

FEATURES

Student businesses: Big bucks in the ivory tower

Lloyd Wasser

Thinking of starting your own student business? It might not be as difficult as you would imagine, especially with the wealth of government agencies, career counselling centres and first-rate publications all working earnestly to help propell budding young entrepreneurs into the fast and dizzy world of big business.

Every year, thousands of students take the plunge and create their own jobs, tired of the low wages and aggravation of salaried positions for overly-large companies. Many of these fledgling businesses eventually turn into large scale enterprises, and range from low overhead occupations like landscaping and essay-writing services to such high profile businesses as magazine publishing and banquet catering. But no matter what the size of the service offered, all successful student businesses have one thing in common: enthusiasm. That, coupled with great dedication and a sprinkling of common sense, can be the first step down the road to creating your own unique business.

To help the first-time businessman, *Employment and Immigration Canada* have produced a slim booklet entitled *Running Your Own Summer Business*, and it's chock-full of advice on planning, researching and creating the best possible enterprise. One thing they stress is that to run a smooth business you have to enjoy what you're doing. Creating a job just for the sake of having one is not the answer here.

Creating a business that you find stimulating and important is the key to success.

"If possible, try to combine hobbies and interests into your business," suggests Suzin Ferris of York's Career Centre. "Focus on what you like to do."

Ferris is one of the highly-trained counsellors at the Career Centre (N105 Ross), and she welcomes anyone requiring more information on student businesses to visit. Amidst the myriad of journals, books, clippings and pamphlets that compose the Centre library are a good number of useful documents that may prove invaluable in researching the right way to tackle your own job.

Ferris suggests researching your business before you invest time, money and energy into it. Knowing what you're getting into could be the difference between success and failure.

"Do research," she advises. "Talk to people who have started their own businesses to find out the benefits and problems, and see what a typical day is like for them. As well, zero in on a specific area of your chosen field. If you like video tape recorders, then learn all you can about them before you invest anything else."

Running a small business means more than answering the telephone and locking up each night. Any business, no matter what size, has its share of intricate

cont'd on page 9



John Ens

Why Mick loves it

Howard Shulman

You have probably seen the flyers posted all over York. You know, the ones that proclaim "Mick loves it." They're the brainchild of York Arts

student Jason Atkins, and the thing that Mick (Jagger) loves so much is the York Econocard. Atkins realizes that with record inflation, "People just want to save money." And that's exactly what the Econocard allows you to do.

Once you buy the \$3.50 Econocard, it can be used repeatedly throughout the year. It's not a coupon (like other offer systems), and the discount rates that apply to the various businesses are printed on the card itself. For example: if you go to *Tony's Rock and Roll West* on Wednesday nights and present your Econocard, you're spared the three dollar cover charge (and by that time the card has almost paid for itself!).

Part of the partner's success has had to do with their preparation and hard work. The two are constantly searching for new ideas and new contacts.

The preparation comes in the form of research. "When you're designing some work for a company, you want to learn everything you can about it," says Sawczak. "Recently we did some advertising graphics for a car company. By the end of the job we had both become authorities on car sales."

For Mandarinino running his own business is a dream come true. "I've always wanted to run my own place. You work at a company and you give them ideas, but they don't listen. With our company we can do what we want."

Unlike many small businesses which usually start after a few drinks at a cocktail party and end a few months later on the rocks, Mandarinino and Sawczak plan on being around for awhile. "Unemployment is high and jobs are hard to get. We know that. We feel by creating our own business, we'll be able to hire other people and help the economy," says Mandarinino, pointing out that he's found part-time work for three people.

Mandarinino's concern for the economy is also evident when he talks of the benefits of competition. "We want to do well, and try to keep our prices down. But you can't charge too cheaply, though, because by undercutting everybody you're putting them out of business."

excellent response

Upon completion of their education both hope to find jobs with large companies, learning concepts and picking up contacts. At the same time they want to maintain C.J. as a part-time business. "Then after a few years we can get back together full-time and really make the company work." And not just in Toronto, stresses Mandarinino, "but all over the world."

And you can't get more graphic than that.



Berel Wetstein

Jason loves it!

