



Sprouts

2021 BUSINESS PLAN



Actions and Ideas for Families Navigating an Imperfect World

www.sproutsmagazine.ca



@SproutsMagazine



@sprouts_magazine_

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OUR TEAM



AMY is a published writer that has been honing her craft for the past seven years. She comes from a background of marketing, design, and communication for non-profit organizations. Amy is excited to translate her passion for providing the best possible content to parents and kids to Sprouts!



KELLY is a content marketing specialist with five years of experience working on innovative and impactful B2C and B2B strategy in destination marketing. She is passionate about telling stories that encourage people to learn, reflect, and ultimate act to make the world a better!



AKI is a publishing manager with four years of experience in a not-for-profit research organization in Iran. With her passion in publishing, she is excited to serve the organization to create reliable information for parents to communicate better with their kids about the world we are living in!



ALE is an academic publishing consultant working for several higher education and communication research institutions in Mexico in the implementation of dissemination and Open Access initiatives. She is passionate about knowledge communication, and a firm believer that education is the best way to a better world.

WHO IS SPROUTS?

TAG LINE

Actions and ideas for families navigating an imperfect world.

PURPOSE

In an overwhelming world, Sprouts is committed to being an accessible hub of trusted information for parents with research-based content that contains actions and activities to help include kids in the conversation about the world we live in.

MISSION

Sprouts is a digital publication committed to providing the tools for families to with elementary school kids to empower them to respond together and actively engage in the complex world around them. We provide research-based accessible content for parents that is reviewed and overseen by our board of experts. We cover topics such as how to talk about the news with your kids, mental health and cognitive skills, and the climate crisis. With each piece of content, we provide a curated list of activities for kids, activities to do together as a family, conversation starters, and actionable steps that you can take to help kids learn and shape their future.

VALUE PROPOSITION

Sprouts is an emerging education community for parents seeking reliable information to help navigate our modern world. We provide accessible content that is grounded in research, overseen by our board of experts, and oriented towards action so you can engage your children in challenging conversations about the world they live in, at every step of their growth.

NICHE

Sprouts exists in the intersection between parenting media (Magazines, Mommy Blogs) and more traditional news and science media. We serve parents of school-age children who are looking for reliable information and ways to communicate with their kids about the world we live in.

EDITORIAL

Editorial Overview

Content Requirements

Our Content

EDITORIAL OVERVIEW

Sprouts is a non-profit magazine. We have a board of experts that oversees the magazine and ensures informational accuracy in everything we do. Articles are informed by experts and written by either experts or science communicators in a conversational and understandable way to best convey the information to our audience. Many of our articles are summarized from academic open access journals with reprint/reuse permissions for not-for-profit distribution. All curated activities and actionable steps are vetted by experts to ensure they are suitable for elementary school aged kids. Our articles go through a review process by our editorial board of experts before they are published on our site. With each article, the sources of information used are included at the bottom to give proper acknowledgements and allow for our audience to read further if they like.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Our editorial board is made up of ten recognized scholars, interested in children development and information literacy. Some roles of our editorial board are to review submitted articles, identify topics for special issues, guest edit, attract new authors and submissions, and promote the journal to their colleagues and peers. Their interdisciplinary and multicultural perspectives provide Sprouts strategic guidance that helps us fulfill our mission of providing parents with researched-based information and tools to communicate with children.

The members invited to the initial editorial board of Sprouts are:

- **Melissa Tremblay:** Professor, Faculty of Education - Educational Psychology Dept, University of Alberta
- **Mario Rodriguez:** Field Scientist, Climate Hazards Center, UC Santa Barbara
- **Mina Fazel:** Professor, Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford
- **Jackie Marsh:** Professor, Department of Education, University of Sheffield
- **Tilde Bekker:** Professor, Department of Industrial Design, Eindhoven University of Technology
- **Rebecca Raby:** Professor, Department of Child and Youth Studies, Brock University
- **Chris Furgal:** Professor, Department of Indigenous Studies, Trent University
- **Janice Williams:** Learning Specialist, New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- **Elaine Whittaker:** Bioartist
- **James A. Anderson:** The Hospital for Sick Children, Joint Centre of Bioethics, University of Toronto.

CONTENT PILLARS

Talk News With Kids

Resources to help parents understand and talk about the events happening in the world with their kids.

Healthy Minds

Content dedicated to helping build cognitive skills in kids from mental health to critical thinking.

Planet Action

Covering subject areas related to the Climate Crisis and provides actions for kids who want to help their communities and the planet.

PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

In order to give every article the appropriate time to be carefully reviewed and produced while delivering timely information for parents, we publish evergreen content on a two-month schedule for the main articles that that will be posted three times a week: Talk News with Kids on Monday, Healthy Mind on Wednesday, and Planet Action on Friday. Current topics that require an immediate response will be addressed mainly by articles written by our board of experts, articles prioritized to expedite the review process, revisions of information from past articles that have information that relates to the urgent subject matter, or curated information from trusted sources. We will also send out a weekly newsletter to provide a curated list of action-oriented content for our subscribers.

COST

Contributors can volunteer their time if they wish but we will budget around \$100 per article for our contributors.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to our website come from a wide range of sources. We plan to write one third of the content in house. Board members are encouraged to contribute in kind articles and our editorial team will also actively seek out writers and journal articles that would make good content for the website. We plan to reach out through our board members and partnered universities to find new writers. Because all of our content is reviewed by our board of experts, we see the possibility of finding students to write for our website who are studying in a field related to the content we provide a viable option. Additionally, we will have the option under our contribution tab to contribute writing to our website. This avenue of contribution will be closely overseen by the editorial team and any content selected will go through the same editorial review from our board of experts.

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS

All of our content is written with the use of fact based information from trusted sources. These sources come in the form of references at the bottom of articles and articles written by trusted experts. All text must be written in a conversational tone that is accessible to anyone and does not talk down to readers but lifts them up.

EACH ARTICLE MUST CONTAIN

- Title
- Two sentence summary
- Contributor's name and date
- One or more images
- The main text between 300 - 1000 words in length, excluding references. Please note that word limits will be strictly adhered to for final publication. Content that exceeds 1000 words will be reviewed as to whether it needs to be shortened or not.
- Accompanying each article will be a list of activities tailored to elementary school aged children under the categories: To Do, To Read, and To Watch.
- References follow the Chicago style, i.e. the author, date system. All in the text citations should be formatted with the author's name followed by the year in parentheses: Smith (2000).
- Should references be available online, a link should be provided to the article referenced.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

- Sprouts requires the full address information including email and telephone number for all contributors. Each author will be asked to submit a brief biography of around three sentences.
- All content should be submitted with 3 - 5 keywords.
- Sprouts uses Canadian spelling, however authors may submit using either British or American English as spelling of accepted papers is converted during the production process.
- Submissions are not required to reflect the precise reference formatting of the website (use of italics, bold etc.), however it is important that all key elements of each reference are included.
- When an article is published online, the contributors will receive an email alert and are asked to share a link to the published article through social media.

EDITORIAL REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE

The acceptance criteria for all articles focuses on the quality and its significance to our readership. Except where otherwise stated, articles are reviewed by the editorial board.

REVIEW PROCESS

Stage 1: Initial quality check

After the article is submitted, we'll check that it complies with Sprouts editorial and publishing policies. This includes checks on authorship, competing interests, ethics approval, and plagiarism. We oversee this process to ensure that the article contains everything our editors need to perform the publishing process.

Stage 2: Editorial Board evaluation

The Editorial Board Members will decide whether to accept the article, request minor or major revisions, or reject it due to unresolvable concerns, based on the relevance, veracity, and approach of the information. We aim to make our decisions on the articles within 30 days of submission.

OUR CONTENT

NEWS FOR KIDS

Seeing Through Conspiracy Theories

How does belief in conspiracy theories grow? How do we talk to kids about conspiracies and give them the skills they need to see through them?

Questioning Our Biases

How are biases wired into our brains? Let's address those biases and raise kids ready to stop and question their assumptions.

HEALTHY MINDS

Skills to Help Kids Calm Their Worried Minds

Mindfulness can help kids from a young age sort through their worries. We have you covered with the info and activities you can do together with your kids to help calm their worried minds and build resourcefulness they can draw upon for years to come.

How Time in Nature can lead to Better Health and Well-Being

Spending twenty minutes a day in nature can decrease health risks and improve cognitive development in children. But how can you work outside time into busy work and school schedules? We have some ideas...

CLIMATE ACTION

It's Hurricane Season: How to talk to kids about scary weather?

We can help kids understand why there are floods and high winds while also showing them that there are things they can do to prepare and help with extreme weather happens.

Clean Water: We Drink It, How Do We Protect It?

Where does the water in our tap come from? Learn about Indigenous Activists leading the charge for water protection and how families can help protect the world's clean water supply

NEWSLETTER

Our newsletter will deliver three activities to our readers' inbox once a week. The value of this is that it is an efficient way to connect our audience of busy parents to curated ideas and resources. The newsletter will be simple, optimized for mobile, and take the hassle out of thinking and searching for parents. While many science, education, or information-focused newsletters can come across as intimidating laundry lists of links or a wall of text updates on administrative and scheduling issues, our newsletter is highly visual and straight to the point for direct ease of use. We also see the newsletter as a way to drive our readership to explore new and relevant articles on our website, support us with donations, and as an excellent place to provide thoughtfully chosen advertisements to our readers.

