Hill Country Barbecue and Hill Country fried chicken is a Texas themed restaurant that is named after the Twenty five country region of central Texas and South Texas known as the Texas Hill Country. Opening its first restaurant in the Flatiron District of New York City in 2007 followed by its second location in Washington DC in 2011 and finally in 2013 opening its third location in downtown Brooklyn Hill Country Barbecue has proven that they know success and they know business.

After working for Hill Country Barbecue for 2 years as a chef supervisor for their concession location inside of Madison Square Garden it was an easy decision to decide to meet and interview with the Founder and Chief Executive Office Marc Glosserman. I initially sent him an email asking how he would feel about being my subject and allowing me to interview him on his marketing strategies and his ideas. Mr. Glooserman called me immediately delighted that I chose him and his company to interview.

I met with Mr. Glosserman on April 17th 2014 at 1pm at his office at the NYC Hill Country location. While waiting for him to be ready for our meeting I was told to feel free to take a tour of the restaurant. Having been here a few times before I was already somewhat familiar with the outline of the restaurant but still took the opportunity to admire the ambiance.

While walking through the restaurant I couldn’t help but notice that one of the walls was covered with carved wood pieces and on another wall there was hanging framed magazine covers that displayed Hill Country and the barbecue industry. Their tables were authentic wood and wooden chairs to match. A large bar lined the back filled with various beers and spirits. There was also a merchandise area filled with different apparel and accessories baring the Hill

Country logo. The most impressive display was the kitchen. While sitting at the table the patrons have a clear view of the open kitchen and the cooks or as they call them the pit masters. There are different sections for the different types of food that is to be ordered such as different meats and sides and desserts. It was set up almost like a museum, a piece of art. I also noticed a large staircase that led to the basement area. In that area there is a whole other dining area but in front of that dining room there is a huge stage where they have frequent performances by different artists.

As I was walking around the music area one of the employees came downstairs to inform me that Mr. Glosserman is ready for me. She escorted me to his office where he was ready and waiting eagerly for me. When I came into his office I noticed he had many pictures on the wall with different pieces of their smoked meats and also a lot of banners and promotional materials from different charities and events they have been a part of. He offered me a seat and had called in the same employee to bring in some food for us. He had an amazing spread prepared filled with some samples of their signature meats and side dishes such as: Beef brisket, pulled pork and macaroni and cheese just to name a few. I immediately thanked him for his hospitality and he generously admitted that he was flattered by my request to interview him and he also thanked me for my hard work and dedication to Hill Country,

Before I began the questioning I sampled his spread and we spoke about the job and how I felt about working for the company for so long. I went on to tell him how I appreciated the opportunity to work for a product I stand completely behind and I will be sad to leave at the end of the year. He continued to explain how the restaurant works and asked me if I would consider

working for the establishment when I return next year. I respectfully accepted and was extremely flattered that he thought so highly enough of me to offer a continuing position and was equally as amazed that what started out as just an interview to learn more about the company and their marketing abilities turned into an amazing networking opportunity.

Now that we got the small talk out of the way it was now time to start my interview. I explained the questions will be basic questions in regards to the marketing aspect of his job and the restaurant. I told him that I will be taking notes and to feel free to talk openly and with as much detail as he would like to convey.

My first question was to tell me about his experience as a marketing professional in the restaurant industry. He seemed very enthusiastic and eager to answer this question. He told me that as the founder of Hill Country Barbecue I have been involved in all aspects of developing Hill Country as not just a restaurant but a brand. I have had my hand in all factors from the décor before opening and the marketing plans to bring customers through the door. Being involved in the marketing has been rewarding and exciting. I have met some amazing people throughout these years and have worked with amazing vendors.

My following question was if he enjoyed being in the marketing department and would he recommend it to me? He explained that I absolutely love it. The ability to create and inspire customers and my employees is something that I have always felt passionate about. Marketing opens a whole new door for the industry and puts your business in your hands and helps me to cater to the masses. I would recommend this area to anyone who has a creative mind and wants to be open to inspire others.

I was very interested in how Hill Country markets and stays on top I asked how they researched the market before they opened. He went to explain that for the areas we opened our restaurants we research not only our competitors but similar restaurants that were there before and how long they were opened for and why they closed. We also research the type of people that lived and worked in the area and identified whether or not they would fit the market we were gearing towards.

Mr. Glosserman talked very openly about how much he appreciated his staff and those that were devoted and passionate about his business so I asked him how his employees are involved in the marketing process? In detail he explained that our employees are one of the main reasons our business is so successful. They are a part of all our marketing campaigns and events that take place in and out of our restaurants. We have weekly meetings to discuss any new products that are in the works and any events that we are invited to participate in. We respect and accept their ideas and opinions. This restaurant is theirs as well as ours.

I very much appreciated his dedication to his staff and his success has proven they have the right idea. I continued my questioning by asking him you have been very successful; how do you stay on the cutting edge? Researching current trends has made us very successful. We have been able to keep up with what is in and how customers learn of trends. Through different social media sites and what potential competitors are succeeding in and whether or not they would work for our restaurants.

I continued to ask him is there an example of a marketing strategy that you have revised to make it work better? Event marketing is one of our largest marketing strategies to date. When Hill Country first opened our events consisted mainly of hiring local bands to play in our restaurant. We hung up fliers in the neighborhood sent out e-vites to those on our mailing list. Today we are a part of many events outside the restaurant, such as, googa mooga a music festival in prospect park, also we do various charity events such as Share our strength, AIDS walk new York and city harvest just to name a few.

We discussed in detail many of the organizations that Hill Country is a part of so I wanted to know if they often worked with outside event planners to bring in special events to the restaurants? He explained that Very frequently they worked with dozens of charitable organizations to bring many events into our restaurants to bring awareness to the charities and advertising for Hill Country as well as being sponsored in many of the charities events at their locations.

Finally I wanted to know about what keeps their customers coming back. I inquired about if they offered their repeat customers any incentive? He answered that currently we have a loyalty program called Friends and Family Rewards. It is a rewards card that with constant purchasing leads to complementary items as well as promotional opportunities throughout the year. Also those on our mailing list receive coupons throughout the year as well as first knowledge of our events.

I finished the interview with once again thanking him so very much for his hospitality and the wonderful food he provided. We promised to stay in touch and continue our working relationship when I returned.

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Marketing Interview

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