Final Self-Evaluation: Kai Eldridge

During the fall quarter, I interned at Elliott Bay Brewing Company as their social media and marketing manager. It was a fantastic experience I am so happy to have been immersed in the world of social media and breweries, in a position where I was able to express myself creatively, be self-directed, and learn a variety of skills. I learned about the brewing process by taking a brewing class and participating in a couple of brew-days, and I am now fluent in beer lingo. I also learned a variety of fun facts such as which properties affect the flavor or color profile of a beer, and which beers are easier or more difficult to perfect. Finally, learned a ton about photography, photo editing, maximizing engagement on social media and marketing strategies.

My first learning objective required researching what content and frequency of posts similar businesses to Elliott Bay were successful in doing. I then developed a strategy to implement based on best practices. I read up on the topic through sites such as Forbes and social media marketing blogs like *Sprout Social*, but about half of my learning was a result of trying out different strategies and noting how the audience reacted. I used YouTube videos to gain insight on how to best use my camera and take photos that are pleasing to look at. Research also gave me a better understanding of what is a career in social media could look like.

My next learning objective was to create fresh, new, interesting content for Elliott Bay Brewing Company’s social media outlets. I have increased not only the consistency, but also the quality of content posted by EBBC. Content included event promotion, posts about food specials, and writing/sharing employee spotlights. Over the past few months, the quality of my photos has increased exponentially. It takes me half the time to get a shot that I like, as well as to edit the photos, than it did when I first began. The first few weeks I struggled with overexposure, other lighting issues, and poor focusing. I have learned techniques to avoid these problems and style photos in a more aesthetically pleasing way. My favorite written posts are employee spotlights. Due to the fact that most of my work can be done from home, I am not always interacting with the staff. It was so much fun having the opportunity to interview employees, because I got to socialize and build relationships with many people who I may not have spoken to otherwise.

My final objective was to track data through *Social Report* to better understand what content was most successful with Elliott Bay Brewing Company’s audience. I have come to understand that photos with people in them get the most engagement, and hashtag optimization is key to growing a following. From the data I’ve tracked, I know that the audience wants to hear stories, but more so about employees than about the brewing process or different flavor profiles within the beer. Most of Elliott Bay Brewing Company’s following is between 30 and 60 years old, equally divided between male and female, and almost all of the audience lives in the United States. Knowing this information helps me to cater to the audience and create fun, interesting content for those who are viewing it.

In the initial contract, my final objective was to record participation and interaction metrics to facilitate Elliott Bay’s participation in the *Brewers Association* sustainability tool if time allowed. Although the company values sustainability, there was more than enough work for me to do in regards to published content. Revamping social media platforms was more of a priority than having me to understand Elliott Bay’s interaction with this particular tool, so I focused on content creation above all.

To keep track of progress, I created an ePortfolio on Word Press with weekly blog posts sharing what I had done each week, struggles I endured, lessons I learned, and goals for the following week. I posted photos detailing my favorite moments, and created a bibliography of resources that helped me to fulfill the internship. It will be lovely to look back at my ePortfolio to remember the experience, as well as to go back to the bibliography to access to any of the websites I found helpful.