.S.A Customs and the Bridge Authority, we participated in the Annual International Bridge Walk, which gave us the opportunity to connect with consumers to showcase and promote our store in a favorable light. Our committed, diligent, fun-loving staff boasted their "Do better at the border" shirts while participating in the walk and handed out free water donated by the store to thirsty participants. One of our entertaining students proudly showed his Canadian spirit by wearing the "Strong & Free Onezee" on the bridge walk; it was an amusing and enjoyable way to draw attention to the brand while promoting the store. We loved Aaron's dedication and his Canadian Spirit so much that we gifted him with the Onezee for being such a great sport! As a result, we were able to leverage the assets around us and gain free media attention, raise awareness to the store and had a great day where staff interacted with current customers and future customers while promoting duty free shopping and going beyond all borders!

To show our employee's appreciation for their dedication and hard work this year, each staff member was gifted a piece of clothing from the "Strong & Free" line of their choice. The staff was so excited to receive this gift and will now be brand ambassadors who will represent the Sault Ste. Marie Duty Free Store and "Strong & Free Canada" in a favorable light.

Our student staff brand ambassadors will return to school sporting their new gear and promoting the benefits of duty free shopping. Our hope is to increase the brand awareness outside of the store to attract new potential customers.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with “Strong & Free Canada” as we collaborate together on our new venture of designing a new uniform to be used next year. We are currently holding a contest with staff members to design and create a fashionable uniform featuring the Duty Free Logo and incorporating “Strong & Free” that employees will embrace and bring a new look to our store. Together with “Strong & Free Canada” we have built a dynamic, compelling partner relationship that has given the store a fresher look, drove up revenue and helped us reach our agenda of targeting the younger audience as well as other age groups. We plan on continuing and further expand our relationship with “Strong & Free” as well and with their brand partner Stanfield to truly “represent the Canadian Spirit of compassion, honesty, integrity and to always support the rights and freedoms of all humankind”.



Giving back to the community is very important to us and our involvement gives us the opportunity to meet lots of new people. One example is our support of the Local Lung Association at the Festival of Trees, in which we were able to showcase our products to a large audience outside of the store. We also continue to reach out and support the Fowler Family whose 6-year-old son Kayge battled DIPG (a rare pediatric brain tumour) and unfortunately passed away earlier this year. Our hearts were truly broken, and we wanted to help the family bring awareness DIPG to find a cure so other children may be helped. The family had started a travelling rock campaign to bring awareness to DIPG, and with their permission we started the “Building a Bridge of Hope to end DIPG” campaign at the store. We partnered with a local business (Lemieux Composting) who graciously donated rocks for staff members to paint in Kayge’s memory. A display was set up in our rock garden at the front of our store and customers were invited to take a rock with them on their travels to spread awareness of this terrible cancer who takes away precious children. On the underside of the rock a website address is painted so we are able to track the rocks on their travels around the world. It is so rewarding to the staff to continue to keep our “Forever Six” Superhero memory alive by continuing to raise awareness in his name. Our community involvement has increased awareness to our store by keeping us visible and allowing the store to have a generous, trustworthy image in the public eye.



Last November we came up with a new innovative idea to generate more revenue targeting our fragrance sales. We held a Christmas tree “Pick a Tag Fragrance Sale” where customers would pick a numbered tag from our tree which corresponded with an envelope that held savings of either \$15, half-price or free. It was fun exciting way to interact with customers, bring awareness to our selection of fragrances, and generate a lot of sales.



Our continued partnership with Kinross Speed Park, sponsoring a racecar, donation baskets and advertisement was again a successful strategy this year. Car racing is a popular event on both sides of the border in our area, which gives us a lot exposure and draws in fans to the store before they cross the border to attend the races. This year Kinross Speed Park hosted the Hot Shoe 100 which brought in many racers and fans from across North America and many new faces and attention to the store.

