

**Student#2**

**ENTP 6864**

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## **Postmortem**

My group (2), consisting of Constanzia Hooker, Jen Rupisan, Barry Rupisan, and myself used this class as an opportunity to push ourselves a little beyond our comfort zone in hopes of creating something that would actually have value to the residents of Second Life. In fairness, I'm not sure we fully realized the extent to which we were doing this but we did all agree in the beginning that we would rather push it a little then play it safe and have a product that was not new or useful.

We definitely had people that were instrumental along the way and they aided in shaping the direction we chose. JB Hancroft was extremely helpful and patient with us. He not only helped us to realize what was and was not doable, but also took time to do demonstrations and speak, in more depth, about the logistics of what we were taking on. He also introduced us to Cathy Gray, who was understanding, patient, and helpful as well. Both of their time and enthusiasm helped us to conceive and create our product. These two, along with many people from Builder's Brewery, and a lot of random encounters along the way were all very important in helping us create, develop, and launch our product.

In spite of the great amount of support available to us, I still don't think we felt ready and comfortable when we undertook the task of creating our product. I initially thought this was due to the short timeframe with which we were working but I later realized that I think this may just be a normal reaction and is probably a common feeling for entrepreneurs in the real world. I was looking at it as a static point in time where everything had to be right and ready, when in reality the entire experience was a process that we had to continually tweak and adapt to. With this new perspective, I do believe that we were adequately prepared to undertake the task, albeit perhaps slightly unaware.

## **Project**

Despite the necessity to adapt as the project and our specific product developed, we were able to keep the costs within the allotted seed money. Our actual development costs were the most expensive part of our project and may have inhibited our ability to spend more money on advertising and brand development. The increased costs for development were partly due to the short timeframe we were working with but we agreed they were fair. Focusing on financial resources on our product development forced us to get more creative in promoting our business and getting our name out there. To save money in these activities, we relied more heavily on low cost promotion methods, including self

promotion (going out and speaking to people in technology groups/circles), social media outlets, and word-of-mouth. We did have some minor expenditures on billboards and advertising but found that presenting and example and speaking about our product proved more successful.

### **Group Work**

As a whole, I believe our group worked well together and we were able to manage the requirements of the class. That having been said, there were some difficulties within the group, as there are often are in these activities, and we had to overcome these challenges, including lack of participation from some members, identifying member strengths and assigning those members to that area of the project, and managing our time as a unit versus individuals. More than anything, I learned that it is not necessarily enough to show up and do your individual parts well. The group will still need a facilitator to make sure these individual efforts are coordinated and in-line with the group efforts. Although we were all working hard and doing our parts well, we sometimes lacked a rudder, and therefore a clear direction. Despite these challenges, we were able to periodically meet as a group and pull our individual efforts into a coordinated effort.

### **Successes**

Our individual thoughts and ideas were enhanced by our group collaborations and I believe the sum of our combined ideas was greater than our individual thoughts. I believe the product we created was fairly creative and serves a real purpose for the Second Life community. The idea was not a reflection of an individual idea but the culmination of all of our thoughts combined. This was probably the most rewarding aspect of our work together and we were proud of the end result.

### **Learning Items and Areas to Improve**

Although we were pleased with our end product and collaborations, there were some areas where I believe we could have improved. We did a limited amount of market research in the beginning that helped shaped our direction and this proved vital in the end. Still, we would have benefited from assigning a group member to continue market research throughout the development of our product so that we could have appealed to a larger segment in the SL community. More specifically, I would have liked to identify the compatibility issues we had with different viewers so that we could have provided examples and made sales with individuals not using Viewer 2. Additionally, I believe we could have created the same product using less prims, which would have made our product more useful to a larger number of people.

### **The Course**

This class provided an experience beyond what many of the other entrepreneurial classes have taught me. Although this was sometimes frustrating because it did not fit neatly into

a set class schedule and required us to essentially “do whatever it takes”, it provided a more realistic example of the real world and, more specifically, of starting a business. In the past, I would have to submit write-ups on case studies and would receive a grade based on the depth of my understanding and the creativity/feasibility of my proposed solution. With this class, the process would be similar in that we would collaborate within our group and come up with a strategy or solution....and then we would realize we were completely wrong. Instead of receiving a grade based on the understanding, creativity, and feasibility of our thoughts, we would have to adapt to our failures and try new directions until we saw better results. The best example of this was when we first started trying to promote our product via billboards in high-traffic areas. We saw zero return from this and had to try new methods. In the end, we were able to take our product into areas with people interested in technology gadgets and then we saw a large increase in the amount of interest.

## **Conclusion**

This class provided an excellent “petri-dish” for developing, presenting, and revising our product and business ideas. The two largest “take-aways” for me, were:

One, in a group without a natural facilitator, we should assign someone to take a birds-eye-view of all our individual efforts. Even if this person has less individual items than the others, to make up for the extra work, it is important to have a group leader coordinating the many different parts so that nothing is accidentally omitted.

And two, make sure you are always looking at your products from the customer’s perspective. More specifically, look at it from the perspective of potential customers. We were excited and encouraged by our initial feedback and so proceeded down our path without realizing we were missing a large segment of SL by not developing in more than one viewer format. If we were doing it again, I would allow more time before our launch to test our product on multiple potential customers. If we did this, we would have identified this issue prior to launch and could have either provided it in more than one viewer or we would have at least had a better answer for those having trouble.

In the end, I believe these two items, along with all the other activities in this class, are both important things to have learned. I believe this class provided a great environment to learn these, and other items, by allowing us to actually work through the issues as legitimate entrepreneurs. For this reason, I would definitely recommend this class and would take it again, knowing what I know now.