

# Creative Brief for Carol & Rebecca's Bakery / Coffee Shop

Phillipa Armes

AS.480.643.81.SU16: Branding & Advertising

The Johns Hopkins University

## Background Summary

Carol and Rebecca have been best friends since grade school, and share a love of baking. Their families and friends always ask them to make cakes and pastries for birthdays, family events, and weddings. Beyond baking delicious pastries and cupcakes, Carol and Rebecca also specialize in making highly stylized, decorative cakes made to look like objects.

Carol and Rebecca have decided to turn their mutual passion for baking and cake making into a full-time career, and have saved enough money to open their own bakery and coffee shop in their favorite D.C. neighborhood, Georgetown. The two friends are eager to open their café, and are excited to share their delicious creations with a wider audience outside of their personal social circles.

Of all of the moments that define their process, Carol and Rebecca most relish the joy that they are able to bring to people's lives through their cakes and pastries.

### STRENGTHS

- Delicious and distinctive product: Carol and Rebecca's cakes speak for themselves. Their families and friends love their cakes so much that they don't purchase baked goods from bakeries or stores anymore; they go straight to Carol and Rebecca.
- Location: Georgetown's walkable and bustling yet quaint atmosphere has made the neighborhood a hub for great restaurants, stores, and hotels alike. Georgetown attracts foodies from all over the world; Carol and Rebecca's bakery and coffee shop will fit perfectly into the neighborhood's existing "personality."
- Personal brand and network of friends: Carol and Rebecca already have a following – their families and friends. Carol and Rebecca's commitment to creating delicious, unique cakes precedes them, and their brand awareness is likely to grow exponentially as they leverage their personal networks.

### WEAKNESSES

- Competition: The Georgetown cake and coffee market is already heavily saturated with heavy-hitters like Georgetown Cupcake, Sprinkles Cupcakes, and Baked & Wired. These brands enjoy cult-like followings, and are known throughout the community, and in some cases, the country.
- Name recognition: Carol and Rebecca are new players in the cake and coffee market. With such stiff competition and the preexisting brand stickiness of Georgetown Cupcake, Sprinkles Cupcakes, and Baked & Wired, Carol and Rebecca will need to work hard to build that same level of brand awareness and loyalty.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Differentiation: Carol and Rebecca's unique cake flavors and designs are a key point of differentiation in a heavily saturated market. They have the opportunity to make their brand and cakes truly stand out.

- Partnerships: Carol and Rebecca have the chance to create a bakery and coffee shop concept that celebrates product partnerships and features the best of local business. They will source only local ingredients and utilize coffee and tea products from other regional purveyors. Also, Carol and Rebecca will feature art in their store created and curated by local artists, further making their brand distinctive.

## THREATS

- Competition: Georgetown Cupcake currently dominates the cupcake market in Georgetown, with Baked & Wired coming in as the current local favorite location for good coffee and pastries. Carol and Rebecca will struggle to disassociate “cupcakes” from “Georgetown” in “Georgetown Cupcake” in the minds of their customers.
- Operating costs: The cost of living in Georgetown is 36% higher than the Washington, D.C. average, and 85% higher than the US national average. Further, the cost of housing in Georgetown is 276% higher than the US national average ([AreaVibes](#)). Carol and Rebecca will need to contend with high operating and rent costs, which will impact their ability to make a profit as they start their business.

## Overview

This creative brief is being put together as Carol and Rebecca begin to envision what their bakery and coffee shop will look like, and as they move from aspirations to concrete branding and business plans. Carol and Rebecca are hoping to create a unique, bespoke, and welcoming cake and coffee shop, founded on the joy that they have already been able to bring to their families and friends through their food.

Carol and Rebecca’s biggest challenge will be attempting to gain traction and awareness in the bustling Georgetown market. They will also face fierce competition from existing (and well-known) bakeries in the area, most notably Georgetown Cupcake. Further, Carol and Rebecca may struggle financially as they attempt to get their bakery and coffee shop up and running, particularly in the expensive Georgetown community. Carol and Rebecca will need to invest heavily in marketing, advertising, and promotions upfront to help them get their brand name and products known outside of their personal networks.

There is real opportunity for Carol and Rebecca to create a distinctive brand and presence in the Georgetown area. Particularly as the neighborhood is a hub for both traveling and local foodies, Carol and Rebecca are in a prime position to reach this ideal target audience.

Further, as Millennials become more discerning with their coffee and food choices, and as they marry their social and cause-based interests with their eating decisions, Carol and Rebecca should be able to leverage this growing trend to their advantage. By staying true to their roots and sourcing local ingredients from partner purveyors, and by infusing their brand with a commitment to giving back to

their community, Carol and Rebecca will better position themselves to attract and cater to this crucial subsector of conscious consumers.

