

Crafty

Nicole Ewart

Crafty consisted of nine members, all new to the world of business, who signed up to Young Enterprise in the hope of gaining some employability skills, managing our own business and possibly making a small sum of profit! Initially, we felt overwhelmed by the organisation and innovation required to run a business. However, we were able to step up to the mark but had no idea what amazing opportunities were ahead of us. Being a part of Crafty undoubtedly surpassed all our expectations as we discovered skills and qualities we never knew we had, as we watched our company grow.

As a newly formed company, our first task was to decide on a service or product. Our Young Enterprise company, 'Crafty', was built with the intention of encouraging trade in the arts and craft aspect of business. We felt that there was a niche in the market that our team could fill. Having heard about the many Craft Fairs hosted by our school and through various websites, we discovered that those companies offering personalised items were increasing in popularity. As a team we felt that handcrafted notebooks, with the end user in mind, could enable us to boost the local economy. We were eager to use unique designs to bring a new, more personal side to the stationery industry. A problem with handmade items however is the cost. As students, we all know how expensive a good notebook can be, especially since we are purchasing several at a time. As a result of this, Crafty wanted to create a range of bespoke, individual and quality notebooks, at an affordable price. Of course, before we were sure about the idea, we decided to take part in some market research in order to place a price point and investigate what was already available on the market.

After everyone within the company had decided on their individual roles, the Marketing Directors started to create our unique logo, while the Administrative Director and I started on raising start-up capital. We did this by designing and printing 'Santa letters' and 'You're on the nice list letters'. These letters were very popular with



teachers' children and also pupils with young siblings. The event ran smoothly, proving to the school staff that we were well organised and capable of making handmade crafts, therefore building a customer base within the school for when we began to sell the notebooks.

When the Operations Director and I had confirmed notebook prices, there was a repeated process to contact the Finance Directors to ensure basic blank notebook prices and the cost of selling the books would be viable and in the best interest of Crafty. We were able to use paint brushes that were in art study in school, which saved us money. We only had to invest capital in buying paints in bulk at a reduced rate at the beginning of the year. An efficient system of accounting for all revenue and expenditure meant that we could keep a close eye on the revenue and cash flow within our company. I received weekly updates from the Finance Directors, ensuring that Crafty was in a stable financial position.

We decided, after a team discussion and review at the beginning, that in order to keep the notebooks as personal as possible, that the use of finger painting to make quirky and eye-catching designs were the most desired method, as we felt that the much more human input-element of our notebooks attracted clients. We also decided to use an ombré design, featuring a 'City-scape', and our 'Cloud Notebooks' also proved equally popular, as each featured vibrant and eye-catching colours that were able to draw in members of the public. Together we worked to create themed notebooks based on the season, working efficiently to cater for the exact demands of our

customers. Also by taking personalised orders we were able to create a more intimate company-client relationship, enabling us to spread the influence of the company as our customer rapport increased.

During our Young Enterprise experience, we were presented with many opportunities to enter competitions to win awards for our achievements as we developed key skills. I was nominated by our Operations Director Diana for the Journey Award. This award is an opportunity for individuals to tell their stories on how Young Enterprise has helped them develop dramatically over the course of the programme. I was awarded first runner up in Northern Ireland out of 75 finalists, from 17,000 companies across the UK, something I never thought I could achieve before taking part in Young Enterprise.

Throughout our Young Enterprise experience, we have made our company grow from strength to strength with both members' confidence levels and quality of sales increasing. Everyone within the group has different skills and qualities, which allowed us to effectively carry out our business plan. We would like to thank Young Enterprise Northern Ireland for presenting us with so many opportunities that have shaped us into the entrepreneurs we are today. As Managing Director of Crafty, I am so proud of all the time and effort members of the team have put into the company. Our great adventure has been challenging, involving a great deal of mental effort with everyone enjoying the whole experience. Each member of the company can now confidently say, "I know what it takes to run a company."

Capture That Quote

Our Young Enterprise experience began in September 2015 on a dull Monday afternoon in the Sixth Form Study, with seven of us: Hannah, Julia, Cathy, Tara, Niamh, Naomi and Shannon deciding to form together to take part in the company programme. Little did we know we were about to begin a rather successful company, creating made-to-order, bespoke frames.

Capture That Quote was not an easy company to establish, as finding the balance between friendship and working together in business wasn't an easy process for a group of seven girls, as I'm sure you can imagine. However after a few weeks, we started to find our feet and Capture That Quote began to grow.

As the weeks progressed, we began developing our products and deciding on a target market in preparation for the various craft fairs and Young Enterprise Competitions that we

planned to take part in. The process was an intense one as we really got a sense of what it was like to work in the real world of business, from producing our products, to marketing through social media and finally to actually selling our frames, whilst luckily managing to make a significant profit. Despite the considerable amount of work we had to put in, it all paid off as we got the opportunity to take part in a Young Enterprise trade fair, where we were judged on our products and our company overall. This really was the highlight of our experience.

Young Enterprise provided us with an amazing opportunity, a real insight into the world of business and invaluable experience, as well as trips to various places and lots of laughs during late-night hours spent making frames!

We would like to express our thanks to everyone who helped us through the process of creating Capture That Quote.



CornFused

Beth McCullagh, Marketing Director

'CornFused' was a large group of twelve enthusiastic Young Enterprise members. When we began to think of some ideas, we were all keen to sell something new, different and most importantly a product that people would want to buy. The Young Enterprise Programme was a steep learning curve, but we managed to source, brand, market and sell our product: popcorn. We had two new flavours: Strawberries and Cream and Lemon and Lime Sherbet. An important factor for us was ensuring that our product appealed to everyone, so popcorn proved to be perfect for those with allergies to Nuts, Wheat and Dairy and also for Vegetarians and Vegans.

We sold our popcorn at various trade fairs throughout the year, as well as in the Rosehip Café and Bakery. Meeting with customers and encouraging them to try our new product was perhaps the highlight of the process. In the end, all our hard work paid off when we won the Regional Marketing Award.



The Young Enterprise Company programme was a truly enjoyable and worthwhile experience. From sourcing

and marketing, to pitching and selling, every member developed so many new skills and ultimately made new friends.

Big Leap

At the beginning of our AS year, a group of students consisting of: Alice Winson, Aisling McGreevy, Ella Diamond, Lucy Cook, James Beckett, Josh Peacock, Lee Groves, Matthew Smyth, Ross Malcomson and Laura Keating, decided to form a company and join Young Enterprise. After much consideration and discussion, we came to the decision to write a short book, based on the transition from P7 to Year 8, in order to help those in their transition to Secondary School.

We wanted to focus on the main issues surrounding this move such as: how to tackle exams and homework, how to make friends and how to cope with this new environment. In our company we were each assigned a section to focus on and after writing, we created the book in Photoshop. To raise the capital required to get our book printed, we decided to make 'chocolate sleighs' out of different chocolate bars and candy canes to sell at the craft fair. This proved to be very successful and we raised the money required to have our book printed.

After printing, we decided to firstly set



up a stall at our school's open night in an attempt to sell our books to the P7 children attending the night. We had a successful evening and managed to sell many of our books. Throughout the year, we were then able to take orders for our books and sell to Primary Schools and other organisations.

Overall, joining Young Enterprise was

both a rewarding and challenging experience, which gave us many valuable skills that we will be able to use in later life. We learnt how to work as a team effectively, to meet deadlines and to manage our money wisely. I strongly recommend Young Enterprise, as it's a great way to make new friends and gain valuable skills that will benefit you in the future.

Spectrum Ceramics

Spectrum Ceramics were a Young Enterprise company consisting of ten girls who painted and sold handcrafted mugs. We decided to make this product because we felt that we could incorporate our love of art with our love of business. To start, we brainstormed some designs and, after a lot of discussion, decided on 4 main designs which were named: 'The Secret Garden', 'Copperfield', 'Charlotte's Web' and 'Spotty Dotty'. Each mug was £3.50 or two for £6 and our most popular mugs were 'Copperfield' and 'The Secret Garden'. In order to finance our purchasing of materials, we set up a 'Give and Receive a Rose' event around Valentine's Day in school. We then decided to widen our product range and came up with the idea of painting and selling coasters to compliment the mugs. This allowed us to sell sets



of mugs and coasters for £4, which was very popular at Christmas. Each member of Spectrum Ceramics learnt

a lot through the Young Enterprise Programme and to top it all off, we all received a little bit of profit too!

The Quick Start Club

Jessica Lewis, Katie Lockhart, Matthew McClimonds, Lara Kirkwood, Sophie MacFarlane, Cameron Le Foulter, Jack Law, Enda McDermott (Year 10)

Our journey began when every Thursday at lunch, we all went to Miss Gilpin's room for Quick Start Club. Quick start gave us the opportunity to set up our own company and to design and manufacture our unique product. We named our company 'File It' and our slogan was 'Read it, write it, file it!' One Thursday afternoon we went around the school and got people to complete surveys to find out whether our peers would even buy the files, and what designs or patterns they would like on them. Each week we made more progress towards our final product.

Once our product was complete, we were able to get two days of selling in the school's Atrium. On these two days we made a profit of £61.50. It also gave us a chance to work on our social and sales skills. Many people didn't have money with them so we started taking orders, which meant that we took a note of their name and Form class and put their chosen file aside. We delivered it to them over the next few days. At the end we only had a few files left; we took these home for family members so they were put to good use and none were wasted.



Once our product was made we had to sell them in the Atrium.

To make our product, we first had to get materials. To keep our cost low and make our perfect product environmentally friendly, we asked some of our teachers if they had any old unused files that they didn't use; we managed to collect over 60 files without spending a penny! After buying all of our decorations, we ended up spending only £12 in total. To make our funky files we needed somewhere to go at the weekend with lots of space, so we hired the community room at Tesco as it was free and we also got free food and crisps, YUM. It was a great way to meet up and make our product without everyone crowding into someone's house.

As we had three groups going for gold, we had to narrow down the competition. A Dragon's Den was organised with three teachers as the judges. The three teachers (Mrs Tully, Mr Dempsey and Mrs Cosgrove) judged us by the power point we presented to them. They also asked us a lot of questions about our business plan, Mr Dempsey being particularly interested in our profit or loss figures. Thankfully we had a strong business plan and very good sales figures. They analysed the power point and presentation of each of the three groups in the competition and then decided on the winner by taking into account all of the information we supplied. After what seemed like forever, the judges came to a decision...we had triumphed! We were in the Northern Ireland finals!

One Friday at break-time we were asked to go to Mr McLoughlin's office. Matthew, another member of the group, and I had joked that we may have won a 3 course meal, but what he had to tell us was a whole lot tastier. When we entered we were slightly surprised to see place mats on the table but that wasn't the most surreal thing to happen that day, as he told us some fascinating news... WE HAD WON THE N.I. FINALS and in the process had won a trip to the Northern Ireland Science Park in Belfast.

As a reward for winning the competition we got a day off school to go to the Belfast Science Park. Our minibus arrived to take us to the Science Park at 9:15am and we were accompanied by Mrs Morrow and Miss Gilpin. We arrived at the Science Park at 10am and left our schoolbags on the minibus.

Upon entering we met our tour guide who allowed us to choose snacks and drinks – for free! She gave us some very interesting information about the Science Park, especially that it is the centre for start-up businesses in N.I. We also visited the Titanic pump house behind the Science Park and learnt that this building is now used as a coffee shop. Afterwards our tour guide brought us to a company called Taggled, which was founded by Ian Scott who is a former pupil of Banbridge Academy. We also visited Glowmetrics (an advertising company), to learn a little about how competitive this industry is. Finally, we visited Citi Bank where we were kindly given gift bags and posed for the camera yet again. Just before we boarded the bus back to school, a local businessman who currently works in the Science Park told us about different businesses and how they were growing. We had a great day and found this to be a fantastic opportunity to learn about the world of business.

Young enterprise was a great experience for us and was really fun. You should join too if you are in Year 9!