

Questions for Entrepreneurs

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January 23, 2016

What does the company/non-profit organization do? What is the focus? How long has it been in operation? How has it evolved over time?

I'm going to focus on 1st Maker Space here as it consumes most of my time now...

We partner with middle and high schools to produce 3D Design & Printing summer camps and have developed a Youth Maker Space business model which allows us to setup maker spaces in schools at no charge. We fund the space by selling 'Maker Passes' to parents on a subscription basis.

We've been developing this model for about 18 months.

See the attached 'Stanford GSE FabLearn 2015' handout & these videos:

Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/142678800>

Fox59: <http://fox59.com/2015/10/29/ips-career-technology-center-using-3d-printers-to-teach-kids-about-engineering/>

Localstake promo video: <https://youtu.be/wlNA1uzwMvM>

IBJ Article: <http://www.ibj.com/articles/53870-pioneer-in-3d-printing-has-high-hopes-for-education-startup>

For background: Sir Ken Robinson in Time Magazine: [Why Schools Need to Bring Back Shopclass](#)

What ignited the spark in you to start a new company/non-profit organization? How did the idea come about?

Entrepreneurs see opportunities emerge from a stew of problems, assets, ambitions. We turn those into businesses. In our case, I had lots of 3D printers, some donor money and experience selling tech products to the education community.

Entrepreneurs are a capitalist society's problem solvers. Low achievement by students, especially in STEAM areas, looked like a problem I could help solve.

What have been some of your successes?

We have lots and lots of cheerleaders in town who want us to succeed. We hosted our first series of camps with 280 kids. We have IPS and Noblesville schools on board for our 1st Maker Space and dozens of partner schools using our 3D printers.

What have been some of your failures and what have you learned from them? What would you have done differently?

I had to fire my education director. Epic drama. Hiring is hard. I hope to do better.

I am an idea guy, not a manager. Finding the team is hard – I think we may have it now but only time will tell.

What motivates you?

Happy customers, praise, being right, acknowledgement, enough money to offset the risks of leverage.

What has been the single most important decision you have made that contributed to your success?

So far in this venture: firing my co-founder. I don't take any pride in it, it took way too long and cost far too much.

On the bright side: networking with many many important people that have made, and will continue to make, this project successful. Networking over years is like compound interest. It does magical things for a business.

Who or what has been your greatest inspiration?

Fear of losing.

What sacrifices have you had to make to become a successful entrepreneur?

Spending less time with family. Too much stress & responsibility have no doubt affected my health.

What is the major difference between entrepreneurs and those who work for someone else?

Entrepreneurs are responsible for everything – the buck stops here.
Inspiration/Leadership of employees.

Entrepreneurs are fire starters, not so much fire tenders.

<http://blogs.computerexpertsindy.com/2015/11/fire-starter-or-tender.html>

What three pieces of advice would you give to students who want to become entrepreneurs?

- Hire/partner smart
- Plan as well as you can – measure everything and follow-up diligently
- Understand the risks and make sure your loved ones understand (spouse in particular) what can go wrong and what that may cost.

What are the three top skills needed to be a successful entrepreneur?

- Belief you can do it
- Energy/Enthusiasm
- Writing/Communicating/Selling skills

Anything else you would like to add that would be helpful for students who are thinking about starting their own company/non-profit organization.

I've collected lots of thoughts and resources at wiki.kimbrand.com

Thank you so much!

You're welcome!