

TRIUMPH GULF COAST, INC. PRE-APPLICATION FORM

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name of Individual/Entity/Organization: NAJ Innovations, Inc. (d/b/a MRGN)

Proposal Title: Increasing Profit Margins In Real Time for Food & Beverage SMBs in the Florida Panhandle

Amount of Triumph Funds Requested: \$500,000

Total Estimated Project Cost: \$2,000,000

Brief Description of Individual/Entity/Organization:

MRGN (NAJ Innovations, Inc.) is the only Business Intelligence platform purpose-built to identify areas of underperformance and inefficiency in food & beverage small businesses, starting with restaurants. Founded November 19, 2019 (EIN: 84-3763921), MRGN helps restaurants identify areas of underperformance, waste, overspending and potential areas of growth by providing insights on-the-fly based on real-world, real-time economic fluctuations. MRGN is the brain of a restaurant group, correlating and interpreting data points across all of its tech systems, and providing sound guidance across all areas of the business. After speaking to 650+ restaurant owners; unanimously citing fragmented data, lack of COGS transparency, and labor cost visibility as their top pain points; MRGN built the first BI platform purpose-built for restaurants that not only analyzes historical data to forecast the future, but does so within the context of market and economic variables: inflation, supply chain disruptions, street closures, weather events, and more. Backed by Techstars and TechCrunch Disrupt alumni, MRGN currently has \$288K in committed ARR, 5 design partners, 3 case studies, and a 1,000+ business waitlist.

Contact Information

Primary Contact: Yoni Rubin

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Names of co-applicants, partners or other entities, organizations that will have a role in the proposed project or program:

MRGN is currently in late-stage discussions with two municipalities (including a Miami program starting at \$288K ARR) and a large household-name franchise organization. MRGN's GTM is currently focused on two strategies: restaurant groups/franchises and municipal economic development councils. Florida-based restaurant associations, local SBDCs, chambers of commerce, and CDFIs in the panhandle counties are anticipated co-collaborators in the regional

deployment. MRGN is also in active discussions with strategic platform partners Toast, Square, and Restaurant365 for distribution at scale.

REQUIRED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Amount of Funds Sought from Triumph Gulf Coast

NAJ Innovations, Inc. (MRGN) is requesting \$500,000 from Triumph Gulf Coast. This represents 25% of the company's \$2,000,000 seed round, currently underway. The Triumph funds are specifically earmarked to support the Northwest Florida Restaurant Resilience deployment: building and launching MRGN's supply and distribution AI features, developing the partnership portal and program for regional CDFI/municipal integration, and activating on-the-ground business development across Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla counties.

ii. Amount and Identity of Other Sources of Funds

The remaining \$1,500,000 of the \$2M seed round is being raised from angel investors, venture capital, and strategic investors. MRGN already has \$288,000 in committed ARR from its first enterprise franchise deal and design partners, providing earned revenue alongside the raise. The company has a \$130M mid-funnel pipeline of prospective customers. MRGN's current seed round proceeds are allocated as follows (per the pitch deck): Engineering 40% (Proprietary Machine Learning Engine), Marketing 30%, Business Development 20% (Partner Program), and Product Management 10%.

iii. Location of the Project or Program

The proposed program targets food and beverage SMBs across all eight disproportionately affected counties of Northwest Florida: Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla. MRGN's platform is cloud-based, integrating via one-click registration with a restaurant's existing systems (Toast, Square, QuickBooks Online, Restaurant365); enabling immediate deployment anywhere in the region without geographic constraint. The company's corporate headquarters is located at 473 FDR Drive, K703, New York, NY 10002, with a distributed team and the capacity to embed regional presence in the Florida panhandle as funding activates.