The reason there are so many of these 'Mick' flyers around York--especially in Central Square--is due to Atkins' high-pitched ad campaign to promote his new product. He hopes to get the card off the ground through word-of-mouth as well as through the eye-catching Jagger pic. "You have no idea what Mick loves," says Atkins. "You get curious, you're almost pushed to read it."

The campaign has been a successful one so far, with fifty cards sold in the bookstore since October 5th (the first day the card went on sale) and over seventy-five at the other outlets.

Jason Atkins prides himself on being a doer, not a talker. This is the reason he started his own business. He likes being his own boss, and finds it rewarding and gratifying. Atkins also realizes that, because of continuous inflation, and because his Econocard benefits students through the savings it creates (as well as the revenue for merchants, and some free advertising), the York Econocard is "an opportunity that cannot be overlooked."

Graphics firm projects huge popularity

Elliott Lefko

There's a fine line between aggressive selling and over-selling, says twenty-year old graphic sales Director Jay Mandarinino.

"You can't push a sale. Don't try to be bigger than who you are. Show the customer why you're better than the competition. Talk to them, don't just sell," advises Mandarinino.

Along with partner Christine Sawczak, also twenty, Mandarinino has just this summer founded C.J. Graphic Image. Their company offers a complete service, including consulting, designing, and printing. In addition, because they have had very little overhead, their prices are lower than any other competitive service.

They began the business with their own capital, hoping to take advantage of Mandarinino's business acumen and Sawczak's graphic imagination. The idea worked, for in their first month of operation, they made over \$400 despite working a fifty-hour week at their regular jobs.

According to Mandarinino, the

printing field is an extremely competitive one. "There's hundreds of printing shops in Toronto. You walk down Yonge Street and it seems like every fifth shop is a printing shop."

In order to compete with the many printing and copy shops, Mandarinino appeals to a basic business axiom which has never failed him: "People want quality not quantity, if given the choice."



Jay Mandarinino and Christine Sawczak of C.J. Graphic Designs.

he says. "Most printers will do the job without suggesting any ideas to the customer. Our

approach is to work with the client and try three or four different possibilities."

"That's why I like working with Chris," he continues. "She'll work for hours, doing a design over and over until she's satisfied. One time I took one of the designs she had thrown out to a client, who looked at it and thought it was great. Only then did I bring out her good drawing."

He was really happy that Chris had taken the extra step for him."

Jewelry sparkles at York

Mike Guy

Our purpose is not only to make a profit but to satisfy our clientele," says Wolf, of *Angel's Touch Jewelry Company*, the business he manages with partner Mark Critchly. Rosa, manager of *Gold 'n' Fantasies*, agrees because although their businesses are separate from each other, both of these jewelers offer prices 20-50 percent lower than those of most retail stores.

Rosa explains, "We eliminate the middle man, thus we are able to sell jewelry that is well-made at an affordable price. Most of my customers, students, professors and people that work here, come to me in relief after pricing similar jewelry elsewhere. They find it a convenient place to pick up interesting, quality gifts and get their own jewelry expertly repaired."

Rosa (presently a student at York), studied jewelry-making at George Brown College, in Toronto. However, most of her past experience is attributed to working in a jewelry store in the Four Seasons Sheraton Centre, worked with antique stones. "The jewelry I have for sale is either handmade, cast in Toronto or imported from Israel, Italy, or Mexico."

Rosa says she will take special orders from your specifications or will design something to suit your taste. All the jewelry is guaranteed and can be appraised upon request.

Wolf also trained as a jeweler before coming to York. "I was schooled as a jeweler in Germany," says Wolf, "and I have worked with people from all over

the world, including South America, Nigeria, South Africa, India and Viet Nam. From each person I learned something new, for everyone has his own technique."

"It's odd," says Wolf, "but only 30% of our clientele desire custom-made jewelry."

"If the customer decides upon a design, we are saved the trouble of thinking up new ideas. Sometimes we may have an idea in our heads for four years before we actually make it."

"In the past we've made some extremely outlandish jewelry for our customers. For example, a ring with a propeller, a necklace in the form of an astrological sign and a belt buckle with various compartments. But whatever our customers want, our customers get. That's our philosophy." □