

How The Startup Studio CHANGED

my World View

By Ryan King, WPS Entrepreneurial Studies Graduate



EMPOWERED Being Empowered

I had the pleasure to take The Startup Studio's Entrepreneurial Studies course at Windermere Prep during my sophomore year of high school. I was excited to be able to participate in this class because throughout my childhood I had always dreamed of being an entrepreneur and wanted to start my own company. This drive led me as the boy selling lemonade on the side of the road next to the neighborhood clubhouse, the boy getting in trouble for trying to sell duct tape wallets on school campus, the boy trying to pitch his duct tape wallet idea to Ace Hardware, and the teen knocking on all of his neighbor's doors trying to powerwash their house. All of these ventures unsurprisingly ended up failing for many reasons, but I hoped this course would give me insight as how to correctly go about creating and managing a startup.

Even with all of this anticipation for the class, I somehow managed to get lost on my way the first day and showed up three minutes late. To my surprise instead of letting it slide since it was the first day of school, Mr. Conroy, The Startup Studio's founder, made an example out of my tardiness and proceeded to lecture the class on the importance of character and your image. At first, I thought he was giving me a hard time, but later in the year, I realized the true importance of building your reputation and relationships.

We were all then put into groups of four at random and told that these were going to be our new startup partners for the rest of the semester. While it was hard at first, we slowly started to build our team brand and try to find our passion that would lead us to our base for our startup. After Mr. Conroy taught us about the ways to model a new business, he let each



STORY in
Motion 

Continued on Page 2

team start to try to create an idea for a company and then create a presentation of it to pitch to the class.

After each presentation, the rest of the class was able to give feedback, and as the trust and familiarity with the class was built up, the feedback became more and more brutally honest. Pride and ignorance caused me to reject any initial criticism of our group's idea, but this program helped me to realize that it wasn't personal, as criticism is critical to help improve your vision. Later on in the year, I started to find the true value of feedback and interacting with your customer base to identify possible improvements and pivots for the startup. When receiving feedback after a presentation, I always wanted them to be as harsh as they could to help me identify our shortcomings so that we can improve on them. Building a relationship with the class where we trusted each other and didn't take criticism personally was a huge part in the development of our ideas. Through constant pitching I began to build real confidence and lose all the fear I initially had.

Building a relationship with the class where we trusted each other and didn't take criticism personally was a huge part in the development of our ideas.

After three rounds of presenting and pivoting, The Startup Studio gave my class the opportunity to participate in a networking event and share our ideas with members of the community and receive their feedback. This greatly helped with my presenting skills and ability to communicate my vision with others. From the feedback that we received at the networking event, my group realized while our "Drinkless Activity" app was good in theory, it was going to be very difficult to build it into a scalable technology. More important, I realized that I really was

not passionate about it.

At the end of the semester and after several different ideas and pivots, the group ended up dissolving. While none of these companies were actually able to be taken to the market, I learned an immense amount about what it takes to build a company and how failure and the ability to listen and pivot are crucial skills needed in entrepreneurship. I then went back to the drawing board with this newfound knowledge and began to look at my own story for a path to success.

BRILLIANCE

A New Idea

My family at that time was trying to sell our home in Georgia and the listing agent hired a helicopter crew to take some photos of the home. I owned a drone (DJI Phantom 2) that I used to film my friends wakeboarding. After seeing the listing pictures and my drone footage, I noticed that I was able to get just as good of aerial footage as the helicopter had captured.

Having this knowledge, I then started practicing my filming and editing skills until I created a prototype promotional video of my neighbor's home using my drone. After a lot of market analyzation and feedback from realtors, many of whom were family friends, I decided to invest my time and resources to become certified for commercial

drone videography. The Startup Studio gave me the opportunity to pitch my newly fleshed out idea to investors as well as my peers. While no investments were made due to the infancy of my startup, I got very positive feedback along with some key pivotal points which helped fuel me to keep investing in the idea. I now realized why the power of my own story was so important.

After many different iterations, I finally settled on the startup name King Drone Services. Mr. Conroy and my father, who is also an entrepreneur, helped me start to build my brand and incorporate my company legally making it King Drone Services LLC. Jessica Villalobos, a family friend/realtor, liked my work and allowed me to come do a pitch for her brokerage. Subsequently, I was able to land my first job for Park Square Homes.

I waited for more business to come but shortly realized that the only way for me to attract business was going to be for me to knock on some doors. I went and introduced myself at many brokerage offices but was either quickly turned down or given a contact to email which I never received an email back from.

My passion was the only thing pushing me forward at that point and after going to about ten different brokerages, I finally received a call back from Isleworth Realty. I was hired to do an open lot filming for them. And while I didn't make much money off the first job, it convinced me that it was time to invest all the capital I had available in the company. I took out next to all of my savings and spent \$2,000 on the best drone on the market for my line of work.

The quality of my videography and photography skyrocketed and I was able to use this high-quality footage along with my network to attract new clients. In order to build my network and show the quality of my work, I started to offer new clients half off their first video. This was when the startup truly started to grow and I became profitable.



RELATIONSHIPS

Building Relationships

With the capital inflow from my new clients, I was able to keep investing in more equipment for King Drone Services. This additional investment allowed me to start capturing 360 virtual reality tours of listed homes through the use of Matterport. I also was able to upgrade my interior photography camera, and I even added another drone to the King Drone Services fleet. Thanks to the help of local realtor John Gordon, I was able to become a Premier Sotheby's approved vendor. I also started to attract many other agents from different high-end brokerages such as Isleworth Realty, Coldwell Banker, Engel & Völkers Clermont, Stockworth Realty, and several others. The relationships that I built with my clients was a huge component in the growth of my company and I came to quickly understand why it is one of the core disciplines taught inside The Startup Studio.



DREAMS

Moving Forward

Starting my first company at 16 years old was an invaluable experience. Being in The Startup Studio was a great privilege and empowered me with the skills to move forward on my dreams and passions. I am very thankful to have had my dad as well as Gary Conroy as mentors to help make my vision a reality. To see some of my past works, you can visit my website www.kingdroneservices.com. Or if you are interested in scheduling services, I can be reached via email at ryan@kingdroneservices.com.

AUTHOR

About the Author

Ryan King is 19 years old and is enrolled in the Honors Program at The University of Florida. He will be majoring in Business. He plans to participate in various intramural sports including football, lacrosse and wakeboarding. When Ryan is not studying, playing sports or spending time with his friends, he operates King Drone Services. Ryan founded this company and has been successfully providing drone, video and photography services to the residential and commercial marketplace.