## Drivers

Carol and Rebecca want to open a bakery and coffee shop founded on joy, quality, and whimsy. They are seeking to take their mutual talent for baking and turn it into a career – not only to make money and sustain their quality of life, but also to bring happiness to others through food. Carol and Rebecca want to make their bakery and coffee shop not just a destination for high quality custom cakes, but also a welcoming and warm neighborhood pastry and coffee café.

Cupcakes have seen an uptick in popularity and trendiness in recent years, and the trend does not appear to be going away anytime soon ([Huffington Post](#)). As competitors like Georgetown Cupcake have experienced, serving this niche is a profitable and popular market segment; even when times are tough and money is limited, there is always a demand for cupcakes. Their whimsical, portable, and inherently cute nature speaks deeply to consumers.

Carol and Rebecca's café will serve a variety of baked goods – including their specialty custom cakes, cupcakes, tarts, bars, cookies, breads, and muffins. Their café will also feature a full espresso and coffee menu.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Become Georgetown's leading custom cake and pastry shop.
2. Become a local favorite for cakes, cupcakes, pastries, and coffee.
3. Develop and foster partnerships with other local purveyors, vendors, and artists, in the spirit of giving back to the community.

## WHAT WE'RE BRINGING TO LIFE

- Joy
- Comfort
- Craftsmanship and quality
- Deliciousness
- Whimsy
- Locally sourced ingredients
- Partnerships
- Community
- Foodie fanaticism
- Coziness
- Community

## HOW WE WILL MEASURE SUCCESS

Beyond Carol and Rebecca's financial and business goals (sales and making a profit), their success will be measured qualitatively based on feedback from customers, mentions, and reviews on sites like Yelp. As Carol and Rebecca's business and brand grow and become better known in the Georgetown area, word of mouth and business referrals will become another key measure of success.

## Audience

While Carol and Rebecca's brand will no doubt speak to many different people, the following are snapshots of a few of Carol and Rebecca's key target customers:

### ANNA

Anna is 29 years old. She is originally from South Carolina, but now lives in Georgetown, D.C. Anna works as a senior account executive with a large marketing and advertising firm in D.C., and is considered to be in the upper middle class. Anna enjoys spending time with her friends, and often takes the lead on planning parties, gatherings, and other social events. Anna is very health-conscious, but also has a sweet tooth and likes to splurge on classy sweets and pastries for special occasions. Anna is a very busy woman and thus does not have the time or energy to put together meals and make treats herself, so she enjoys the convenience of calling local vendors to provide all of the things she needs to throw fabulous parties – including custom cakes, cupcakes, and other treats. She spends a lot of time getting ideas and inspiration from Pinterest, and follows all of her favorite local brands on Instagram. She is motivated by a desire to make her friends happy, and loves the satisfaction she gets from knowing that the parties she plans are a point of conversation. She wants to grow her local network of product vendors to include brands that share her fun-loving spirit, and is always looking for the next best thing to have at the next gathering she puts together.

### KATRINA

Katrina is 38 years old, has been happily married for 10 years, and has two children – Aiden (age 8) and Sara (age 5). Katrina is a stay-at-home mom, while her husband, Rick, works as a lobbyist in D.C., where he makes over \$125K per year. Katrina is very active in the PTA at Aiden and Sara's school, and sits on several committees dedicated to planning social events for the students and staff of the school. Katrina also likes to volunteer with local charities during her free time, including Children's Charities Foundation. Katrina is in the process of planning Sara's 6<sup>th</sup> birthday party, and is assessing different bakeries in the area to create a custom cake to make the day truly special. Since she is so active in party planning and logistics with several other organizations, she is eager to find a bakery that is easy to work with, reliable, and who shares her family values. She would like to foster an ongoing relationship with a bakery that she can keep on her roster for future events – assuming Sara's cake and party favors turn out well.

### CARRIE & JACOB

Carrie and Jacob are both 22 years old, and are finishing up their last year as seniors at Georgetown University. Lately, Carrie and Jacob have been spending a lot of time in local coffee shops and cafés

as they work on their senior theses and start studying for finals. Carrie and Jacob enjoy the vibe and ambiance of coffee shops, and don't mind spending a little extra for a good latte (as long as the Wi-Fi is free!). They are both socially active, and support causes that are near and dear to their hearts – for Carrie, that means the arts and supporting local businesses; for Jacob, that means socially conscious entrepreneurship. Carrie and Jacob consider themselves to be thought leaders amongst their peers, and are often approached by new students for recommendations on good and affordable local restaurants and cafes. Carrie and Jacob are always excited to see new restaurants opening in Georgetown, their favorite D.C. locale, and appreciate places that allow them to stay awhile and work.