NEWSLETTER MOCKUP



**TAKE A BREAK. REST YOUR EYES. WE VET AND
TRANSLATE TOUGH TOPICS SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO.**

ACTIONS FOR THE WEEK



TO WATCH

Donec congue arcu purus, ut mollis nisi
tincidunt accumsan. Ut maximus metus
id maximus accumsan. Vestibulum sed
cursus leo. Nam a tortor sed tortor
congue maximus. Fusce commodo
pulvinar erat, id t tincidunt ligula.



Etiam iaculis sem a nunc aliquet pretium
in a orci. Nunc eget feugiat nisi, ut
viverra eros. Nulla in auctor diam. Fusce
rhoncus eros a nisi malesuada blandit.
Sed iaculis neque at quam auctor
gravida. Vivamus blandit nisl sagittis,
vestibulum quam a, blandit erat.
Maecenas sed tristique



TO READ



TO DO

Donec congue arcu purus, ut mollis nisi
tincidunt accumsan. Ut maximus metus
id maximus accumsan. Vestibulum sed
cursus leo. Nam a tortor sed tortor
congue maximus. Fusce commodo
pulvinar erat, id tempor eros fermentum
nec. Mauris



WE ARE READER SUPPORTED!

Contribute the price of a coffee today to fuel the work of Sprouts.

CONTRIBUTE

FEATURED ARTICLES



SEEING THROUGH CONSPIRACY THEORIES

[READ MORE](#)



CLEAN WATER: WE DRINK IT, HOW DO WE PROTECT IT?

[READ MORE](#)



Demo Address Demo Store Demo Canada
Call Us: 123-456-7898
Email Us: Support@sprouts.com
[Unsubscribe](#)

MARKET ANALYSIS

Market Research Summary

Competitors

Audience

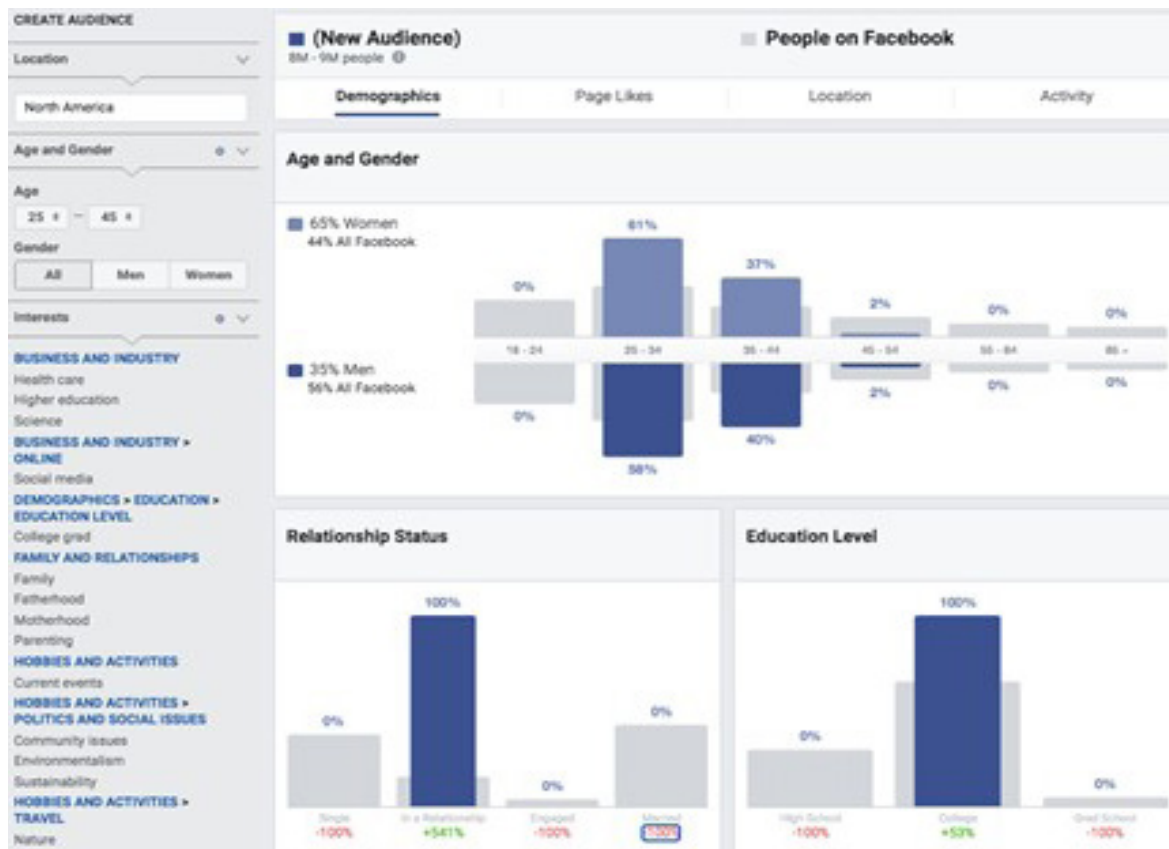
Personas

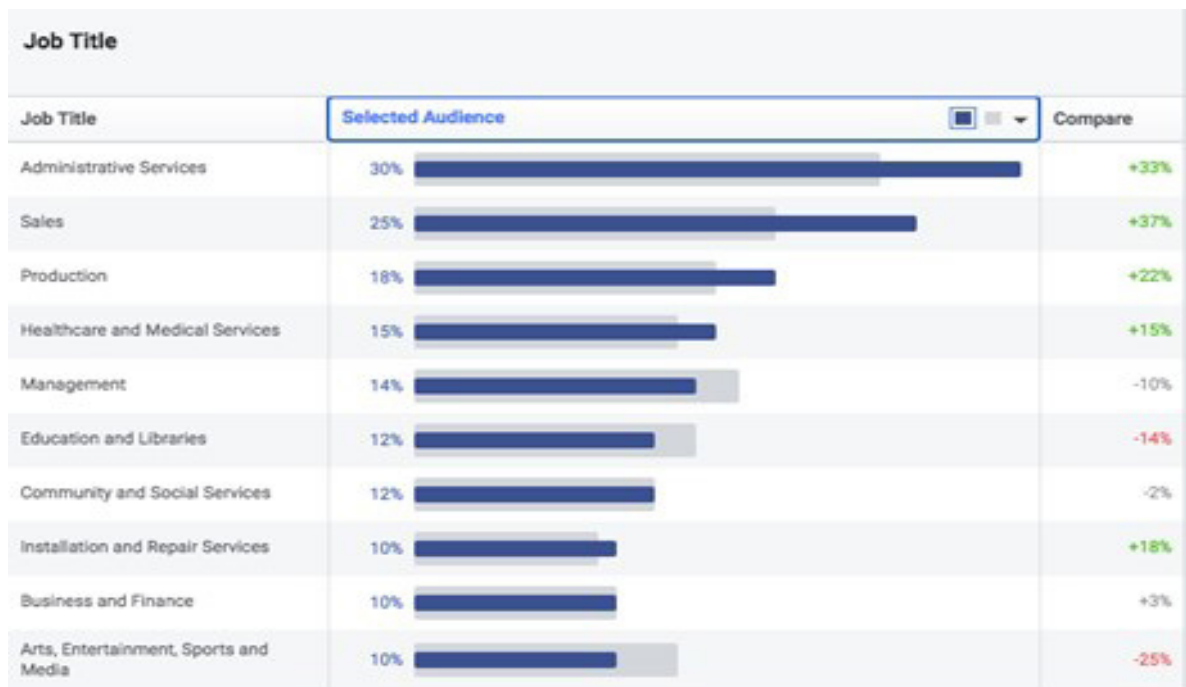
MARKET RESEARCH SUMMARY

In approaching market research we used tools such as Facebook Insights and Simply Analytics to narrow down the audience we are targeting. These tools allowed us to see trends, such as our audience being mobile centric, that we then incorporated into the fabric of Sprouts and how we approach accessible web design. We also looked at competitors to gauge places where we could differentiate ourselves and serve audience needs that were not being met within our competitive landscape.

FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

Facebook insights supports some of our estimates about our audience in terms of education level and job types, however, the scope of 8-9 million people is too broad to be truly helpful for specific targeting. When we limited our research to Canada we found an audience of 150K-200K people is starting to get more manageable to target. Looking at activity for this type of audience, we can also see that mobile use is overwhelmingly how our audience interacts with Facebook. Additionally, it is useful to see that this audience is active on Facebook in the form of high-value engagements (shares, likes, comments) quite regularly.





SIMPLY ANALYTICS

Data from SimplyAnalytics indicates that there is a sizable target audience in major Canadian cities (Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax) that fit our demographic, psychographic, and consumer behaviour assumptions. For example, we can see households with significant median income and school-age families invest significant money into education.

