Date: 28th July 2023

To CityStudio Vancouver, SFU and the City of Vancouver

From TAE RW 5 student Group B

Subject： Service-Learning project proposal

Project： Penguin Rewards

**Introduction:**

We started the Penguin Rewards project to create a positive impact on our community by supporting local businesses, encouraging a green recovery, and fostering healthier lifestyles while addressing the challenges faced by small, neighbourhood retailers in Vancouver.   We are Civic Innovation Change Lab which is a distinctive, semester-long program from RADIUS SFU that has been operating since 2011.

**Problem statement:**

The problem statement of the Penguin Rewards project is to solve the challenges faced by small neighbourhood retailers in Vancouver. The problem stems from many retailers going out of business over the past decade, and some factors threaten the visibility and sustainability of neighbourhood retailers. We identified an opportunity to create a platform, the Penguin Rewards app, to support small businesses. This gamified online platform incentivises shopping and sports participation, supporting the local economy and promoting healthier lifestyles. Besides, the project aligns with the city of Vancouver’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and Sustainability goals, which aim to reduce vehicle use and support a green recovery.

**Recommendation:**

Considering the issues, we have offered some suggestions. First, encourage small neighbourhood retailers to engage in collective and collaborative marketing campaigns. By pooling resources, they can achieve better visibility and reach. The Penguin Rewards app will serve as a platform for these cooperative endeavours.

For the second one, we are offering the Green Initiative Incentives: Align the rewards system more closely with the city of Vancouver’s Climate Emergency Action Plan and Sustainability goals; offering extra points or incentives for eco-friendly purchases or participation in environmental initiatives could make the app more appealing to environmentally conscious users.

Last but not least, it is also essential to pay attention to public-private partnerships; engaging with local government agencies is necessary to explore potential public-private partnerships. These partnerships could offer further support and resources to the Penguin Rewards project, enhancing its impact.

**Background:**

What is Civic Innovation Change Lab? The Civic Innovation Change Lab, a unique and ongoing project run by RADIUS SFU since 2011, is a semester-long program. It brings together students from different backgrounds and disciplines to jointly address specific issues that Vancouver presents. This interdisciplinary approach contributes to innovative solutions to local challenges. "Civic Innovation" is an approach aimed at increasing the welfare of citizens, urban efficiency, civic engagement and community action. The course provides knowledge of public affairs, social innovation and social services.

**Counter:**

     We need to emphasise that we have a lot of limitations due to the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of our investigation as part of the project was made by using social media.  Because of that, we were unable to contact local members who lacked an internet presence (social media or others), such as senior age groups.  More than that, as a result of technological and language barriers, we were unable to get in touch with potential and particular businesses: ethnically owned, mom-and-pop retailers.

In Numbers:

30 Community Member survey respondents.

7 Business Owner survey respondents.

12 Observations.

1 Business Improvement Area (BIA) Organization.

**Impact:**

    This project has a great impact and some value propositions.

Community Members:

* Encourage users to increase physically active
* Promotes community belonging
* Language accessible
* Saves users money on their daily needs

Small Neighbourhood Retailers

* Improves online visibility
* Incentivizes sustainable business practices
* Increases foot traffic
* Supports local economies

As part of the business model of the project we have some keys:

* As a for-profit business, we will produce revenue by invoice businesses a 30%\* commission fee for each offer used.
* As a two-sided market, it includes local businesses as our main customers and local members as our users.  We'll invoice businesses a flat charge of 30% per offer used.
* Our start-up cost is relatively small.
* We can cover our operating costs for the first year by grants such as Radius SFU’s Social Innovation Seed Fund and/or government grants. This will provide us enough time to monetize Penguin Rewards.

**Methodology:**

     To further our project, and understand our market, we are outlined in the following two phases:

Phase 1: Data Gathering

     We made two surveys - one for community members and one for business owners - which we posted and shared using Facebook groups, Reddit threads, BIAs, and the greater SFU community.

     Our goal was to obtain real insights into our problem area from the point of view of those we were looking to help.

* Community Members

     See their local businesses thrive and find ways to support local businesses, focus on young populations that are more concerned about fostering local resilience in their communities.

* Business Owners

     The majority were not concerned with sustainability or climate change or resilience.  They are more concerned about the impact on profits since pandemic varied, and pandemic has been a huge challenge for small local businesses.

     To understand a more holistic comprehension of our problem area, we started reading through news articles, interviews, City reports, and existing investigations. Below is a resume of some our key findings:

* Local retailers are presented as social hubs and gathering spots for communities.
* Small local businesses have only received lower levels of foot traffic since the pandemic.
* Bureaucratic barriers.
* For local retailers, it is difficult to survive with increasing rent costs and urban development.
* Limit technological capacity or online presence reduce the ability to adapt into a digital environment.
* Larger retailers have been a significant menace to local business.

Phase 2 : Data Analysis

    We create a high-level process map.  This process map highlights the recurring challenges.

1. Consider

Post or upload a website or blog about our project Penguin Rewards.  Facebook and Instagram are one start.  Looking for potential Ads for the App.

1. Explore

Surf the internet and see for other apps in recommendation or similar to our app.

Download similar apps and find how it works.

1. Compare

Download other similar apps to see what they have to offer for small local businesses and how they can help to climate change.

Meet with friends and talk about the app and ask them about their opinions and suggestions.

1. Test

Install the app and encourage the same to as many participants as possible to keep track of the development.  We tried to contact new stores to redeem offers as part of the project.

Meet and talk with local store owners to know more about their experience.

1. Loyalty

Upload a video that talks about Penguin Rewards on Youtube and other social media.

Contact friends and family and tell them about this project.

We can classify this project as:

* Direct: Because it is a face-to-face service which connects people to business and business to business.
* Research-based: Part of the process is gathering and presenting information based on the interest and need of the local community.

**Expected outcomes:**

**Community Members:** motivates users to participate in physical activity, improving quality of life. It also emphasises the importance of community as it fosters a sense of unity among members. It ensures inclusion through open language and welcomes diverse stakeholders. In addition, users benefit from reduced costs for their daily needs, improving economic well-being.

**Small Neighbourhood Retailers:** increases the online visibility of small retailers, expanding their customer reach and market. It promotes sustainable business practices and encourages an environmentally friendly approach. With increased footfall, these merchants gain greater exposure and potential sales growth. This program supports the local economy by strengthening small businesses and fostering strong community ties.

**Conclusion:**

The Penguin Rewards project presents a viable solution to the pressing issue of struggling neighbourhood retailers in Vancouver. It merges commerce, community involvement, and sustainability goals into one coherent strategy. We believe that with the implementation of our recommendations, namely collaborative marketing, green initiative incentives, and exploration of public-private partnerships, the project can significantly enhance the resilience of these small retailers.

Furthermore, this program emphasises physical activity and support for local businesses and is well-aligned with civic innovation efforts to create a healthier, more sustainable, and more economically resilient community. As such, the Penguin Rewards project is an exemplary model of a community-based, tech-enabled solution for urban challenges. Its ongoing success will undoubtedly bring significant positive change in Vancouver and beyond.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Signature** | **Date** |
| Esteban Perez Retamozo |  |  |
| Gary | 形状  中度可信度描述已自动生成 | 31st July 2023 |
| Jerry Xing | 一群鸟在沙滩上  描述已自动生成 | 31st July 2023 |
| Clio Xiao | 形状  中度可信度描述已自动生成 | 31st July 2023 |

**Respectfully submitted:**