

SUNY Buffalo State University

## Digital Commons at Buffalo State

---

Creativity and Change Leadership Graduate  
Student Master's Projects

Center for Applied Imagination

---

5-2024

### Cooking up Passion: Steps to Opening a Food Truck

Clivens A. Fresnel  
fresnec01@buffalostate.edu

#### Advisor

Dr. Molly Hollinger

Department Chair

Gerard Puccio

---

#### Recommended Citation

Fresnel, Clivens A., "Cooking up Passion: Steps to Opening a Food Truck" (2024). *Creativity and Change Leadership Graduate Student Master's Projects*. 389.

<https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/389>

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects>

Cooking up Passion: Steps to Opening a Food Truck

by

Clivens Anthony Fresnel

An Abstract of a Project

In

Creativity and Change Leadership

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Master of Science

May 2024

Buffalo State University  
State University of New York  
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

## **Abstract**

### **Cooking up Passion: Steps to Opening a Food Truck**

This project encapsulates my creativity journey and desire to pursue my passion for the culinary arts. I reflected on my experience in the engineering/technology field and made some strong connections with various creativity principles. The years of experience I have accumulated in corporate America have taught me a lot and helped push me to achieve things I did not think I could. What I am attempting to accomplish with this project is to combine my experience in the workforce with my passion/interest in the culinary arts.

I have connected with some phenomenal individuals who have taken the risk of starting a business and or pursuing their passion. Through their guidance and support, I have taken some monumental steps forward and devised an action plan. This project demonstrates the importance of finding community and connecting with individuals who believe in and support your dreams. I am grateful to everyone who has played a role in my life until now.

I hope reading this project inspires individuals with a strong sense of joy, love, understanding, determination, inspiration, motivation, dedication, and happiness. All of these emotions are woven deep into every word and section.

Buffalo State University  
State University of New York  
Department of Creativity and Change Leadership

Cooking up Passion: Steps to Opening a Food Truck

A Project in  
Creativity and Change Leadership

by

Clivens Anthony Fresnel

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2024

Dates of Approval:

\_\_\_\_\_5/21/24\_\_\_\_\_



Dr. Molly Holinger

Associate Professor

*Clivens Anthony Fresnel*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clivens Anthony Fresnel

Student

## Copyright Notice

Copyright © 2024 by [Clivens Anthony Fresnel]

All rights reserved. The works of authorship contained in this paper, including but not limited to all text and images, are owned, except as otherwise expressly stated, by [Clivens Anthony Fresnel], and may not be copied, reproduced, transmitted, displayed, distributed, rented, sublicensed, altered, stored for subsequent use, or otherwise used in whole or in part in any manner without the prior written consent of [Clivens Anthony Fresnel], except to the extent that such use constitutes “fair use”; under the Copyright Act of 1976 (17 U.S.C. §107), with an attached copy of this page containing the Copyright Notice. The principle of fair use specifies that a teacher may fairly copy 10 percent of a prose work, up to 1,000 words. This page is number v.

## Table of Contents

Section One: Background to the Project.....	1
Introduction.....	1
My Vision: Sé Monique.....	2
The Larger Vision.....	2
My Role at Tesla: A Foundation for Leadership and Creativity Skills.....	4
Section Two: Pertinent Literature and Resources.....	10
What is Creativity.....	10
Constraints.....	14
The Creative Problem-Solving Process .....	14
Creativity Tools.....	16
Creative Leadership.....	16
Section Three: Outcomes.....	19
Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes.....	19
Strategic Plan.....	20
Short-term Plan.....	21
Intermediate-term Plan.....	23
Long-term Plan.....	24
4Ps Analysis of strengths and weaknesses evaluation plan and measuring success.....	26
Evaluation Plan and Measuring Success.....	29

Section Four: Outcomes.....	30
Business Plan.....	30
Mentorship.....	30
Section Five: Key Learnings.....	32
Section Six: Conclusion.....	34
References .....	35
Appendix A: Business Plan.....	38

**List of Tables and Figures**

Figure 1.1: Storyboard.....4

Figure 1.2: Resume of Different Roles.....6

Figure 1.3: SLII Model.....6

Figure 2.1: Thinking Skills Model.....15

Table 3.1: Short-term Plan.....21

Table 3.2: Intermediate-term Plan.....23

Table 3.3: Long-term Plan... ..24

Table 3.4: 4Ps Analysis of strengths and weaknesses evaluation plan and measuring success....26



## **SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT**

### **Introduction**

I am Clivens Anthony Fresnel, and I am a first-generation Haitian immigrant. I moved to Brooklyn, NY, when I was three years old. Food is at the center of Haitian culture. My grandmother taught me how to cook as a kid, and I instantly liked cooking. Learning to cook Haitian food brought me closer to Haitian culture and was a creative outlet. I had many interests when I was younger and ultimately decided to go the engineering route. I graduated from SUNY Buffalo State College in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering Technology. I began working at Tesla as an NCM (Non-conforming Materials) shortly after. Then, I was promoted to Associate Process Engineer, and now I am a Production supervisor.

In 2022, I returned to SUNY Buffalo State for my master's in Creativity and Change Leadership. I graduate in May 2024. The degree taught me a lot, such as the CPS (creative problem-solving) process. I am a more effective problem solver who can turn my ideas into reality.

Throughout my journey, a strong passion for food and cooking has developed. My backup plan was always to become a chef, but unfortunately, I never failed at being an engineer. Last summer in class, I learned visionary thinking; the professor asked us to imagine where we saw ourselves in the next five years. My vision for myself only involved pursuing my culinary passion. I know my path is unorthodox compared to the conventional path. That is precisely why I feel so strongly about this. My path has led me to this point. I am ready to pursue my culinary passion.

### **My Vision: Se Monique**

My master's project is starting my food truck business, Sé Monique. I look forward to brainstorming new recipes and coming up with new and creative ideas to market my food/brand. CPS will be at the center of Sé Monique. Several factors have aligned, making this the ideal time to shine and take steps forward. For example, I have a community of people backing me up. In addition, SUNY Buffalo State offers a wide range of opportunities and resources. The small business office is one of them, and they will assist in getting Sé Monique off the ground. I will use my past experiences and acquired skills, which I will elaborate on next, to ensure Sé Monique's success.

### **The Larger Vision**

My vision for myself is crystal clear. I want to pursue the culinary arts and become a Michelin-star chef. The chef I will be is the one who creates new and novel recipes in a safe environment, nurturing those involved, exciting, innovative, and supportive. I will ensure my team has all of the tools to be successful, and I will create opportunities for them to be successful.

My vision is very ambitious, but I know it can be achieved. One factor that leads me to believe this is possible is that I am already a creative leader at Tesla, which I will describe in detail in the next section. I am a fair, goal-oriented, driven, compassionate, inspiring, creative, ambitious, competitive, helpful, and resourceful leader. I want those around me to succeed and accomplish their goals while they are accomplishing mine.

My best friend Ian had a vision for himself to become an airline pilot. In 2019, after graduating from Buffalo State with his bachelor's degree, he began to realize his vision and took the first steps to becoming an airline pilot. After graduating, he worked in a warehouse with his

dad to save money for flight school. In 2020, he moved to Florida to attend ATP school. While there, he received several different certifications and started accumulating flight hours. He moved back to New York at the end of 2022 and became a flight instructor, but he still had a long way to go before reaching 1,500 hours. Fast-forward to 2024, he has reached 1,500 hours and is signed to American Airlines as a regional pilot. Witnessing his journey to achieve his vision has been a blessing. Words cannot describe how happy I am for him and grateful to have him as a friend. Ian is one of my best friends; his journey gives me courage and hope. Thanks to his story, I know my dreams and vision are also attainable. He is my real-life hero and a role model.

The image below (Figure 1.1) is a storyboard of my vision. The top left box shows where I am, finishing my master's degree in Creativity and Change Leadership, working for Tesla, and establishing a strong faith. The tornado represents everything I am juggling right now. The next square to the right shows me getting restaurant experience this summer. After that, I want to open a food truck called Sé Monique. When I have the opportunity, I want to go to culinary school to further enrich my culinary arts knowledge. I want to travel the world with the woman of my dreams and enjoy the food together. Lastly, after accumulating all these experiences and knowledge, I want to open a restaurant and pursue a Michelin star.



