Social Microentrepreneurship in Belize

FLOWER OF ST. THERESE: A CASE STUDY

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PROBLEM

Flower of St. Therese is in its inception stage. Key strategies need to be formulated to ensure that the company will be a strong entrant into Belize's cut flower market.





The entrepreneurs: Inaldi Cardona and Zorena Obando.

POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS

- Belizeans buy flowers for weddings, Valentine's Day, Quinceaneras, funerals, birthdays, and as church offerings
- Restaurants, banks, and government buildings
- Hotels and resorts for destination weddings

THE COMPANY: FLOWER OF ST. THERESE

Flower of St. Therese is a small cut flower retailer based in San Ignacio, Belize. The company is a social enterprise that will provide workplace training for women in the community who were victims of domestic violence. The company's co-founders are not ambitious for immediate growth or high profitability. However, the co-founders need to take the right steps to ensure that Flower of St. Therese will be a viable business.

THE ENTREPRENEURS

- Company co-founded by sisters Inaldi Cardona and Zorena Obando.
- Inaldi will be the executive manager of Flower of St. Therese and will facilitate the launch of the business by providing a percentage of initial funding, forming relationships with suppliers, planning long-term growth strategies, and creating marketing strategies.
- Zorena will be the operations manager, and be responsible for designing the flower arrangements, supervising staff, and making day-to-day management decisions.
- Zorena is trained in art but neither Inaldi nor Zorena have a technical background in storing, maintaining, or cultivating flowers.



Flowers on sale at a market in Melchor, Guatemala, a potential supply source for Flower of St. Therese.



Sample bouquets made by Flower of St. Therese.

CHALLENGES

- Small and stagnant economy
- Two small but established competitors in the region
- Uncertainty about which products to promote: "American-style" imported flowers or locally sourced tropical flowers
- Limited time, resources, and expertise

PRODUCT OPTIONS

American-style flowers

- Roses, lilies, carnations, daisies
- Must be purchased and picked up in Mexico or Guatemala
- Requires a $US 35 import permit from the Belize Agricultural Health Authority for every border crossing
- Purchase price from suppliers is more than 2X the price of local flowers

Tropical Belizean flowers

- Gingers, Heliconias, Lobster claw heliconias, Anthuriums
- 8 local suppliers in the San Ignacio region
- Average price is approximately $US 4/dozen

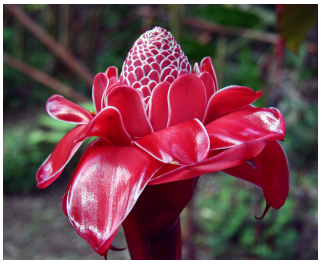
COMPETITORS

Roberta Rose

- Runs business out of home in San Ignacio
- Services are highly demanded
- Most customers request arrangements with American-style flowers
- Willing to provide arrangements to meet any budget
- Free delivery

Vienna Bloom

- Small business owner in Belmopan (1 hour from San Ignacio)
- Uses both imported and native Belizean flowers
- Customers are based primarily in Belmopan, but also serves customers in San Ignacio and Belize city
- Provides mixed arrangements using both imported and native Belizean flowers





Heliconias cultivated by tropical flower suppliers in Belize.

CONSUMER PRODUCT PREFERENCES

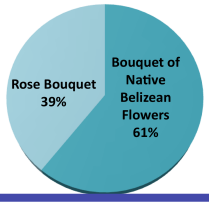
A market research survey asked Belizeans to choose between a bouquet of roses and a bouquet of tropical flowers of equal value:



OR



Consumer Preferences



NEXT STEPS

1. Capacity Building: Inaldi and Zorena should seek training in professional floral design and cultivation. This would allow them to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the types of flowers that would work best for their arrangements as well as how to care for flowers. Training would help Inaldi and Zorena understand how to make more sophisticated flower arrangements than what is currently available in Belize to obtain an edge in the market.

2. Choose one of the following project offering strategies:

A) Sell only arrangements of imported flowers

B) Sell arrangements of both imported and Belizean local flowers

C) Sell Belizean flowers with the long-term vision of changing consumer preferences.

3. Marketing Strategies: Capitalize on social networks and advertise widely using flyers, social media, newspaper, radio, television. Partner with local domestic violence shelter to advertise social enterprise aspect. Set up a stall in the San Ignacio Saturday market.

REFERENCES

Belize Trade and Investment Development Service, About Capacity Building. *Beltraide*. Available at: http://www.belizeinvest.org.bz/about%20capacity.html [Accessed December 17, 2010].

World Bank, 2011. Belize. *Data*. Available at: http://data.worldbank.org/country/belize [Accessed April 4, 2011].

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