

Start a Business in College

Ever think you can't find a real job in your college town or that your current position just isn't good enough? If that is the case, then I've been down your road before. My freshman year I got a job with a small national magazine through my work study program, but was limited to only \$1000 per semester. Now, if you've ever tried to live as a college student who parties, eats out at least twice a week, and has real things to pay for (car payments, rent, phone bills, utilities, etc.) then you aren't going to make it on a measly \$250 a month. I knew that I would need some extra scratch coming in if I was going to be comfortable and not worry about my finances.

I'll let you in on what I'm doing at my campus and what I recommend to you; the struggling student. Just because nobody is hiring (which is very likely in the recently stagnant economy) doesn't mean there isn't money to be had. You should give serious consideration to starting your own business. It's not as complicated as you might believe. There are a multitude of high-paying, low-risk jobs that you can undertake to not only get paid, but build your resume and gain some real world experience and skill that employer's desire; compared to your peers working their way through college in food service or some other dead-end job.

My first undertaking was starting a coupon booklet for a neighboring college town. At my university, there are at least 4 different coupon booklet companies littering the campus and local shops with their savings-books at the beginning of every semester. They hire out a few reps to solicit local businesses and organizations to advertise in them, and then do a mass printing before each semester begins. My idea was to institute this same business model and idea at a neighboring college town. It was just me out there, hitting the streets and making calls to get the businesses in that town to advertise in my coupon booklet. The whole thing went off without a hitch and I made over \$6000 for a minimal 6 weeks of work during the summer.

After that, I started working around sporting events and developed promotional coupon sheets that I would hand out at tailgating events for football games and outside the arena at basketball games. The idea was to hand out a small pamphlet with coupon/advertising space on the inside. I asked a multitude of local businesses to advertise until it was full. I then did one mass print of the pamphlets and hired some friends to hand them out during the games. If you charge the right amount and check printing costs, this could be a very big money maker for you. My total earnings for both seasons (one pamphlet for football and another for basketball) were \$3000 after paying wages and print costs.

The third activity I do provides me with a monthly paycheck. Many businesses in college towns are unsure how to advertise and market their services to the campus. I started a campus marketing service and charge businesses for me to create an advertising plan for the campus and implement it. I currently have 4 clients and charge them X amount of \$/month for my services. It helps to take a class where you can get experience on a marketing or public relations campaign. I have been doing this for less than half a year and have made around \$6000 all together.

These high-paying, low-risk jobs can give you a step up over your peers, who more than likely have no drive or knowledge about how to start a business. The key point to get across from reading this article would be to do what you know how to do and don't sell yourself short. Being your own boss and operating a business doesn't mean you need to own an office, have a group of employees, or even work all the time. You can still make time for school, friends, and family with simple business solutions like these. Remember, college is a time to explore and take risks...nobody said you had to be poor while you did it.

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