

Black Entrepreneurship in Brazil - Clube de Preta

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Abstract (English):

With the largest Afro-descendant population outside of Africa that comprises approximately 52% of the population, Brazil has experienced substantial growth among its middle class, particularly for Brazilians that identify as black or mixed-race. This growth has resulted in over 5.8 million black entrepreneurs with access to the internet, which has generated over R\$219 billion (approximately \$54 billion U.S. dollars) in revenue. In recent years, associations such as REAFRO (Afro-Entrepreneur Network of Brazil), which was established in 2015, and projects like Afro Hub, an initiative created in 2018 by Feira Preta, Afro Business and Diaspora. Black with support from Facebook, promoted networking and provide black entrepreneurs with greater access to technology and other key resources to expand their businesses. After introducing students to these recent efforts supported by the private sector to cultivate black entrepreneurship in Brazil, students will focus on the startup, Clube da Preta, an online company founded in 2015 that offers customers a monthly subscription to Afro-centric products. Students will examine the company's history to discuss the challenges faced by internet-based black-owned businesses in Brazil. By the end of the unit, students will present ideas on how Clube da Preta can achieve long-term growth while maintaining its mission of working with black, independent distributors and maintaining a client base that values products celebrating Afro-Brazilian culture.

Proficiency Level: Intermediate Mid to Intermediate High (ACTFL)

Case (Portuguese):

O Brasil tem a maior população afrodescendente fora da África, compondo uma maioria da população. No setor empresarial do país, os afrodescendentes também são a maioria dos empreendedores. Apesar das estatísticas, o mercado de consumo brasileiro em grande parte não tem reconhecido ou não tem satisfeito adequadamente os estilos, necessidades e preferências dos Afro-brasileiros. Iniciativas, como a Feira Preta em São Paulo, foram estabelecidas para encher esta lacuna através de locais onde vendedores, artesãos, e empresas pequenas podiam vender seus produtos. No entanto, estas feiras e festivais somente acontecem durante épocas específicas do ano. Apesar dos desafios, o papel crescente da tecnologia, em particular a internet, ajudou Afro-empresendedores a ganhar mais visibilidade no mercado e alcançar um maior número de consumidores pelo Brasil. Uma startup, Clube de Preta, usou o poder da internet para servir como uma plataforma para vender marcas Afro-brasileiras independentes e onde consumidores Afro-brasileiros podem achar produtos que refletem seus gostos e estilos.

O gênese do Clube de Preta começou em 2015 quando o casal Bruno Brigida e Débora Luz queriam encontrar uma solução para ajudar Afro-empresendedores a ganhar uma presença maior no mercado brasileiro. Bruno e Débora tinham muitos amigos quem eram Afro-empresendedores nos setores da moda, de acessórios, e

cosmética. Eles perceberam que seus amigos ganharam a maioria de sua renda durante os meses de outubro, novembro, e dezembro em feiras e mercados diferentes, mas não havia muito negócio o resto do ano. Naquela época, Bruno estava fazendo um curso de jornalismo e compartilhou numa tarefa as experiências de seus amigos. O professor comentou para Bruno que o que seus amigos estavam fazendo com seus negócios tinha muito potencial. Esta experiência ajudou Bruno e Débora a começar a refletir como podiam realmente ajudar crescer os negócios de seus amigos. Bruno tinha uma assinatura mensal com um clube de cerveja e percebeu que os clubes de assinatura estavam ficando cada vez mais popular no Brasil. Eles decidiram que um clube online de assinatura para marcas Afro-brasileiras podia ser uma maneira de aumentar vendas para empresas pequenas e locais enquanto cumprindo com a missão de empoderar empreendedores sub-representados.

Bruno e Débora integraram suas habilidades e formação para desenvolver Clube de Preta. Bruno tem uma formação em gestão de empresas que serviu como o recurso chave para desenvolver a logística para sua startup. Débora tem uma formação em museologia e sua experiência como uma influenciadora digital no Instagram eram essenciais para o sucesso da empresa porque seu conhecimento de curadoria a ajudou a juntar produtos diferentes (livros, roupas, produtos de beleza) em volta de um tema para depois enviar para os assinantes. Eles trabalharam diretamente com fornecedores locais assim empreendedores negos de bairros periféricos tem a oportunidade de vender seus produtos o ano inteiro, que então resulta em uma experiência com curadoria mensal para os clientes de Clube de Preta.

Como muitas startups, Clube de Preta expandiu rapidamente mas também tem que lidar com os desafios de como manter essa expansão. No final de 2019, Bruno falou que eles tinha mais que 400 clientes permanentes quem pagavam pelo clube de assinatura mensal. Bruno e Débora pensam que poderiam ter mais ou menos mil clientes no final de 2019 se não fosse por problemas com a aprendizagem da infraestrutura tecnológica para seu website e como lidar com um número alto de pedidos. Eles mantêm o website eles mesmos e processam os pedidos para as caixas mensais de assinatura no seu apartamento em São Paulo. Apesar dos desafios, eles tem a meta de contratar dois funcionários de tempo integral para ajudar com o website e processar os pedidos online. Débora e Bruno aumentaram recentemente o número de planos de assinatura mensais de dois a quatro para poder atrair uma gama maior de clientes como níveis diferente de poder aquisitivo.