*Figure 1.1 Storyboard.*

### **My Role at Tesla: A Foundation for Leadership and Creativity Skills**

My various roles at Tesla and my master's program have equipped me with the skills to pursue my culinary vision. I am a people leader at Tesla, and developing my leadership style has been extraordinary. I know my experience as a production supervisor will be used heavily when I begin to lead a kitchen. I get to implement various leadership styles and learn the impacts of those styles in real-time. Learning about the different leadership styles also helped to strengthen my leadership skills.

The most effective I was at Tesla was when I had an effective leader. As an NCM (Non-Conforming Materials) technician, my supervisor, Emily Lederman, was a great leader. After learning different leadership styles this semester and experiencing several organizational changes at Tesla, I know what made Emily great as my boss. She was able to gather my thoughts and ideas

and help guide me to our desired outcome. Under her leadership, I felt safe, seen, and understood. Emily was able to control the environment to the best of her ability. Whenever the environment changed negatively, it was not because of her. I never thought it was her fault. The work I accomplished was very fulfilling, and I know I could not advance my career to be a Process Engineer without her leadership and guidance.

As an Associate Process Engineer, my experience was completely different. I had another female leader. She was the manager of all of the process engineers. I received basic support and little to no development. One-on-ones were never consistent, and when I asked for some development, she set up one meeting, and we never met again. Throughout this time, I felt unseen, not supported, and isolated. My intrinsic motivation was running out, and little extrinsic motivation was provided. My work felt less meaningful, and going to work daily was sometimes annoying. I found a mentor in my second year, and she was able to help guide me and make my work more meaningful.

My resumé (see Figure 1.2 below) shows the leadership impact. When Emily led me, each project had meaning, and I was engaged. Emily was able to tap into all of my skills and created opportunities for me to succeed. Emily saw my leadership potential, and I was able to develop others, and the skills I taught them helped advance their careers. The learning from NCM carried over to Associate Process Engineer, and with the new scope of work, I worked on some good projects. Overall, this experience taught me the type of leader I want to be and the impact I want to have on those who follow me. An experience like this is a good reminder of what not to do and how to persevere through challenging leadership.

Relevant Experience:		
<b>Tesla</b>	<b>Associate Process Engineer</b>	<b>April 2022 – Present</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Champion, the deep dive into the first pass yield metric resulted in a 25% first pass yield increase for the V3 cabinet line.</li> <li>Conducted comprehensive data analysis, pinpointing areas within the current process that demanded strategic enhancements.</li> <li>Exercised influential input with design engineers, recommending alternative procedures to optimize product manufacturability.</li> <li>Pioneered a novel production process, resulting in a substantial increase in production throughput.</li> <li>Proactively managed issue resolution, devising practical corrective actions to eliminate process inefficiencies.</li> <li>Provided crucial support in guiding products from conceptualization through pilot line production and seamless transition into mass manufacturing.</li> <li>Drove project success by meticulously defining project scopes, effectively managing expenditures against budgets, coordinating with external vendors, and overseeing the seamless installation of new equipment, ensuring the fulfillment of all project requirements.</li> </ul>		
<b>Tesla</b>	<b>Non-Conforming Materials Technician</b>	<b>August 2020- April 2022</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce site scrap cost by ~\$1.3M annualized.</li> <li>Day-to-day coverage of the production line, including rapid response of out-of-control processes.</li> <li>Investigate root causes and repair Non-Conforming Material (NCM), components, or systems.</li> <li>Support implementation of process changes to improve process and product yield.</li> <li>Ensured timely, effective completion of trials by maintaining positive relationships with investigators and other members of the cross-departmental site team.</li> <li>Trained and mentored production associates to develop the necessary skills to support NCM and remanufacturing endeavors.</li> </ul>		

Figure 1.2 Resume of different roles.

In his book *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Peter Northouse (2021) reviews various leadership styles. The chapter on the situational approach was one of the many I connected with. This chapter introduces the SLII Model (see Figure 1.3 below), which has two scales: the



supportive behavior scale S1 – S4 and the directive behavior scale S1 – S4. Each scale has its meaning, and leaders can use the SL scale to evaluate their team members.

Figure 1.3 SLII Model.

A lightbulb came into my head after reading about what Northouse calls the Situation Approach. I realized why my experience as an NCM technician and Associate Process Engineer was so different. As an NCM Technician, Emily guided me through the different phases and the SLII model. My leaders should have guided me when I was an Associate Process Engineer. As a leader, the people on your team will have different skill sets and needs. If you can only be an effective leader with members of your team who are S4, then you are not an effective leader. As an Associate Process Engineer at Tesla, my leader was only practical with S4. I was an S2 to an S3. My leader should have taken more time to develop me and guide me. When I was in NCM, I was an S1, and Emily was able to get me to an S3, and that development helped me to the next level.

My vision in my new role as Production Supervisor is to have the most efficient production team in GFNY. Currently, I am working on getting my team trained across every station on their current production line, and later, they will get trained at every station across the business unit. The goal is to have a versatile team ready for unforeseen circumstances. Alat and Suar (2020) explored leader flexibility in the manufacturing sector, focusing on understanding the nature of uncertainties leaders face and how their attributes facilitate their responses to these situations. Flexible and adaptive leadership theories emphasize the role of individual leader flexibility, focusing on personal traits, spontaneity, intuition, and reflection. Adaptive leadership involves ambidexterity, which depends on the individual manager's ability to balance competing objectives. Micro-adjustments to everyday changes can result in the long-term adaptability of organizations.

There are many moving pieces regarding leadership, which can sometimes be overwhelming and stressful. An inability to adapt to change will result in the team's failure; thus, leaders must be highly flexible. This is even more prevalent in the manufacturing environment,

where many outside factors such as people, equipment, materials, demand, and company direction impact leaders. Adapting while staying one step ahead ensures the team's success and fosters a winning culture.

In my first weeks as Production Supervisor, I noticed people calling out of work, which was outside my control. I cannot always rely on the one person who is a superstar to always come to the aid of the team. If the whole team is versatile at every station, then when people call out, that impact will be minimal. To accomplish this goal, I wait for moments when there is no need to have a high performer working that station. This gives the new operator time to master the station without performing at their best immediately.

With my experience at Tesla, I recognize the value of creating a creative and supportive environment for those around me. Mainemelis, et al. (2015) gathered data from 230 employees and their leaders in an automobile manufacturing company in China. It revealed that proactive behavior partially mediates the influence of creative leadership on employees' creativity. They concluded, "Creative leadership...has a positive attitude toward failure and considers it as an opportunity to learn. Thus, creative leaders are more likely to convey the faith for employees that failures can be overcome, and motivate them to persevere in the face of setbacks" (p, 14).

Similarly, I realized I am currently implementing creative leadership approaches to my team. I always tell my team, especially the production leads, that failure is a part of the process, but having a failure mindset is not. Whenever we miss our daily production goal, I see it as an opportunity for us to be better the next day, and I come up with solutions to ensure our success. One day on the V3 supercharger production line, only two units passed through EOL (end-of-line testing). The team worked a 12-hour shift, so for 12 hours, only two units passed. The impact was minimal because we had a WIP (work in progress) post-EOL. We were still able to hit our daily



goal. The next day, I told my team that every four hours, we should aim for three units past EOL for a total of nine units in a 12-hour shift. The team received the implementation well; they liked that it added some urgency to their day as they worked through testing units. One of my reports told me it is discouraging for them to leave the day or the work week and not hit the goal. I always try to find new opportunities and ways to ensure my team's success.

## **SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE AND RESOURCES**

### **What is Creativity?**

Given that *Sé Monique* is a creative endeavor, it is important to articulate how creativity is defined and conceptualized. For a long time, I thought creativity meant creating art, such as a painting, sculpture, writing, or invention that changed the course of human history. There are innumerable forms of creativity and creative individuals. The notion that creativity is exclusively confined to the arts is a fallacy. We all possess an inherent capacity for innovation, and this creativity permeates all our pursuits. Realizing and embracing this truth is significant and liberating, as it shatters any self-imposed boundaries and motivates us to delve into our creative potential in every facet of life.

Embarking on a two-year personal odyssey, I sought to unravel the enigma of creativity. This voyage led me to a unique understanding. Creativity is not just about producing art or inventing groundbreaking technologies. It is about embracing change, adapting, and learning while perceiving the world in its myriad shades of gray. It is a safe, fun, collaborative, freeing, innovative, and novel process.

