



Young Entrepreneur Spotlight



Anna Brekken, 17 | Anna Made Designs

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/annamadedesignco/>

Colorado

Industry/Field of Business:

Greeting Cards, Handmade

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

A: I sell handmade greeting cards, as well as custom greeting cards for businesses to give to their employees or clients!

Q: What inspired you to become an entrepreneur?

A: When I was in middle school, my grandma taught me how to make cards. I really enjoyed the process of designing and making them, and had more cards than I could send! So, I opened a shop on Etsy.

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

A: Creating my first recycled paper cards was a huge milestone – it really felt like I was making cards from start to finish. I had even more control over the colors and textures, and these types of cards are unique to what I've seen other people selling.

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

A: There have been weeks where I don't have enough time to do the things I want to in my business. Time management has been a challenge, especially in high school during sports season! In 2024, I've started setting goals for the next months a quarter in advance, so I'm able to zoom out and see which tasks will actually move the business forward.

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

A: Instagram is my main marketing platform, and it's where I've met most of my clients for custom greeting card packages. I also have found that sending a monthly newsletter increases the chances that customers will come back for more cards!

Q: Describe a typical day running your business.

A: Like most people running a business, every day is slightly different. A couple weeks ago, I went to a photo studio to take product photos for my Greeting Card Restock launch. The next couple days were spent editing photos on Lightroom and Photoshop, and uploading them to Etsy. Some weeks, it's writing my email newsletter and filming videos for social media. And of course, there are weeks where all I have time for is to make cards because I have a bulk order to fulfil.

Q: How do you stay motivated and focused, especially during tough times?

A: In the months where my cards aren't selling as well as I'd like them to, I take a step back and look at why – maybe it's because there's no major holiday in that month, or because I haven't updated my designs in a while. Once I'm clear on the reason things aren't going as planned, I can take steps to improve.

Q: What impact do you hope to achieve with your business in your community or the world?

A: I've been working with Animal Rescue of the Rockies and donating 25% of the sales of cards in my Paw Collection since 2020. I want to continue to expand that product line and maybe even sell my cards in their shop!

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

A: As I continue to grow and learn from running AnnaMade Design Co, I'd like to work with other entrepreneurs, helping them with their marketing. Whether it's social media or writing blog posts or ideating advertisements, I can take the skills I've learned here and apply them to businesses at a larger scale.

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

A: Find a product or a service you really care about and love doing, because it's something that will take up a lot of your time.

Q: What is one thing you wish you knew before starting your entrepreneurial journey?

A: There are so many parts to running a business, but selling the product is what makes everything work. So, it's been important for me to focus on the cards and the designs first, before I do the email newsletters and social media content and those parts of the business I really enjoy.

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

Instagram: @annamadedesignco

Etsy shop: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/annamadedesignco/>

Newsletter: <https://join.annamadeblog.com/>