
The Drury Family

Drury Inn / Hotels

By M. Karen Hubbard

LESSON DESCRIPTION

In this lesson, students will explore the concept of “innovation” by entrepreneurs as they learn about the contributions of the Drury family. Students will read the story of the Drury family and, through the use of activities, determine the innovations promoted by the Drury family and create an innovation of their own.

ECONOMIC CONCEPTS

- Entrepreneur
- Invention
- innovation

RELATED CONCEPTS

- map skills

MATERIALS

- Copy of “The Drury Family” reading for each student
- Activity 1 – “Innovation: Whom Would it Attract?”
- Activity 2 – “Your Innovation and Whom it Would Attract”

TIME

- 60 minutes

PROCEDURES

1. Relate an experience you had with a stay in a hotel. Ask the following questions:
 - a. Have any of you stayed in a hotel/inn?
 - b. When did you stay in a hotel/inn? (vacation, family reunion, visiting a relative/friend in another area, etc.)
 - c. Describe the room you stayed in. (bed, television, chair, dresser, maybe a refrigerator, microwave, iron, hair dryer, shampoo/conditioner, soap, lotion, etc.)

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- d. Describe the hotel area outside the room. (i.e., pool sitting area, hot tub/sauna, check-in area, continental breakfast, eating area)
 - e. Have any of you stayed in a Drury Inn/Hotel?
 - f. Who do you think opened the first Drury Inn/Hotel?
2. Tell the students that they are going to read a story about the Drury family who began, and still runs, the Drury Inns/Hotels.
 3. Explain that the Drurys were a family of **entrepreneurs**. “Entrepreneurs” are people who think of a good or service that they think someone would like to buy, and produces it. They take a risk that people will not like the good or service, and that all of the time, effort, and money he or she has spent to make the product will have been for nothing. Entrepreneurs think of goods or services that have never been thought of before. We often think about entrepreneurs as being the first in their areas of business, but most entrepreneurs begin a business producing something that has already been produced by someone else. These entrepreneurs have an idea of how to improve the good or service or how to produce it better.
 4. Discuss:
 - a. Where did the Drury family live in the 1940's? (They lived on a farm in Kelso, Missouri.) Locate Kelso, Missouri, on a Missouri map. What part of the state is it located? (Bootheel of Missouri) Why do you think it is called the Bootheel of Missouri? (Looks like the heel of a boot.)
 - b. What part time job did the family do which became a full time job? (plastering)
 - c. What characteristics did the father teach his sons which helped the business to grow to a full time job? (quality, service, innovation, value)
 - d. What mistake taught the brothers a lesson for their future hotel business? (They used the same truck to carry sand, which was used for plastering, which they had just used to carry soybeans. Soybeans started to sprout from the walls of a house they had plastered.)
 - e. What lesson did the mistake teach? (Things can never be too clean.)
 - f. What did the brothers do when they realized their mistake? (They went back to the homeowners and replastered the walls.)

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- g. Would this help or hurt their business reputation? How? (This would help their business reputation because people would know that their company did a good job and that it would correct any problems.)
 - h. What question should you ask yourself when you make a mistake in school? (What can I learn from my mistake so I can do a better job in school?)
 - i. What was the name of their first hotel and where was it located? (Holiday Inn located in Cape Girardeau, Missouri) Locate Cape Girardeau, Missouri, on a Missouri map.
 - j. What problem did their first hotel have? (Hotel made money on the room side but lost money on the restaurant/lounge side)
 - k. What was the name of the new hotel and where was it located? (Drury Inn located in Sikeston, Missouri) Locate Sikeston, Missouri, on a Missouri map.

OPTIONAL – Visit the Drury Hotel website to plot all hotel locations on the Missouri map.

5. Explain that there is a difference between **invention** and **innovation**. An invention is the making of a new good or service or a new way of making a good or service. An innovation is an improvement in a good or service. Ask the following questions:
 - a. What are some ways the company tried to make people choose their hotel and not other hotels? (Free Quikstart Breakfast, first indoor/outdoor pool, Free Evening Beverages & Snacks, Free High-Speed Internet, Free HOT! Quikstart Breakfast, Free Long Distance Calls, microwaves & refrigerators in every room)
 - b. Would these new ways be called inventions or innovations? (innovations) Why? (These were improvements on the hotel business to attract customers, not a new idea.)
6. Distribute Activity 1 – “Innovation: Whom Would it Attract?”