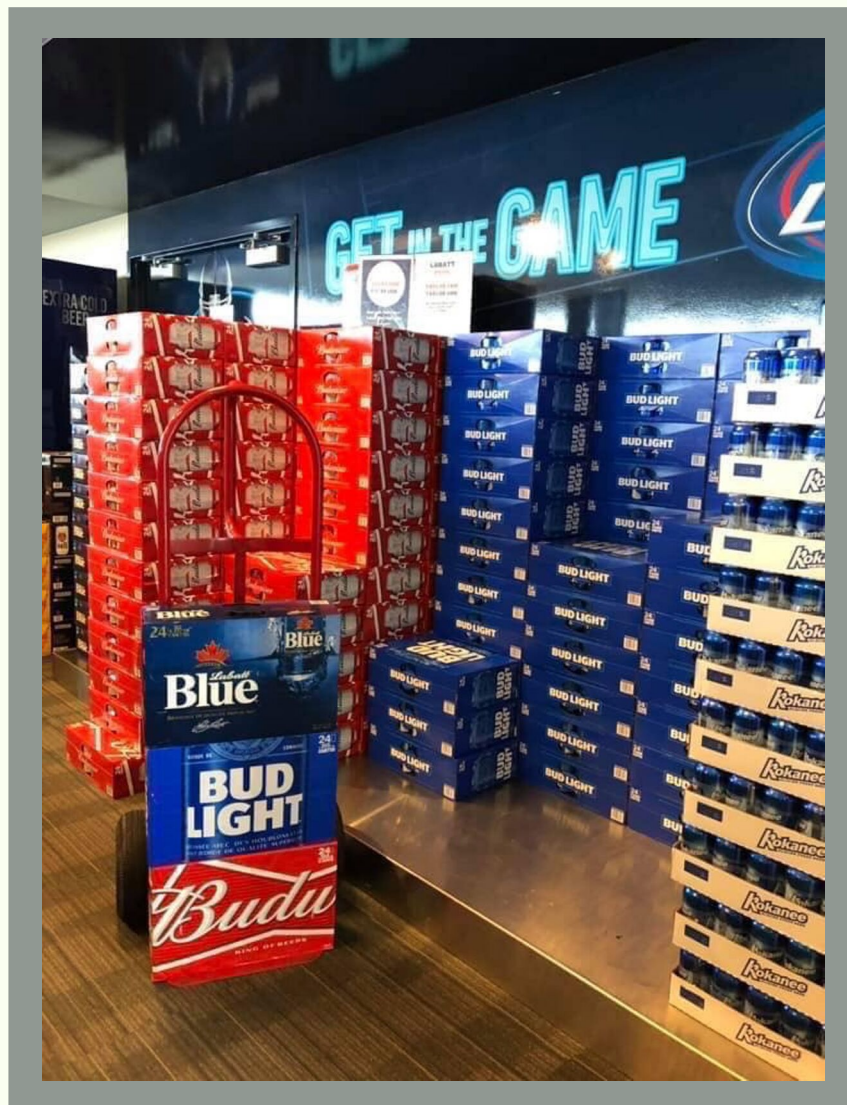


Watson's Windy Point Lodge fishing trip draw was once again a huge success!

Our ideas and collaboration continue to benefit each other. Our location in Northern Ontario is the home to some of the best fishing areas in North America and many US Anglers regularly visit the area. We again focused on targeting this group by promoting the contests at each partner's businesses as well using our social media platforms which generated a lot of positive attention. The winner was drawn in mid-August and the lucky winner from Ohio and his son enjoyed an amazing three day trip on Labour Day weekend and made wonderful memories to last a lifetime. Together we have built a powerful relationship that has driven sales and built up each other's customer base.



Our strategic partnership with Labatt's Canada continues to bring the store to new heights concerning the five case beer specials on long weekends and holidays! Social media, word of mouth as well as inside and outside signage has had an astounding effect on beer sales. Our strong partnership has continued to generate amazing results by doubling our revenue each year! Personalizing and humanizing the Sault Ste. Marie Duty Free Store whether by having an online presence, advertising, partnerships, exceptional customer service or our community involvement has definitely had positive impact the way the public views our store and on revenue. The store's effort and commitment in our marketing strategy has made Sault Ste. Marie Duty Free Store a household name. We feel we were able to market our store by using creative and unique channels that has definitely rolled out the red carpet to our customers and promoted sales growth by double digits and innovation.





strongandfreecanada • Follow
Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario

strongandfreecanada Today's Instagram feed is dedicated to our friends at @dutyfreesm

The Sault Ste Marie Duty Free location has fully embraced what it means to be #strongandfree!

We are delighted to have you as retail partners, and love your staffs enthusiasm and passion!

Cannot wait to visit your location and see the awesome sea of Strong and Free you have created.

Forever grateful for your partnership! 🇨🇦❤️

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37 likes
1 DAY AGO



BACK TO SCHOOL

CONTEST!

