**Business Plan**

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**Executive Summary**

Our food truck was created on the basis of surveying the Island for available food options, we know generally speaking that it is a beach town, and a majority of the food options revolve around seafood, we were also able to find other offerings such as Italian and Asian options, as well as America diners and fast food restaurants. With a food truck simplicity was also in mind, we felt that breakfast options were lacking, and one thing that several of us tend to enjoy when we go to the beach are acai bowls, and we could not find any of these on Chincoteague, from there development began. Our goal with our menu was to be simplistic, we essentially have the bowls which we will offer in two sizes, and various toppings to make it your own, and that is our signature dish. As for beverages we have classic breakfast staples, orange juice and coffee, as well as smoothies that utilize some of the same topping ingredients found in our bowls. We utilized a survey as we found it would be widespread and effective in order to gather data from a large pool quickly,

**Company Description**

Our food truck is named Acai You Later. We are located on Chincoteague Island in Virginia. We came up with that name as a clever play on words with acai and “see”. We got our motivation after seeing the local business Ekiben take off and have so much success that they opened another location that is already flourishing. Acai bowls are known as a superfood due to the abundance of vitamins and nutrients that it contains. We pride ourselves on providing the local area with an option of whole grain, whole foods, vegan, and organic options that will help our customers who cultivate a healthy food choice surrounded by unhealthy foods such as pizza. We will work with local farmers and that will ensure that we will know what farming practices they use. We want our farmers to grow with the environment in mind and that is a big reason why we want to know the farmers who supply our food to see if they care about the environment as much as us.

**Market Analysis/Market research**

After conducting our research into a small pool of local Maryland residents, specifically regarding the types of foods, dietary restrictions, drinks, food service, and opinions towards acai bowls alongside whether these potential customers would be willing to be enticed by Acai You Later, a food truck based off of acai bowls, we have determined a significant amount of information. Approximately forty percent of respondents would like us to possess cold drinks, i.e. smoothies, orange juice, etc., and small sweet snacks, i.e. chocolates, candies, etc. Furthermore, approximately twenty percent of respondents would prefer us to have some form of small savory snacks such as chips, fries, etc. This information will assist us in determining what form/sorts of products we will be stocking in our food truck. Moving forward, 100% of respondents prefer the foods that we provide to be organic versus only twenty percent preferring locally sourced meat, seafood, and food produces. This was a big indicator to us that the services that we provide should be fully organic in nature. Followed by this, approximately 60% of all respondents prefer the items to contain no preservatives, artificial growth hormones, and to be gluten-free, which we had expected to be the case considering the location of the food truck, Chincoteague Island in Virginia. When marketing specifically acai bowls, forty percent of respondents are neutral towards the idea of ordering take-out food from an acai bowl shop, versus the rest of the respondents equally strongly agreeing and disagreeing with the idea of ordering take-out from the shop. This is a bit conflicting with the outside market and business research that we have organized detailing that outdoor and local/community-oriented businesses work well towards Chincoteague Island consumers, however it was within the margin of error that was predicted and adjustments to either the station that we are located at or the business itself can be made.

Furthermore, seventy percent of respondents of our survey agree with the statement, “Do you enjoy acai bowls?” versus twenty-five percent of respondents disagreeing with the above statement. Along with this gathered information, equally eighty-percent of respondents would be willing to take an interest in a food truck that is selling acai bowls, with only one respondent stating that they would like to see the menu items before taking an interest. These points only reinforce our attitude about starting a food truck business, specifically serving acai bowls to our customers.

**Organization and Management**

Our business, Acai You Later, located on Chincoteague Island in Virginia, is an acai bowl business where we offer a variety of acai bowls and also allow bowls to be made specifically to the customers specifications. The organization and management of this business is key to the success of our work. Managing our staff will be critical since it is a food truck business. It is estimated and eventually fully planned to be around 2-4 people within and around the food truck at all times preparing the food, serving to customers, and marketing ourselves at the location wherever we may be parked. The food delivery aspect, once the food truck itself is running low on food, will be delivered via various local and outsourced food companies that will refrigerate the truck, restock our supplies, and focus on maintaining our overall food quality. Furthermore, to further market ourselves we will focus on two main aspects, marketing ourselves on social media alongside handling and participating in local community-driven events and partnering with other local businesses and creating an innovative and supportive environment whilst also gaining community support as well. These events with other local businesses will be planned and logistically resolved via the businesses themselves in a combined effort. Overall, all relevant business inquiries and logistical efforts will be resolved internally with our local staff on-site and those who are working from afar (if applicable).

