***MKT301 Winter 2015Borderless Classroom Assignment Thompson Brothers Bar Be Que***

As a part of the final exam for MKT 301, WI, 2015, I developed a comprehensive project in which students collaborated to create a marketing campaign for the expansion of a Cobb Parkway business, Thompson Brothers Bar Be Que (TBBBQ).

With minimal marketing, TBBBQ established a business serving BBQ and down-home recipes located on Cobb Parkway, Smyrna, GA,11 years ago. As emerging economic opportunities south of Fulton County and near the Hartsfield-Jackson airport began to unfold, their dream to open a second location and to expand it into a sports bar and entertainment venue was becoming more of a reality.

One of the owners approached me requesting a class project to create a marketing campaign that will be used to establish and execute an add-on business under the TBBBQ umbrella. In January 2015, the marketing campaign for TBBBQ was incorporated into the syllabus and the borderless marketing project began.

The first week of the MKT 301, 2015, class, one of the TBBBQ owner’s presented to the class the history, the vision, and the future of the new business. The students were divided into three groups and asked a plethora of questions relevant to their group’s project.

The next 7 weeks the MKT class work included theory, case studies, philosophies and exercises from the text book. In week 7, class was held in the restaurant. Students witnessed first-hand TBBBQ customer service, catering, eat-in, and take-out business, Business to Business (B2B) and their POS system. Above all, they enjoyed the interaction with the customers, exposure to business at its peak lunch hour and sampling the food.

Several weeks later, the students created a written proposal, a Power Point presentation and a mock website. The students photographed the food and themselves at the restaurant which were used in the mock website. In addition, they created a “customer experience” tab on the website taping audio in their own voice, lamenting about the business.

The element I enjoyed most is the expressions on students’ faces as they witnessed how an established business works. Additionally, Anthony Maxwell, Women’s Basketball coach, joined us for this portion of the borderless class.

Following in-class practice sessions and group collaboration, the last week of class the owner returned to the classroom to see the final presentation. We were also joined by other Life University, staff, faculty, and deans. The three guest served as judges, evaluating individual and group presentations. The final presentation left the owners speechless. The word they used was Awesome!.

The owner was extremely grateful for the marketing plan and suggested that when they have the grand opening of the new business, he would like to invite the class to join in on the festivities.

Recently, I visited TBBBQ and they are slowly implementing some of the suggestions made by the students (purchased a new POS system).

Although I imagined a borderless classroom, this was my first venture with an existing business. Feedback from the students proved that the risk was worth the rewards.