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Robert Perkins and The High West Distillery

September 20, 2011

On September 16th, Robert Perkins came to Georgia Southern University to share the amazing story of a persistent entrepreneur that risked everything to achieve his entrepreneurial dream of creating great Rocky Mountain Whiskey. As the world’s only ski-in distillery, this western-saloon inspired organization is part of a liquor market that earns about $38 billion globally. The case focused on the fact that David Perkins knew absolutely nothing about the creation of fine whiskey in the beginning, but after apprenticing in Kentucky and Scotland for intensive periods of study, and two years writing his business plan, he was finally ready to make the agonizingly difficult decision of the exact location. Readers of the case are then left with the cliff-hanger to decide what would be the optimal choice for a distillery attempting to achieve success in such a competitive but lucrative market.

In attendance were academic professionals and PhD students attempting to gain insight on how to write and teach cases. Robert Perkins emphasized that today’s students must learn through doing, but since it is an intellectual world where students are sometimes spoon-fed knowledge it is up to the professors to build self-efficacy in their students to be successful in their teachings. Professors praised the idea of cases with a focus on an entrepreneurial effort as they allow readers to consider the ambiguity of real life situations, and learn that there is not always a correct answer.

Dr. Perkins went on to highlight some suggestions for those who would like to venture out on writing a case. He stated that picking a topic that would interest not only the reader, but the writer as well is the optimal route as many hours will be spent on investigative journalism and so one’s interest in the subject is crucial in order to make it a successful and intelligent piece of work. He went on to explain that highly controversial stories with a great narrative drive tend to be the most popular among readers. But he reminds them to remember to always “write the facts and imply theory” so that the case can be free of any writer bias to ensure that it is as accurate as possible so that it can be a great teaching tool.

Furthermore, after the valuable insight was provided, Dr. Perkins then gave away very fashionable Highwest T-shirts, a hat, and provided Dr. Luke Pittaway with two uniquely hand-blown High West “Sippin’ Glasses”. He then went on to enlighten the group about the science behind pairing whiskies with different food items, and allowed the entire group to taste test the High West Double Rye, which was noted by the Sourmash Manifesto as being “superb/outstanding”, with chocolate. The pairing was nothing short of amazing and brought a fantastic closing to an enlightening lecture.

About Robert Perkins

Dr. Robert Perkins is a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Stetson School of Business and Economics, Mercer University in Atlanta where he teaches: Entrepreneurship; Ethical Leadership; Leadership; Team Dynamics; International Business; Human Resource Management; and Organizational Behavior. Dr. Robert Perkins founded Corporate Psychology in 1982 as a consulting firm to serve senior management. His expertise has been sought for his ability to deliver executive coaching, team excellence, and organizational performance programs by prestigious organizations worldwide. Dr. Perkins has led broad organizational psychology consultation to management—including executive selection and coaching, business strategy and structure expertise, survey-based team development, and performance management skills training—in a number of positions with Rohrer, Hibler and Replogle, Hay Associates,
and NCR Corporation. Dr. Perkins has also served as Chief of the Psychology Service at Fitzsimons Army Hospital. He has taught at the university level in the MBA programs of Wright State University (Organization Behavior) and University of Colorado (Leadership) and at the undergraduate level at the University of Dayton and Denver University. Dr. Perkins received his BA in Psychology from Kent State University; his MS in Clinical Psychology from Ohio State University; and his Ph.D. in Organizational Psychology from Colorado State University. His doctoral dissertation explored Leadership Style and Organizational Performance.
The Applied Small Business Management Class is working to increase foot traffic and awareness of the many businesses that downtown Statesboro has to offer as well as to provide consulting services to the businesses in that area.

The first business the group is working with is Reboot with Rob Wilkerson who is the first entrepreneur to join the new E-Zone in the Downtown Statesboro City Campus. His company is in the startup phase and our group is setting out to help him create a business plan and work towards spreading “PC happiness” to the people of Statesboro.

Reboot supplies customers a variety of services for PCs including increasing the speed of problem computers to providing hard drive and memory installations, data recovery and more. Rob has set to help other small businesses and private individuals improve their overall PC experience and efficiency at a reasonable price.

By Jennifer Lumia