SimplyAnalytics Current Project: Sprouts New Project Open Project Project Settings

	Vancouver, BC (CMACA)	Calgary, AB (CMACA)	Victoria, BC (CMACA)	Edmonton, AB (CMACA)	Saskatoon, SK (CMACA)	Toronto, ON (CMACA)	Montreal, QC (CMACA)	Halifax, NS (CMACA)	Canada
# Basics Total Population, 2020	2,732,731	1,569,944	403,695	1,502,363	341,259	6,592,170	4,376,190	444,274	37,983,097
Households by Income (Current Year) Median Household Income (Current Year \$), 2020	\$87,542.21	\$101,054.93	\$83,913.31	\$96,054.07	\$94,604.69	\$91,811.75	\$71,642.81	\$75,714.71	\$80,530.17
% Household Population 25 to 64 Years by Educational Attainment Household Population 25 To 64 Years University Certificate, Diploma Or Degree At Bachelor Level Or Above, 2020	39.66%	40.52%	35.85%	31.10%	33.67%	43.53%	34.59%	37.50%	30.87%
% Households in F1: School-Age Families, 2020	9.95%	10.45%	4.53%	6.70%	6.67%	5.64%	22.30%	3.27%	9.34%
Total expenditure Education Textbooks and school supplies School supplies, 2020	\$15,909,659.55	\$10,970,588.38	\$2,744,829.20	\$4,571,387.58	\$3,908,042.38	\$21,940,704.15	\$42,712,492.26	\$1,749,510.31	\$236,636,945.26
Average Total expenditure Education Total tuition fees Other courses and lessons, 2020	\$394.37	\$396.84	\$333.38	\$294.49	\$253.05	\$331.27	\$182.54	\$217.89	\$227.70

AUDIENCE LOCATION

Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax

MARKETING TRENDS THAT SUPPORT SPROUTS

- Mobile-centric
- Showcasing reading times and providing lots of white space and visual cues for easily scannable and digestible content
- Digital minimalism with a desire for more curated and intentional internet time that is nourishing, valuable, and useful and less time spent on the negative aspects of social media such as scrolling and the harmful results of comparing oneself to others. People are looking for real life, transparency and values up front.
- Avoid the scroll, slow your roll: encouraging slower, calmer, reflection as an antidote to very busy and very overwhelming social media feeds.

COMPETITORS

PARENTING SCIENCE

<https://www.parentingscience.com>

Value Proposition:

Scientifically-savvy information about parenting and child-psychology using rigorous analysis and citations of peer-reviewed research similar to an academic setting.

Overview

- Education for parents to know how children perceive the world
- Focus on critical thinking
- Use of multiple sciences and social science disciplines
- Older blog style, but has some popularity due to the consistency/quality of the information (has existed since 2006)
- Substantial lifelong web hits, but very high bounce rate, and low time spent on the website indicate users are put off by the low quality of design (<https://www.similarweb.com/website/parentingscience.com/#search>)
- 12,000+ followers on Facebooks indicates some traction, but only posting articles and not fostering an engaged community

Audience:

Science-minded parents, educators, teachers, lay-people who love science

Channels:

Website, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter

Sources of Revenue:

Advertisements, Book shop with books, toys, and games

TIME FOR KIDS

<https://www.timeforkids.com/>

Value Proposition:

Immersing tomorrow's leaders in conversations about today's world, the way kids like to learn.

Overview

- Paid, digital subscription (\$19.99/year)
- Covers latest news for children based on their reading level
- Helps parents explore world issues with their children
- Based in California USA
- Authentic news and critical-thinking skills that shape active global citizens
- Has been a trusted news source for 25 years
- Lots of focus on classroom resources
- Has the benefit of association with the TIME brand

Time For Kids Overview Continued

- Use of 'easy to use, easy to engage, easy to access'
- Audience spending several minutes on site, lower bounce rate, high proportion of audience landing on website via direct search, indicates purposeful seeking out of this resource and recognition of brand (<https://www.similarweb.com/website/timeforkids.com/#social>)
- Established Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram channels as active communities although there is some disconnect between the three channels

Audience:

Families, K-6 Teachers, Children

Channels:

Print and digital publication, Website, Newsletter, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter

Sources of Revenue:

Advertisements, digital and print subscriptions magazine, school subscription packages, digital library

MEDIASMARTS

<https://www.mediasmarts.ca>

Value Proposition:

Develops digital and media literacy programs and resources for Canadian homes, schools, and communities to enable children and teens to develop critical thinking skills.

Overview

- Not-for-profit charitable organization with a mission of helping children grow to be active and informed digital citizens
- Formerly Media Awareness Network with connection to Canadian Government, TV, and radio initiatives about media literacy and standards in the 1990s
- Create annual reports on digital and media literacy in Canada
- Have a board of directors from media companies and education stakeholder sectors
- Their content is free to use
- They have some viral content on social media but mostly broadcasting posts rather than facilitating engaged communities

Audience:

Teachers, educators, families, parents, people concerned about the impacts of media on children

Channels:


Website, Media Literacy Week campaigns, Youtube, Twitter, Facebook

Sources of Revenue:

Advertising, donors, volunteers, sponsors



WHAT MAKES SPROUTS DIFFERENT?


Sprouts offers its audience easy-to-access, mobile-centric content that enables people to quickly orient themselves towards engaging activities and conversations. While our competitors may have established brands and voices, their content can come off as dense, dry, or one-note. While our competitors pigeonhole their readers or require them to parse through information, we curate and display the key information that our audience wants in a way that values their time, lifestyle, and interests.




Sprouts

Actions and ideas for families
navigating an imperfect world





HEALTHY HABITS: TURNING FAMILY WALKS INTO A HEALTHY HABIT







PEACEFUL PROTESTS

2020.12.12

Maecenas vel facilisis libero.
Aliquam erat volutpat. Sed justo
ante, aliquet eget rhoncus vel,
pulvinar quis lorem.


[READ MORE](#)

IT'S HURRICANE SEASON: HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT

 Jane Doe  2020.12.12  00:05:00 

We can help kids understand why there are floods and high winds while also showing them that there are things they can do to prepare and help with extreme weather happens.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Nulla vehicula odio tincidunt egestas maximus. Phasellus mi felis, tempus vel luctus ac, tincidunt tristique justo. Praesent rutrum laoreet velit sit amet blandit. Nam nulla ex, malesuada eget luctus a, imperdiet eu tortor. Fusce pharetra lorem dolor, eget rhoncus quam efficitur sed. Aliquam pharetra nibh vel



AUDIENCE

Although we plan to expand into a secondary audience of teachers and librarians as we expand our content over the next five years, our primary audience is well-educated, middle-to-managerial class first-time parents or guardians. They are socially-aware people who are very invested in their child's education but may be time-starved due to work, household, and community responsibilities. Psychographics are much more important and useful to us than traditional demographics as we're speaking to diverse groups of people who are united by common needs in their role as parents or guardians, rather than being homogenous in identity. Therefore, we will be more focused on the behaviours and needs of our audience than getting too narrow about who they are.

PSYCHOGRAPHICS

- Socially aware and invested in bettering their community
- Value lifelong education (both formal and self-education)
- Likely in multilingual and multicultural households
- Working and/or managing a household (busy and have many responsibilities)
- Invested in their role as a parent and guardian, always looking to improve and share their learnings with other like-minded parents and guardians
- Worldly and well-travelled
- A high degree of emotional and media literacy
- Not afraid of tough conversations, unlearning bias, rolling up their sleeves to do community work

DEMOGRAPHICS

(In order of significance)

- First-time parents or people stepping into a parenting role
- Middle class to managerial class, well-educated, financially comfortable
- Ages 20-45 parents/guardians
- All ethnicities
- All genders

THE AUDIENCE'S GOALS

Our target audience needs to access trusted, accessible information because they want to help their children actively engage in the world.

MEETING THAT GOAL BEFORE SPROUTS

- Social media
- Established parenting brands and publications
- Health institutions

PAIN POINTS

- Poor navigation of existing websites
- Distrust in information on social media
- Overwhelm in information, hard to make decisions
- Distraction and frustration of social media opinions
- User experience, the appearance of the website, difficulties finding the information within the mass of information, and difficult website navigation.

HOW SPROUTS IS MEETING AUDIENCE NEEDS?

1. Clear, trusted, easily accessible information
2. One stop shop for parent resources and kid activities
3. Website easy to navigate and a good experience that people want to spend time on
4. Mobile accessible website that makes it easy to search and find information quickly

ACTIONS



TO WATCH

Donec congue arcu purus, ut mollis nisi tincidunt accumsan. Ut maximus metus id maximus accumsan. Vestibulum sed cursus leo. Nam a tortor sed tortor congue maximus. Fusce commodo pulvinar erat, id t tincidunt ligula.