Various accomplished scholars have defined creativity over the years, and their work has influenced my philosophy toward creativity. Carayiannis and Gonzalez defined creativity as “Creativity is related to the capacity to imagine, since it requires the creator to perceive future potentials that are not obvious based on current conditions. From a cognitive perspective, creativity is the ability to perceive new connections among objects and concepts—in effect, reordering reality by using a novel framework for organizing perceptions” (Carayiannis et al., E. 2003, p. 11). Their definition captures the core of creativity and imagination; dreaming of

endless possibilities through our life experiences stimulates our creativity. Through those experiences, we find innovations that make our lives easier.

Torrance defined creativity as, “. . . a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, and so on; identifying the difficult; searching for solutions, making guesses or formulating hypotheses about the deficiencies, testing and retesting these hypotheses and possibly modifying and retesting them, and finally communicating the results” (Torrance, 1966, p. 6). This definition captures creativity's adaptability, perseverance, and knowledge-seeking. Our lives are forever changing, and with those changes, we have to adapt if we want to survive. A pivotal part of survival is seeking knowledge. We must learn from past blunders and pursue knowledge and guidance to adapt. Adapting and gaining knowledge helps motivate us to advance when no results have been revealed.

Lastly, Csikszentmihalyi defines creativity as “ a phenomenon that is constructed through an interaction between producers and audience. Creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgments about individuals’ products” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 4). This definition exemplifies the importance of the creative environment and the benefits of having a community to support your creativity. Our environment plays a significant role in our overall success in life. Establishing a strong community of people keeps the energy in the creative process fun and engaging.

Kampylis and Valtanen explored the multifaceted nature of human creativity and the need to redefine it by examining definitions, collocations, and consequences. They reviewed 42 definitions and 120 collocations of creativity. Based on their results, they stressed: “The real challenge is to apply a holistic framework that can bring about a remarkable conceptual change

in the ways that creativity is conceived and practiced. Otherwise, a human being with a creative idea could be a fatal combination particularly when that human has been taught to value and think in a narrow, one-sided way.” (p, 19). In other words, there is a need to redefine creativity and move towards a new era of conscientious creativity. This new era emphasizes creativity's ethical and constructive aspects while considering its potential negative consequences. The document highlights the importance of understanding creative processes and products' intentions, effects, and outcomes. It proposes a three-dimensional analytical framework for investigating the consequences of human creativity. It also emphasizes the need for a more balanced emphasis on both the positive and negative aspects of creativity in scientific research, with your insights playing a crucial role in this balance.

Defining creativity is just the beginning. We must also accept all forms of creativity, as creativity impacts our lives—failure to recognize the different forms clouds our judgment and perception of creativity. One such model, that recognizes that creativity occurs on multiple levels, is the Four C’s of Creativity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009):

1. Mini-C: Transformative Learning
2. Little-C: Everyday Innovation
3. Pro-C: Professional Expertise
4. Big-C: Eminent Accomplishments

Each C has requirements and is defined. For example, “Big-C creativity consists of clear-cut, eminent creative contributions. A qualification for study might be the winning of a prestigious award or being included in an encyclopedia” (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009, p. 5). It is reserved for those creative and revolutionary contributions that live on through the years and cement themselves in history.

Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) characterize little-c as focusing on “everyday activities, such as those creative actions in which the nonexpert may participate each day” (p, 7). They continue, “Too much of a focus on Big-C leads to the ideas that only certain people can be creative, the only creativity that matters is that of the Big-C kind, or that creativity involves negative forms of deviance. Moreover, the category of little-c helps underscore the important (and, at times, essential) role that creativity plays in everyday life and points to the importance of identifying and nurturing creativity in everyday settings such as schools and classrooms, the workplace, and the home and social settings” (p, 8). Little-c creativity helps us improve our everyday routine and keep our creative minds flowing.

Next, “mini-C is the novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions, and events...Central to the definition of mini-c creativity is the dynamic, interpretive process of constructing personal knowledge and understanding within a particular sociocultural context” (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009, p, 9). Mini-C focuses on the interpersonal and process focus of creativity. This can be interpreted as finding/ developing one’s creative potential. The outcome or potential may not always be present. However, “we have the openness to new experiences, active observation, and willingness to be surprised and explore the unknown” (p, 10). Going through one’s natural self-discovery process will open doors for oneself.

Finally, Pro-C in the four Cs of the creativity model refers to one’s professional expertise—the years and decades leading up to an individual Big-C moment. Pro-C recognizes individuals' progression and consistency in learning, adapting, and developing in their respective fields. As one navigates one’s career and life, one accumulates experiences. The accumulated experience gives individuals more confidence to pursue bigger goals.

## **Constraints**

Constraints also influence one's creativity. In *Creativity from Constraints in Engineering Design: Lessons Learned at Coloplast*, the author writes, "In a more pragmatic sense, this points out the important role of constraints in creative processes, but it does not necessarily imply that the more constraints, the better. Creativity and constraints have a dual relationship, as constraints can be both limiting and enabling in creative processes" (Onarheim, 2012). Knowing one's limitations and the resources available to get the desired outcome helps one's creativity and decision-making.

## **The Creative Problem-Solving Process**

Above and beyond definitions and theories of creativity, the creative process has been essential to my approach to Sé Monique. Creative problem solving, or CPS, was introduced to me in *Create in A Flash* (2020) by Dr. Firestien. Dr. Firestien defines creative problem solving as "a simple, repeatable way to take on new challenges and develop innovation solutions that create productive change. CPS is a recipe for deliberate creativity" (p. 30). The process consists of the four steps listed below:

1. Clarify the problem – identify the goal, wish, or challenge. Then, gather all of the data you know about the goal, wish, or challenge.
2. Generate Ideas – generate as many ideas as possible to help solve the goal, wish, or challenge.
3. Develop Solutions – Ideas are evaluated on strengths, weaknesses, potential, and concerns.
4. Plan for Action – create a list of actions to help you execute your goal, wish, or challenge. (p. 31)

The CPS process can be used to solve an extensive array of problems. Expanding from various fields, topics, and decisions (Firestein, 2020). The CPS process can help people solve problems like choosing their career path, relocating to a new city, and starting or growing a business. The different converging and diverging tools help to strengthen the CPS process. Divergent thinking is the process of generating lots of new ideas that are novel, goofy, fun, and exciting. One is thinking outward of all the different possibilities. This can connect to decision-making by examining one's options before deciding. Convergent thinking is the process of selecting, shorting, and refining ideas. After examining the ideas and options, converging on an idea or option becomes easier.

The thinking skills model, displayed in Figure 2.1, is another tool for creative problem-solving.

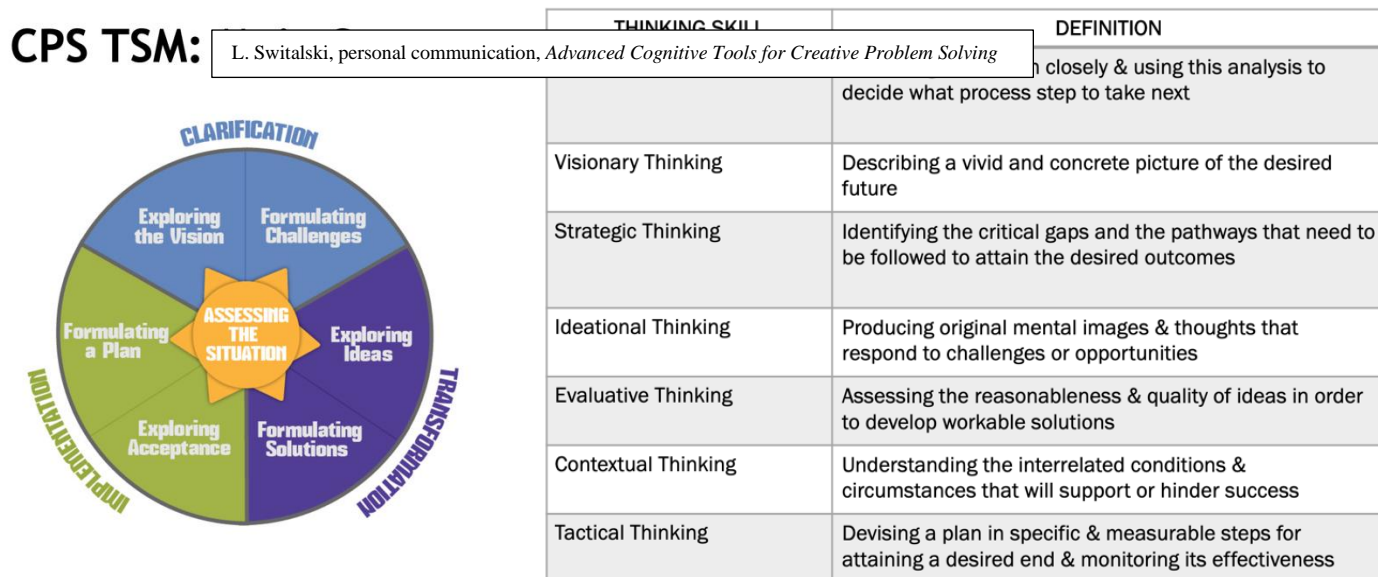


Figure 2.1 Thinking Skills Model.