Finalmente, Bruno e Débora tem uma visão de longo prazo para Clube de Preta que inclui uma empresa online com sucesso financeiro mas que permanece conforme à missão de empoderamento social para Afro-empresendedores das periferias do Brasil. Em termos de sua base de clientes, eles tem a meta de expandir o número de assinantes até três mil para Clube de Preta no futuro próximo. Enquanto Bruno e Débora estão trabalhando para expandir o alcance da empresa por todo o Brasil, eventualmente eles gostariam de entrar no mercado internacional também.

Case (English):

Brazil has the largest Afro-descendant population outside of Africa, and it makes up the majority of the population. In the business sector of the country, Afro-descendants also make up a majority of the entrepreneurs. Despite these numbers, the Brazilian consumer market has largely ignored or not adequately addressed the styles, needs and tastes of Afro-Brazilians. Initiatives, such as Feira Preta (Black Fair) in São Paulo, were created to fill this gap by providing venues where vendors, artisans, and small businesses could sell their projects. However, these fairs and festivals only occur during certain periods of the year. Despite these challenges, the increasing role of technology, in particular the internet, has allowed Afro-entrepreneurs to gain more visibility in the market and reach a larger number of consumers throughout Brazil. One startup, Clube de Preta, has employed the power of the internet to serve as a platform to sell small, independent Afro-Brazilian brands, and where Afro-Brazilian consumers can find products that resonate with their tastes and styles.

The genesis for Clube de Preta began in 2015, when the couple Bruno Brigida and Débora Luz wanted to find a solution to help Afro-entrepreneurs gain a larger presence in the Brazilian marketplace. Bruno and Débora had many friends who were Afro-entrepreneurs in the sectors of fashion, accessories, and cosmetics. They noticed that their friends made most of their money during October, November, and December at different fairs and markets, but that business was slow the rest of the year. At the time, Bruno was taking a journalism course and shared the experiences of his friends in a class assignment. The professor commented to Bruno that what his friends were doing with their businesses had a lot of potential. This experience made Bruno and Débora begin to reflect on how they could really help their friends' businesses grow. Bruno had a paid membership to a monthly beer service and realized that subscription services were becoming increasingly popular in Brazil. They decided that an online subscription service for Afro-Brazilian brands could be a way to increase sales for small, local businesses while fulfilling their mission of empowering underrepresented entrepreneurs.

Bruno and Débora combined their unique skills and training to develop Clube de Preta. Bruno has a business degree, which has served as a key resource in developing the logistics for their startup. Débora's background in museum studies and her experience as a digital influencer on Instagram were also essential to their business' success since her understanding of curation allowed her to combine different products (books, clothing, beauty products) around a shared theme to then ship out to the subscribers. They work directly with local suppliers so Black entrepreneurs who are from working-class neighborhoods have the opportunity to sell their products year round, which then translates into a monthly curated experience for Clube de Preta's clients.

Like many tech startups, Clube de Preta has expanded quickly, but also has to grapple with the challenge of how to keep up with that growth. At the end of 2019, Bruno reported that they had over 400 permanent clients who paid for the monthly subscription service. Bruno and Débora feel they could have had around 1,000 clients by the conclusion of 2019 if not for issues with learning technology infrastructure for their website and handling orders on a mass scale. They maintain the website themselves and process the orders for the monthly subscription boxes out of their apartment in São Paulo. Despite these challenges, they have the goal of hiring two full time workers to help with the website and fulfill the online orders. Débora and Bruno have also recently expanded the number of monthly subscription plans they offer from two to four as a way to attract a wider range of clients with different levels of purchasing power.

Ultimately, Bruno and Débora have a long term vision for Clube de Preta that includes a financial successful online business, but that remains true to its mission of social empowerment for Afro-Entrepreneurs from Brazil's working class sectors. In terms of their client base, they have the goal to expand the number of subscribers for Clube de Preta to 3,000 in the near future. While Bruno and Débora are currently working to expand the company's reach to include all of Brazil, they would eventually like to enter the international market as well.

Additional Resources:

<https://www.clubedapreta.com.br/>

<https://www.instagram.com/clubedapreta/>

<https://www.facebook.com/clubedapreta/>

<https://www.clubedapreta.com.br/manifesto>

Learning Goals:

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of Black culture in Brazil
- Make connections between increased investment in diversity initiatives in the public and private sectors, and the growth of Afro-Brazilian companies
- Identify and analyze the challenges faced by a Black-owned small, online startup
- Develop a proposal to address the company's problems and long-term vision
- Develop presentation skills in Portuguese incorporating appropriate vocabulary for business settings in Brazil

Assignments:

I. Group Presentation Instructions

Background: Clube da Preta, a black-owned online startup from São Paulo, currently has 400 subscribers for their monthly subscription service. They have the goal of reaching 3,000 subscribers by the end of 2020. As consultants, you must advise the startup on how to increase and maintain the number of subscribers they have while still adhering to their mission of working with black-owned independent suppliers that provide a high quality product that celebrates black culture.