TO READ

Etiam iaculis sem a nunc aliquet pretium in a orci. Nunc eget feugiat nisi, ut viverra eros. Nulla in auctor diam. Fusce rhoncus eros a nisi malesuada blandit. Sed iaculis neque at quam auctor gravida. Vivamus blandit nisi sagittis, vestibulum quam a, blandit erat. Maecenas sed tristique



TO DO

Donec congue arcu purus, ut mollis nisi tincidunt accumsan. Ut maximus metus id maximus accumsan. Vestibulum sed cursus leo. Nam a tortor sed tortor congue maximus. Fusce commodo pulvinar erat, id tempor eros fermentum nec. Mauris

PERSONAS

YASMIN, 35

Vancouver BC

"Hi, I'm Yazmin! I'm a busy mom of two energetic kids. My partner and I want to give our kids the best but finding resources for them is too overwhelming when there is so much out there and I don't know what websites to trust. I really need a one stop shop for great resources to help educate my kids and find activities for them to do when I have to bring some work home."



Yasmin likes that Sprouts is:

- A trusted source of information that can help her and her partner engage with their kids about hard topics
- A place to find activities to do together as a family that are engaging and educational
- Easy to use which means less stress about finding information and activities for her family

Yasmin found Sprouts on social media from a parenting group on Facebook and decided to look into it more when her friends started sharing posts on Instagram. Now she is a dedicated audience member that loves the weekly newsletters because it puts curated resources in her inbox every week.

RAFAEL, 43

Toronto, Ontario

"Hi, I'm Rafael! But lately I have been known as 'Super Dad' after leaving my job to look after my 1 and 8 year old. I've been looking for parenting websites for awhile but hadn't really found anything that connected. I want to make sure that play time with my 8 year old during baby naps is a chance for special Dad and son time and also an engaging learning experience. There are so many opinions about what is good for kids that it can be hard to know what resources and activities are the right choice."



Rafael likes that Sprouts is

- A website with a diverse lens on content for kids with resources for parents that aren't just for white moms.
- A place where he can find activities that will keep his kids engaged and enrich their education with new perspectives.
- Easy to use, and is a good source of reassurance and support to help him continue to be Super Dad

Rafael found Sprouts through a homeschooling channel he joined during the pandemic to help teach his son when he was learning from home. Now he pops on Sprouts' website regularly and loves to engage with the curated videos and checks the newsletter every week.

CHARLIE, 29

Halifax, Nova Scotia

"Hey, I'm Charlie! I recently became the full time guardian of my 10 year old sister, Sophia. I'm a third grade teacher and I often work long hours helping kids, as a leader for clubs at the school, and grading assignments that I bring home. I worry that my long hours working means that I am not giving Sophia the support she needs. She is very overwhelmed with the world and I need guidance on how to have conversations with her but the resources I am aware of don't feel inclusive and understanding of all guardian situations"



Charlie likes that Sprouts is

- A hub of information on a lot of difficult subject matter like the news and talking about mental health.
- A place where they can find approaches and activities that will start the conversations naturally so Sophia doesn't feel cornered.
- Easy to use and comes from trusted sources so they know that the information they convey to Sophia is reliable
- Simple and relevant content that doesn't have a patronizing tone or a lack of inclusivity that they've encountered in other parenting resources.
- A source for resources that approach topics like critical thinking, mental health, and empathetic listening within a real world context. Charlie looks forward to Sprouts coming out with teacher resources so they can translate the website resources that have helped Sophia to their third grade class

Charlie found Sprouts through google when they were looking for resources to help their students during the pandemic. Charlie fit Sprouts into their life through social media browsing and likes that they can watch Sprouts stories on Instagram and easily swipe through to important information.

MARKETING STRATEGY

Marketing Goals

Social Media Channels

MARKETING GOALS

As we launch Sprouts we will be focusing our marketing efforts on building brand awareness and a core engaged audience. We are setting realistic goals that we created with the current marketing landscape and our competitors' performance in mind to keep our efforts focused in a few key areas. Our small team has a high degree of social media and digital marketing knowledge which we will employ as we make incremental gains through extensive testing. By using our marketing budget in savvy ways and leveraging the connections of staff and our editorial board, we will avoid burning through our money in the pay-to-play world of social advertising while making the most impact.

BUSINESS GOALS

1. Grow the Sprouts brand

Social Media Goals: Awareness

Metrics

- Followers
- Likes
- Reach

2. Turn Readers into Advocates

Social Media Goals: Engagement

Metrics

- High value engagements on social media shares, comments, mentions by like-minded brands
- Word of mouth is hard to measure but we will be capturing anecdotal evidence alongside the other metrics to build a better picture

3. Increase Readership of Our Content

Social Media Goals: Conversion of passive social media followers to dedicated newsletter readership

Metrics

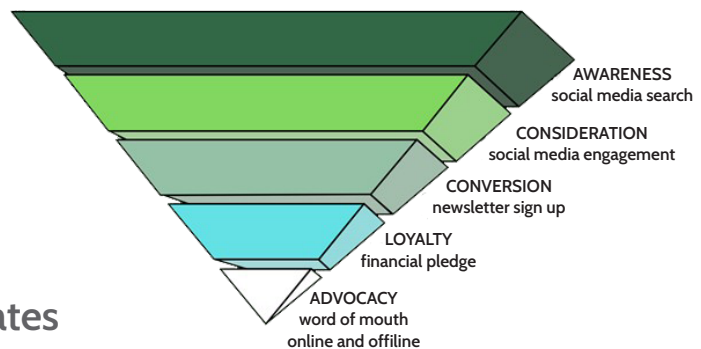
- Newsletter sign ups
- Newsletter open rate
- Newsletter retention
- Increased time spend on our website

4. Inspire Loyal Readers to Support Sprouts Financially

Social Media Goals: Click-thru-rate on posts about ways to support our freemium content

Metrics

- Number and amount of one-time donations
- Number and amount of recurring donations/pledges



SMART GOALS

As a start up, it is important to balance clear goals with testing and flexibility. The following table provides Year 1 goals and stretch goals for metrics that provide the best indication of audience awareness and engagement. While these numbers may look modest, they align with our aims of building a highly engaged, loyal, and specific core audience. Metrics will be captured on a monthly basis, and after the first three months of data we can infer more meaningful insights to adjust tactics where necessary.

	Year 1	Stretch Goal
Facebook followers	1,000	2,000
Instagram followers	2,000	3,500
Time spent on website	1:20	2:00
Newsletter subscribers	1,500	3,000

COMPETITOR SNAPSHOT

Competitor research has been used to help build our own goals. It is useful to contextualize that our competitors grew their social audiences when user-behaviour was different and algorithms favoured organic reach. We will focus on audience engagement via shares and comments as key performance indicators rather than only the number of followers we have.

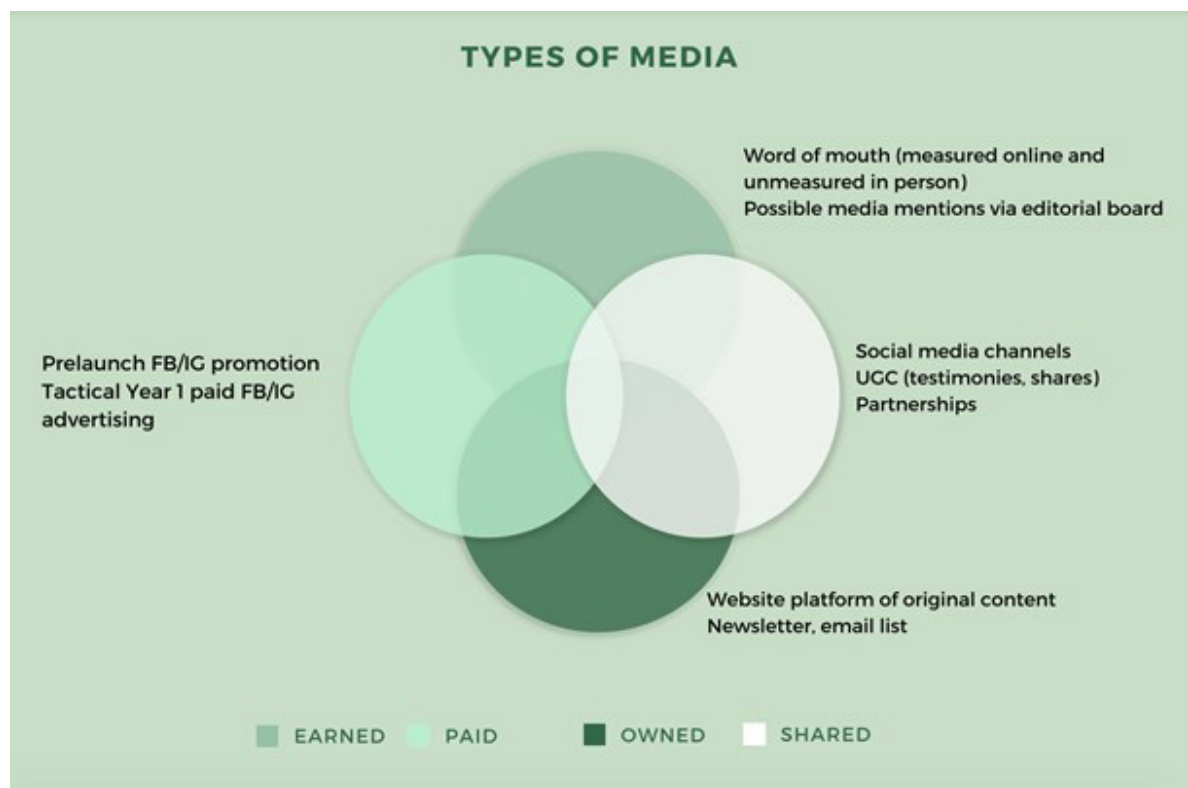
	Parenting Science	Time for Kids	MediaSmarts
Facebook followers	12,992	38,688	6,545
Instagram followers	N/A	8,779	1,229
Time spent on website	1:20	3:03	1:13

MARKETING BUDGET

Our marketing budget is \$4,163. This is 17% of our net revenue. This is an intentionally modest projection of our budget. At this stage, we don't have the funds to meaningfully engage in the paid media space or rely on this to provide awareness. We will instead by focusing on shared and earned media.

