

CASE STUDY: Kuumba Barbados – Cultural Branding & Hospitality Business Strategy for a Caribbean Culinary Experience

Client: Kuumba Restaurants (Expansion Concept: Kuumba Barbados)

Project Duration: 2.5 Months (Summer 2023)

Role: Cultural Strategist, Business Plan Developer, Brand Identity Consultant

Tools Used: Google Workspace, Canva, PowerPoint, Adobe Illustrator

Overview

Kuumba Barbados is a visionary culinary and hospitality concept developed as a subsidiary of Kuumba Restaurants. Inspired by Afro-Caribbean heritage, the concept was designed to merge cultural tourism, sustainable dining, and heritage preservation into a single experiential destination. I was connected with a commercial property owner in Barbados to develop a full business plan and brand blueprint that could serve both as a roadmap for launch and a pitch to investors, tourism boards, and international partners.

Objectives

1. **Design a Scalable Business Plan** for launching a flagship location in Barbados.
2. **Develop a Brand Strategy** rooted in Afro-Diasporic food and cultural values.
3. **Align the Concept with Barbados' National Development Goals** in tourism, sustainability, and culture.
4. **Create Marketing and Investment Materials** for funders, government agencies, and cultural partners.

Strategic Approach

1. Market & Cultural Research

- Analyzed Barbados' hospitality industry trends, real estate feasibility, and diaspora investment patterns.
- Researched cultural sites, culinary traditions, and potential partnerships with local artisans and farmers.
- Mapped alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals and Barbados 2040 tourism strategy.

2. Business Model Development

- Proposed a hybrid model: restaurant, event space, artist residency, and cultural boutique.
- Designed multiple revenue streams: dining, catering, culinary workshops, cultural packages, and branded merchandise.

- Created 3-year financial projections, break-even analysis, and staffing models.

3. Brand & Visual Identity

- Crafted a brand story reflecting the “7th Principle of Kwanzaa” — Kuumba (Creativity).
- Designed logo and mood board showcasing Afro-Caribbean aesthetics, ancestral textiles, and tropical color palettes.
- Developed sample menu concepts that merged traditional Bajan fare with global soul fusion.

4. Strategic Communications

- Outlined messaging for international and regional stakeholders including the Barbados Tourism Board, CARICOM cultural liaisons, and Black travel networks.
- Proposed a phased launch strategy: soft brand build-up via social media, pop-ups, and cultural exchanges in NYC, DC, and Toronto.
- Created a pitch deck for diaspora investors and cultural entrepreneurs.

Results & Impact

Key Deliverables:

- 35+ Page Investor Business Plan
- Cultural Brand Identity System
- Strategic Pitch Deck & Menu Concepts
- Partnership Development Framework

Outcomes (as of early 2024):

- Shared in two cultural entrepreneurship circles focused on Afro-Caribbean food sovereignty.
- Under review by two Barbados-based hospitality consultants for site feasibility.
- Attracted preliminary interest from diaspora tourism cooperatives in the U.S. and Canada.

Reflections

Kuumba Barbados represents a fusion of heritage, hospitality, and economic vision. This case allowed me to apply **cultural communications, place-based branding, and sustainable business strategy** in a real-world framework that could be adapted across the Global Black Diaspora.