

Zoe Schneider
GEMB M.A. Candidate
June 15th, 2019

Grown, Gifted, and Black Consulting

Executive Summary

The world is full of young, gifted persons of color - the 'Nina Simone's, the 'Robert Johnson's, and the 'Berry Gordy's. So often, these individuals do not have adequate support to develop their craft into a sustainable career. At Grown, Gifted, and Black Consulting, we work to take young, developing artists from creative adolescence to professional, artistic adulthood. We provide opportunities, encouragement, and resources for emerging musical artists, because we imagine a better tomorrow, and we believe the work of unheard creators will take us there. Operating as a creative media social enterprise, we are focused on working with artists of color from limiting financial backgrounds, but we are welcoming to all. Through comprehensive mentorship, administrative support, and informative workshops, we will enable our clients to create sustainable artistic careers. Our team of compassionate, young, business professionals are informed and equipped to support our clients with a diverse catalog of knowledge and experience, generating effective and efficient service. With services ranging from social media management, to digital marketing and strategy, industry counseling, contract negotiation support, and more, it's our mission to use our expertise to help monetize their talents, and empower them with tools to manage their artistic careers.

1. Company Overview

1.1 Name and Brands

Legal Name:

- Grown, Gifted, and Black Consulting

Official Abbreviation:

- GGBC

Brands:

- Grown, Gifted, and Black
- Interchangeable with Grown, Gifted, and Black Consulting

Website Domain Name:

www.growngiftedandblack.com

1.2 Sector

Industry Sector: Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

NAICS Code 541611

Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services

1.3 Legal Form

Limited Liability Company

I'm not committed to maintaining permanent ownership of this business, and do not plan to develop it as a sole proprietorship. The security of limited liability is attractive, as well as the ease in which control over the company could be transferred to another person when I feel ready transition to a more passive role. Additionally, I would like to have partners in this pursuit within the first 3 years and prepare to introduce a co-administrator. While the activities of this enterprise could qualify for non-profit status, through six years of work in the non-profit sector, as founder I have determined this is not the ideal path for the growth of this company. This venture could be

classified as social entrepreneurship or social enterprise, but the expectations and regulations imposed on a non-profit on a federal level would hinder the success of this business.

1.4 State of Registration

GGBC will be launched in Boston, Massachusetts. Not only have I discovered a market opportunity, I am very familiar with this urban landscape and its artistic community, having studied music in Boston myself for many years. Additionally, my extensive knowledge of the Bostonian culture will be advantageous for navigating the market and connecting with consumers. While GGBC is able to work for many artists remotely, the majority of our business will be conducted in the Greater Boston area. I will be registering my taxes in Massachusetts, the company will be incorporated in this state, and it will be my home base as the CEO.

1.5 Core Activities and Competitive Advantage

Grown, Gifted, and Black is a consulting firm focused on providing administrative support, industry counseling, and creative opportunities to developing musicians. Our services welcome music creators from all backgrounds, but we have an emphasis on supporting young artists of color. Our business model could be compared to that of Full Picture Consulting, a brand-consulting agency based in New York, NY. This is a company with admirable mastery of monetizing a personal network. Founded by Desiree Gruber, the company has been able to facilitate iconic partnerships and events, as well as develop culturally impactful original content. Although their work refers mainly to the fashion and lifestyle sectors there is much GGBC can learn from their business model and trajectory. We strive to embody their ideals of intimate and dedicated partnership between their employees and clients, however our clientele differ. GGBC

has set out to work specifically with a vulnerable population. Our consulting services would be most useful to young musical artists with limited financial resources, who want to develop their artistic identity and expand their brand reach. Run by young music business professionals, it's a symbiotic relationship wherein lies the opportunity for our team to learn and develop best practices for the promotion of artists in the music industry, while providing necessary services to those who would not be able to procure them otherwise.

