

conflicting opinions of the partners resulted in inclusion of both “old world” dishes as well as contemporary, trendy, American ones in the list of offerings. Advertising was aimed at distinctly different groups in different ways—these groups included tourists, students, blue-collar workers, young professionals, and families in the area. However, money and time constraints often acted as brakes for repeat advertising toward any one target. For example, in targeting tourists, Georgia distributed coupons and menus to hotel doormen in the area, but nobody had the time to revisit the hotels, so that it turned out to be a one-time effort.

The major operational challenge for Upside Down was that of reliable management. Due to its hours of operation, there was a need for a day and a night manager. One manager, who seemed quite competent, somehow rubbed Stephen the wrong way, and was the one who was dismissed long distance. A day manager had been working out well for a while, although some of the staff complained about him. However, he did not want to take on an evening shift, which was the more lucrative period for the restaurant. The staff itself was barely capable in terms of skill, competence, and expertise. They were sufficient to keep the restaurant afloat in its current position, but certainly not in enabling its growth.

Georgia felt that although she had been pushed into a position of taking the lead on occasion, it was not one of leadership. The partners, other than Michael, did not hesitate in calling, and indeed relying, on her to solve all kinds of issues at all times. At various times, Georgia had handled everything from designing the menu, settling staff conflicts, processing resumes and interviewing applicants, designing marketing programs, to talking to the bank about finances. However, the partners were not willing to cede control to her on strategic and major decisional issues. They also did not respond to Georgia’s requests to pitch in with help on operational issues. Not that they were not polite about it, but it seemed that everyone else always had a convenient reason for why they could not be there at Upside Down. The partners seemed content to direct from a distance, with an implicit understanding that Georgia would do all of the heavy lifting of implementation. Since the partners were all known to Georgia through social and familial connections, she hesitated to counter their suggestions and decisions, or to demand more of them.

Georgia felt strongly that she should have formal control and real leadership, but culture and personality exerted a strong pull on her not to demand it. While entrepreneurship levels were extremely high in Georgia’s community, not many women were involved actively in the family businesses. Even fewer, almost none, were active owners or in formal leadership positions. In terms of personality, Georgia was a very emotionally mature person; in dealing with others, she expected them, mostly in vain, to act in a similar manner. Finally, being the eldest in the family and female, she perceived herself in a care-giving role. All this led to her taking a gentle, persuasive approach rather than a tough and confrontational one. Lately, Georgia was wondering if that approach was effective at all.

The biggest and most worrisome concern for Georgia and Michael was the increasing reluctance of the other partners to inject any more capital into the business; it appeared that they both were the only ones willing to do so. Even as the other partners agreed that the business had potential, they seemed more and more reluctant to put in time and money. For Georgia and Michael, it became even more important that Food Station do well, since a percentage of the profit from there was being funneled to Upside Down. Georgia was also concerned that she was spending altogether too much time at Upside Down, to the detriment of both her “own” business as well as her family.

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