I survived Geebiz

Part I – Let’s party!

My name is Juanita. Juanita Álvarez Jaramillo. Why are both my last names important? Well, they are not, but they are the most paisa last names you can find. What does paisa mean? It is what the people from my region of Colombia like to call ourselves.

And if Hobbits are recognized for their hairy feet and hate for adventures, we are recognized – by ourselves – for our exceptionally beautiful women and business capabilities. One thing I can assure: our favorite figure of speech is the hyperbole.

So when everyone started telling me how difficult Geebiz was and my teacher said “You’re not going to sleep for weeks, you’re going to hate me!”, I simply assumed it was an exaggeration. I knew it was going to be something I’d have to work hard for, but I was confident. After all, I’m a nerd, so what could go wrong? It was all going to be like a perfect stroll in the park, I was going to have so much fun, like a party! -I don’t actually like parties, but bare with me, I need the metaphor-.

Part II– Down the rabbit hole.

Then reality struck me like an ice cold bucket of water. Not right away, though. My teammates were super nice, most of them showed their ideas right away, we decided what we were going to do. We all made our inputs into the business idea, like mixing substances in a lab and making a beautiful Briggs-Rauscher reaction –which is an awesome looking reaction that cyclically changes colors- out of our ideas and opinions, which were very different, partly due to our different cultures.

But then, out of a sudden, it felt like our reaction magically turned into hydrogen sulfide, because I simply thought it Stank of rotten eggs. My fun Geebiz party turned into an Mad Tea-Party. I realized going into Geebiz was like going down the rabbit hole, right into the madness of wonderland.

Part III– Surprises

By the last week of the competition, I was kind of giving up. Our idea had no differentiation, I was worried about the costs, about the place, the numbers just weren’t OK in my mind, I felt like my English – which is my second language- wasn’t vast enough to express to my team mates how bad I thought our business idea was. I think my Colombian teammate and I were way too pragmatic and thought of numbers while my teammates seemed to be solely focused on the social part of the project, and had a more feeling-oriented scope. I felt like an alien, and I didn’t have a hitchhiker’s guide to the intercultural Geebiz galaxy. We were running out of time…

And one day, I just decided to stop fighting and to start actually making the best out of our idea. And when my team mates started posting on our Facebook group their parts of the reports, I was actually pleasantly surprised. So at the end of the day, how did I survive Geebiz? I stopped being an angry, whiny little nerd and turned into an actual team mate, who tried to communicate even though we didn’t agree on everything or view things the same way. And at the end, I’m extremely happy that I participated. And I can almost say, that I liked it.