

Minding Your Own Business: ArtSci Student Tackles Entrepreneurship

by Esther Jiang (BSch '15 Environmental Science and Economics)

In the summer before my final year at Queen's, I had just finished a wonderful experience on exchange in Hong Kong and had the opportunity to be an underwriting intern with a big insurance company. In my final year at Queen's, just coming out of the internship, I was faced with trying to figure out what was next. I applied to jobs, went to some interviews but my heart just wasn't in it.

Like many do, I chose my degree with the desire to contribute positive change to our planet. Reality struck when I realized the challenges faced with finding someone to pay you to pursue your passions exactly the way you wanted to. I hadn't even considered starting something on my own (I would have had no idea where to start) until I found Queen's Innovation Connector Summer Initiative program (QICSI).

When a friend passed along an ad for QICSI, a program which allows students to build a company by providing mentorship and resources, all while getting paid, it seemed to call my name. When I received an acceptance into the program, I stopped my job search.

The year that has followed the program has been one of many trials and tribulations. During that one year, I moved several times, switched ventures, and had to take on a serving job in order to pursue them. Most weeks I work every day, 15 hours a day.

Through this, I constantly doubt myself. I wonder what in the world makes me think I'm cut out for this. Despite this, I continue. I continue in the pursuit of a feeling of gratification that is stronger and deeper than any night out. I continue because I want to change the world for the better. I continue in the pursuit of immense personal growth.

It's easy to doubt ourselves and from my experience this is especially prevalent in women. We are often unsure whether we have the ability to pursue our dream careers. I want to tell you that you do.



Esther Jiang, BSch'15

The hardest part is that switch in mentality from identifying all the things that could go wrong to focusing on all the things you could achieve. Once you do that, it makes you unstoppable.

I watched a talk recently about "grit". It mentioned that people tend to distance themselves from those who have achieved high levels of success. There is an assumption that successful people are "geniuses" or outliers and can't be compared to the general population, whereas what really separates them is grit: passion combined with perseverance.

If you are interested in entrepreneurship, there are plenty of resources at Queen's that can help you get started.

Queen's Innovation Connector is one place to go. If you already have an idea and team, QyourVenture is a great

"If you have an idea, tell people about it. You never know what might come together."

place to go to find ongoing support. If you are completely new and just coming in with some curiosity (like I was), there is a summer program I did, called QICSCI and another called Summer Company Program. Both give you funding money and the environment to find a team and build up the start of a business. It is an opportunity unlike anything else. If it's something you want to try and test out, this program is a great opportunity to see if it's a fit. If you are unable to do the program, don't let that discourage you. Start small. If you have an idea, tell people about it. You never know what might come together.

For more information about the Queen's Innovation Connector (QIC) and their summer initiative program, visit: queensu.ca/innovationconnector

continued

Running your own business: Resources for Freelancers and Entrepreneurs

UpWork.com UpWork is a place for freelance workers, as well as potential employers, to be able to post and search for jobs and work opportunities. The site has more than nine million freelancers from 180 countries. The site also provides assistance with payment guarantees for the freelancers, as well as project deadline assistance so that the employer is ensured that their work is completed on time.

Freelancer.com Very similar to UpWork, as it offers the same services with a very similar structure. Freelancer just has a larger more diversified platform, with connections in over 240 countries, regions and territories. They also have a large number of opportunities in smaller cities around Canada.

WeWork WeWork provides office space and physical resources for freelancers and entrepreneurs to conduct their business. They rent desks and office space on a monthly basis in their shared work spaces. In addition, they have conference rooms with updated technology, an online network to find work, certain benefits and discounts, and weekly events and workshops. These offices can be found in 10 different countries, including a space in Montreal. Freelancers who want access to the service, but no need for an office space can purchase a monthly package which gives them all of the benefits aside from desk or office space.

KEDCO Small Business Development Centre Free and confidential services to point new entrepreneurs (and freelancers) towards how to start their own business. KEDCO offers one-on-one personal consultations and programs to discuss business ideas and needs, referrals to professionals in the community, information about financing programs and initiatives, and assistance in identifying the resources you may require to start and grow your own business.



The graphic features a blue background with a white banner at the top that says "ENTREPRENEURS HERE" with a "START" button. Below this, there are two columns of skills: "Teamwork, Leadership, Communication, Initiative" and "Experience, Problem Solving, Analytical Skills, Adaptability". A central icon shows three stylized people. At the bottom, it says "VISIT COLLEGEPRO.COM" and "APPLY NOW!". The "college pro" logo is at the bottom right, with a disclaimer: "This is not an offer to sell you a franchise. Franchises are offered by prospectus only."

ENTREPRENEURS HERE

START

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Communication
- Initiative

- Experience
- Problem Solving
- Analytical Skills
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