Presentation Requirements: For the next business meeting you need to ensure that your group includes the following in the presentation:

- Identify three areas of strength in Clube da Preta's current setup that you feel could contribute to future growth. Explain how they can allocate more resources into these areas to ensure continued growth.
- In addition to current strengths, propose two to three items that Clube da Preta should consider as a way to improve and expand their startup. For each item that you propose, you need to explain why that course of action is necessary and how it will improve current limitations.
- Make sure to prepare a 10-minute presentation of your proposal, which will be delivered at the next meeting with Clube da Preta.

II. Final Reflection Instructions

Now that we have completed the course unit on Black Entrepreneurship in Brazil, take time to write a reflection on what you have learned from the content, class activities, and homework assignments. Make sure that you include the following in your reflection statement:

- How have the insights you gained from this course unit changed your perspective or understanding of businesses that operate outside of your social or cultural milieu?
- Are you more likely to be aware from what businesses you purchase services or products, in particular if it is an independent business from an underrepresented population?
- Do you believe that business endeavors can be viable while having an ethos rooted in being socially conscious and culturally inclusive?
- Now that you have learned about Afro-emprededorismo in Brazil, how might this impact how you look at and understand at a deeper level Black entrepreneurship in other countries like the United States, Latin America, and the Caribbean?

Module Plan:

Estimated time needed: six 50-minutes class periods (this can change based on the students' proficiency level in Portuguese).

Day	In-Class Activities	Homework	Materials Needed
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to course unit • O que é empreendedorismo? • O que é Afroempreendedorismo? • Read and discuss: <i>Empresas afro-brasileiras já movimentam R\$12 bilhões por ano</i> • Start watching video: <i>Antes era só empreendedorismo, agora é afroempreendedorismo</i> 	Students will make a post to the Blackboard discussion board responding to online video.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artigo (link): Empresas afro-brasileiras já movimentam R\$12 bilhões por ano - Online Video: Antes era só empreendedorismo, agora é afroempreendedorismo
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start class discussion based on student posts to discussion board • Qual é o papel da internet no Afroempreendedorismo? • Read and discuss article on AfroHub: <i>Conheça o AfroHub</i> • Watch and discuss video: <i>Feira Preta</i> 	Students will watch 3 short videos on AfroHub initiatives in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Vitória and post to Blackboard comparisons between different sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artigo (link): Conheça o AfroHub - Online Video: Feira Preta - Online Video: AfroHub São Paulo - Online Video: AfroHub Rio de Janeiro - Online Video: AfroHub Vitória
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Clube da Preta (discussion of internet-based black-owned startups) • Examine Clube da Preta website: www.clubedatpreta.com.br • Watch and discuss video: <i>Empreendedores da Quebrada</i> • Read and discuss: <i>Manifesto Clube da Preta</i> 	<p>Leia artigo <i>Clube da Preta reúne afro-empreendedeores de moda e beleza</i></p> <p>Assista os videos: - <i>Origens do Clube da Preta</i> - <i>Perfil dos clientes</i></p> <p>Cria uma lista de vocabulário (10 palavras ou frases) relacionada a Clube da Preta e Afroempreendedorismo</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Artigo (link): Clube da Preta reúne afro-empreendedores de moda e beleza - Online Video: Empreendedores da Quebrada - Website (link): Manifesto Clube da Preta - Online Video: Origens do Clube da Preta - Online Video: Perfil dos clientes

Day	In-Class Activities	Homework	Materials Needed
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss <i>Clube da Preta reúne afro-empresendedeores de moda e beleza</i> • Discuss vocabulary identified from reading and videos • Videos for case study: <i>Desafios com tecnologia; Desafios com crescimento; Desafios logísticos;</i> 	<p>Assista os videos: - <i>Trabalhar com outros empresendedores negros</i> - <i>Ajudar outros empresendedores negros</i></p> <p>Identifique 3 áreas de sucesso e 3 áreas de dificuldade para Clube de Preta</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online Video: <i>Desafios com tecnologia</i> - Online Video: <i>Desafios com crescimento</i> - Online Video: <i>Desafios logísticos</i> - Online Video: <i>Trabalhar com outros empresendedores negros</i> - Online Video: <i>Ajudar outros empresendedores negros</i>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss Videos • Brainstorm session: Students divide into small groups to discuss the following question: <i>Como pode o Clube da Preta aumentar sua presença online e entrar em novos mercados enquanto mantém sua ética de ajudar outros empresendedores negros e fornecer produtos enraizados na cultura Afro-Brasileira?</i> 	<p>Os grupos pesquisam informação e preparam suas apresentações para compartilhar suas ideias para Clube da Preta.</p>	<p>Instructions for the group presentations</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business meeting: Group presentations • Discussion and evaluation of group proposals • Watch video: <i>Visão para o futuro</i> 	<p>Post reflections to Blackboard</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online Video: <i>Visão para o futuro</i> - Instructions for Reflection Assignment