The Thinking Skills Model (CITE) differs from the CPS FourSight Model (CITE). The affective skills and the sub-skills make the TSM more complex than the FourSight Model. By contrast, the FourSight Model focuses more on the stages and available tools. Knowledge of the thinking skills can help someone new to CPS better understand its structure. They allow for easier and more flexible use of the CPS process without going through the entire process to solve a problem. Each affective skill builds on top of the other, helping individuals throughout the process. The Thinking Skills Model will only be as effective as the affective skills.

### **Creativity Tools**

*Creativity Unbound* (Miller et al., 2007) and *Creativity Rising* (Puccio et al., 2012) offer various creativity tools that can be used during specific steps in any creative process. For example, tools like Empathy Mapping help one view life from a different person's perspective. Individuals can use these tools to enrich their creativity and decision-making.

### **Creative Leadership**

This brings me to creative leadership, specifically creative leadership within the cooking domain. Studying how creative leadership and the creative process are used in the culinary space has been inspiring. Bouty and Stierand (2018) explored the multifaceted practices of creative leadership in haute cuisine, shedding light on leader chefs' diverse roles and practices and their impact on culinary creativity and innovation. Furthermore, the study emphasizes preserving the domain's cultural heritage and knowledge while fostering creativity and innovation within the culinary industry. The authors stated, "Creative leadership aims to realize the creative vision of the leader by fostering the mastery of 'technique, rigor, discipline, professionalism, memory, culture [...] Only if one knows one's traditions and is able to make the classics impeccably, then it is possible to modify them, to invent new dishes'" (2018, p. 16). My key takeaway was these words:



“Creative leadership aims to realize the creative vision of the leader” (2018, p, 16). As I gather leadership experience at Tesla and work on my vision for my life this semester, I realize I can execute my vision. I am the leader of my own life, and as the leader, I need to set the expectation of excellence. If I do not, I will not be able to expect excellence from those around me and lead them to greatness.

Establishing a solid creative environment in my future restaurant will help lay the foundation of excellence. To accomplish this, the creative process is essential when pursuing new gastronomical feats in the culinary realm. Vargas-Sanchez and López-Guzmán (2022) explored culinary processes and experiences in Michelin-starred restaurants and the relationship between the creative process in Michelin-starred restaurants in Spain and the gastronomic experiences they offer. A systematic and formal creative process, as well as the collaborative nature of the creative process, had a significant influence on the types of gastronomic experiences offered by Michelin-starred restaurants. This research emphasizes the importance of formalizing creative processes and promoting a culture of open, participatory, and collective creativity within the establishments. Furthermore, the study recommends systematically defining the business model and enhancing the chef's entrepreneurial role to improve the competitiveness of these high-end restaurants.

Vargas-Sanchez and López-Guzmán conclude, “The explanatory dimensions of the creative process, in the framework of a culinary establishment recognized with Michelin stars, are the following: its spontaneous or informal nature, its systematic or formal character, its predominantly individual nature, or the result of a collective process. In each case, the specific combination of these four variables determines how the gastronomic experience offered is configured” (2022). The variables mentioned here are the principles Michelin-star restaurants use to embark on new gastronomy endeavors. The same principles can also be used in other avenues

of the restaurant business because restaurant owners are always trying to keep up and stay relevant as the market changes.

## **SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN**

### **Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes**

Working for Tesla in various roles, I learned how to create new processes to improve key metrics such as scrap and yield. Translating these skills to Sé Monique, I will establish critical metrics, such as food waste, labor cost, operation cost, and more, to track the success of my business. I will create OKRs (Objective and Key Results) to help advance the business and develop initiatives to meet goals and targets.

Goals:

1. Create a business plan that includes financial projections and a marketing plan.
2. Start my business in a commissary kitchen. This will give me an idea and a feel for restaurant ownership.
3. Create a process.
4. Build efficient systems.
5. Create a positive, uplifting kitchen community.
6. Buy all of the equipment I need.
7. Show WNY how great Haitian food is.

## **Strategic Plan**

My strategic plan includes an outline of short-term, intermediate, and long-term goals (see Tables 1, 2, and 3). I also conducted a SWOT analysis to assess my plan's potential strengths and weaknesses in Table 4.

There are many problems and ideas that I need to work through, such as logos, the website, the starting menu, and the marketing plan. I will use CPS for recipe development and coming up with good logo ideas and great marketing strategies. I plan to start writing down recipes, inviting friends to taste my food, and giving me an honest rating. From there, I will get their feedback and see how to improve the flavors. I want to use the Thinking Skills Model to visualize my business and find inspiration for my logo as a springboard for my marketing strategy.

First, I plan to establish a baseline and gather data, primarily through conversations with experts.

Table 3.1: Short-term plan.

<b><u>Short-term Plan: May 2024 – August 2024</u></b>			
<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Detail</u></b>	<b><u>Target Completion Date:</u></b>	<b><u>Actual Completion Date</u></b>
Complete philosophy paper	This assignment is due for CRS 635	May 6	May 6
Complete masters project	This assignment is due for CRS 690	May 11	
Complete all remaining assignments	Review syllabus and complete all assignments before the end of the semester	May 13	
Complete business plan	Se Monique is my food truck I am launching	May 13	
LLC publication	Call local newspaper and pay for six-week publication for Se Monique	May 8	
Update résumé	Update résumé to reflect my current role as production supervisor at Tesla. Also, update the objective to show my	May 4	May 4

	passion for pursuing the culinary arts		
Apply for restaurant jobs	Find a restaurant that is willing to hire me so I can get some restaurant experience	June 1, 2024	
Attend Ian's celebration party	Ian is having a party celebrating his achievement of getting a job at American Airlines	May 25, 2024	
Se Monique logo	Finalize a logo for Sam Monique	June 10, 2024	
Food trailer acquisition	Purchase a food trailer for Se Monique	August 1, 2024	
Wrap food trailer	Find someone that can wrap the food trailer with the Se Monique logo	August 10, 2024	
Create social media accounts for Se Monique	Share my journey with the world throughout this whole process	June 1, 2024	

Permits	Get all permits needed for Se Monique to launch	August 30, 2024	
---------	---	-----------------	--

*Table 3.2: Intermediate-term plan.*

<b><u>Intermediate-term Plan: August 2024 – August 2025</u></b>			
<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Detail</u></b>	<b><u>Target Completion Date:</u></b>	<b><u>Actual Completion Date</u></b>
Launch Se Monique	Open Se Monique to WNY	September 2, 2024	
Optimize Se Monique	Create efficient systems that operate at a high- level.	October 30, 2024	
Employees	Begin to hire employees to run someone Monique	November 15, 2024	
Pay off debt	Start paying off that I have accumulated	May 2025	
Culinary school	Have the money to pay for culinary school	August 2025	

Table 3.3: Long-term plan.