Our marketing budget will go towards:

- \$1,200 will be used for promotion in a Pre-launch short-term push. This will coincide with Crowdfunding efforts to build brand awareness, audience interest, and anticipation for launch.
- The remaining \$2,963 will go to paid social media advertising over the course of the first full year. We've detailed this in a month-by-month average, but in reality there would be times we choose to increase our paid advertising around specific virtual events, partnerships, or times of heightened audience engagement (i.e spring break, prior to summer holidays, and back to school time). Social media can be a volatile space. In months where audience's attitude towards the social media platform we're using changes, algorithms change, or news cycles capture more attention, we'll turn off advertising dollars to avoid wasting money.



SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

We plan to focus solely on Facebook and Instagram as we believe that less is more. Business social media requires consistency and testing as well as quality content. By focusing our efforts on delivering excellence on two popular platforms with our audience, we will have a greater chance of growing our following and keeping up the quality of our content rather than spreading our resources too thin.

As we become more established and learn how our audience prefers to interact with us, we can grow and expand our social media presence to other platforms that have formats that are useful for our audience such as Pinterest, where we can specifically target our audience with inspirational and educational content.

We are unlikely to focus on Twitter as the platform requires lots of time to do well, is most useful for customer support at high volume, and is primarily as a fast-paced news source. Additionally, for the time being we will not have a LinkedIn presence (could be useful for business to business networking once we are more established) or Youtube (as it is challenging to compete with dedicated video-first content creators and the pace of production required is not feasible for us).

INSTAGRAM



Instagram is a highly visual and engaging platform with lots of ways to build a following. Smart and consistent use of hashtags can aid in discoverability, and there are lots of ways to quickly get feedback and engagement from an audience in low barrier ways. Additionally, this is a great place to connect to like-minded people and organizations through follows, algorithm suggestions, and follower lists. With a basic strategy and internal framework for how to spend time on this platform, creating and curating stories can be a fairly easy side-of-desk task where one can see incremental gains week over week. While it is important to keep abreast of algorithm changes and user-opinions of the platform, Instagram is a major player and having a presence here is a necessity for our start-ups digital marketing efforts.

- 57% of 25–30-year-olds use Instagram
- 47% of 30–49-year-olds use Instagram¹

¹ <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/>

What will our content look like?

- We will have a clean and consistent grid that balances images from our site, features of people, places and topics we're covering, as well as snippets of information in infographics and quotes
- Consistency is key. We will aim to post 3x/week to the grid.
- We will use our curation skills to share lots of Instagram stories. This is an opportunity to participate and have a more dynamic presence on the platform without the pressure to create lots of original content.
- With stories we can poll our audience, ask questions, develop our tone of voice for social media, and demonstrate the type of content we're reading and engaging in.
- We will use LinkTree to drive traffic to fundraising campaigns, our website, particular topics we may do dedicated features on, and things we want to raise awareness for.

FACEBOOK

While Facebook is a critiqued and competitive social platform, the sheer volume of people who use it makes it too big to fully opt out of at this time. We will aim to have a strategic and savvy presence here because people the age of our target audience continue to check Facebook regularly and spend time there even if they are not posting regularly.

- 84% of 25–30 year olds use Facebook
- 79% of 30–49 year olds use Facebook²

What type of content?

We will mainly focus on maintenance and evergreen content on our main page.³ This is simple content that has long term value and clearly demonstrates our brand voice. We will schedule content three times a week on our feed.

We will have a balance of original content that clicks through to our website and curated content from other sources to keep our audience interested and engaged, but there will always be a minimum of one original Sprouts post per week.

We will assemble a list of vetted sources that create content that aligns with our values, so that it is easy for us to pull in content curation. This is a savvy way to use Facebook, particularly when the time to create strong original Facebook content that performs well in Facebook's pay-to-play environment is often a law of diminishing returns and very hit and miss for smaller brands.

2 <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/new-social-media-demographics/>

3 <https://neilpatel.com/blog/evergreen-content-marketing/>



This image is an example of curation that maintains our brand and provides awareness for our services.

Consistency of posting is key to developing our Facebook presence, but we expect and are okay with engagement being low unless we put money behind our posts.

Our aim on Facebook is to build awareness for our brand and direct people to the Sprouts digital platform. We will be purposeful about how we spend our time and resources on Facebook itself, and not fall into a trap of spending too much time worrying about forcing ourselves to meet unrealistic reach or

follower goals. As savvy digital marketers, we will review performance month over month, keep abreast of changes to the Facebook algorithm, and create small tests to help us learn what our audience responds to rather than being hyper focused on targets which is increasingly outdated and unhealthy.

To this end, we will aim to spend our 'Facebook time' joining Facebook groups that are relevant to our audience and subject matter because active and engaged Facebook users increasingly prefer to spend their time in more private, interest driven groups. Here, we can share our content, comment and engage in other people's contributions, and observe common questions from our key audience.

It will be important to test this tactic in both large and small groups, and we will need to be respectful of the norms and community guidelines within these groups. While this tactic can be helpful for building awareness of our brand, a secondary function is gathering observational audience research.

Potential Facebook groups include but are not limited to:

- Mindful Parenting (9.6K members)
- Digital Resources for Distance Learning (63K members)
- Homeschooling Resources Support Group (35K members)
- Action for Happiness (17K members)
- For Our Kids/Parents for the Planet Action Group (431 members)

As we grow, we may look to put some of our marketing budget towards sponsored posts or specific ad campaigns to direct to events, talks, and partnerships.

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

Revenue Sources

Finances

Planning for the Future of Sprouts

REVENUE SOURCES

Sprouts is a not-for-profit website and magazine more focused on our values and serving our audience. That said, there are expenses involved in creating this website and we believe that even for a startup non-profit magazine it is very important to pay for content contributions. As a media company, we understand the importance of having multiple streams of revenue. The more diverse our streams of revenue, the better we will be able to survive in the shifting world of digital publication. So, Sprouts has found several revenue sources to support itself financially so we can continue to grow and reach a wider audience while not bankrupting ourselves in the process.

DONATIONS AND USER-FUNDED PAYMENT (31% of revenue in Year 1)

On our website there are several places that encourage readers to financially support our content. Readers can pick one-time donations or commit to recurring payments. Taking inspiration from successful reader-funded digital publications (such as the Tyee and the Guardian), we are working with the assumption that a core group of readers that are aligned with our values will pay to support our work.

Of an audience of 1000 loyal readers in year one, we estimate 250 people will contribute financially. Please see the Table 1 below for further details. This is a supplemental revenue stream that we will look to build to build and improve as our brand awareness and depth of content grows.

Table 1: Revenue Gain from Website Donations

\$	One off	Revenue	
1			
5	15	75	
10	30	300	
20	20	400	
\$	Monthly		
1	75	900	
5	50	\$3,000	
10	20	2,400	
20	5	1200	
\$	Annually		
1			
5	20	100	
10	10	100	
		8575	TOTAL

CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

(39% of revenue in Pre-launch)

This initiative will take place in a condensed time frame during the pre-launch phase to build momentum in both awareness and direct support for Sprouts. Based on 500 backers, this campaign will be reliant on Sprouts team members and editorial board members leveraging their personal and professional connections to get community buy-in from people who want to see Sprouts in the world. This will primarily be based on in-kind labour so we can reap the most financial benefit from the rewards we offer our backers. There will be three levels of pledges. As is typical for crowdfunding campaigns, backers are often primarily paying to support something they believe in, with rewards or incentives as 'nice to haves'.

See the Table 2 below for details on pledges and rewards. To view the full text of our pre-launch crowdfunding campaign see Appendix 1.

Table 2: Crowdfunding Rewards

Pledge	Reward	Cost to us
\$25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited edition Sprouts swag pack (stickers, magnets, pencils)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">\$15 for items and shippingWe make \$10
\$50	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opportunity to pitch your content ideas to our team 1-1Will feature four facilitated breakout rooms that will culminate in outlines for four future content series on SproutsYour name will be included in writing credits on our website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In kind labourWe make \$50
\$100	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Exclusive access to a virtual evening of conversation with our board membersIncludes break out rooms with subject matter experts and special guestsAnd receive a 'Sleep Better' gift from donated by LUSH, in support of hard working parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">In kind labour from our teamDonation from our partnersWe make \$100




PATREON

(11% of revenue in Pre-launch and 14% of revenue in Year 1)

Our Patreon plan is built to incentivize those who share our values, love our work and want to go above and beyond to support of our platform. This is different from our Crowdfunding campaign which has specific aims to get Sprouts launched, and is also different from our donation/user-funded plan which is more tied to the website content.