**Service or Product line**

Our group has decided to do a food truck that is named Acai You Later. We decided on this idea due to the lack of breakfast options and the lack of an Acai bowl restaurant. We plan on having Acai bowls in small or large sizes that give customers the option to make their own bowls as our signature dish. We plan on using fresh ingredients for the food truck that include granola/oats that are organic and whole grain. We plan on having fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers that use organic growing practices to ensure that our customers receive quality food that is locally grown. We plan on cultivating relationships with local farmers to ensure that customers get what is advertised. Greens such as kale, string beans, and broccoli will be included in our menu.

The drinks that we will be including with our food dishes will be organic fresh squeezed orange juice that is squeezed as the order is placed. The orange juice drink sizes will range from small to very large. Our coffee drinks that we offer will be from high quality coffee beans that will have a decaf option for people who wish to have their coffee without the jitters that caffeine can bring some people. The coffee sizes will range from small to very large because it is important to provide adequate coffee sizes as a breakfast focused establishment. Our smoothies are another big part of our drink selection and will be offered as two different options. Strawberry banana will include chopped up organic bananas with toppings that the customer wants to add. They can add oats/granolas, vegetables, and even some desert options. The different variations of the smoothies will help people who want a smoothie for a desert, or some people who want a smoothie as a healthy alternative to a food dish to keep them full.

**Marketing and Sales**

As a business, it is important to let your customers be aware of the many aspects of your business. Many marketing strategies can really attract a diverse group of individuals, which will then create a sense of community. First, it is critical that we create a website that anyone can look up on any search engine for success. Additionally, we will ensure that it can be accessible and compatible on mobile devices because most online traffic is established. Our website would incorporate our information, menu, location, and scheduling.

Second, we will utilize directory platforms and social networking websites, such as Yelp and Google Review, to make ourselves known to others since many people use those platforms to find places to eat. Having such user-friendly websites with our business location would increase the reach of our business.

Third, we will create an online presence on all social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and more. Throughout, we would be posting about the events occuring every week for our followers to be aware of what location and time we would be serving our delicious acai bowls. Like Ekiben, not only will we post weekly updates on events that we will cater, but we will be posting relatable, trendy, and funny content to entertain our audience.

Finally, we would attend or host any event, like fundraisers, live music concerts, community gatherings, and more. Not only would it benefit us by sharing our custom delicious acai bowls for others to enjoy, it would benefit others to get together and build a community. They would be able to socialize with many individuals and can possibly create lasting friendships while eating our great food.

On our opening day, we will give an affordable discount to our customers. With all of our extra unopened ingredients that we would buy locally, we will donate them to food banks and charities; we will help those in need and provide food to workers who provide great services, such as volunteers and health care workers free of cost. We hope that all of our marketing strategies would get us press and included into the local news, and from there it could make our diverse community even bigger.

**How will you make your business stand out?**

Our main stand out point is the food offerings, we believe we are the first on Chincoteague to offer Acai, and that is what we are building around. Additionally, since it is an opportunity for customers to make their own bowl based on their preferences, it would most likely gain attention. Also, we plan on contacting several neighborhood HOAs (HomeOwners Association) and discuss whether we can establish an event dedicated to our food truck for their respective neighborhood. If they agree, they will not only inform their neighborhood with filers, but present it on their social media page, which will be a potential double benefit.

**Appendix**

**Market Research:**

Our menu consists of Acai bowls that are offered in two sizes small or large, they are fully customizable and we have various topping options that can really make it your own, these options include various fruits such as strawberries and blueberries, greens such as kale, as well as granola and oats, we also offer various beverages such as orange juice, coffee, and various fruit smoothies such as strawberry banana, and blueberry.