We provide many counseling and management opportunities, including personal profile evaluation and development, to help artists explore their artistic identity and prepare a professional profile for promotion, sponsorships or partnerships, or live performance opportunities. GGBC also offers social media engagement and growth assistance, procuring and facilitating brand partnerships and sponsorships, advising clients on contractual negotiations, digital asset creation such as a website support, creative support, live performance bookings, public relations, and networking opportunities. Volunteer consultants will conduct a large portion of our main business activities, and are a critical part of our organizational structure. Volunteered legal council from Annelise Rivero, bar certified lawyer, social media engagement consulting from HSG visuals, a US based media management company, and Jody Slagel, Berklee Alumni, assisting with financial management of GGBC, as well as offering financial literacy assistance to our clientele. These donated services will be beneficial to potential clients, and integral to the appeal of the company.

At Grown, Gifted, and Black artists such as Nina Simone, Robert Johnson, and Berry Gordy inspire our ethos. American musicians and people of color who struggled deeply within an industry that was not designed to support and encourage them as black artists. From their example, we've learned the power of being young, gifted, and black - but now we've grown up.

In our world, and within the world of music today, young artists often find themselves lost and unable to capitalize within the industry. It's our mission to build a bridge between the talent and the industry to create sustainable and monetized careers for these developing artists. A key component of our business model will be providing opportunities for young musicians to be mentored by fellow artists and industry professionals. Activating a network of successful professionals of color, such as ethnomusicologist Dr. Bill Banfield, publicist Yvette Noel-Shure, or musician and professor Lawrence Watson, will allow our clients to obtain valuable guidance and support that can be often hard to find within professional settings. Our competitive advantage rests in the youth of our staff, the pulse of culture at their fingertips. We are experienced and well connected nationally to provide optimal service to our artists. Immediate access to the people who need our services most and a keen awareness of how to communicate effectively with them will allow us to build impactful and sustainable partnerships.

2. Corporate Identity

2.1 Main Stakeholders

The young artists we intend to develop are the main stakeholders. We are not concerned with our own recognition in the industry, and we are not concerned with financial viability and success, our sole mission is to empower young artists with business skills they need to survive in the music industry. We've adapted a wholly client-centric business model, because they are our priority above the expectations of others. Ideally, the company will become a resource for other companies, like independent or major record labels to source talent, and short-term live music venues around Boston, which could become stakeholders as we book our clients for performances.

2.2 Mission Statement

*“Young, gifted, and black
We must begin to tell our young
There's a world waiting for you
This is a quest that's just begun”*

Many young people of color in this world, and especially within the entertainment industry, have been forced to grow up quickly, and without the support and guidance of mentors. We want to provide the encouragement and expertise to allow young artists the creative space to revert to a childlike sense of curiosity and freedom in their artistic pursuits. Great art demands great artists, and we want to help creators focus exclusively on the creation of their art, by helping them monetize and sustain its economic success. We want the dreams, ideas, and visions of gifted, young artists come to life, and facilitate their transition into effective and impactful public campaigns. Our mission statement concentrates on learned and refined music industry expertise to uplift and artistry and professionalism of developing musical artists of color.

2.3 Values/Mantra

We value the voice and vulnerability of young artists. We want to arm them with the tools for success and help shape their careers into sustainable revenue-creating endeavors.

We believe:

- There is worth not only in the productivity, but the humanity of developing artists.
- People of color encounter systemic challenges that hinder professional and financial success, requiring specific kinds of support to enjoy thriving careers.
- We will always prioritize authenticity.
- Do your work with passion or don't do it at all.
- Self-awareness, and an attitude of gratitude, is the foundation for an extraordinary life.

2.4 Visual Identity

The colors used for our visual representation will be black, for aesthetic quality, and purple to represent the color of royalty, providing the foundation a dignified and regal visual campaign.



Our font option will be Bebas Neue simply because it looks amazing in Black, it's easy to read, and I believe offers the strong, yet approachable message we're aiming for.

Our proposed logo, with a modern vision, with respect to the values of the past, attempts to reproduce the feelings of vintage Motown style.

2.5 Communication

Printed: With a young target demographic, I do not foresee GGBC having a strong presence in printed media. In promoting upcoming artists, however, one cannot emphasize enough how important it is to maintain a positive relationship with the Press, including but not limited to newspapers, magazines, even zines in the Boston area. I have been working in media relations for years, and I have a positive relationship with much of the printed media in the Boston area, but this is not how the strongest base of our consumer audience chooses to receive news, information, and media. We will preserve our time and resources by investing in other communication outlets, but our relationship with traditional media will be an integral part of our success as a business.

