



A half hour special from IN THE MIX, the award winning weekly PBS series,

"Be Your Own Boss"

This "In the Mix" show highlights young entrepreneurs in various fields who have followed their passions and started small businesses as a result. Hosted by Tommy and Nick, two teens with interests in magic and video production, the program starts by showcasing a group of students in a Southern New York state school participating in a Junior Achievement Business Plan Competition. We then meet an 18-year old music producer and recording engineer who has assembled a recording studio in a shed in his backyard. Other segments introduce a young adult who co-owns a sportswear store, a group of budding artists selling their work through a group in New Orleans, and a former high school and college football star building a career as a personal trainer. An extremely savvy and successful 13 year old girl explains how she collaborated with her younger sister to create necklaces made with bottle caps and magnets. Through their stories, we learn how these young people have been able to harness their passions, talents, and interests into successful businesses, learning valuable lessons for success not only in business, but in life.

This guide to "Be Your Own Boss" contains two major sections which include questions, discussion topics and activities.

Section 1 - Clarkstown North High School - Junior Achievement of New York Business Plan Competition

Amy Marcello, a volunteer from Price Waterhouse Coopers, helps high school students begin brainstorming ideas for a product to manufacture and sell. She explains what developing a business plan will entail, and encourages the students to come up with an idea that uses an already existing product in a different way, to fulfill a need of consumers.

In a later segment, Amy leads a guided discussion with the students about the different roles in a business: CEO, CFO, COO and Marketing. Students discuss which positions their personality traits are best suited for, and realize that several different personalities and styles are needed to run a successful company.

The final segment finds the students at the final stage of the competition. Groups who won, placed second, and didn't make it discuss their business plans and hopes for the future.

Discussion Questions:

1. The first step for the contestants in the Junior Achievement Competition is to decide what product or service to create. What are the different challenges involved in creating a product as opposed to offering a service? Why is it advantageous, as Ms. Marcello says, to come up with a product that uses something that exists in a different way?

Creating a product involves manufacturing and packaging as well as marketing and selling. Offering a service may require supplies but not manufacturing. Because you will be competing with others who sell the same product or offer the same service, using something that exists in a different way will set you apart from the competition. From a manufacturing standpoint, it is easier to adapt something that already exists than to create something from scratch.

2. In larger companies, different roles are assigned to different administrators as discussed in the second segment. All these positions involve managing people and resources, but in different ways. Explain the differences between the responsibilities of the CEO, CFO, COO, and VP of Marketing. The students in the competition chose roles for themselves based on their personality traits and strengths. Which position would you prefer to have? Why?

The COO oversees the daily operations of the company, the CFO oversees its finances, the Marketing Department markets and sells the product or service, and the CEO oversees every department. Students make chose CEO because they like to oversee the big picture, COO because they

are detail oriented, CFO because they are good with money, Marketing because they are creative, etc.

3. Ms. Marcello talks about filling a consumer need when coming up with a business plan. Give some examples of companies that have found great success by fulfilling a need of consumers. Is that the only ingredient needed for success? What are other areas of a business that affect its success?

Computer giants like Apple and Microsoft have succeeded providing faster, smaller and more powerful ways to process and share information. Walmart is a huge success for providing goods at very low prices. While fulfilling a consumer need is very important, companies must also make sure they are run efficiently and fiscally. Advertising and marketing is necessary to get the word out about a product.

Section 2: The Entrepreneurs: Magic, Music, Art, Jewelry, Retail and Fitness

Tommy, the show's host, is a young magician who introduces the different segments. He performs some magic tricks, while explaining some of the issues involved in starting a business as a performer for hire. He talks about the hard work and planning involved in starting your own business and offers some tips on keeping expenses low by doing his own advertising and getting inexpensive business cards. He is also credited as assistant video editor and music composer for the show.

Ron Geffen is an 18 year old who loves music. After learning to play guitar and joining a band, he became enamored with the equipment involved in recording, and loved learning how to use microphones and programs to record music. With some financial help from his dad, he assembled a recording studio in a backyard shed and offered to record friends and classmates for free while he honed his recording skills. As he increased his recording expertise, he began charging for his services. He uses his profits to reinvest in equipment for the studio.

Francis Colomeda owns a sporting goods store and describes the satisfaction he gets from being responsible for all aspects of the business and being his own boss.

As a high school football star, Shawn Harris dreamed of playing in the NFL. Instead, he is finding deep personal satisfaction helping others by turning his love of fitness into a business as a personal trainer.

