Project Ideas – Ben Mason

**Homemade Cooking**

Homemade cooking is a service that provides homemade meals to users through a simple to use mobile application. This will be done through a network of drivers and cooks that will work together to prepare and deliver meals straight to the door of the users, eliminating any excuses to eat unhealthy food and providing easy, fast and hearty meals wherever you are. The motivation for this project comes from a feeling of necessity as there is a large gap in the market for a healthier version of the popular and largely successful meal delivery platforms currently dominating the food industry, being UberEats, menulog and deliveroo amongst others. There are many people in the community that enjoy cooking and find comfort in food and the way in which food can bring people together. Others may simply want to make some extra income on the side by cooking one of their signature dishes and providing joy to others by sharing their dish with the world. No matter the reason, there are people in the community who would be benefited by all aspects of this business from cooking to consuming to providing jobs for drivers and that is the primary motivation for this project.

In the current state of the world wherein we are experiencing a pandemic that closes restaurants and forces people to isolate at home. There will be more people at home leading to more people with spare time that could be dedicated to cooking and more users that cannot leave their houses to eat out. This lays out the perfect foundation and solution to one of the biggest problems in the global economy in 2020, lack of circulation of money due to people being unable to leave their houses. Homemade cooking will circulate money around the economy, from the pockets of the users to the pockets of the cooks, boosting the economy in this time of crisis.

The majority of cooks are expected to be retirees as this application would appeal to them the most out of any other audience. This is due to the fact that retirees have more spare time as a general rule of thumb over any other age group because they are unemployed. Many retirees also enjoy cooking and look for something to fill in their spare time while simultaneously bringing home some income so they do not have to purely rely upon their pension and/or super fund. Aside from looking for income and a pastime, many retirees seek a sense of purpose which they lack due to being unemployed, a sense of purpose that Homemade Cooking may be able to supply them with. The sense of giving back to the community and sharing their love and creations, giving them that sense of fulfilment that they seek. Melbourne is also the world’s hub of new diets and specialised diets whether that be keto, vegan diets or simply healthy eating which makes it the perfect location to roll out the app for healthy homemade meals.

Further details cover 4 key areas including cooking, delivery, consumption and the application itself. In terms of cooking, meals may be prepared by everyday people in their own homes in their own time. An example would be if I were to cook 10 pasta dishes, I would then input into the app that 10 pastas are ready at this location. The user can open the app and see all of the available meals and their estimated arrival times, can choose which meal they would like to purchase with ratings beside each cook from previous orders through the app. Once a meal has been purchased, a nearby driver will be dispatched to their location to pick up and deliver the meal. Once the meal has been consumed, the user can then review the meal and leave comments on the cook’s profile for future users to view and utilise.

Costs of the application would include the initial marketing campaign to attract new drivers to the business as the initial hurdle at the heart of the project is acquiring a large network of drivers that are spread throughout Melbourne for fast enough delivery to where food does not become cold or the users frustrated. This marketing could be done through cheaper methods such as listings on community notice boards or through intense online marketing and advertisements which would obviously lead to a greater acquisition of drivers but comes with its share of associated costs. Not only would marketing need to be done to attract drivers but also to attracts users and cooks, community notice boards again would be ideal for the latter option as that is where retirees may be most likely to see the adverts. Other costs would involve the creation of the application which could again be done on a budget or on a more thought out and developed approach. The application needs to be programmed and created from scratch using software such as Swift and Marvel to create the app and Pixelmator to help design logos and general design features of the app such as function buttons and menus. A computer would be needed in order to program the app as well as a smartphone in order to test the app and ensure it runs smoothly on all devices.

Within the app the user would be able to sort by cuisine and with Melbourne being home to over 140 different cultures there will be no shortage of options for a variety of meals from a variety of chefs, providing seemingly endless amounts of unique foods that you can not find in a restaurant with each cook providing different and unique experiences. On top of all this, recipe cards will be delivered with each meal allowing the consumer to learn how to cook the dish and hopefully start cooking habits of their own to allow them to lead healthier lifestyles. Many current options for meals away from home are local cafes and restaurants or for the busier individual who may not be able to leave the office, ordering food delivered which in its current state is ridded with unhealthy options and forces the consumer into purchasing food that will be detrimental to their health and diet. Instead of having an oily pizza and garlic bread for lunch at the office, they could enjoy a healthier, more cost effective meal that also gives back to the community. I anticipate there will be a number of legal issues involved with providing meals cooked in inconsistent homes and without food health and safety guidelines being met but to alleviate this problem, each cook can apply to join the app and when they do, must agree to their kitchen space to be examined by professionals hired by the company to certify that the cooking conditions meet the standard in the business. This will also allow for customers to feel safe and confident in purchasing the homemade meals.

The skills required would involve heavy experience with programming languages such as swift since Apple has not allowed the use of java or similar languages to create apps on their platform. Marketing skills will be needed to know where and when to advertise the app and what effects it may have on our potential users. All of the skills mentioned are not difficult to find as they are not very specialised skills. The software’s needed are also easily accessible and there should not be any issues accessing them in order to produce the app.

If Homemade cooking is successful and becomes widely used for meal delivery services in the place of UberEats, menulog and deliveroo, Melbourne will see people undertaking healthier eating habits and undertake cooking of their own through the recipe cards. This will reduce the amount of people that are overweight, give people new hobbies through the retirees being able to cook and fill in their time with something they enjoy and giving the consumers the ability to learn new recipes and eat healthier while assisting retirees in fulfilling their desire for a purpose.