**Marketing Materials:**

Marketing wise the most critical aspect to us would be a good website, where people can view important information about us, such as the menu, location, scheduling, etc. We would also like to use social media in order to build a community based following, we would use all popular social media platforms in order to do so. Another big one for us would be review sites such as Google reviews, and Yelp, we feel in a town that gets a lot of tourism, people are not familiar with all the options so something highly rated on these sites would attract more customers ultimately, perhaps we could offer a promotion for those who leave us a review, at the same time we want transparency in our reviews so we would respond to anyone who had an issue with or bad experience with our truck.

**Disaster Plan:**

As for a disaster plan, there are numerous things that could potentially go wrong, such as a shortage of necessary ingredients or materials, large price increases on materials, and lack of sufficient help. Two things we have learned from the pandemic is the importance of food safety, and touchless payment options, these are two things that we would implement on a regular basis, in order to have people feel more comfortable buying food from our truck.

As for a shortage of materials, we plan to use mostly local ingredients and materials where we can, in order to keep cost down and support the local community, however in the event that there are shortages or large price increases, none of our ingredients are rare, in fact we can get them almost anywhere, so we would determine the next logical backup stop for ingredients whether it be a grocery store, or another supplier, as for price we want the product to dictate the price, if the truck builds a large enough following, we can reduce or adjust prices to combat any form of inflation and still make sales with customers who understand why there may have been an increase or vice versa. If it came to a lack of help, we essentially have our menu minimal enough that one person alone could potentially run the truck if it came down to it, preparation time is minimal if we prepare in advance, another option would be to adjust working hours to a greater number to accommodate for less help, that way we can spend time in advance preparing things in order to be able to efficiently pump out customer orders.

**CI Research:**

| **AJ’s on the Creek** | * Seafood * Vegetarian Dishes * Beef * Poultry * Biscuits * Salads |
| --- | --- |
| **Asian Express** | * Chinese Food * Beef * Chicken * Shrimp * Rice * Vegetables * Soup * Take-out available |
| **Auntie Anne’s** | * Pretzels * Pretzel Hot Dogs * Pretzel Nuggets * Take-out available |
| **Backyard Firepit** | * Barbecue * Sandwiches * Ribs * Meats * Beans * Soups * Bread |
| **Beach Road Round Up** | * Breakfast Sandwiches * Breakfast Burritos * Breakfast Platters * Omelets * Quesadilla * Bowl * Burgers * Classic Chicken * Hot Dogs |
| **Better.** | * Food Truck * Soup * Salad * Snacks * Sandwiches * Shrimp * Pasta * Grits |
| **Bill’s Prime Seafood & Steaks** | * Seafood * Steaks * Soups |
| **BYOC - Build Your Own Cookie** | * Homemade Cookies * Ice Cream Flavors * Sundaes * Various toppings available * Other misc items. |
| **Captain Zach’s Seafood** | * Seafood * Chicken * Soups * Tacos * Quesadilla * Sandwiches * Delivery available. * Take-out available |
| **Chincoteague Diner & Restaurant** | * Burgers * Sandwiches * Salads |
| **Don's Seafood Restaurant** | * Seafood * Soup * Salads * Vegetarian Dishes * Take-out available |
| **Etta’s Channel Side Restaurant** | * Seafood * Salads * Chips * Take-out available |
| **Famous Pizza & Sub Shop** | * Pizza * Cheesesteaks * Seafood * Pastas * Salads * Gyros * Take-out available |
| **Having a Meltdown** | * Grilled Cheese * Sandwiches |
| **Island Creamery** | * Ice Cream |
| **Island Dawg** | * Hot Dogs * Tater Tots |
| **J&B Cold Cuts** | * Sandwiches * Take-out available |
| **Ledo Pizza** | * Pizza * Salads * Subs * Calzones * Pitas * Gyros * Take-out available |
| **Lily’s Little Mexico** | * Mexican Food * Tacos * Fajitas * Burritos * Quesadillas |
| **Liz’s Devil Dawg’s** | * Hot Dogs |
| **Maria’s Family Restaurant** | * American Restaurant * Pizza * Subs * Fried Chicken * Italian Dishes * Salads * Seafood |
| **McDonald’s** | * Fast Food * Burgers * Fries |
| **Mister Whippy** | * Ice Cream * Milkshakes |
| **Mr. Baldy’s Family Restaurant** | * Seafood * Soups * Salads |
| **Pico Taqueria** | * Mexican Food * Tacos * Fajitas * Burritos * Quesadillas |
| **Sandy Pony Donuts** | * Donuts |
| **Sea Star Cafe** | * Sandwiches * Soups * Salads * Take-out available |
| **Steamer’s - All You Can Eat** | * Seafood |
| **Steve’s II Express** | * Deli * Take-out available |
| **Subway** | * Subs * Sandwiches |
| **The Marina Restaurant** | * American Food * Pizza * Soups * Salads * Sandwiches |
| **The Reel Eel** | * Seafood |
| **The Ropewalk** | * Seafood * Salads * Soups |
| **The Village** | * Seafood * Soups * Salads * Pasta * Steak |
| **Woody’s Serious Food** | * Barbecue |