This revenue comes from monthly audience support via additional pledges for access to Sprouts as a brand and way of thinking beyond our free content. We will have three levels of support, with different levels of rewards and access to our process, the Sprouts team, and potential virtual events we will create to add value and build community. We will periodically review the rewards and test ways to improve this program. Table 3 below shows details of our patreon including our estimates of revenue based on an attainable estimate of 40 supporters.

Table 3: Patreon Rewards and Revenue

Tiers	Seedings	Sustainers	Bloomers
			
Message:	Thank you! A little bit goes a long way. You're helping us with the upkeep of our website, social media pages, and the long hard hours we put into this passion project.	We're so grateful for your generous support. We always pay our writers a living wage, but your contributions mean we can continue to raise our rates. Quality content takes time and skill. Thank you for recognizing this.	You are a superstar! Thank you for helping us not only survive, but thrive as a small, independent start up. Your generosity means we can look to our future goals and the sustainability of Sprouts.
What you get:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your name on our contributors page. The satisfaction of supporting independent, not-for-profit content. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A personalized thank you. Limited edition Sprouts merch (pens, magnets, pins) donated by local vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusive access to fireside chats with our authors, editorial board, and the Sprouts team. Our eternal gratefulness!
Number of supporters	20	15	5
	\$4 x 12 months x 20	\$9.50 x 12 months x 15	\$20 x 12 months x 5
\$ per year	\$960	\$1,700	\$1,200

ADVERTISING AND SPONSORED CONTENT

(2% of revenue in Pre-launch and 36% of revenue in Year 1)

We see offering advertising for some relevant and trusted organizations as an added value for our readers especially in the actionable links at the end of articles. We have projections to earn \$100 a month from branded content in year one. This is based on a need to build our brand awareness, as well as create and sustain an engaged, niche audience that will appeal to partnerships and advertisers. We will need to prove our audience engagement via newsletter click through rates and open rates over time in order to accurately predict CPM. A \$100 flat rate is a starting point that, if we gain our intended audience, would be a great deal for advertisers.

We would honour this original rate for trusted partners to thank them for their early support for our publication. However, upon testing and review, we could potentially raise our rates for new sponsors and earn more revenue as our audience grows. We will be seeking advertising from companies and organizations that align with our values and fit our audience's needs and lifestyle. Advertising will come from educational, informative, ethical, and healthy lifestyle brands. These include but are not limited to:

- David Suzuki Foundation
- SPUD food delivery service
- Orca Books
- Nature Path foods
- Scholastic Books
- Vancouver Institute of Philosophy for Children
- A Kids Book About
- BC Teachers Federation

IN-KIND REVENUE

(19% in Pre-launch and 19% of revenue in Year 1)

The majority of the expenses listed on our financial statements (website design, graphic design, marketing, and one third of the editorial contents) are in-kind contributions on part of the Sprout creators. This revenue also comes from the volunteer labour, academic and industry network connections, and thought-leadership expertise (i.e social and professional credibility and capital) of our editorial board

GRANTS

(29% of revenue in Pre-launch)

\$5000 from Business Innovation – Canada Periodical Fund in pre-launch

As a digital periodical with a regular publishing schedule with reliable and original content, we were eligible for the Business Innovation Grant from Canada Periodical Fund which will provide us with \$5000 for our pre-launch period.

Full Grant Details Can be found at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/periodical-fund/business-innovation.html>

MERCHANDISE

(Beginning in Year 2)

Merch is a great way to show that you are a part of a cool community with these cool items! The things we may offer are: kids and adult T-shirts, mugs, stickers, tote bags, and pens.

As an efficient product test, we will create prototypes of smaller less expensive items that we will include as 'limited edition original sprouts merchandise' as rewards for our Crowdfunding and Patreon participants.



SPROUT KID'S MAGAZINE

SUBSCRIPTION

(Beginning in Year 2)

Depending on the growth of our audience, reader support, our access to additional financial grants, and the print magazine landscape in 2023, we will look to publish a print magazine for kids that compliments the digital platform aimed at parents and guardians.

FINANCES

REVENUE SOURCES

Budget Plan	PRELAUNCH		YEAR 1	
REVENUE	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
Sales and memberships				
Subscription/Membership	\$ -		\$ -	
Other Sales	\$ -		\$ -	
Total Sales	\$ -	0%	\$ -	0%
ADS			\$ -	
Ads (Website)	\$ -		\$ 1,500	
Ads (Newsletter)	\$ -		\$ 1,200	
Sponsored Content (Facebook)	\$ 200		\$ 1,200	
Sponsored Content (Instagram)	\$ 200		\$ 4,000	
Affiliate Links	\$ -		\$ 2,160	
Total Ad Sale	\$ 400	2%	\$ 10,060	36%
In Kind			\$ -	
Logo Design	\$ 150		\$ -	
Website Creation	\$ 1,000		\$ -	
Website Recurring Cost	\$ -		\$ 150	
Accounting	\$ 750		\$ 1,500	
Editorial	\$ 300		\$ 1,200	
Internet	\$ 1,200		\$ 2,400	
Total In Kind	\$ 3,400	19%	\$ 5,250	19%
Grants			\$ -	
Canada Council	\$ -		\$ -	
BC Arts Council	\$ -		\$ -	
Canada Periodical Fund	\$ 5,000		\$ -	
Total Grants	\$ 5,000	29%	\$ -	0%
Donation			\$ -	
Donation	\$ -		\$ 8,575	
Total Donation	\$ -	0%	\$ 8,575	31%
Other				
Crowd Funding	\$ 6,750	39%	\$ -	
Patreon	\$ 1,935	11%	\$ 3,870	
Total	\$ 8,685	50%	\$ 3,870	14%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 17,485	100%	\$ 27,755	100%

EXPENSES

Budget Plan	PRELAUNCH		YEAR 1	
EXPENSES	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
ART/EDITORIAL				
Contributor Fees (writers/guests)	\$2,400		9,600	
Design	\$0		0	
Logo Creation	\$150		0	
Total Art/Editorial	\$2,550	25%	9,600	39%
Marketing Budget				
Advertising	\$0		4,163	
Promotion	\$1,749		0	
Total Ad & Promo	\$1,749	17%	4,163	17%
Website				
Design	\$1,000		1,000	
Hosting & Domain	\$60		60	
Total Website	\$1,060	10%	\$ 1,060	4%
Operations				
Accounting	\$750		1,500	
Bank Charges	\$390		780	
Insurance	\$401		800	
Rent	\$0		0	
Postage & Courier	\$300		600	
Telephone, Fax, Internet	\$1,800		3,600	
Website Recurring Cost	\$0		150	
Computer & Software	\$500		1,000	
Administrative Expenses	\$600		1,560	
Total Operating	\$4,741	47%	\$ 9,990	40%
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$10,099	100%	\$ 24,813	100%

CASHFLOW-PRELAUNCH

Budget Plan			PRELAUNCH						
CASHFLOW BUDGET		Prelaunch	Year 1	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
CASH INFLOWS									
TOTAL SALES	\$0	\$0		0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL AD SALES	\$400	\$10,060		0	0	0	0	200	200
TOTAL INKIND	\$3,400	\$5,250		200	200	200	450	1,300	1,000
TOTAL GRANTS	\$5,000	\$0		5,000	0	0	0	0	
PATREON & CROWDFUNDING	\$8,685	\$3,870		1,445	1,445	1,445	1,450	1,450	1,450
TOTAL DONATION	\$0	\$8,575		0	0	0	0	0	
TOTAL CASH INFLOWS	\$17,485	\$27,755		\$6,645	\$1,645	\$1,645	\$1,900	\$2,950	\$2,700
CASH OUTFLOWS									
TOTAL ART/EDITORIAL	\$2,550	\$9,600		0	0	0	950	800	800
TOTAL MARKETING BUDGET	\$1,749	\$4,163		0	0	0	583	583	583
TOTAL WEBSITE	\$1,060	\$1,060		0	0	0	0	1,060	
TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$4,741	\$9,990		1,082	582	582	582	582	1,300
TOTAL CASH OUTFLOWS	\$10,099	\$24,813		\$ 1,082	\$ 582	\$ 582	\$ 2,115	\$ 3,025	\$ 2,700
BANK BALANCE									
BANK BALANCE AT BEGINNING	0	7,386		0	5,563	6,627	7,690	7,476	7,401
BANK BALANCE AT END	6,129	9,675		\$ 5,563	\$ 6,627	\$ 7,690	\$ 7,476	\$ 7,401	\$ 7,386

