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Howard Brothers gain traction with ProjectMQ

June 15, 2016



Marcus and Malcolm Howard have been working on their gaming production company since 2013 when they were still taking classes at Georgia Southern. Though the brothers are still working full-time jobs elsewhere, they've continued to work on and grow ProjectMQ and have gained traction over the past year.

ProjectMQ is a global community for indie game studios and fans. The Howards are building an exclusive application that gives users the opportunity to enjoy high-definition multimedia from top indie games worldwide. The ProjectMQ site (www.projectmq.com) has been live for over six months now, garnering worldwide users from over 40 countries. The site pulls together and catalogs multiple types of gaming media in one place.

The hard work the Howard brothers have been putting into their platform is beginning to pay off. They have been entering competitions, networking and marketing, and pitching to investors. Just last November, Project MQ was a top non-finalist in Richard Branson's 2015 Extreme Tech Challenge. They also won the first Hatch House Open business competition this year, which included a cash prize of \$5000 for the business. The ProjectMQ Twitter page was also recently ranked by the social intelligence platform, Klear, in the top .5% of all social media users generating over six million impressions just this year.

We are excited to hear that great things are happening for these determined Georgia Southern Entrepreneurial Alums and are looking forward to more exciting updates in the near future as ProjectMQ continues to grow.

My Year in Enactus

June 15, 2016

A letter from the outgoing President of Enactus, Ryan Murchland

Over the past two years I have had the privilege to call myself the President of Enactus at Georgia Southern. What started as an organization that was just plopped into my lap became my responsibility as well as the responsibility of three others to revamp.

With no clue as to what Enactus stood for or what the purpose of the organization was, we began doing research to see what we could find on the history of the organization. After learning that it was an entrepreneurial organization that focused on making a sustainable impact on the community by using entrepreneurial actions, I thought what a way to make a name for myself as well as an opportunity to meet people in the community. Little did I know that this was only one of a few things that I would learn in this organization.

After spending a good bit of the fall semester trying to make an inactive organization active again, having to write up a constitution and bylaws, and attending numerous workshops required by the University in 2014, we were finally an active chapter. This allowed us to apply for funding through the University as well as use the numerous resources that the University had to offer. We then conducted our first kick-off meeting which brought out approximately 25 students. We were successful in retaining about eight of the 25 and ended the semester with a team of about eight in all. We spent most of the first year creating relationships with people in the community, trying to grow our brand and making people aware of what Enactus at Georgia Southern did, as well as trying to find projects to work on.

The very first lesson I learned as an entrepreneur was a pivot. A pivot is defined as the actions you take in creating a modified plan when your original plan falls through. After having two projects fall through after months of work, and after spending countless hours on these projects for a competition we hoped to participate in, my motivation was deflated as was my confidence in myself as a leader. Without a project to take to competition, I felt that everything I had worked for just went down the drain.

I should also emphasize (if you haven't picked up already) how much of a competitor I am. I played sports throughout my entire life and I HATE losing. This characteristic has carried over in everything I do. After sitting down with Dr. Stewart, the advisor at the time, and listening to him tell me that we weren't going to be able to compete, the news absolutely ripped my heart out. Everything I spent a year working on in trying to revamp a dying organization, recruit new members, learn what exactly this organization was all about, how to put together a successful presentation for competition, find projects to work on and loads of other things — the last thing I wanted to hear was that it wasn't good enough for competition. That doesn't mean that the work wasn't high quality, it just meant that we didn't have the funds to go to St. Louis and be a competitor to other schools. It would have been an embarrassment if we went.

I didn't let that stop me, though. I scheduled a mock presentation where we made our own presentation in front of local entrepreneurs as well as professors so they could give us feedback and we could grow the next year. Fast forward to this past year, with a year of leadership under my belt and after losing

four seniors going into this school year, we were back at square one trying to recruit a team for Enactus. We were able to build to a team of 12, and ended with a group of seven.

This time we were able to find projects to work on and actually make a difference. Enactus helped to increase profits nearly 350 percent for the Humane Society at their comedy event. We helped underprivileged individuals find jobs and grow in their current positions with the re-launch of SUITS, and we created our first gaming tournament. We finally had what we needed to go to competition for the FIRST time in four years.

We went to our regional tournament not knowing what to expect. After putting together what we felt was a flawless presentation, we were announced as a regional champion. This meant that we would be going to our FIRST NATIONAL COMPETITION. We recently returned from the national competition, and although we didn't win, we learned so much to make our organization even more successful and learned how to grow in the future. This is the Enactus part of being a President.

What did I learn as a President of Enactus? If I really wrote about all that I learned, this paper would be about as long as Webster's Dictionary. Just to cover some of the basics, I learned that communication is very important, networking yourself and what you stand for is crucial. I learned that I'm not always right, failure isn't always as bad as we tend to think it is, advisors are like your mothers because they always tend to be right, heated debates mean that you're learning something or very close to learning, people will let you down, people will also make you look a lot better than you deserve.

I learned how to develop partnerships, how to create sustainable projects, how to use entrepreneurial skills to help our community be a better place, how to be a leader, how to be a role model, how to be a business partner and how to be a mentor to younger students. These are just a few.

Without this organization, I don't know where I would be as a businessperson or a leader. Thanks to this organization and the advisors and mentors of this program. I am proud to say that this has helped me gain employment with State Farm where I will start training to become an entrepreneur. I will be training to open my own State Farm branch where I will be my own boss and will be responsible for start-up costs and managing it all. I cannot thank Dr. Stewart, Dr. Halaby and of course Mrs. Hallman enough for the real-world business skills you taught me and have instilled in me. I am forever grateful for that.

As for the incoming President and Presidents to come, I hope you learn twice as much as I did. The resources are there. It's just about how hungry you are to learn about what the real world has to teach you. As I reminisce on the past two years, I had a blast and wish I could stick around one more year to go win a National Title with this group. I have been blessed to meet the hardest working students at Georgia Southern, and I look forward to hearing about all the success to come.