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Shipping Website Concept Wins Business Model Competition

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Shipping Website Concept Wins Business Model Competition

Thryft Ship allows for hassle-free shipping for small businesses

DECEMBER 9, 2022 BY ALYSSA GARZA



Valeria Brenner (center) winner of the 2022 'Servin' the South' Business Model Competition at UM, is congratulated by Rich Gentry (left), co-director of the university's Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Steve Grantham, president of J&R Restaurant Group and one of the competition's judges. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – A shipping website made for small businesses won first place in the 2022 "Servin' the South" Business Model Competition hosted by the **University of Mississippi Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship**.

Thryft Ship allows small businesses with an Instagram presence to receive a shipping link for customers to use, saving time and avoiding errors on shipping labels. Through its partnership with ShipEngine, a shipping and logistics platform, Thryft Ship offers commercial-level pricing, making it faster and cheaper to ship items.

The concept was developed by Valeria Brenner, a University of Georgia marketing and international business major from Johns Creek, Georgia. She took home \$10,000 as the competition winner.

"I used to run a thrifting account back in my freshman year of college, and shipping was always a huge hassle for me," Brenner said. "I always thought that, although shipping was time-inefficient and confusing, it was just the way that it was.

"That was until I started talking to other thrifting accounts in the community and I realized that everyone dealt with this issue, not just me. I took it upon myself to find a solution to make shipping through Instagram a faster process and came up with Thryft Ship."

The business' goal is to help new business owners with Instagram accounts become more efficient by saving time so they can focus on growing their business.

"Valeria had a fantastic idea born of her own experience promoting products on Instagram" said Rich Gentry, CIE co-director and professor of management. "That entrepreneurial venture and the formal support of UGA's entrepreneurship center at an Idea Workshop helped her build the venture which brought her so much success.

"This event is a unique opportunity for student entrepreneurs to demonstrate and discuss their business ideas with each other and a panel of experts who can give advice and suggestions that they might not be able to get in any other setting."

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation's capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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Ole Miss In the News

Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to

The fall competition was created for Ole Miss students before the CIE became a BMC Global partner in 2015. BMC Global discontinued its competitions due to the pandemic, and since 2021, the center has rebranded the competition to include college students from across the U.S.

"I am delighted to see the business model competition continues to attract not only Ole Miss student entrepreneurs, but also top teams from SEC schools as well as other regional schools," said Tong Meng, CIE director of programs.

"We're so glad the CIE is able to provide these wonderful networking and funding opportunities for young entrepreneurs and we are grateful for the generous support from our judges and donors."

Twenty-two competitors participated in this year's event. The six finalists represented UM, the universities of Alabama and Georgia and Auburn University.

"The BMC is an amazing opportunity to get feedback and network for your business," said Tanner McCraney, co-founder of the Rumie app and a BMC finalist from Ole Miss. "You get real feedback from judges that can take your idea, start up, or functional business to the next level."

Finalists were evaluated by a panel of five judges:

- Steve Grantham, president of J&R Restaurant Group, which operates in Mississippi and west Tennessee
- Matt Mossberg, managing partner at West Group, a consumer branding and manufacturing firm in north Mississippi
- Reed Barrett, co-founder of CampusOptics, based in Houston, Texas
- Jeff McManus, UM director of landscape services, Ole Miss Golf Course and airport operations
- Donna Barksdale, founder and owner of Mississippi River Trading Co. in Jackson

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