NATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK 2024

Young Entrepreneur Spotlight

Andrew Kurtz, 19 | A Designs

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City/State:

Denver, CO, but I go to college in Boston

Industry/Field of Business:

Stationery/Greeting Cards

Q: Briefly describe your business. What do you offer?

A: I sell personalized stationery, greeting cards, and custom pet cards on Etsy. The personalized stationery is by far my biggest category.

Q: What inspired you to become an entrepreneur?

A: One of the aspects of entrepreneurship that I am drawn to is creating something of value for other people. There something cool in knowing that complete strangers value your creations enough to spend their money on it.

Can you share a pivotal moment in your journey that led you to start your own business?

A: During high school I experienced significant health challenges which lead to me spending time at home. During that time, I rekindled and hobby of making greeting cards. My grandparents offered to buy them, which got me thinking about selling them to their people.

Can you share a significant success or milestone you've achieved in your business?

A: I am a Star Seller on Etsy that has sold over $90,000 to 49 states!

What has been your biggest challenge as a young entrepreneur and how did you overcome it?

> **A:** The biggest challenge I faced was getting organic sales online. To put it simply, it is hard to start selling on a marketplace. Have you ever purchased from a seller with no reviews? The way I overcame that was selling to friends and family first to build a foundation of reviews, then strategically optimizing my SEO for long-tail keywords (keywords that are specific enough that customers know what they want and are likely to buy your product, but also aren't over saturated)

Q: How do you market your business and which tactics have been most successful?

> **A:** I get almost all my sales through Etsy, the majority of which are organic through search, and some from Etsy ads. Organically through search is by far my most successful which also critical to the health of the business because it is free, so my margins aren't eaten by ad-spending.

Q: Describe a typical day running your business.

> **A:** I have outsourced the physical production of the stationery, so the real time goes into customer service and creating the designs for the stationery because they're personalized. The cool thing is I have found a way to automate about 70% of that which I will discuss in the upcoming projects question.

Q: Where do you see your business in the next 5 years?

> **A:** There are two possibilities–generating over $100k in revenue per year or I have started a new more lucrative company

Q: What piece of advice would you give to other young people thinking about starting their own business?

> **A:** Just go for it! Being a kid (or college student) is the best time to learn because you don't have to worry about food and shelter, so you have much less risk! Another piece of advice it to set short attainable goals and take it step by step. It is easy to get overwhelmed with everything you need to do, so focus on learning one thing at a time!

Q: How can people learn more about your business (website, social media handles)?

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Q: Are there any upcoming projects or events you're excited about and would like to share?

> **A:** I have been working a lot on automating my business using a propriety software I am developing called ADesigner. I used to manually design everything in illustrator (changing

the customer's name, choice of color, and other personalization options), but now that I have learned how to code I have made a tool that automatically pulls my order data from the Etsy API, parses the personalization choices into a standardized form, automatically generates PDFs of most designs (a few it does half of and I manually tweak), then uses browser automation to upload them to the printing company website. Then I just must review the order to make sure it looks good and hit send. It cuts down order processing time by 70%!