COUPONS FOR A CAUSE

GUMBALL CHALLENGE: TEAM #4
Alia Sani, Jimmy Doll, Charles Halverson, & Krista Opsahl-Ong
What We Did

- **Our Motivation:** find something low-cost that Duke students would be interested in buying.
  - Can’t be something too big, has to be something small
  - An impulse buy--FOOD

- **Our Idea:** Cheaper Off-Campus Food
  - Approached a large number of off-campus food vendors and asked if they could donate coupons or gift cards for us to re-sell, benefitting Grameen America
  - Collectively visited over 20 vendors
  - Sold coupons and gift cards to students throughout the day of our event
Entrepreneurial Thinking

• Low-Cost, zero investment other than time

• Promotes local food vendors in addition to Grameen America

• Several iterations – experienced failure
  ○ Over 50% of vendors we contacted turned us down
  ○ Contacted/visited with Duke Dining to add an on-campus component
  ○ Started with the idea of “Coupon Packs”
  ○ Worked with a constantly evolving idea

• Adapting to new conditions
Team Skills

● **Interpersonal skills**— needed to approach vendors and sell this event to them

● **Innovate as we went**— when our first method of sales did not work we had to modify in order to be successful

● **Deferred judgement when brainstorming**— we came up with over ten ideas on how to make money and kept an open mind about each choice, finally agreeing on a final decision

● **Familiarity with our networks**— we each advertised members of our varying affiliations and their contributions proved to be a huge component of our revenue
What Worked and What Didn’t

What worked:

- Reaching out to our networks
- Advertising on social media
  - Gumball Challenge FB Group
  - Yik Yak
  - Snapchat
  - GroupMe
  - Listservs
- Explaining the dual goal of promoting economic growth in Bangladesh and supporting local Durham businesses
Social media Examples!
What worked and what didn’t work

What didn’t work:

- Approaching some vendors:
  - Turned down by more than half of vendors we contacted
    - Sushi love, Local Yogurt, Nosh…
  - Constantly being deferred to managers/owners
  - Unresponsive to follow-up emails and phone calls
- Selling at the bus stop
  - Sold few donuts and coffee, but no coupons
  - Incessant rain hindered our productivity
**Learning Experience**

- After experiencing failure we learned how to make a quick turnaround and utilize the resources we had available
  - Donuts
  - Networks/affiliations
  - Social media
- Learned how to approach third party vendors
  - Grameen America
  - Increase businesses’ clientele
- Several iterations and extreme frustration made for eventual success!
FINANCIALS

Total profit: $194

Expenses: $0 (only time)

All coupons and gift cards were donated at zero cost and sold for a fraction of the cost to event participants.
Coupons For a Cause

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