Thirteen year old Maddie Bradshaw decided to paint the inside of bottle caps and attach magnets to the back as a way of decorating her new locker in middle school. Her friends loved the "Snap Caps" and requested their own. When Maddie got the idea to create a magnetic necklace which could be used to hold the interchangeable bottle cap designs, a successful business was born. Selling her jewelry on consignment, her orders have increased exponentially and her business is booming.

Discussion Questions:

1. All the young entrepreneurs spoke about following their passion. Maddie advised us to "start out with something you love", and Jenn Napoli, founder of the Ya Ya program said "The most exciting way to make money is with something you make". Why is it so important to be passionate about a business venture?

When you love what you are doing, it makes you want to do it even if you don't make a profit at first. Your passion will also translate into the quality of what you produce or the service you provide.

2. Most small businesses need money to get started. This is called capital. Ron spoke about having his dad agree to the initial investment, Maddie said her mom matched "tooth fairy, Christmas and birthday money" that she had saved. What are some other ways to raise capital for a business? How does the type of business affect the amount of capital needed to start it?

Businesses can raise capital by trying to attract investors; when the company makes a profit, some of the money will go back to the investors.

Some businesses require expensive equipment or materials to get started, like a recording studio or a sporting goods store. Selling homemade items or providing services like a personal trainer would require less capital.

3. Ron spoke about reinvesting his profits into more equipment for his recording studio. Consider the importance of reinvesting money back into a business. In what types of businesses would it be especially important?

In most businesses, it is important to reinvest a portion of the profits. You may need to buy more supplies to create a larger inventory. In a type of business that requires remaining current, you may have to invest in new equipment. Even those who provide a service probably have to spend money on courses to stay up to date in their field.

4. Shawn spoke about the need to "learn and update your knowledge every year" as a personal trainer. Ron said "you can never stop learning when you keep recording. You can always learn something new in every single session." Why is continual learning important for keeping a business profitable? Ron mentions the need to "read manuals, learn shortcuts". What are ways to keep learning about different aspects of a business?

It is important to stay current and state-of-the-art in business to be successful. Joining professional organizations related to your business and attending conventions and classes is one way to keep learning. You can read about competitors or similar businesses through trade publications and websites. You can attend college courses in business or a topic related to your field.

5. All the young entrepreneurs discuss advertising at some point. Shawn says that word-of-mouth is most important for personal training, and that you "advertise through results". Ron did his first sessions for free while he honed his skills. Tommy puts up fliers in supermarkets, prints out his own business cards, and does tricks for teachers and kids as a way to advertise his magic business. Discuss other types of advertising and how valid they would be for different types of businesses. How much money should be spent on advertising a business?

Some types of advertising are word-of-mouth, newspapers, radio, television, and websites. Offering goods or services at a discount by giving coupons could help introduce people to a product or service. The size of the business would determine the type and expense of the advertising. A large company might buy commercial time during the Super Bowl but a young person with a business or service would more likely advertise in a local paper. While a company might want to start up with a big advertising push, the cost of advertising shouldn't absorb all of a company's profits.

6. Francis, the sporting goods store owner, says the biggest advantage to being your own boss is the respect of the community, customers, and vendors. Ms. Napoli talks about the importance of empowerment and self-sufficiency that the Ya Ya program brings to disadvantaged youth. How is a business self-empowering? Why is that important?

A business can be self-empowering because as the title of the show states, you can "Be Your Own Boss". As the young entrepreneurs in the show illustrate, doing something you love, and working hard at it, can result not only in a successful business, but a great feeling of accomplishment.

Activities:

Go the website <http://www.mindyourownbiz.org/> and work in teams to develop a business plan for your "dream business". Present your business plans to the class.

Work with a partner to take an approximately 30 minute online course at <http://archive.sba.gov/training/>. Summarize what you have learned and present your findings to the class.

Contact businesses in your community and ask to arrange for your class to tour the company's facilities. Invite a local business owner or administrator to come to your school and address your class.

Break the class into groups and assign each group a webinar from the choices at <http://archive.sba.gov/training/>. Students sign up and listen to webinar, reporting back to the class on what they learned from the experts.

Resources:

Junior Achievement of New York

<http://www.jany.org/>

Helium.com tips for teen on starting your own business:

<http://www.helium.com/knowledge/1852-tips-for-teens-on-starting-your-own-business>

US Small Business Administration Teen Business Link

<http://archive.sba.gov/teens/>

Ehow.com articles on helping teens start a business

http://www.ehow.com/how_2203620_start-business-teens.html