

**Small Business  
Development Center  
Shippensburg University**

*Helping businesses  
start, grow, and prosper.*



**Soul Smoked BBQ, LLC**  
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**Industries:** Food , Catering

**Founded:** 2020

**SBDC Assistance:**  
Business Planning,  
Marketing and Research.

I could not have asked  
for a better Business  
Consultant than  
Georgina.

*- TJ Morton*

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## Feeding the Soul

Be careful what you wish for! For TJ Morton, that motto is ringing true. Last year, TJ contacted the Shippensburg University SBDC to start his small business, Soul Smoked BBQ, LLC. As a self-proclaimed foodie and someone who had perfected the art of smoking meats, TJ was ready to explore the options of starting a food truck business. With the support of his loving wife Heather, who helped make all of this possible, TJ is fully employed at his business and sales have exceeded his expectation.



Prior to opening his business, TJ managed a 4-million-dollar operation at a company for 16 years. His staff averaged around 23 people and he was responsible for staffing, payroll, production, and scheduling among other things. He said that at the time, he felt overworked at a 9-5 position and thought his job was stressful. TJ jokes that he sometimes thinks longingly about those days, especially when he is up at 5AM to prep his smoker for a full day of catering.

TJ has always loved cooking. He says, 'I would stay in the kitchen with my mom every time she cooked. I remember a time when I used to get mad because I thought she was melting the ice cream and I would always ask her why. She told me that it was "lard" but I kept insisting it was ice cream. Well one day she got tired of me asking and she gave me some and let me tell you I never asked that question again! As I'm writing this I can still remember that taste "disgusting". As I got older I became infatuated with the smell of BBQ. I started cooking for the family and I burnt up my fair share of food, but then also they just kept telling me how good it was and I honestly thought they were just being kind and not candid. Then requests started coming in for my BBQ and the light went off; maybe they are being honest. So with my love for cooking and my passion for feeding people's souls, Soul Smoked BBQ LLC was formed.'

TJ reached out to the SBDC for advice and he says the help he received was phenomenal. "I jumped into this knowing absolutely nothing. I could not have asked for a better Business Consultant than Georgina. She laid out the blueprint, was always there if I had questions and was extremely candid with me good or bad and yes she hurt my feelings sometime lol" but I never gave up. I followed the blueprint and made it to the finish line. I would not have been able to do this on my own. The Shippensburg University SBDC is totally awesome hands down.

Some of the challenges TJ faced were ones he never considered before starting. The physical challenges of processing 500-800lbs of meat every week, picking up 32 quart pans full of water and 16lbs of cooked noodles sitting in boiling water. Despite the challenges, TJ is garnering a reputation for delicious food and his business is growing. He loves working for himself and choosing his venues. Long-term, he dreams of opening a brick-and-mortar restaurant, but for now, he is concentrating on feeding one soul at a time.

