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The Breaking of the Chain has Begun

May 7, 2013

Written by: Justin Hess

This semester the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority handed the task of trying to bring Georgia Southern students to the downtown area to a group of entrepreneurship students. It was the first attempt by students to try and promote the historical area and overall it has been successful. Awareness of downtown is lacking very much so with the students. I can personally vouch for this because prior to the project I wasn't aware of all the establishments' downtown had to offer. The group decided to hand out loyalty cards as a tracking device to monitor our progress along with an aggressive marketing approach to get the student bodies attention. As the group started out they quickly became of how big of a task they had before us.

We quickly handed out nearly 1000 cards in the first month along with hundreds of flyers that described our project and had a detailed map of downtown Statesboro with each location labeled. As we talked to each student that approached our tables the react was similar what are these places and I had no idea they even existed. After explaining to all the students we encountered what our project was they seemed pretty interested in it and what we were trying to accomplish. Once we had tables in various locations for a number of weeks we had students coming up to us saying oh you guys are that breaking the chain group about downtown. While that isn't exactly the full description of our project at least we had gotten their attention. In addition to telling students about the program we had to communicate with the restaurants about our ideas and work with them to monitor the success rate. Then we went digital, creating a Facebook page and twitter account for Breaking the Chain. On these accounts we constantly were posting information about what we were offering and the prizes we had for participating. We had prizes for getting a certain number of stamps by a certain date, then another for people posting pictures of themselves at the restaurants on the list. Through the first couple of months we really reached out to people.

Now that the semester is coming to an end we are starting to tally some of the metrics we kept as we progressed. Throughout the semester we reached out and made legitimate impressions to nearly 10,000 people. There are only 20,000 students on campus which means that in just one semester we were able to reach half the campus and inform them about the downtown area. Downtown now crosses students mind when they are looking for food and entertainment, which was the goal. The name of our group is "break the chain" which in itself explains the goal and the accomplishment.