<b><u>Long-term Plan: September 2025 – September 2029</u></b>			
<b><u>Action</u></b>	<b><u>Detail</u></b>	<b><u>Target Completion Date:</u></b>	<b><u>Actual Completion Date</u></b>
Se Monique	Decide if I am going to sell Se Monique or have someone else run it while I'm away	September 2025	
Culinary school decision	Decide what culinary school I want to attend. ICE, the CIA or La Cordon Blue	September 2025	
Moving	Begin packing all my belongings and move to the cities or country, I will be attending cuddling school.	November 2025	
Start culinary school	Begin attending class in culinary school	January 2026	



Graduate from culinary school	Depending on the school, I go to this could take two years.	May 2028	
Relationship	Throughout this journey, I am hoping to find a partner	Unknown	
Build culinary experience	With the additional knowledge and experience I have acquired. I wish to continue to travel and hone in those skills.	There will never be a completion date for this	

*Table 3.4: 4Ps Analysis of strengths and weaknesses evaluation plan and measuring success.*

<b><u>Person</u></b>	
<b><u>Strengths (Internal)</u></b>	<b><u>Weaknesses (Internal)</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly motivated</li> <li>• Understanding of the creative process</li> <li>• Creative problem-solving</li> <li>• Creative leadership</li> <li>• Ambitious</li> <li>• Driven</li> <li>• Goal oriented</li> <li>• Persistent</li> <li>• Perseverance</li> <li>• Understanding</li> <li>• Strong sense of faith</li> <li>• Strong support system</li> <li>• Believe in my ability to execute</li> <li>• Leadership experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financially limited</li> <li>• No establish network in the culinary field</li> <li>• Zero culinary experience</li> <li>• Optimism</li> <li>• Impatient</li> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Fear of the unknown</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical experience</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Product</u></b>	
<b><u>Positive</u></b>	<b><u>Negative</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Menu for my business plan is already created</li> <li>• Feedback I have received from family and friends have also been positive</li> <li>• The menu reflects the food of my country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I will have to work extremely hard if I want to execute my vision.</li> <li>• I have never worked in a restaurant so I don't know what the kitchen environment is like.</li> <li>• I don't know how to cook at a pace that can keep up with orders coming in.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Process</u></b>	
<b><u>Plusses</u></b>	<b><u>Minuses</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving myself a chance to fulfill a lifelong dream of mine</li> <li>• Four years of experience working at Tesla and developing processes for Tesla</li> <li>• Developing a new identity for myself and the culinary space</li> <li>• Highly intrinsically motivated to pursue this passion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will take several years before I can achieve this goal</li> <li>• Starting to pursue my passion at the age of 27</li> <li>• It will take countless hours for me to catch up to those already in the field and</li> <li>• Getting my skills to a high level of expertise</li> </ul>
<b><u>Place</u></b>	
<b><u>Opportunities (External – Situational/Contextual)</u></b>	<b><u>Threats (External – Situational/Contextual)</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potentially going to culinary school overseas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convincing people to take a chance on my dream</li> </ul>

- Leaving Buffalo, New York
- Meeting and working alongside veterans in the culinary space
- Traveling around the world and tasting and experiencing different cuisines
- Developing myself in new cultures and experiences

- Living in new cities and making friends with new people
- Opportunities will be limited due to my lack of experience and knowledge
- Not being around my support system

### **Evaluation Plan and Measuring Success**

I plan to evaluate my food truck business based on the financial projections stated in the business plan. I will also track my progress and review my sales numbers. There are plenty of data analytics available in the food industry. My goals for the business are apparent and obvious, and I will be able to evaluate myself and track my progress easily. When the business launches, I want to keep a diary. I will write daily entries keeping tabs on my emotional, psychological, and mental state while running the business.

My focus is solely on the food quality versus making a ton of money. I want the business to run efficiently and smoothly with or without me being there. My goals are much bigger than this food truck business, and I am already thinking ahead. If I am not progressing, I will reevaluate everything and chart a path forward. I seek improvement actively, believe in continuous improvement, and hope to grow and learn through this process. There are various tools I could use in CPS and lessons I have learned from Tesla to get back on track. I am confident in success and can handle feedback and criticism well. I will continually seek out resources and help from others. Ultimately, sales and numbers may indicate whether I am doing well, but my ultimate goal is personal growth.

## **SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES**

The significant outcomes include creating the LLC, completing the business plan, networking, mentorship, and financial projections.

### **Business Plan**

First, I developed a business plan for my food truck business. I met with the small business office on campus, and the employees there were beneficial in guiding me and providing me with helpful information. The feedback I received was incredible and reassuring, and I believe that Sé Monique has potential. A draft of my business plan is included in the Appendix.

### **Mentorship**

I contacted several people in the Buffalo State network to gain knowledge and insight to drive my project forward. For example, I met with Karina Loera-Barcenas, a Creativity and Change Leadership program alumni, a former employee of the Small Business Development Center, and Eli Lily. Her expertise in business and entrepreneurship was the primary reason I sought her mentorship. Due to our similar stories, talking to Karina was informative and reassuring; She understood what I attempted to do. I needed to hear Karina's empathy, compassion, and sincerity.

I also spoke with Benjamin Bissell, who has started several businesses, one of them being a consultant company. Ben has worked with several nine nonprofits over the years, and his work led to the development of the West Side Bazaar. Ben has a strong entrepreneurial drive and passion. Ben and his wife are working on a new business importing goods from Taiwan to Buffalo, NY. It was riveting to hear all of Ben's past experiences and his various roles. Ben has helped and advised numerous people throughout his various business endeavors. Ben shared with me some helpful tips and some wise advice, including grants I should apply for as a small

business, contacts who have done what I am trying to do, nonprofit organizations specialize in helping small businesses, and a new insight on entrepreneurship.

Talking with both Ben and Karina validated my feelings and anxiety toward entrepreneurship; they reminded me that these feelings are a part of the process and that I am on the right path. Managing my emotions has been incredibly challenging throughout this whole process. The uncertainty of pursuing my passion and interest clouds my judgment and emotions. Nevertheless, I feel better knowing Ben and Karina have also gone through this and have no regrets.





## SECTION FIVE: KEY LEARNINGS

Working on this project has taught me new and strengthened lessons I had already learned. I am genuinely grateful for this experience and the learning that took place, including:

1. **The Importance of Optimism:** Initially, I underestimated the complexity of the process, assuming it would be straightforward. Looking back, I see my naïveté and am grateful and appreciative of my optimism, which led me to make courageous and bold decisions. So far, I have no regrets. I have remained positive throughout this journey.
2. **The Ability to Adapt:** My ability to adapt has been tested throughout this journey. Multiple changes took place simultaneously. I started a leadership role halfway through the semester. I worked on the business plan, created the LLC, completed my assignments, met the expectations of the organizations I am a part of, and took time for myself. This semester was packed full of change, and I handled it well.
3. **Support is Crucial:** The community I have is looking out for me. None of this would have been possible for me to start without the people in my community supporting me. I have met some incredible people who have agreed to meet with me, share their experiences, and offer me sound advice. Embarking on this journey highlighted the importance of having a strong community. I would be lost if I did not have these people helping me and wanting my best interest. So many opportunities have been given to me. My community makes it easier to pursue my passion.
4. **Faith:** My faith in God has allowed me to believe in what I am creating. I am thankful for the many opportunities and blessings I have received. With each new blessing, I feel more prepared to execute my vision. I have been attending Bible study and Sunday service every

Sunday. Learning the word and worshiping the Lord in my church community help keep me grounded and patient for what is to come.

## **SECTION SIX: CONCLUSION**

So much has happened in my life these past two years pursuing this degree. Now that I am at the finish line, I am grateful to have gone on this journey while pursuing my master's in Creativity and Change Leadership. The journey makes sense now, and I have the resources and tools to prepare for what is coming.

At first, the plan was to launch my Food truck business at the start of June, but now, the start date has been pushed back to Labor Day weekend. This is the best thing to do, and waiting will help me become a better chef and business owner. I have accepted all the changes that come with pursuing my passion and am grateful for all the learning opportunities. Going through all of this has taught me that there is not a conclusion at any time soon. I will continue to work on this and improve upon what I started. This is what I see myself until the very end.