CASHFLOW- YEAR 1

Budget Plan		YEAR 1												
CASHFLOW BUDGET		Year 1	JAN	FEB	MAR	APRI	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CASH INFLOWS														
TOTAL SALES	\$0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL AD SALES	\$10,060	605	605	705	755	755	805	905	905	905	1,005	1,005	1,005	1,005
TOTAL INKIND	\$5,250	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	1,950
TOTAL GRANTS	\$0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PATREON & CROWDFUND	\$3,870	320	320	320	320	320	320	325	325	325	325	325	325	325
TOTAL DONATION	\$8,575	710	715	715	715	715	715	715	715	715	715	715	715	715
TOTAL CASH INFLOWS	\$27,755	\$1,935	\$1,940	\$2,040	\$2,090	\$2,090	\$2,140	\$2,245	\$2,245	\$2,345	\$2,345	\$2,345	\$2,345	\$3,995
CASH OUTFLOWS														
TOTAL ART/EDITORIAL	\$9,600	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800	800
TOTAL MARKETING BUDG	\$4,163	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347	347
TOTAL WEBSITE	\$1,060	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	0
TOTAL OPERATIONS	\$9,990	1,045	545	545	1,345	545	545	545	545	545	1,045	545	545	2,195
TOTAL CASH OUTFLOWS	\$24,813	\$ 3,192	\$1,692	\$1,692	\$2,492	\$1,692	\$1,692	\$1,692	\$1,692	\$2,192	\$1,692	\$ 1,752	\$ 3,342	
BANK BALANCE														
BANK BALANCE AT BEGIN	7,386	7,386	6,129	6,377	6,725	6,323	6,721	7,169	7,722	8,275	8,428	9,081	9,675	
BANK BALANCE AT END	9,675	\$ 6,129	\$6,377	\$6,725	\$6,323	\$6,721	\$7,169	\$7,722	\$8,275	\$8,428	\$9,081	\$ 9,675	\$ 10,328	

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF SPROUTS

Diversifying Content

As of now, we have planned for the first five years of our business operations. Our goal is to grow our audience in a way that will make us able to launch our print kid's magazine by the end of year two. We hope that our digital publication will continue to grow to serve our audience as their kids grow. This means expanding upon the age range of content for kids as well as the topic areas Sprouts covers. This process will be very audience driven and we will seek feedback throughout in order to best serve our community.

Once we build traction, we will look to further diversify the content we produce. We plan to start the development process for a Sprouts podcast at the end of year two and then expand into video content in years following. We see a great opportunity in apps, especially in the ability to reach and help children in a more controlled setting than the wider internet. Should an app be attainable financially and something our audience would like, we plan to develop a mobile app in the later part of our five year or ten year plan.

Diversifying Our Audience

We are also planning to expand our audience to include teachers and librarians. This will include building lesson plans for teachers, looking at running event series in schools, and being in close communication with teachers and schools to provide them with important resources that they need.

Diversifying Our Team

Sprouts is a non-profit magazine and we hope that we can seek out great talent to help us with our enterprise in a volunteer capacity, with in-kind donations, or in paid positions as our finances grow. We see a great benefit in mentorship and once we get our footing as a digital publication, we will look into the possibility of Government of Canada student summer work grants.

EXIT STRATEGY

Although we are putting all of our heart and energy into Sprouts, we are aware that there may come a time when we must move on. The reason for moving on may be personal such as retirement or it may be that Sprouts is no longer a viable publication. We have developed an exit strategy if a situation should arise in which the editorial team must exit Sprouts.

- Merge with another business or be acquired. We are incredibly values driven and always want to be of service to our audience, and therefore see our competitors as potential partners. We never want to clutter the market, but want to genuinely provide value where we currently see gaps. Therefore, an established organization with government support such as MediaSmarts would be a great long term partnership or somewhere to pitch our services (e.g more functional and easier to navigate mobile website, more sophisticated social media presence and audience engagement, action-oriented activities). Should a partnership, acquisition, or merger occur between Sprouts and another value based media entity, we will be open and honest with our audience as to any changes to Sprouts that may occur as a result.

- Build a succession plan for Sprouts and staff members in advance by finding like minded individuals and training them over a period of a few months - years (depending on the position) to prepare them to take on the business when the original founders would like to retire or move on from Sprouts.
- If we choose to close Sprouts at any time, we will give notice to our audience at least six weeks before closing down. We highly value our audience's trust and will be mindful about directing them to other similar resources.

DESIGN BRIEF

Design Overview

Website Design

Photo Criteria

Website Flow

DESIGN OVERVIEW

Sprouts' branding design aims to appeal to parents who value knowledge, learning, education, and communication. Our design provides an optimistic feeling and evokes the way Sprouts is helping parents guide their children towards a brighter future in a friendly and honest way.

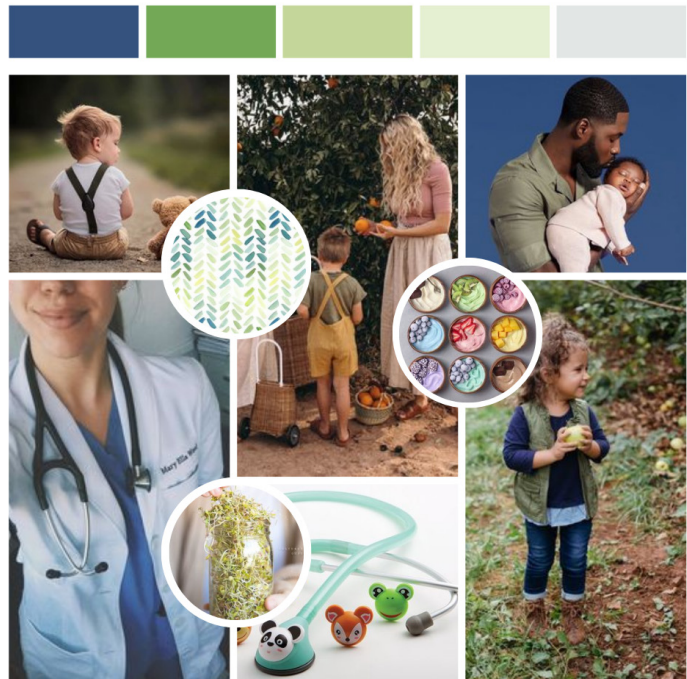
Our logo communicates how ideas nurture growth, using elements that can be used separately to highlight information without losing its meaning.



Our voice and color palette is friendly, inviting, honest, and knowledgeable. We want to have a conversation with our audience, share knowledge that is founded in research in a way that is accessible to all parents, both in how we explain the information that backs up everything we do, but also in the way that we relate to one another as people.

Type hierarchy

- H1-Lovelo Black, 35pt
- H2-Lovelo Black, 25pt
- H3-Lovelo Black, 20pt
- Nav bar-Cabin semibold, 20pt
- Href1- Cabin semibold, 15.5pt
- Href2-Cabin semibold, 9pt
- P1-Avenir, 16pt
- p2-Avenir, 14.5pt



WEBSITE DESIGN



Based on our market research and our main goals, Sprouts website is designed to provide an easy experience for readers and contributors. Because our target market uses mostly a smartphone (see survey Appendix 2), Sprouts is designed to be responsive to any kind of mobile device. The website flow has been designed for maximum usability, making sure the user does not need more than three clicks to get to the information they are looking for.

Colours used on the design appeal to a calm, familiar, and gender-neutral space where the user can easily read information thanks to a sans serif web typography and a clear typographic hierarchy that facilitates finding information through the site pages.

The main actions available for users are reading content, contributing to Sprouts, and subscribing to the newsletter. These are highlighted with call-to-action (CAT) buttons in every page of the website. CAT buttons are clear and carefully placed on the website for them to be easy to find, attractive, and non-intrusive to readers. Each article uses the same elements used in the logo to highlight actions related to the topic. This makes it easier for parents to plan, screenshot, or come back to the actions when needed, while strengthening their relationship to Sprouts visuals.

PHOTO CRITERIA

All the images used through the site fit the following photo criteria:

Quality Guidelines

- Images should enhance the overall brand and reputation of the website.
- Colour tones in every photograph should fit the brand moodboard and tone.
- Images that are photographs must display diverse families and children 3-16 years old engaging in activities such as reading, playing, helping communities, and portraying good habits.
- Graphic illustrations or drawings are not used unless previously approved as necessary to the site content.
- The graphics should be directly and obviously related to the site's mission and target audience.
- Images should be in focus, well-lit for the subject matter, and properly processed for color correction.
- Images that are grainy, obviously photoshopped, or have been processed incorrectly will not be displayed or will be removed from the site.
- Image treatments — alterations made to an image such as framing, shadowing — must be consistent and in keeping with the current design and style of the website.

Resolution and size

- Images should be used at 100 percent of their size at 72 dpi to provide the best loading time for the page.
- Images should be coded to display correctly in mobile devices.
- Graphic items must fit on the page in such a way that other items on the page aren't moved.
- The size should be such that any wrapping text is still legible.
- It is important to keep the file size as small as possible to ensure that the page loads quickly. In most cases, this can be done by making sure that the physical size of the actual file is the same as the size it should be shown on the screen. Note: It is possible to resize an image using HTML code. This is not acceptable, because it dilutes the quality of the image and often results in a longer page load.

Preferred Formats

All images should be output in a format most technically suited for the image type.

