

USC Partners With Local Business

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Innovation

Across the Sunshine Coast, established businesses are benefitting from valuable student insights, research and analysis, whilst the students themselves are benefiting from real-life learning opportunities, resulting in a classic 'win-win' scenario.

For the second year running, students undertaking entrepreneurship studies at USC have sought to further develop their skills and apply theory in the field by working alongside an established entrepreneur in his or her business.

Students from Dr Retha de Villiers Scheepers' third year entrepreneurship class were divided into five groups, resulting in a mix of skills and experience, and then matched to five Sunshine

Coast businesses willing to mentor and partner with students.

“This course provides an opportunity for students to work in a team with local businesses, who deal with real-world problems, and they devise solutions to some of these problems,” said Dr Scheepers.

“The students were asked to formally meet with their respective entrepreneurs to discuss matters relating directly to their businesses and begin identifying areas of opportunity. The student teams then conducted a formal analysis for each assigned business using the SEE (Supporting Emerging Enterprises) model and reported their findings.”

One team including students Laura Garrett, Benjamin Hartmann, Martin Hansen and Justin Becker were assigned to Noosa Boardroom, a serviced office and business centre in Noosaville.

“This process uncovered potential areas of improvement and our findings were presented to the owner Steve Lawrence for consideration within two weeks of engagement,” said Benjamin.

“Upon agreement, both Steve and our student team began working towards achieving five key ‘deliverables’ including a customer satisfaction survey and exploring options for engagement with the Innovation Centre at Sippy Downs.”

“Working with the owner Steve Lawrence has really put this course and University generally into perspective. To be able to see what happens in the real world and applying what we are learning has been invaluable,” said Benjamin.

Noosa Boardroom owner Steve Lawrence has also praised the program.

“I’m always looking for innovative ways to improve my business and for ways to keep me personally motivated and enthused each day and the raw feedback from the students has been awesome,” said Steve.

“Sometimes you need a different perspective on the business, and the students have given me that.”

USC is looking to hear from other businesses that would like to get involved in the program.

If your business has about five employees or more, and the owner is willing to commit to regular meetings over a period of 3 months, please contact Dr Retha Scheepers at www.usc.edu.au

Noosa Boardroom

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