

ShirtbyHand



An enterprising student who is combining his university studies with running a bespoke shirt making business is proving to be a tailor made success story for other young students thinking of starting their own business.

Robert Hoving, who is studying a Masters degree in International Business Studies at Robert Gordon University (RGU) in Aberdeen, launched ShirtbyHand in May 2011. His bespoke ladies and gents shirt tailoring service is accessible through his website, www.shirtbyhand.co.uk.

The interactive website enables customers to log on and design their own shirt or blouse by choosing from a variety of colours, cuts, and patterns, right down to the detail on the inside of collar and button rail – all for just £69. Customers can even add their own monogram if they wish!

Originally from Holland and now living in Aberdeen, Robert says he knew from an early age he wanted to become his own boss. "It has always been one of my dreams to start my own business. I have worked for many companies throughout the years and I liked the fact there are no limits if you are your own boss. You can

decide what you want to do."

Explaining how the idea to branch into custom shirt design came to fruition, Robert said, "I went to China last year and got myself a tailor made suit at an affordable price and thought why can't I do this in the UK? However, the reality is I'm a student and can't afford to fly back and forward to China to source a factory and everything that would involve. So, when I came home I decided to get in touch with Dutch clothing company ShirtbyHand. Having owned one or two of their shirts and been impressed with the quality, I decided to find out if they would be interested in a collaborative partnership."

Proving that you can realise your ambitions if you really try, the Dutch management team accepted his proposal.

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Case Study One

He immediately enlisted the help of the business incubator unit at Robert Gordon University, and the Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) which seeks to foster a culture of entrepreneurship among students in Scottish universities by equipping them with enterprise skills, and providing the support and resources for students to start up and grow their own business or social enterprise.

“RGU and SIE have played a crucial role in getting my business off the ground” said the shirt-maker who spent the next 4 months getting the business ready while mastering professional tailoring skills. “They gave me sound business advice and SIE introduced me to experienced professionals in the industry who put me on the right tracks – without their help I doubt I would have progressed as quickly as I did.”

Robert says his focus at the moment is to build the Scottish business. “A lot of my customers are in Aberdeen but I am also getting more and more enquiries from Glasgow and Edinburgh. A lot of our clients don’t have time to shop, so we go and meet them at

their office or alternate choice of venue. We try to fit around their agenda. My aim, once I finish my degree, is to appoint agents who can measure up clients in all the major cities in the UK, and possibly expand our services to include tailor-made suits.”

www.shirtbyhand.co.uk

The Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) is the national organisation for promoting and supporting enterprise and entrepreneurship in Scotland’s universities. Working with students, educators, and partners in the business community we inspire, encourage, develop and support Scotland’s next generation of entrepreneurs.

For further information visit:
www.sie.ac.uk.



Image courtesy of ShirtbyHand

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