**Resources:**

<https://www.chincoteague.com/restaurants.html>

<https://www.chincoteaguechamber.com/dining-chincoteague-island/>

**Direct Research Methods:**

* **Surveys**
* Questionnaires
* Focus Groups
* In-depth Interviews

For our use case, we decided a survey would be the best direct research method because we can gather information from a large pool quickly. We do not need anything in-depth; we are most curious in what people would like to see food options on the island, as well as if we were to use this regarding our potential idea. We could ask if this is something they would like to see, as well as questions about the offerings, a questionnaire would also be a viable option; however, surveys are generally shorter and more about pooling smaller amounts of data from a larger group, rather than focusing more on individual answers. This will allow us to use statistics to understand potential clientele better.

**Currently on CI:**

* Seafood
* Italian
* Asian
* Fast food

**Possible Themes:**

* Acai Bowl - possible menu, bowl with various toppings, smoothies, juices, coffee
* Breakfast Bakery

**Final Theme:** Acai Bowl

**Name:** Acai You Later

**Menu:**

* Bowls (Small or Large)
  + Make your own
  + 1 Fruit Base to Choose From:
    - Blueberry $3.00
    - Strawberry $3.00
    - Banana $3.00
  + Topping Options (Can Choose 3 Fruits, 1 Greens, and 1 Granola/Oats):
    - Fruits (Strawberries, Blueberries, etc.)

- Blueberry $3.00

- Strawberries $3.00

- Bananas $3.00

- Kiwis $3.00

* + - Greens (Kale, etc.)

- Kale $3.00

- Spinach $3.00

* + - Granola/Oats $3.00
* Drinks
  + Orange Juice $3.00
  + Coffee $2.00
  + Smoothies $6.00
    - Strawberry Banana
    - Blueberry

**Questionnaire:**

1. Which types of food items do you often buy from vendors/food trucks/

○ Cold drinks (smoothies, orange juice, etc)

○ Small savory snacks (chips, fries, etc.)

○ Small sweet snacks (chocolate, candy, etc.)

○ The main dish they offer (hot dog from a hot dog stand)

Other:

1. When buying food items, what aspects are most important to you? (Check all that apply)

○ Locally sourced meat seafood

○ Locally sourced food produce

○ Organic

○ Gluten-free

○ No artificial growth hormones

○ No preservations

Other:

1. Faster service with fewer menu items is more important than a larger menu with slower service.

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

1. I would rather take-out food from an acai bowl shop.

○ Strongly Disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neutral

○ Agree

○ Strongly Agree

1. Do you enjoy acai bowls?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Other:

1. Non-dairy options, like oat milk, almond milk, and coconut milk would be great in an acai bowl menu?

○ Strongly Agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Disagree

○ Strongly Disagree

1. Do you have any dietary restrictions? (Check all that apply)

○ Vegetarian

○ Vegan

○ Kosher

○ Halal

○ Gluten-free

○ None

○ Other:

1. Would you be interested in a food truck that is selling acai bowls

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

○ Other:

1. What food options would you like to see or be interested in? (Short Answer)

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