Digital: In pulling resources from printed media, we're able to reinvest into a strong relationship with digital media. With young emerging artists, the easiest way to connect with them is through various forms of digital communication. We will facilitate a dialogue, and provide resources and information with a strong newsletter and email chain. Our business model does not require extreme amounts of direct advertising, but it does require constant communication with a broad audience on behalf of our clientele. To broadcast a message, and share art or information, there is no more effective method available today.

Social Media: Our strongest efforts lie in assembling a strong team with a deep understanding of digital social media platforms. In time, GGBC will grow its own brand recognition and expand its social media imprint, but our team's focus lies with our clients' brands. It is social media that allows fans and artists to connect, and it is increasingly important for us to have a strong relationship with all social media platforms to ensure the success of the people we represent.

Social Media Handles:

Instagram: [growngiftedandblack](#)

Twitter: [growngiftedabc](#)

Facebook: [growngiftedandblack](#)

3. Business Environment & Customer

3.1 Value Proposition

In a world systemically positioned against them, young, black persons must grow up faster than their peers and they often lack the support and guidance needed to live a safe, happy, and healthy life. To be young, Black, and gifted is a privilege, but developing creators of color often struggle to turn their talents into sustainable careers. At Grown, Gifted, and Black

Consulting, we want to provide opportunities for young artists of color to be nurtured and empowered to profitably bring their art into the world.

Through administrative and advisory services, at GGBC we hope to provide artists with the creative space to embrace a childlike sense of wonder and inspiration that will empower their art. Staffed by industry experts, we are a team committed to growing and supporting the POC artist community in every way possible. Our ultimate goal is to help young POC artists craft impactful careers, and to help these brilliant young minds adapt a sense of pride, security, and sustainability.

3.2 Pricing Policy

Grown gifted and black is a social enterprise, so we are only interested in generating enough revenue to sustain vital business activities. Any capital we do require, for website maintenance compensating partners and staff, will come from general tiered pricing system for different services such as EPK development, website creation, or social media management. Pricing will be on an individual basis, taking into consideration the financial viability of each client. Additionally, there will be a cost-free component to this consulting model, in which we will be acquiring Grown, Gifted, and Black fellows. People with a promising musical career on the horizon, such as jazz drummer Jas Kayser, or Los Angeles based artist Floyd Fuji, would be offered the services for free in exchange for our marketing use of the content we create for them and in the partnerships we acquire for them. This will help us acquire customer trust and expose us to our key demographic: young artists of color. We will also be exploring a referral discount, for example, for artists our clients work with who join our services.

3.3 Market Positioning

On the graph of perceived benefits verse price, I believe GGBC falls in the mid left quadrant between low cost, low price, and disruptive. Being a social enterprise, our focus is on service. Service for communities and service to our clientele, as well as service to the greater good by helping artists create music that will be impactful and well received by the general population. We save valuable time for the clients we represent, by using our expertise for many of the administrative tasks that distract young people from creating. We want to be socially conscious and impactful by making a point to represent some of the most vulnerable people in business and society: young people of color, people with disabilities, and persons within the LGBTQIA+ community.

With GGBC's willingness to represent and work for such a niche corner of the market, I think we will stand out from other consulting firms because we're a "For us, by us" (FUBU) business. Operating without profits in mind, we're not particularly bothered by the scalability of our model. We prefer to prioritize intimate partnerships built with the clients we represent, by offering tailored custom consulting experiences. We would rather do great work for a few artists, than mediocre work for more people.

3.4 Customer Segmentation

While our mission is aimed toward young artists of color, we're welcoming to all. Our most prominent motive is to work with musicians who need our services in return for their artistic productivity, allowing for immense diversity within our key demographic. We are not prejudiced against musicians from a more mature age range, but we understand that young musicians more frequently do not have the financial means to obtain the services we offer.

3.5 Customer Data

About 10% of the United States population considers themselves musicians. With about 2.1 million artists on Spotify, about a quarter of them approximately 23% are losing money on their musical endeavors. The majority of musicians need a secondary source of income to support themselves. We want to appeal to this vulnerable population and offer them opportunities to monetize their talents into musical careers allowing them to focus on maximum production of art.

