

Career Connection



Name: Lani Lazzari

Current age: 15

Age when you became an entrepreneur: 11

Company name: Simple Sugars



What does your company do?

Simple Sugars manufactures and sells handmade all natural body, facial, and foot scrubs. A scrub is a product that you use when you take a shower or bath, to exfoliate and moisturize your skin.

How did you decide to start your company?

I have had really sensitive skin ever since I was a baby, and I can't use most commercially produced products because the artificial colorings, scents, and preservatives that they contain really irritate my skin.

I decided to make a body scrub when my mom asked me to make homemade Christmas gifts for my friends and family, because I wanted to make something that was fun and safe (and the stuff I had to use from the dermatologist was really boring!).

I knew I had a great product that smelled good and had great benefits for your skin, but I decided to sell it when people who I had given it to asked me for more.

How do customers find out about your company?

I have many loyal customers who spread the word about how much they love the product. Also I have recently gotten some significant press. I've been featured on the Web sites of Allure, Teen Vogue, SELF, CosmoGirl, Redbook, and Forbes, as well as others. I have been featured in many local magazines and newspapers and nationally in Entrepreneur Magazine.

How did you decide on pricing for your products or services?

I priced my products based on market research and also the actual production cost to make the product itself. My scrubs are priced lower than most of my competitors, because I don't want it to be so expensive that I wouldn't spend money on it myself.

The prices have risen since I first started, because the cost of producing my product has increased. Some of the supplies that I use have doubled or tripled in price since I started.

Where do you sell your products or services?

Did you get any investments from other people to start or expand your company?

Obviously, my parents have invested in my company. My aunt also gave me some money to fund my Web site. I showed them that I was a good investment by really being passionate about what I am doing and sticking with it.

What are the best things about working for yourself?

The best thing about working for myself is that I make my own rules. I can decide when I want to work and what I want to work on. It's definitely hard work, but I like motivating myself instead of having someone else telling me what to do.

What are the hardest things about being an entrepreneur?

The hardest thing for me is keeping up with all of the work. I need to spend time developing and growing my business, but it's hard to do that when I'm already busy keeping my business running (doing things like filling orders, making the products, etc.). This is why I plan to hire some employees so I can concentrate on working at my business instead of in it.

Also, it's very frustrating when people don't take me seriously because of my age. Because I'm young, people tend to discount my abilities and not treat me as a savvy business person with a legitimate company.

What qualities does a successful entrepreneur need to have?

A successful entrepreneur needs to be passionate about what they do, be confident and unafraid of taking risks, be willing to work hard and make sacrifices for their business, and realize that there are more rewards than just money.

What are your future goals for your company and for yourself personally?

My goal is to continue to grow Simple Sugars. I would like to see it distributed nationally. I'd like to go on the Ellen Show (haha). I'd like to be able to pay for my

I sell the majority of my products on my Web site, www.simplesugarsscrub.com. I also have my products in a few spas and other specialty stores in my area. In addition, I sell them at local markets and craft fairs during the holiday season. My next steps to grow my business are to expand into more retail outlets and to hire a sales force.

If you have other people working for your company, how did you find them?

I don't have any employees at this point, but I am planning to hire some sales reps soon. My mom helps me a lot though. I can't actually legally own Simple Sugars yet, because I'm not 18, so it all has to be in my mom's name. She also helps with things like shipping, banking, and accounting, because during the school year I sometimes get too busy with school work to be able to do it all myself.

When I plan to hire employees, I will look for people who are passionate, hardworking, and outgoing. My friends are always asking for jobs, but I know that some of them are not right for the position. I don't think you should hire your friends, just because they're your friends.

college education. And I'd like to keep my company as environmentally and socially responsible as possible, and provide a great atmosphere for women to work in.

Do you have advice for teen entrepreneurs who are just starting out?

My advice for anyone starting a business is to do something you're passionate about and always put yourself 100% behind whatever it is you're doing. Also, everyone grows at their own pace, and it's not bad to grow slowly at first.