## References

- Alat, P., & Suar, D. (2020). Flexible leadership in the manufacturing sector. *International Journal of Organization Theory & Behavior*, 23(1), 23-42. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijotb-08-2018-0093>
- Balder Onarheim (2012). Creativity from constraints in engineering design: lessons learned at Coloplast, *Journal of Engineering Design*, 23(4), 323–336, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09544828.2011.631904>
- Bouty, I., Gomez, M. L., & Stierand, M. (2018). The creative leadership practices of haute cuisine chefs. In Mainemelis, C., Epitropaki, & Kark, R. (Eds.), *Creative leadership* (pp. 156-170). Routledge.
- Carayiannis, E., & Gonzalez, E. 2003). Creativity and Innovation = Competitiveness? When, how, and why. In L. V. Shavinina (Ed.), *The international handbook on innovation (1st ed.)*, pp. 587-604) <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-008044198-6/50040-1>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 313-338). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511807916.018>
- Firestien, R. L. (2020). *Create in a flash : A leader's recipe for breakthrough innovation*. Green Tractor Publishing.
- Firestien, R.L. (1998). *Why didn't I think of that? A personal and professional guide to better ideas and decision-making*. Williamsville, NY: Innovation Resources, Inc.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Beghetto, R. A. (2009). Beyond big and little: The Four C Model of Creativity. *Review of General Psychology*, 13(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0013688>

- Mainemelis, C., Kark, R., & Epitropaki, O. (2015). Creative leadership: A multi-context conceptualization. *Academy of Management Annals*, 9(1), 393-482  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/19416520.2015.1024502>
- Miller, Blair., Vehar, J. R., & Firestien, R. L. (2004). *Creativity unbound : An introduction to creative process* (4th edition). THinc Communications.
- Rita, P., Vong, C., Pinheiro, F. & Mimoso, J. (2022). A sentiment analysis of Michelin-starred restaurants. *European Journal of Management and Business Economics* 32(3), 276-295.
- Peter G. Northouse (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice (9th edition)*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Pettitt, Edward D., "Robert L. Bailey's Disciplined Creativity Process for Engineers Compared to the Creative Problem-solving Process" (2002). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 22. <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/22>
- Pettitt, Edward D., "Robert L. Bailey's Disciplined Creativity Process for Engineers Compared to the Creative Problem-solving Process" (2002). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 22. <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/22>
- Puccio, G. J. (2012). *Creativity rising: Creative thinking and creative problem solving in the 21st century*. ICSC Press, International Center for Studies in Creativity.
- Puccio, G. J., Mance, Marie., & Murdock, Mary. (2011). *Creative leadership : Skills that drive change* (2edition.). SAGE.
- Standen, Penelope J., "Fueling the Passion: Creating a Department Vision, Understanding and Improving a Workplace Creative Climate." (2007). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 103. <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/103>

- Standen, Penelope J., "Fueling the Passion: Creating a Department Vision, Understanding and Improving a Workplace Creative Climate." (2007). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 103. <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/103>
- Switalski, Laura B., "Evaluating and Organizing Thinking Tools in Relationship to the CPS Framework" (2003). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. Paper 27.
- Torrance, E. P. (1966). Torrance test on creative thinking: Norms- Technical Manual Research Edition. Princeton NJ: Personnel Press. Inc.
- Wirth, Christine, "A Journey in Transforming My Passion into Reality: Creating a Business Based on Artwork" (2006). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 76. <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/76>
- Wirth, Christine, "A Journey in Transforming My Passion into Reality: Creating a Business Based on Artwork" (2006). Creative Studies Graduate Student Master's Projects. 76. <https://digitalcommons.buffalostate.edu/creativeprojects/76>

Appendix A

Business Plan

# Se Monique

Business Plan

May 2024

Address

Phone/Fax

Website/E-Mail



# Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Company Description	3
Product/Services	4
Market & Competition	5
Marketing & Promotion	6
Management & Advisors	7
Financials	8
Attachments	10



## Executive Summary

---

Sé Monique's Caribbean Food Truck brings the vibrant flavors and rich culinary heritage of the Caribbean to the streets of Buffalo, New York. With a unique fusion concept that combines traditional Caribbean dishes with international influences, Sé Monique's offers a tantalizing array of mouthwatering entrees and sides that are sure to delight food enthusiasts and adventurous eaters alike.

Our mission is simple: to provide customers with an exceptional dining experience that transports them to the sun-soaked shores and bustling markets of the Caribbean. From our flavorful Haitian Chicken Stew to our crispy Fried Pork (Griyo) and savory Jamaican Oxtail, every dish at Sé Monique's is crafted with care and attention to detail, using only the freshest ingredients and time-honored recipes passed down through generations.

### Market Opportunity:

Buffalo boasts a diverse and thriving food scene, yet the demand for authentic Caribbean cuisine remains underserved. Sé Monique's aims to fill this gap by providing customers with a taste of the islands in a convenient and accessible format.

### Looking Ahead:

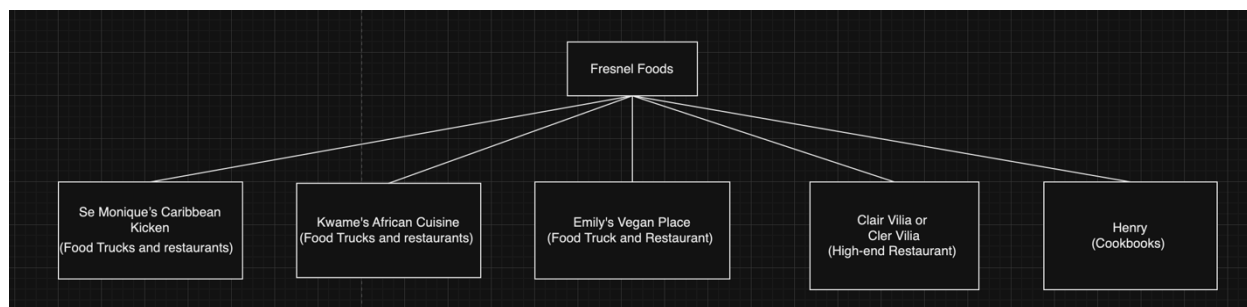
As Sé Monique's embarks on its journey to become a beloved fixture in the Buffalo food scene, we are committed to upholding our core values of authenticity, quality, and customer satisfaction. With a clear vision, innovative concept, and unwavering dedication to excellence, Sé Monique's is poised to carve out a distinctive presence and leave a lasting impression on the culinary landscape of Buffalo, New York, and beyond.

## Company Description

---

Fresnel Foods aims to tap into culinary gems and bring them to the forefront of mainstream media. There are so many different cultures, each with its own cuisine and cooking styles/methods. Food brings us closer to each other, and when we consume food from a different culture, we learn their history and show gratitude with each bite.

Fresnel Foods will use various outlets/brands to express different culinary experiences. Each brand will focus on one region and target a particular dining/culinary experience. This business plan is for Sé Monique. Sé Monique is an LLC DBA, and this is the first one in the business. I, Clivens Fresnel, will own Sé Monique and all other brands.



Sé Monique's Caribbean Kitchen will kickstart the Fresnel Food empire. Sé Monique's will start as a food truck; this will help lay the foundation and establish our business operation/systems, marketing strategies, employee development plan, custom feedback, and regional presence. Sé Monique will travel to different college campuses, events, hospitals, and corporate buildings in Erie County and western NY. Sé Monique will go where the people are to build a trusting relationship. When Sé Monique's systems are established and meet our efficacy standard, the goal will be to open up another truck and later have a storefront location in Buffalo, NY.

The communities in the western NY area would benefit from the exposure to this new cuisine. Sé Monique would introduce foods like Griyo (fried pork cubes), a Haitian cuisine staple. The crunch from the crispy skins and the soft tender pork fat makes for a wonderful combination. Or Haitian-style baked ziti. This pasta dish has rich, creamy bechamel sauce mixed with amazing ground beef ragu. Sé Monique's will offer this and more. Our great menu would be convenient for the communities in WNY because of the mobility our food truck will have.

This process will be the same for Kwame's African Cuisine and Emily's Vegan Place. Both restaurants will start as food trucks and slowly build a strong client base before expanding and having their own storefront locations. When Sé Monique's Caribbean Kitchen, Kwame's African Cuisine, and Emily's Vegan Place are established and systems are optimized to a world-class restaurant standard, we aim to franchise and move into different regions in New York State.

As the business grows and our culinary skills are strengthened and honed to perfection, then Clair Vilia will be born. Clair Vilia will deliver a fine dining experience the world has never seen. Capturing different worldly food and bringing together culture, music, and history. The feeling customers will feel will be the same as eating their grandmother's homemade dinner.