ANSWERS:

1. Travelers who want to get on the road but still have something to eat.
2. Travelers who want to get cooled off and relax.
3. People who want a place to get a drink and a snack in the evening.
4. Business people

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5. Travelers on cold mornings
 6. Travelers who want to keep in touch with their families
 7. People who want to reheat leftovers for a late night snack
 8. Travelers who want to keep things cold.

CLOSURE

Ask the following questions:

- a. What is an invention? (the making of a new good or service or a new way of making a good or service)
- b. What is an innovation? (an improvement in a good or service)

Distribute Activity 2 – “Your Innovation and Whom it Would Attract.” Instruct students to think of a new innovation Drury might add to its hotels and who this innovation would attract. This can be done individually, in pairs or in groups.

EXTENSION

1. Explain the entrepreneurs take risks. Sometimes those risks lead them to make mistakes. However, successful entrepreneurs learn from their mistakes. Instruct students to write a paragraph about a time they made a mistake and the lesson they learned (i.e., mistake – did not study for a test so did poorly, learned – next time study for a test; mistake – did not memorize multiplication tables so could not do math problems, learned – memorize multiplication tables.)
2. Teacher can invite an entrepreneur from the community to discuss the risk and benefits of starting a business.

ACTIVITY 1- Innovation: Whom Would it Attract?

Name _____ Date _____

Match the innovation with the "GROUP OF PEOPLE" it would attract to the hotel.

INNOVATION

ATTRACT

1. Free Quikstart Breakfast _____
2. first indoor/outdoor pool _____
3. Free Evening Beverages & Snacks _____
4. Free High-Speed Internet _____
5. Free HOT! Quikstart Breakfast _____
6. Free Long Distance Calls _____
7. microwaves _____
8. refrigerators _____

GROUP OF PEOPLE

business people

travelers who want to keep things cold

travelers who want to get on the road but still have something to eat

travelers who want to keep in touch with their families

travelers who want to get cooled off and relax

travelers on cold mornings

people who want a place to get a drink and a little food

people who want to reheat leftovers for a late night snack

ACTIVITY-2- Your Innovation: Whom Would it Attract?

Think of an innovation Drury could add to its hotels. On the back of this paper, describe and draw the innovation with your change and make sure you include the people who would be attracted to the hotel because of this innovation.

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The Drury Hotels story began in the early 1940s on the Lambert Drury family farm in Kelso, Missouri, located in the Bootheel of Southeast Missouri. The father and sons supplemented their farm income with plastering jobs on the side. Lambert taught his sons to always provide the best service, to be sure that any job they did was high quality, that people would get good value from the sons' work, and to always be thinking of ways to be innovative. With the business stressing these characteristics (service, quality, value, and innovation), the side job of plastering grew into a full time job.

The Drury brothers learned from their mistakes. For example, they picked up sand they were going to use for plastering using a truck that had just dropped off a load of soybeans. Two days after they had put on the first coat of plaster, the homeowners were surprised to discover soybeans sprouting from their walls. Can you imagine having plants growing out of your walls? The Drury brothers probably had a good laugh and then did what good businesspeople do and re-plastered the walls. They learned a valuable lesson which became the foundation of their future successful hotel operation: **Things can never be too clean.**

The first hotel the brothers built was a Holiday Inn in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. They made money on the rooms but lost all of it on the restaurant and lounge. To solve this problem, they developed a new idea for their hotel. They created a hotel with rooms only. The new hotel was called Drury Inn and it was opened in Sikeston, Missouri, charging a rate of \$10.88.

The brothers concentrated on ways to make a visit to a Drury Inn more enjoyable. They continued to innovate by offering new features. In 1986, they introduced their free Quikstart breakfast so that travelers could get up, grab a bite, and get started on their day. In 1995, they installed the first indoor/outdoor pool, and in 1998 they began offering free evening drinks and snacks. In 2002 they installed free high-speed internet so that business travelers could get work done right in the hotel room. In 2003 they improved their breakfast by offering hot breakfast foods. In 2004 they offered free long-distance phone calls so that people could call their families, and in 2007, they placed microwaves & refrigerators in every room.

The Drury Hotels are 100% family owned and operated. They are renovated every five to six years so each hotel has a "like-new" appearance and a similar identity. They employ about 3,500 people who are given the authority to do whatever it takes to make their guests happy. In just 30 years, Drury has grown from a small plastering business to a successful, growing system of more than 120 hotels in 19 states.