## Competitors

### Georgetown Cupcake

#### STRENGTHS

- Name recognition and brand stickiness: Georgetown Cupcake currently dominates the D.C. cake and cupcake market – their name is known throughout the area, country, and even internationally.
- Celebrity owners: Sister owners Katherine Kallinis Berman and Sophie Kallinis LaMontagne not only run Georgetown Cupcake, but also star in TLC's 'DC Cupcakes,' and have authored several best-selling cupcake cookbooks.
- Nationwide locations: Georgetown Cupcake has expanded across the US, with locations in Bethesda, New York City, Boston, Los Angeles, and Atlanta.
- Product specialization and flavor variety: Georgetown Cupcake only does one thing – cupcakes! But they do them well, and they do them with pizzazz. With over 100 flavors to choose from, customers are always kept hungry and excited.

#### WEAKNESSES

- Product specialization: Customers who might be looking for other baked goods besides cupcakes won't find them here.
- Long lines: Georgetown Cupcake is so well known that they chronically suffer from long lines and extended customer wait times.
- "Girly branding": With their pink logo and décor, Georgetown Cupcake appears only to be catering to women, making it feel a little exclusive of male customers.
- Not a great place to stay awhile: Georgetown Cupcake isn't exactly a place where customers can go to "hang out" for an extended period of time.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Expansion: Georgetown Cupcake has already proven that they have a brand that resonates with cupcake aficionados. The company has also already proven that it works in markets across the US, so why stop there?

- Product extensions: Because their brand is so well known and respected, if they chose to do so, Georgetown Cupcake could easily expand their product line or cobranding efforts with minimal or no damage to their brand integrity or resonance.

## THREATS

- One product, one shot: Georgetown Cupcake's reputation hangs on the one product that they produce. If a customer has a negative experience with a Georgetown Cupcake cupcake, it is unlikely that they will give the brand another shot if there are other options available. Because they only make one product, Georgetown Cupcake has to make it truly amazing.

## Sprinkles Cupcakes

### STRENGTHS

- Growing name recognition and brand stickiness: Sprinkles has locations all over the US, and their name is well known amongst the sweet-toothed community.
- Product differentiation: Sprinkles not only makes specialty cupcakes, but also sells homemade ice cream and cookies.
- Innovation: Sprinkles is branded as the world's first cupcake bakery. The company also pioneered the cupcake ATM, which enables customers to purchase Sprinkles Cupcakes, 24/7.
- Loyalty perks: Sprinkles has a generous perks program that rewards customers at three levels. This program builds brand loyalty and encourages customers to become repeat visitors, particularly in a saturated market with little differentiation.

### WEAKNESSES

- Not as well recognized as Georgetown Cupcake – a local cult favorite.
- "Girly branding": Pink logo and storefronts appeal to women and feel a little exclusive of male customers.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Product differentiation: With their varied product variety (cupcakes, ice cream, and cookies), Sprinkles is better positioned to further expand their brand reach and offerings than other brands like Georgetown Cupcake who specialize in only one thing.

### THREATS

- Locations: With so many locations around the country, Sprinkles could potentially be at risk of losing sight of their brand values and product quality.
- Commercialization: Sprinkles is at risk of coming across as mass-produced and commercialized with the standardization of their products and flavors in all of their stores.

## Baked & Wired

## STRENGTHS

- Product differentiation and homemade feel: Baked & Wired has a large variety of baked goods available, from cakes and cupcakes to tarts and bread, and even granola. Further, Baked & Wired first and foremost has a cozy coffee shop feel – making it the closest competitor to Carol and Rebecca’s brand concept.
- Cool café vibe: Baked & Wired has a very laid back and relaxed vibe that invites customers to stay awhile and enjoy the warm coffee shop atmosphere.
- Full espresso bar featuring coffees, teas, and milks from local and regional suppliers.
- Casual, fun-loving, and cozy brand identity: Baked & Wired doesn’t take itself too seriously, which appeals to a larger audience and comes across as more approachable.

## WEAKNESSES

- Brand recognition: Baked & Wired is a local / community joint, and is not well known outside of the Georgetown and D.C. community.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- A local favorite: With its cool and casual community coffee shop atmosphere, Baked & Wired has the opportunity to become the local favorite bakery and coffee shop not only in Georgetown, but in all of D.C.
- Not as commercialized or popularized as Georgetown Cupcake: Since Baked & Wired is a local café that isn’t trying to cater to tourists or TLC fanatics, they have an opportunity to overtake the bigger players and really refine their offerings to become Georgetown’s “best kept secret.”

## THREATS

- Reliance on local and word-of-mouth marketing: Because Baked & Wired is a relatively small operation, their advertising and brand reach relies heavily on local promotions and word-of-mouth referrals.
- Potential to be overtaken by bigger players: As a small business, there is always a risk that a larger company could come in and take over Baked & Wired’s turf.

## Potential Names

1. Carol & Bec’s
2. Spelt + Spice
3. kāk
4. kāfē
5. The Spotted Cow
6. Fat Cat Cakes
7. Butter Bakery
8. JOY