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Business Innovation Group (BIG) News

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February 10’s BIG Café was a great success. This monthly networking event held by the Business Innovation Group (BIG) was comprised of more than 40 local entrepreneurs, students and faculty who brought energy and enthusiasm, creating a strong entrepreneurial atmosphere. Each gathered at City Campus in downtown Statesboro, enabling one another to help solve business problems by providing invaluable feedback while enjoying a delicious cup of complimentary coffee provided by Cool Beanz along with a nice addition of doughnuts.

The two presenters for BIG Café included Tina and Jeff Banks, owners of Kidovations, and Jonathan and Bob Chambers, owners of Citrusolution Carpet Cleaning. Each presented with the intent of receiving feedback from the attendees to help solve business problems. Tina Banks posed the question, “how do I leverage networking opportunities effectively when I am not the loudest voice?”

Elena McLendon, with the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority, suggested that Tina and Jeff “sponsor one of the Bulloch Recreational teams, allowing them to put [the company’s] name on the jerseys and maybe partner with Party Harbor and have an event with lots of inflatables.” Sponsoring a team will help get Kidovation’s name out there, and hosting an event will allow Tina and Jeff to interact face-to-face with the kids who may start attending Kidovations. Dusty Ziegler, owner of Dusty Zeigler Agency proposed, “Get something like a mascot that captures the culture that would be appealing to the kids as well as to adults, and use that mascot to go to events and cultivate that culture; it will take some of the burden off of you.” Other suggestions included contacting local churches to inform them on Kidovations, using social media, connecting with extroverted individuals at events so they can connect Tina and Jeff to others.

After a brief coffee break, Jonathan and Bob Chambers proposed the unique challenge, “How do we market the sale of our business?”

Fred David, owner of Minuteman Press stated, “It’s very important to put together a complete package of what you want, and be able to show a potential buyer what your cash flow is and how you justify your price.” Brian Reiss, owner of Party Harbor Inflatables, suggested, “Don’t advertise it because people may think the quality isn’t that good, and they just want out.” Other suggestions included using a broker, consider owner-financing, and looking at repeat customers to see if they have an interest in buying.
Entrepreneurs, students and faculty gathered at City Campus on Tuesday, February 16, 2016, from noon to 1:30 p.m. for the monthly Lunch ‘n’ Learn series. Sarah Horton, the instructor for this February’s Lunch ‘n’ Learn, presented the importance of good office space and available resources. Following the presentation, participants took a tour next door to see the exciting progress being made on the Business Incubator!

Upcoming Lunch ‘n’ Learn topics are

- **March 2016**: Video Marketing
- **April 2016**: Local Area Resources
- **May 2016**: Loan Acquisition
- **June 2016**: Web Design & SEO
- **July 2016**: Social Media
- **August 2016**: Growth
- **September 2016**: HR Issues
- **October 2016**: Passion & Purpose
- **November 2016**: Global Entrepreneurship Week – Topic TBD

Thank you to everyone who attended, helping make the Lunch ‘n’ Learn series a tremendous success. A special thanks to Sarah Horton for sharing her knowledge on good office space and available resources. If you would like to attend future Lunch ‘n’ Learn sessions, be sure to visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/coba/big/big-events/lunch-n-learns/ in order to reserve your spot! Lunch ‘n’ Learns are held on the third Tuesday of the month. Remember to bring your lunch when you join us!

Posted in [Events, In the News]
Entrepreneur Spotlight

March 2, 2016

Fred David’s BIG Café Success Story

Fred David attends BIG Café regularly and diligently provides invaluable feedback for fellow entrepreneurs. Fred saw the benefit of presenting at BIG Café and hopped on the train early. He decided to present at BIG Café on November 11, 2015. Fred sought out advice from local entrepreneurs at BIG Café in hopes of finding a good individual to bring on staff.