4. Marketing Strategy

4.1 Major Trends

Micro: The general quality of life of young people in the US is expensive, with student debt, high city living costs, and high unemployment rates crushing an entire generation. To earn a living wage, one needs to be making upwards of \$31,740 or \$15.26/hour, according to the [Living Wage Calculator](#) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). At the close of their 1st Quarter 2019, [the Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\)](#) published numbers indicating startling poverty levels for 16-24 year olds. Even the average young American adult makes \$579 per week, just over \$30,000 per year, placing young people at risk of poverty. The average young person of color is living at the poverty line, making approximately \$24,400 annually. The financial epidemic of the millennial generation and generation z leaves little financial freedom to the young, gifted creators of today. These income statistics are based off of localized data to Boston Massachusetts, being where this company will be incorporated and the majority of our clientele will be located.

Industry: Many artists struggle to receive adequate compensation efficiently. With touring and live music earning higher revenue than that of recorded music or streaming, it's absolutely vital to be surrounded by people who understand how to capitalize on these opportunities. Additionally it's now possible to create standards of music and art once reserved for only major labels, with just a computer and a home studio. There is plenty of opportunity to make high-quality music and carefully refine a brand, with do-it-yourself tools and impactful mentorship.

In the music industry now, it is almost impossible to make it without the support of industry experts. There is a constant stream of opportunities to monetize good content, but without the right knowledge and industry connections, developing artists are in the dark. With rising costs for higher education, professional training is not feasible for everyone, so we will create an empowering, symbiotic relationship with our clientele, bridging sustainable pathways into the industry.

Market: I believe it's vital we remember that we are working with a do-it-yourself market. Young artists today are aware and fluent in many tools available to help start their careers, though they may not know the external environmental factors that need to be considered, as well. Our main focus is going to be based in education so that we are not only providing services for young people; we empower them with resources to sustain their careers long after our working relationship has ended.

Many pop culture trends in the United States are based off of the art, music, and traditions of the black community. We want to identify these trends and empower young people of color to take ownership of the ideas and competencies that have been capitalized and commercialized by those outside of their community of creators. Imparting a sense of ownership and awareness will be a product of in-house education on diversity and inclusion, encouraging

all clients to be open-minded, informed citizens of the world. Younger generations are both well informed and globally conscious. The social conscience of these young people often leans towards a liberal, activist mindset, which will foster a positive public perception of the work we're trying to do with young artistic communities filled with people of color.

4.2 Market Size

According to the United States Department of Labor Occupational Statistics, approximately 41,680 professional musicians live in the greater Boston area. While the focus of GGBC will be artists towards the beginning of their career, we will be open to working with musicians at any stage of professional life. We're excited to work with whoever is in need of our services, only taking on a load that will allow us to maintain authentic and effective relationships with clients. Given where the company will be incorporated, a large portion of business will be conducted with people in the Boston area.

4.3 Business Competition

While of course there is competition, our research hasn't revealed a music consulting service geared to work specifically with the young POC population. BlackBox, Music Media Consulting, and Black Panda are all successful music consulting services, but their focus lies in branding and PR. Grown, Gifted, and Black will use our expertise to reach all facets of the music industry. Our focus on representing young people of color allows us to occupy a unique space in the market and appeal to young artists who might crave this important consideration. Well you can find countless music consultants of every gender, race, and age demographic, there is

something to be said for working with people who understand parts of your identity that couldn't be understood from anything other than shared lived experiences.

4.4 SWOT Analysis

| | Positive | Negative |
|----------|---|--|
| Internal | <p>Extensive knowledge of Music Industry</p> <p>Strong institutional partnerships between labor supply</p> <p>Staffed by mix of seasoned industry veterans and young industry professionals offering a compelling mix of perspectives</p> <p>First hand experience with successful music monetization campaigns</p> | <p>Unpredictability/Unreliability of the consistency of volunteer contributors</p> <p>New in market</p> <p>Limited financial resources</p> <p>Passion project, hard to make partners prioritize the work</p> |
| External | <p>Social consciousness is trending</p> <p>Huge market of young musicians in need of career guidance</p> <p>Socially conscious models are favored in media and advertising</p> <p>Existing clientele has large platforms and strong networks, long reach for community advertising.</p> | <p>Huge market of people in need of services with very limited resources to spend on them.</p> <p>The most lucrative aspects of the industry change everyday, will be vital to maintain relationships with people well versed in these market components</p> <p>Publically offered services depend heavily on donated work</p> |