Iv. Summary Description of the Proposed Program; How It Is Transformational and Promotes Economic Recovery, Diversification, and Enhancement of the Disproportionately Affected Counties

THE PROBLEM

33 million SMBs are closing shop at a pace of 90% within 18-24 months. Small businesses, especially restaurants, operate on razor-thin margins; hovering just around 10%; leading to a

staggering 90% attrition rate within two years, primarily due to cash flow mismanagement. Of those failures, 82% are attributed to insufficient business acumen; 46% admit to a subpar grasp of their own finances; and restaurateurs spend just .003% of their admin time on business strategy and .01% of their efforts on profitability analysis. Existing business intelligence tools are too complex for SMBs and fail to consider critical external factors like market shifts, economic trends, and competitive activity. They visualize data; but do not interpret it. The food & beverage businesses of Northwest Florida's panhandle counties face these same structural headwinds, compounded by the economic aftershocks of the Deepwater Horizon disaster and ongoing volatility in the region's tourism-dependent revenue base.

THE SOLUTION

After speaking to 650+ restaurant owners and finding unanimous agreement on their pain points, MRGN created the only Business Intelligence platform purpose-built to identify areas of underperformance and inefficiency; starting with restaurants. MRGN provides true business intelligence; not just visualization. With one-click registration, the user is immediately presented with menu pricing optimizations based on commodity and supply chain activity across the globe. MRGN provides predictive insights around product/menu pricing, KPIs, hiring plans, financing strategies, and more; all premised on the restaurant's own operating plan (which MRGN builds for the business as well). If corn prices spike, MRGN tells you how much corn is in each dish and how much you can reasonably increase the price on the fly. MRGN is the only IP-protected, patent-pending predictive platform purpose-built for the restaurant owner; integrating holistic coverage, actionable insights, economic data, labor/weather factors, and delivering a proven increase in gross margin. Its closest competitors (xtraCHEF, 5Out, Averro, MarginEdge, MarketMan) offer only visualizations and fail to account for any factors exterior to a restaurant's four walls. MRGN is Simple. Actionable. Affordable; available at \$59, \$129, and \$299/month.

WHY NOW

Restaurant analytics is one of the hottest spaces at the moment, driven by the global economic posture and AI's ability to solve a good portion of this problem. Political turmoil, global pandemic, supply chain stoppages, inflation (CPI up 25% over 5 years, 31% over 15 years), climate change, legislative turmoil, and recent tech advancements have all converged to make this the most critical moment for small food & beverage businesses to have intelligent, real-time economic guidance. In speaking to 1,500 small business owners, every one of them unanimously expressed that what keeps them up at night is the unknowns about the economy. Restaurants quickly floated to the top of the list as those most in need of MRGN's solution, due to the industry's extremely thin margins. SMBs leveraging cloud-based solutions grow 30% faster than competitors; and the space is ripe for innovation.

TRANSFORMATIONAL IMPACT ON THE DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTED COUNTIES

Triumph Gulf Coast funding enables MRGN to execute a dedicated Northwest Florida Restaurant Resilience Program, deploying the platform at subsidized or no cost to qualifying

food & beverage businesses in the eight affected counties. This is transformational for economic recovery and diversification because:

- (1) It directly attacks the 82% SMB failure rate driven by insufficient business acumen; the primary economic drain on the region's small business ecosystem.
- (2) It provides enterprise-grade intelligence tools; previously accessible only to large corporations; to the independent restaurant operators who form the economic backbone of Northwest Florida's tourism-driven coastal economy.
- (3) MRGN's proven case studies demonstrate measurable, immediate impact: a projected \$1,488/month revenue increase for one design partner restaurant and \$2,463/month for another; directly improving the survivability and profitability of local businesses.
- (4) It diversifies and strengthens the region's economic infrastructure by embedding a scalable SaaS layer into the food & beverage sector; creating a self-sustaining, data-driven resilience capability that outlasts any single grant cycle.
- (5) MRGN's mission; to democratize and contextualize knowledge and data for those who do not have access to it; aligns directly with Triumph Gulf Coast's mandate. MRGN is working to invert the small business attrition rate by closing the knowledge gap between small business owners and their monopolistic corporate counterparts. This aligns with two UN Sustainability Goals: (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth, and (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure.