

# From My Experience...

By Brian Linton

**B**rian Linton is a young entrepreneur and recent graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia, PA. He started his first company, Sand Shack ([www.sandshack.com](http://www.sandshack.com)), his freshman year in college and has since grown it into a brand sold in over 100 stores across the east coast. Sand Shack is a resort apparel and accessories company with a central theme of the ocean and the conservation of it. He has also founded an organic coffee company, Kofi Coffee, in Philadelphia. Most recently Brian has been blogging about his entrepreneurial adventures and lessons on his website [www.brianlinton.com](http://www.brianlinton.com).



When I first started Sand Shack three years ago I was determined to succeed. But success in business isn't as easy as just reading about it, and the best way to learn is to get out there and do it. Although the first years of operations have by no means been easy, they have been full of valuable lessons and experiences.

## ***SELL THINGS CLOSE TO HOME***

The biggest mistake an entrepreneur can make is to choose to sell a product or service they know nothing about or have no passion for. Just because selling something can make you money does not mean that it's the right product or service for you to sell. It is so important to sell something you are truly passionate about, because if you aren't passionate, your customers will know and your business will suffer.

## ***USE YOUR COLLEGE AND ITS RESOURCES***

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute (IEI) at Temple University have been an invaluable resource for my companies and me. The IEI hosts an annual business plan competition called the Be Your Own Boss Bowl, and this year I won grand prize. They've also provided me with numerous other opportunities and resources to help grow my business. Drawing on my positive experiences with the IEI, I encourage everybody to look at what their college (or future college) has to offer and do not be scared or ashamed to ask for help or use the resources they have.

## ***DON'T MAKE EXCUSES***

If you need to do something, don't make excuses that inhibit you from doing it. For instance, when I have a sales meeting with a customer I don't simply go home after the meeting is done. There is an unlimited amount of possible customers for Sand Shack's jewelry, hats, belts, or flip-flops. You will be surprised at how much you can fit into a day if you don't make excuses.

## ***ALWAYS SEEK GREAT PR***

Nothing lifts you up or helps your business more than a positive story about you or your company. If you are a young entrepreneur there are plenty of media outlets that would love to broadcast your story to the masses. I'm always seeking out great PR, whether it be a newspaper, online blog, or magazine such as Future CEO Stars. PR in all forms is beneficial. Also, sign up for competitions and get your name out there. You will rarely be randomly approached to be in a story, you have to pitch your story to the media and get them interested in you. One example of a recent PR accomplishment is that Sand Shack was recognized as one of the top 20 collegiate businesses in the nation by StartupNation.com.

To read more about Brian, his current projects, and his entrepreneurial adventures and lessons, visit [www.brianlinton.com](http://www.brianlinton.com). Brian may be contacted at [brian@sandshack.com](mailto:brian@sandshack.com).

**Sponsored By AdVanz llc and  
the PA State Leadership Team**