Fred David asked, “What are the avenues, and what are suggestions of places that I’m missing? Am I not asking the right questions of people to find a production person and a marketing person that could help me grow my business to the next level of where we need to be?” One suggestion included going out to different places like restaurants, for example, and watching the people actually work. Another suggestion was working with Georgia Southern University to develop an internship. Other suggestions included training replacements, looking at students from Ogeechee Tech, seeking out other mission groups and finding motivated people whom Fred could inspire.

Fred’s diligence to BIG Café paid off. After the event was over, several people went up to Fred and mentioned a young man called Taylor Genereux, a recent Georgia Southern University graphic design graduate, searching for a job. After an interview process, Fred decided to hire Taylor. Fred says, “He’s a wonderful young man; he’s been a great addition; and he’s the person I [was] looking for. So, I just wanted to say the BIG Café works.”

BIG Café can have the same impact on your business. If you want to solve a problem or issue, do not miss out on an amazing opportunity to resolve it by presenting at BIG Café! Thank you to all the local entrepreneurs, students and faculty members who make this program successful. Visit YouTube.com to watch Fred’s success story for yourself, or visit GeorgiaSouthern.edu/big/big-cafe to view each BIG Café.

Posted in Entrepreneur Spotlight, Events, In the News
Tom Szaky–Sustainability Seminar & Entrepreneur Lecture Series Speaker

March 2, 2016

Tom Szaky, co-founder and CEO of TerraCycle, will be the keynote speaker for the Center for Sustainability (CfS) and Business Innovation Group’s 2016 Sustainability and Entrepreneur Lecture Series on Thursday, April 7 at 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center.

Szaky’s company, TerraCycle, is an international leader in the collection and repurposing of post-consumer waste. On a yearly basis in more than 23 countries, the company collects and repurposes billions of pieces of waste. TerraCycle generates millions of dollars of donations for schools and charities in the process.

“As a young and well-known green entrepreneur, Tom Szaky is an excellent addition to our ongoing Sustainability Seminar series. He has completely reconceptualized ‘waste’ and has turned the repurposing of trash into a highly profitable business,” said Lissa Leege, director of the CfS.

Throughout the years, Szaky and TerraCycle have collected more than 100 awards acknowledging their work from organizations such as the Environmental Protection Agency, United Nations and the World Economic Forum. Additionally, Szaky is a well-known international public speaker, producer and star of reality television show “Human Resources,” and author of two books, Outsmart Waste and Revolution in a Battle.

“We are very excited to partner with the CfS for this year’s Entrepreneurship Lecture,” said Dominique Halaby, director of the Business Innovation Group. “Tom Szaky embodies both entrepreneurial principles and sustainable practice principles. His lecture presents us with another exciting opportunity to show our students that it’s possible to make money while making the world a ‘greener’ place.”

The Entrepreneur Lecture series was developed by the Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership as a way to showcase the entrepreneurial spirit. This lecture series plays a great role in helping to harness and grow an innovative culture in the region.
BBRED Completes Analysis for McRae-Helena

March 2, 2016

The Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED) recently completed a target industry analysis for the City of McRae-Helena to identify potential industries as attraction targets that could support the existing industrial economy in McRae-Helena and surrounding Telfair County. To find these industries, the research team examined both the industrial sectors and workforce characteristics present in the region.

The McRae-Helena leadership intends to use the findings of this analysis to pursue identified industries with potential to locate in and positively contribute to the local economy of Telfair County. As part of this analysis, the research team compared Telfair County to a grouping of contiguous counties. High growth sectors were identified within the two areas. Industries recommended to McRae-Helena that could support business growth include manufacturing, wholesale trade and transportation and warehousing sectors.

The analysis identified 11 potential sectors that could be good recruiting targets for the City of McRae-Helena. Currently, the city is taking active steps as a direct result of the BBRED study to recruit new businesses to the area. Finally, BBRED would like to thank the North American Development Bank and the GENIE program for financially supporting this research project.

Posted in In the News, Research