5. Financial Projections

The following is a detailed description of the projected required capital GGBC will need in its first year of business. The projected numbers are for an LLC in Boston, Massachusetts, where the company will launch, staffed by the owner and operator, Zoe Schneider. There are items integral to running a business that will be donated at the moment but have the potential to become a vital operational expense, including, but not limited to, the future need for a working space or co-working space membership, salary expense as full or part-time employees are hired, and eventually upgrading to a paid website hosting service. The financials listed below include the purchase of equipment, supplies, and goods required to deliver services, legal and accounting costs, as well as overhead and salaries. Each figure includes a description of the basis for all statements and assumptions. A 10% contingency cost has been added for unforeseen costs.

5.1 Required Capital

| | | Amount Per | For 12 |
|----------------------------------|--|------------|----------|
| | | Month | Months |
| <i>Operating Expenses (OPEX)</i> | Monthly Fixed Expenses: | | |
| | LegalZoom Customized Business packaging plan/Accounting with QuickBooks Grown, Gifted, and Black Consulting LLC Registration Massachusetts filing Operating Agreement, EIN, and Licenses Registered Agent Service Legal Protection and guidance | \$787.00 | \$787.00 |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| | Marketing and Advertising Facebook targeted ads Google Adwords Social Media/Content development consulting Printing costs (Flyers, Business Cards, Pamphlets, Menus) Print Ads/Online Ads | \$100.00 | \$1,200.00 |
| | Telephone & Utilities | \$30.00 | \$360.00 |
| | Internet & Web-Hosting | \$50.00 | \$600.00 |
| | Electricity | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| | Subscription for software | \$17.00 | \$204.00 |
| | | | |
| | Monthly Fixed Expenses Sub-total (I) | \$984.00 | \$11,808.00 |
| <i>Capital Expenses (CAPEX)</i> | Asset Purchases: | | |
| | Software and Apps | \$0.00 | \$0.00 |
| | | | |
| | Asset Purchase Sub-Total (II) | | |
| | Startup Expenses You Pay Once: | | |
| | Trademark & Business Registration | \$50.00 | \$50.00 |
| | Legal and Accounting Organization Costs | \$600.00 | \$600.00 |
| | Licenses and Permits (PRO Blanket Licenses & Stock Exchange) | \$700.00 | \$700.00 |
| | | | |
| | Startup Expenses You Pay Once Sub-total (III) | \$1,350.00 | \$1,350.00 |
| | TOTAL EXPENSES (I+II+III) | \$2,334.00 | \$13,158.00 |
| | Contingency (10%) | \$2,567.40 | \$14,473.80 |
| | Total Estimated Cash Needed to Start For 12 Months (TOTAL EXPENSES +10%) | | \$14,473.80 |

5.2 Potential Risks

We run risk in our socially charged mission, and if it's not appealing to the general public, our company will struggle to sustain our services, despite our unique competitive value. We have made artists the priority over profits, which we are forecasting will lead to a better customer experience, however, without substantial amounts of revenue we will not be able to execute projects at as high a standard of quality as we would like to. Additionally, it could be a challenge to build a reliable network of industry professionals who are willing to engage with our mission on a consistent basis, because the majority of partners we're collaborating with within our organization are young industry professionals. This business model is not scalable and that may pose threat to our sustainability, due to how much investment of time and energy is required for each artist campaign. We're going to mitigate these risks by committing to slow and manageable growth at the Inception of the company, letting our experiences, trials, and errors guide the future decision-making processes of our organization.

5.3 Evaluation Metrics and Control

We will be evaluating our effectiveness and viability by measuring our actual financial performance against projections. Ideally, we want to generate enough revenue to cover operational costs and invest in our artists. Being a social enterprise, the greatest marker of success is how many artists we've worked with that are able to sustain their lifestyles solely thru their artistry, without additional sources of income.