Superior Customer Experience Through Entrepreneurial Hospitality

November 9, 2020

If you search “Entrepreneurial Hospitality,” you will not find a concrete dictionary definition, but the A.B. Freeman School of Business defines it as “The act of driving competitive advantage and value creation through innovation in superior customer experience at all organizational levels across all industries.” The Entrepreneurial Hospitality specialization in the online Master of Management program fully immerses students into the customer’s journey, while challenging them to approach problems with an entrepreneur’s mindset.



Samantha Cummings, Master of Management in Entrepreneurial Hospitality '20

This perspective adds a valuable component to any industry, as hospitality is relevant to businesses in all sectors. As Samantha Cummings, a recent graduate of the program, noted, “I realized that the customer experience is changing, and products are changing, constantly. Products aren't really products anymore—consumers want to have that meaningful connection.”

In just under one year, participants graduate with an Master’s degree in Management with a specialization in Entrepreneurial Hospitality. Students will take 36 credit hours in total, with two classes in each of six 8-week modules, starting in January and ending in December. Starting in January 2021, the program will be offered fully online.

Samantha chose this specific route for her master’s degree for a variety of reasons. Before starting at Freeman, Samantha was already pursuing her professional MBA. Yet, she was not getting excited about her studies like she expected. When Samantha found out about the Entrepreneurial Hospitality specialization, she knew it was perfect. Not only did the Master of Management program accelerate the time to complete her degree, but it also let her focus on something she felt passionate about.

At the heart of the curriculum is the capstone project for the New Venture Planning course. The project challenges students to develop their own business plan for a new venture, incorporating the knowledge and skills acquired throughout the 12 month program, and then pitch it to a panel of experts. Students will walk away with a well-developed business plan in the industry that interests them, letting them customize their education and boost their career.

Samantha found the personalization aspect especially rewarding. She remembers taking an intensive class in the spring with AJ Brooks - the students in the class got to help design the course. Samantha and her classmates talked about their weaknesses and then structured the class around tackling those problems. “The Freeman School was that perfect balance of structure and freedom—working with teachers but also working with your classmates. It really accommodates a lot of different learning styles.”

This program is suitable for a broad range of candidates, as hospitality applies to professionals in every industry. If you want to add a unique spin to your resume or cultivate an innovative way of thinking, this program is for you. Samantha believes that an entrepreneurial mindset can do so much for any business.

Currently, Samantha is a Project Manager at CURE & Co., so she works with various types of restaurants throughout New Orleans. In fact, she connected with her current boss Neal Bodenheimer during her time at Freeman. “The program allowed me to get involved in so many different things. It allowed me to surround myself with

diverse, smart people - people with whom I've continued relationships."

Students who participate in the Entrepreneurial Hospitality program gain a unique perspective on the daily ins and outs of a business. They also expand their connections through the vast network of Freeman alumni and stakeholders who are excited to offer their help in any way. As for guidance for incoming students, Samantha offers this important piece of advice: "Enjoy the time! Remember that you are investing in yourself so really take that time to learn as much as you can, get involved as much as you can, and make every single connection that you can.”

— Neera Kennedy (BSM ’23)