Key Highlights:

1. **Unique Fusion Concept:** Sé Monique's sets itself apart by offering a fusion of traditional Caribbean flavors with international influences, providing customers with a culinary journey that tantalizes the taste buds.
2. **Convenience and Accessibility:** Our food truck brings the flavors of the Caribbean directly to the streets of Buffalo, offering convenient and accessible dining options for customers on the go.
3. **Commitment to Quality:** Sé Monique's prides itself on using the freshest ingredients and time-honored recipes passed down through generations, ensuring every dish is bursting with authenticity and flavor.
4. **Engaging Customer Experience:** From our vibrant branding and social media presence to our friendly and attentive service, Sé Monique's is dedicated to creating memorable experiences that keep customers coming back for more.
5. **Engagement:** Sé Monique's fosters a sense of community and connection through engaging customer experiences, vibrant branding, and active participation in local events and festivals.
6. **Authenticity:** Sé Monique's is committed to preserving the authenticity and integrity of Caribbean cuisine, delivering dishes that are true to their cultural roots and bursting with flavor.
7. **Growth Potential:** With a clear vision, innovative concept, and strategic marketing plan in place, Sé Monique's is poised for growth and success in the burgeoning Buffalo food scene.

## Products & Services

---

Sé Monique's offers a variety of authentic dishes in a convenient, fast-casual environment. Sé Monique's also provides a delicious meal for customers who want to stay and enjoy the ambiance with family and friends.

The Sé Monique's is menu below:

Main Entrees:

**Chicken with Rice and Beans** - Haitian Chicken Stew typically begins with marinating chicken pieces in a mixture of aromatic herbs and spices. After marinating, the chicken is typically browned in a pot to develop rich caramelization and deepen the flavor profile. It is then simmered in a flavorful tomato-based sauce, often made with a combination of tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, and additional spices such as paprika, cumin, and cinnamon. This sauce is where the magic happens, as the flavors meld together to create a robust and aromatic base for the stew.

**Fried Pork (Griyo) with Rice and Beans** - The pork for Griyo is marinated in a blend of spices and citrus juices, such as sour orange or lime, which tenderizes the meat and imparts a tangy and aromatic flavor. After marinating, the pork is typically fried until crispy and golden brown, resulting in succulent and flavorful meat with a crispy exterior.

**Oxtail with Rice and Beans** - The preparation of Jamaican Oxtail typically begins with marinating the oxtail pieces in a mixture of herbs, spices, and seasonings. This marinade infuses the meat with layers of flavor and helps to tenderize it, ensuring a melt-in-your-mouth texture once cooked. After marinating, the oxtail is browned in a pot to develop rich caramelization and deepen the flavor profile. It is then simmered in a flavorful beef broth and other aromatics. Butter beans are added, adding a creamy texture and extra heartiness to the stew. The Oxtail is slow-cooked over low heat for several hours until the meat is tender and falls off the bone, allowing the flavors to meld together and create a robust and savory dish.

Sides:

**Baked Ziti** - is a delightful fusion dish that combines traditional Haitian flavors with Italian culinary influences. The preparation of Haitian Baked Ziti typically begins with cooking ziti pasta until al dente, then draining and setting it aside. In a separate pan, ground beef is browned with a medley of aromatic and spices. This savory meat mixture forms the hearty base of the dish, infusing it with rich flavor and depth. Next, a flavorful tomato sauce is prepared. This sauce is simmered until thick and aromatic, then combined with the cooked ziti pasta and meat mixture, ensuring that every bite is packed with flavor.

Once the pasta, meat, and béchamel sauce are thoroughly combined, the mixture is transferred to a baking dish and topped with a generous layer of grated cheese. The dish is then baked in the oven until the cheese is melted. The flavors have melded together to create a comforting and satisfying meal.

**Sloppy Zoe's** - The ground beef is browned with a medley of aromatic and spices. This savory meat mixture forms the hearty base of the dish, infusing it with rich flavor and depth. Next, a flavorful tomato sauce is prepared. This sauce is simmered until thick and aromatic, then

combined with the cooked ziti pasta and meat mixture, ensuring that every bite is packed with flavor. To serve, the Sloppy Zoe's mixture is spooned onto hamburger buns, which are often lightly toasted to provide a bit of crunch and structure to the sandwich. The bun is then topped with the other half and served immediately, allowing diners to enjoy the sandwich while it's still warm and gooey.

<b>Sé Monique's</b>	
<b>\$13</b>	<b>Chicken with Rice and Beans</b>
<b>\$15</b>	<b>Fried Pork (Griyo) with Rice and Beans (coming Soon)</b>
<b>\$20</b>	<b>Oxtail with Rice and Beans</b>
<b>\$5</b>	<b>Baked Ziti</b>
<b>\$10</b>	<b>Sloppy Zoe's</b>

# Market & Competition

---

## Overview:

The market for Caribbean cuisine in the Buffalo, New York area exhibits a growing demand, fueled by a diverse population seeking flavorful and culturally rich dining experiences. Buffalo boasts a vibrant food scene, with residents and visitors embracing various culinary offerings. However, the Caribbean food niche remains relatively underserved, presenting a lucrative opportunity for a Caribbean food truck to capture market share.

## Target Market:

The target market for our Caribbean food truck primarily consists of individuals seeking authentic Caribbean flavors, convenience, and affordability. Our ideal customers are residents and workers in the Buffalo metropolitan area, particularly those with adventurous palates and a penchant for bold, spicy dishes. Demographically, our target customers span various age groups, with a focus on millennials and Generation X, who are known for their openness to diverse cuisines and culinary experiences. They are likely urban dwellers residing in neighborhoods with a mix of residential and commercial establishments, such as downtown Buffalo, Elmwood Village, and Allentown.

## Market Demographics:

1. Age: Primarily millennials and Generation X, aged 25-45, with a growing interest from younger demographics as well.
2. Location: Urban areas of Buffalo, including downtown, Elmwood Village, Allentown, and surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Occupation: Diverse range of professionals, students, and residents seeking quick and satisfying dining options.
4. Lifestyle: Adventurous food enthusiasts, multicultural families, and individuals with a preference for authentic and flavorful international cuisine.
5. Competitive Landscape: Currently, the Caribbean food scene in Buffalo is limited, with only a handful of restaurants offering authentic Caribbean cuisine. The main competitors in the market include:

**Daddy's Plants & Kitchen:** While primarily a vegan and vegetarian restaurant, Daddy's Plants & Kitchen incorporates Caribbean flavors into its menu, catering to health-conscious individuals seeking plant-based alternatives.

**Reggae Hut:** A traditional Jamaican restaurant offering a variety of classic Caribbean dishes, including jerk chicken, oxtail, and curry goat.

**Jerk's Niagara Falls:** Located in nearby Niagara Falls, Jerk's serves authentic Jamaican fare, attracting customers from the Buffalo area seeking a taste of the Caribbean.

## Points of Differentiation:

As a Caribbean food truck, we offer unique attributes that set us apart from our competitors:

1. **Mobility:** Our food truck provides flexibility in reaching various locations across Buffalo, including popular events, festivals, and office parks.
2. **Convenience:** With our mobile service, customers can enjoy freshly prepared Caribbean dishes without the constraints of traditional restaurant dining.
3. **Authenticity:** We pride ourselves on using traditional Caribbean recipes and high-quality ingredients to deliver an authentic culinary experience reminiscent of the islands.
4. **Innovation:** Our menu features a fusion of classic Caribbean flavors with modern twists, appealing to adventurous foodies seeking new and exciting culinary experiences.

#### Comparative Analysis:

##### Main Entrees:

Sé Monique's offers a selection of authentic Caribbean dishes, including Chicken with Rice and Beans, Fried Pork (Griyo) with Rice and Beans, and Oxtail with Rice and Beans. These dishes showcase Haitian and Jamaican culinary traditions, featuring marinated meats cooked in flavorful sauces served with rice and beans.

In comparison, Reggae Hut and Jerk's Niagara Falls predominantly focus on Jamaican cuisine, offering similar dishes such as jerk chicken, oxtail, and curry goat. While Sé Monique's menu offers a broader range of Caribbean flavors, including Haitian-inspired dishes like Griyo.

##### Sides:

Sé Monique's provides sides like Baked Ziti, adding a unique fusion twist by combining traditional Haitian flavors with Italian influences. This offers customers a diverse array of options beyond traditional Caribbean sides.

