

# Keeping Our Babies Fed

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Transcript

IPS/BAS 495 Undergraduate Capstone Projects

Summer 2022

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Hello, this is my final capstone presentation. I'm Nicole Collins, mother, grandmother, aunt, and friend. My capstone project is something I'm passionate about, as it could have directly affected me, had it happened 12 years sooner. But it's affecting me indirectly as a grandmother and friend to those with wee ones still dependent on formula.

Keeping Our Babies Fed is an outreach into our community to help those affected by the formula shortage crisis happening worldwide. Together, we can make a difference in providing information in regard to the crisis: what it looks like, where the hope lies, and when we could possibly expect to see brighter days.

We could keep each other informed about a variety of safe measures to feed our babies, such as relying on whole milk, asking for samples at the pediatrician's office, or connecting with a mother who just happens to have a growing supply of breast milk in her freezer.

We have the power to help each other by sharing locations of stores with a fresh supply of formula, in acknowledging which stores people should avoid on any given day, to save time as they scour for the spare supply.

The goal is to help each other, as helping one another is vital during this crisis. And even if it doesn't affect someone directly, it surely affects everyone indirectly in one way or another. This project is a community effort to share a wealth of knowledge and to provide support to one another in a time of need.

The work that I did on my capstone project utilized what I know as a mother and grandmother to be a struggle. This awareness of fear, anxiety, and frustration is what led me to develop simpler ways for those affected by the formula shortage to find what they need, whether that's formula, breast milk, other alternatives, or simply answers.

I am well aware of how hard it is to take care of your children under the best of circumstances. This crisis poses additional stress on parents. Keeping your children safe and healthy is a top priority to most parents, and I empathize with their situation.

I've been in a situation that has caused stress and worry, and I understand it. I'm currently aware of the needs of my stakeholders and the factors that are affecting the shortage, causing so much angst. Through my research and development of my project, I was able to provide solutions, informations, and alternatives to help eliminate some of their worries.

Motivation to help one another is the key factor that helped get this project off the ground. Knowing that with a simple share, or posting just one picture, could make the difference to someone was enough to get others involved. Addressing the issue as I did considers the emotional intelligence of my audience.

I am empathetic to their needs and their stress. I understand that the issue is far deeper than locating a can of formula, though that is the number-one priority. They searched for answers, and in one place, they were able to find the knowledge they were looking for.

Through my own fear from a past experience, I found the motivation to provide up-to-date information and alternatives to help these members out. Searching the internet is both exhausting and annoying. Everyone has an opinion about everything.

But knowing that there is someone out there who cares enough to weave through the overabundance of information helps people to prepare and make decisions that are best for their families. I took the time to find a problem that was plaguing my community and figured out why it is happening.

From there, I looked at the issue through different lenses in order to determine what was needed to meet the needs of those I set out to help. I figured out by researching how I could reach people quickly and efficiently, and thus settled on a Facebook group.

This tactic was a great way to start with one, and to grow from there, through shares, word-of-mouth, and interaction. Thinking outside the box and applying what has been known to work to a current problem has been the way I have incorporated the creative framework into my project.

I wouldn't say that Facebook groups in themselves are unique, but being able to help my community, and knowing that the group itself offers the ability to help people worldwide, is unique. I currently have people involved from Oregon, Mountain Home, and even up in the mountains, and everywhere in between.

Imagine the possibilities and the distance we could cover if shared with the right people. Innovation was key in making sure I chose a project that was something I was passionate about, something that could help others, and something that would be a game-changer.

I listed out a bunch of mega ideas, and from there I narrowed down my selection. I then had to decide on the best way to get started in order to share this project with people I didn't even know. I then had to decide what direction to take my project.

I decided to count on word-of-mouth and sharing my group with friends and family, and asking for their support in order to reach people who need the service. I think that my solution is more innovative because I have the power to reach so many. I have just begun to explore the realms of those I can reach and help.

At first, I thought this might just be a project for us here in the Treasure Valley. But as I work on it, I realized that people back east or overseas could benefit from it too. I provided articles on the status of the crisis, allowing parents to know what they can expect for the situation.

I, along with others, have taken pictures of formula shelves around the area to help parents find what they're looking for. This project provided a place for families and friends to interact on a personal level, regarding their struggles.

Through the project, I was able to bring together a group of people who needed help, and those who were able to offer help. Those who joined were able to meet some new individuals and make some remarkable connections.

I can't really see a negative impact that my project had, except maybe a little false hope in finding what was needed. Since the group didn't grow as quickly as I had anticipated, the offerings and connections weren't as large as I had imagined they would be.

I feel as if the positive impact and the little bit of help that was provided completely outweighs the negative, and if given more time, I believe this could be a popular network to help one another while this shortage is happening. I decided that I could gather people from within the community to help one another in need.

I learned that, even though Facebook groups are a great way to spread the word and get people interested, I need to spread awareness outside of Facebook itself. I now understand that not everything on the internet catches on as one might hope, and I learned that there are different ways that I could have approached my project and goal.

In the short time that I worked on this project, I found both success and failures. When I realized my original approach wasn't working as planned, I changed course a little to spread the word. I stepped outside of Facebook and brought in a few more members to help with the community effort through other social platforms and other internet sources.

I believe there were many who were able to benefit from this project. The mother who lost her child but had a ton of frozen breast milk to share was able to find the connection within my group. A couple of moms who were given formula that their children wouldn't or couldn't use found others who were looking for that particular brand, or were willing to try it.

I had conversations with family members and friends of those struggling, and they shared the information of where to find formula, as posted within the group. I had members posting pictures and articles for others to benefit from as well. I acquired skills and creativity as I was trying to figure out ways to pull more people in.

I expanded my skill in research as I went out to the web to weed through the articles on this crisis, finding relevant, helpful articles, rather than opinions. I learned how to network a bit in order to get more people involved.

I also realized I needed to ask the members what they were hoping to gain, and what information would be useful, in order to make sure needs were being met. See, the community did benefit from this project. Maybe not on the grand scale that I had hoped, but one baby fed was a success in my book.

Creativity, innovation, purpose, and community helped make my goal a reality. The impact I made with this project was not as great as I had hoped, but I am still calling it a success. Thank you.

END OF TRANSCRIPT.