- **JPG/JPEG:** The preferred format for posting photography online. JPG/JPEG images can contain millions of colors and can be compressed to your desired size. These sizes are recommended:
 - Photoshop Quality level 80 — small images
 - Photoshop Quality level 60 — large images

- GIF: Generally used for non-photographic images of 256 colors or less, such as buttons, logos, icons and arrows.
- PNG: Non-compressed images that should be used if their file size is comparable to that of a JPG.

Selecting Images

All images used in the site hold a creative commons license or owned by Sprouts and author credit will be given at the file names.

Copyright rules: Site developers must know, understand and comply with the rules of copyright for images on the Web, as well as in print. If you don't know who owns an image, or if you have not been granted express permission to use an image, do not use it. Website developers and editors who authorize site development are responsible for all content on their sites. If you have any questions about the origin, alteration, use or development of the content on your site, please contact the Web Development Coordinator.

Accessibility Requirements

All images and graphic elements (such as tables and graphs) used must have alternative text associated to provide non-visual readers the opportunity to experience the images.

All images and descriptions will be incorporated into the text of the article in a way that will allow text to speech readers to read alternative text and have it make sense with the flow of the article.

WEBSITE FLOW



12 February 2021

PROTOTYPES

To visit Sprouts's website mockups, please visit the following links:

Desktop

<https://xd.adobe.com/view/e5b3e45c-2601-42eb-ab35-bd7565af3df2-b0e0/?fullscreen&hints=off>

Mobile

<https://xd.adobe.com/view/a49ef800-fcd1-4407-ad89-7273fe41e958-f1cd/>

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Crowdfunding Campaign

Appendix 2: Audience Survey

APPENDIX 1: CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN



Hi, we are Sprouts!

Sprouts is a digital publication for parents of elementary school kids seeking reliable information to help navigate our ever-changing world. We provide accessible content that is grounded in research, overseen by a board of experts, and oriented towards action so you can engage your children in challenging conversations about the world they live in, at every step of their growth.

Who is the passionate team behind Sprouts?

Aki is a full-time student and full-time mom that brings to Sprouts her experience in publishing and a keen eye for stories that matter to parents. Alejandra is experienced in academic publishing and passionate about openly accessible information. Kelly has worked in digital marketing for five years, always striving to grow audiences and connect people to stories that matter. And Amy is a published writer who is passionate about providing the best content for parents and kids. Together we are a strong team of young professionals who have spent our formative years growing and learning through world crises. We want to help make navigating the ever-changing world easier for parents and kids.

Our Mission!

Life is busy and the world is overwhelming! We know it can be hard for parents to talk to kids about the crises happening in the world. We want to make parents' lives easier by creating a one stop website for research-based accessible information. With each piece of content, we provide a curated list of activities for kids, activities to do together as a family, conversation starters, and actionable steps that you can take to help kids learn and shape their future.

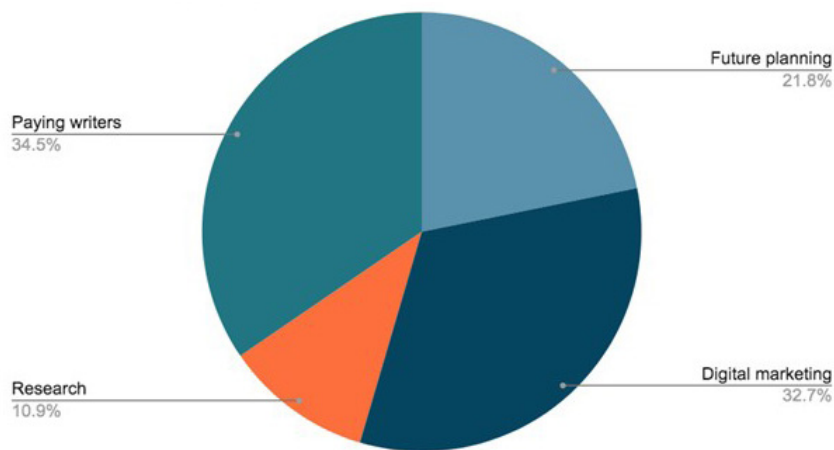
Sprouts is a not-for-profit publication that is overseen by an editorial board of experts. All of our content is reviewed by our editorial board and includes a reference list of the academic sources that went into the articles. But don't worry, all of our content is written in a conversational tone that is accessible and easy to read.

Our publication covers topics including "Talk News with Kids" about how parents can

approach the news with their kids, “Healthy Minds” which includes content that ranges from mental health to critical thinking, and “Planet Action” that covers topics related to the Climate Crisis and provides actions for kids who want to help their communities and the planet.

Budget

Your donation will go towards:



Rewards:

Pledge	Reward
\$25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">limited edition Sprouts swag pack (stickers, magnets, pencils) to be donated by local vendors
\$50	<ul style="list-style-type: none">opportunity to pitch your content ideas to our team 1-1will feature four facilitated breakout rooms that will culminate in outlines for four future content series on Sproutsyour name will be included in writing credits on our website
\$100	<ul style="list-style-type: none">exclusive access to a virtual evening of conversation with our board membersincludes break out rooms with subject matter experts and special guestsand receive a ‘Sleep Better’ gift from donated by LUSH, in support of hard working parents

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY

We surveyed a small sample of parents in preparation for our launch. Below are the questions and the results for each question. Please note, if the percentages do not add up to 100, it is because participants were asked to check all of the boxes that apply to them. Results are highlighted in green beside question responses.

Which social media platforms do you use on a daily basis? (check all that apply)

- Facebook - **66.7%**
- Instagram - **50%**
- Twitter - **50%**
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- Other: Slack - **16.7%**

Which social media platforms do you use on a weekly basis? (check all that apply)

- Facebook - **50%**
- Instagram - **50%**
- Twitter - **50%**
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- YouTube - **30%**
- Other: Slack - **16.7%**

What do you use social media for? (check all that apply)

- Keep up to date with friends and family - **83.3%**
- Engagement – ie posting, commenting, sharing, participating in groups - **50%**
- Finding interesting articles to read - **50%**
- As a news source - **50%**
- Taking a break to watch something passive and light - **16.7%**
- Finding content that are funny, informative, beautiful - **16.7%**
- Other: Business - **33.4%**

How many newsletters do you subscribe to?

- As many as I can, I love them
- A select few that I think have valuable information - **66.7%**
- 1 or 2 but I have to really like the organization first - **33.3%**
- None, I don't want newsletters in my inbox

If you read from an online source do you read on:

- Mobile - **100%**
- Desktop - **66.7%**
- Tablet - **16.7%**

How old are your kid(s)? (Check all that apply)

(Note: those who answered "Adult" also had kids in one of the other age groups)

- 0 to 4 years old - **20%**
- Elementary school age - **80%**
- Middle school age - **20%**
- High school age
- Adults - **20%**

When you are looking for information or activities for you kid where do you go? (check all that apply)

- Social Media - **33.3%**
- Google Search - **83.3%**
- A trusted source you are already aware of - **83.3%**
- Email newsletters - **33.3%**
- Recommendation from a friend - **83.3%**
- Physical books or print magazines - **66.7%**
- Other

What activities would be most valuable for you to find online? (check all that apply)

- Trusted and Informative videos your kid can watch - **66.7%**
- Print out activities - **50%**
- List of good resources to read together or for you kid to read - **16.7%**
- Conversation starters to help have difficult conversations with kids - **16.7%**
- Hands on activities with easy to access materials - **33.3%**
- Things you can do together with your child - **83.3%**
- Things your kids can do on their own - **50%**
- Other: Physical places and events - **33.4%**

Lastly, we would like to hear from you! What would you find the most beneficial from a website with resources for parents and activities for kids?

Short Answer Question Highlights:

"I am most often looking for ideas for simple activities my son (aged 3) and I can do together at home early in the morning (easy crafts, fun prompts for imaginative play, designs for forts, etc.). These ideas get bonus points if they can be done without annoying our downstairs neighbours who like to sleep in. The other thing I am often looking for are ideas of things my son and I can do together outside of the house. One place I see a lack of information is ideas for adventures we can undertake outdoors. There are about a billion ideas for sensory bins, and ideas for putting stickers in lines and whatever, but I'd love to read a post that would help me identify things we might see in a tidepool, or give me ways to make the park we've been to 10,000 times seem new or give me some hot tips for keeping him interested in walking as we explore our neighbourhood. This might be pandemic me talking. Hard to know."

"- List of supplies that aren't individually linked to an online store, but "packaged" (i.e. I don't have to click 7 times out of the page) - Alternative material/ingredients ("you can use this AA battery OR this other power source" - concise information (not too lengthy text; easy to read, direct) - easy to read layout (less ads): either how-to that can also be printed out or clean web layout rather than a very very long scroll - cultural/social context (I'm currently looking for craft activities on Chinese New year, and I'd like more context, which I'm getting by looking at dozen of other websites) - age breakdown clearly labelled"

"STEAM activities that can be done with materials/objects commonly found in the home"

"Places to go to with kids, and details of how to book, what to do etc"

"videos my kid can watch on their own"



SPROUTS