Reggae Hut and Jerk's Niagara Falls may offer traditional Caribbean sides like plantains, festival, or rice and peas, but they may lack fusion dishes like Baked Ziti.

##### Pricing:

Sé Monique's prices its main entrees competitively, with Chicken with Rice and Beans priced at \$13, Fried Pork (Griyo) with Rice and Beans at \$15, and Oxtail with Rice and Beans at \$20. These prices are comparable to or slightly lower than similar dishes at other Caribbean restaurants in the area.

The side dishes at Sé Monique's, such as Baked Ziti, are priced reasonably at \$5, providing customers with affordable options to complement their main meals. In comparison, Reggae Hut and Jerk's Niagara Falls may have similar pricing for their main dishes, but they may not offer fusion dishes like Baked Ziti.

Overall, Sé Monique's stands out in the Buffalo Caribbean food scene by offering a diverse menu that combines traditional Caribbean flavors with unique fusion twists, catering to a wide range of tastes and preferences. Additionally, its competitive pricing and commitment to authenticity position it as a compelling option for customers seeking a memorable Caribbean dining experience.

# Marketing & Promotions

---

## Brand Identity:

1. Develop a strong brand identity that reflects the vibrant and flavorful Caribbean cuisine offered by Sé Monique's.
2. Create a memorable logo and visually appealing branding materials that convey the essence of Caribbean culture and cuisine.
3. Ensure consistency in branding across all marketing channels, including social media, website, and physical signage on the food truck.

## Social Media Marketing:

1. Utilize popular social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to promote Sé Monique's and engage with customers.
2. Regularly post high-quality photos and videos of the food truck, menu items, and behind-the-scenes moments to showcase the authenticity and deliciousness of the cuisine.
3. Run targeted advertising campaigns on social media to reach potential customers in the Buffalo area, focusing on demographics such as food enthusiasts, young professionals, and local event attendees.

## Local Events and Festivals:

1. Participate in local food festivals, farmers markets, and community events to increase visibility and attract a diverse audience.
2. Offer special promotions or discounts for attendees of these events to encourage trial and repeat visits.
3. Collaborate with event organizers and other vendors to cross-promote Sé Monique's and create buzz around the food truck.

## Partnerships and Collaborations:

1. Form partnerships with local businesses, such as breweries, coffee shops, or retail stores, to host pop-up events or cross-promotional activities.
2. Collaborate with food bloggers, influencers, and local media outlets to generate positive reviews and coverage of Sé Monique's.
3. Explore opportunities for catering and corporate events by networking with event planners, businesses, and organizations in the Buffalo area.

## Loyalty Programs and Referral Incentives:



1. Implement a loyalty program to reward repeat customers and encourage customer retention.
2. Offer referral incentives, such as discounts or freebies, to customers who refer friends and family to Sé Monique's.
3. Collect customer feedback and testimonials to continuously improve the dining experience and build customer trust and loyalty.

#### Online Ordering:

1. Partner with existing food delivery platforms to offer online ordering and delivery services for Sé Monique's.
2. Provide convenient options for customers to place orders ahead of time and track the location of the food truck in real time.
3. Offer exclusive promotions and discounts for customers who download the app or order online, further incentivizing digital engagement.

#### Community Engagement:

1. Engage with the local community through charitable initiatives, sponsorships, and participation in community events and fundraisers.
2. Show appreciation for loyal customers by hosting customer appreciation events or offering special perks for regulars.
3. To foster a positive reputation and build trust with the community, actively listen to customer feedback and respond promptly to inquiries, concerns, and suggestions.

By implementing these marketing and promotion strategies, Sé Monique's aims to establish a strong presence in the Buffalo food scene, attract a loyal customer base, and drive growth and success for the Caribbean food truck business.

## Management & Advisors

---

Clivens Fresnel - Member

I am Clivens Anthony Fresnel, I am a first-generation Haitian immigrant. I moved to Brooklyn, NY, when I was three years old. Food is at the center of Haitian culture. As a kid, my grandmother taught me how to cook, and I instantly liked cooking. Learning to cook Haitian food brought me closer to Haitian culture and was a great creative outlet. I had many interests when I was younger and ultimately decided to go the engineering route. I graduated from SUNY Buffalo State College in 2020 with a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering Technology. Shortly after, I began working at Tesla as an NCM. I am now an Associate Process Engineer at Tesla and was recently hired as a Production supervisor.

I have learned a lot working for Tesla in my various roles. I can develop and create new processes to help improve key metrics such as scrap and yield for Tesla. I know these skills will translate into Fresnel Foods. I will create and use key metrics, such as food waste, labor cost, operation cost, and more, to track the success of my business. I will create OKRs (Objective and Key Results) designed to help advance the business forward and create initiatives to meet goals and targets. I will use all my experience over the years to ensure Fresnel Foods's success.

Two years ago, I decided to return to SUNY Buffalo State to get my master's in Creativity and Change leadership. I graduate this upcoming May. This degree has taught me a lot, such as the CPS (creative problem-solving) process. I am a more effective problem solver, and I can turn my ideas into reality. SUNY Buffalo State offers a wide range of opportunities and resources. The small business office is one of them, and they have assisted in getting Fresnel off the ground.

I know my path is unorthodox compared to the conventional path. That is exactly why I feel so strongly about this. Throughout my journey, a strong passion for food and cooking has developed. My backup plan was always to become a chef, but unfortunately, I never failed at being an engineer. I feel like my path has led me to this point. I am ready to pursue my culinary passion.

Lendl Charles – CFO and Marketing

Lendl Charles has a master's degree in economics from SUNY Buffalo State University. He is well-versed in business, marketing, cost-benefit analysis, and leadership. He started a car dealership during COVID-19 and is now expanding the business to include car rentals, detailing, warping, mechanics, and more. He is an exceptional leader and is leading a team at Tesla in the battery remanufacturing department for lines 3/Y. In 2019, Lendl taught himself how to navigate the stock market and became a day trader in 2020 while finishing his bachelor's degree in marketing at SUNY Buffalo State. He manages his portfolio, which is valued at an estimated \$75,000.00.

Lendl knowledge is incredible, and he is very business-minded. His accolades is small in comparison to who he is as a person. Lendl is a god-fearing man who keeps his friends and family close. He has a strong sense of integrity, his moral compass can't be bought, and he is an excellent judge of character. Lendl isn't afraid to speak his mind, and he does so while being respectful to others. He doesn't shy away from helping others and is always willing to lend a helping hand, even to those who are envious of his success. Any business will be successful with Lendl being apart of it.

## Financials

---

With conservative estimates projecting steady revenue growth and profitability within the first two years of operation, Sé Monique's presents a compelling investment opportunity for potential stakeholders. By leveraging existing investments efficiently and implementing strategic marketing and promotion initiatives, Sé Monique's aims to achieve its financial objectives while delivering exceptional value to customers and investors alike.

Please reference the attached file with the financial projection for Sé Monique's Caribbean food truck in Buffalo, New York, covering the first two years of operation:

### Break-Even Analysis:

The break-even point is estimated to be around \$ in annual revenue for Year 1 and \$ for Year 2. This means Sé Monique's needs to generate at least this amount in sales to cover all expenses and reach profitability.

### Cash Flow Analysis:

Cash flow projections indicate that Sé Monique's will maintain positive cash flow throughout both years of operation, with sufficient funds to cover operating expenses and investments in inventory and equipment.

In summary, Sé Monique's aims to limit startup capital by utilizing existing investments efficiently, generate revenue quickly by offering a unique and desirable product, achieve profitability within the first two years, and provide a good return to investors. The business is seeking financing primarily through equity investment, with a goal of repaying loans on time and offering investors a favorable return on their investment.

## Attachment

---

This is where you can put any additional information that doesn't quite fit into the body of your plan. For example, you might want to include press clippings, advertisements, your catalog or additional product sketches – anything that adds to your plan and strengthens your case for why your business is a good investment.

**Permission to place this Project in the Digital Commons Online**

I hereby grant permission to the Department of Creativity and Change Leadership, Center for Applied Imagination at Buffalo State University permission to place a digital copy of this master's Project (insert title) as an online resource.

*Clivens Anthony Fresnel*

---

Name

05/19/2024

---

Date