

CONTENTS

12-25 | Entrepreneurship

Good times or bad, entrepreneurs and small business contribute substantially to the U.S. economy. This issue of @Mays highlights current and former students who've started something.

12 | Opportunity knocks

Chris Nicolaysen and Ohad Nezer, both MBA Class of 2009, learn through experience the importance of focusing on core business.

14 | Be your own boss?

Important considerations before you strike out on your own.

15 | Engineers to entrepreneurs

Aggie engineering students add business knowledge in a 3-week summer course.

16 | Philanthropreneurship

Corporate+nonprofits in a new model of creating sustainable wealth. Andy Ellwood '04 of Gowalla pursues a vision.

18 | Just say 'iivii'

Larry Warnock '83 urges everyone to avoid "death by duck bite."

19 | A bite of business

Still in college Erin Eisenrich '11 launches a print magazine devoted to BCS local eateries.

20 | For the children

A study abroad project turns into much more for Robert Furr '04 and Jose Mahomar '04.

22 | File your taxes, then go shopping

Coming to a mall near you? Kyle Klanske '13 wins \$10K for tax filing kiosk idea.

23 | BCS Fashion Week

International Fashion Week 2011 came to BCS thanks to Paige Melvin '09.

24 | Empowering Entrepreneurs

Travelling to South Africa to share what they know, Lauren Dunagan '11, Paul Morin '10, Rishabh Mathur '10, and Kelly Kravitz '13 help under-resourced small business owners.



8

SAVE THE DATE
JUNE 11, 2011

Mays Summer
Learning
Seminar 2011
*Business in a
Turbulent Economy*



16

7 | Living Large

At a surprise 90th birthday party for Professor Emeritus of Marketing Herb Thompson, former students, friends and family gather

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

1 | Mays programs reach new heights in the rankings

2 | Three Mays students land national scholarships

Damani Felder '14

Jackie Robinson Foundation Scholarship

Terrence Weaver '11

Pat Tillman Foundation Scholarship

Omar El-Halwagi '11

Harry S. Truman Scholarship

IN WEHNER

8 | Duty of Care

PepsiCo CEO and Chairman Indra Nooyi

10 | Marketing 3.0

Marketing thought leader Philip Kotler

FORMER STUDENT NEWS

26 | Marketing and ministry

Marketing graduate Greg Matte '92 follows his heart

27 | Aggie 100 2010

The annual event celebrates Aggies of every stripe

28 | Outstanding Alumni

This past fall, Mays honored former students John Van Alstyne '66, Bob Loeffler '77, Bruce Broussard '84; and doctoral former students Sundar Bharadwaj and Sandy Wayne.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

The generosity of donors supports Mays Business School students, programs and faculty

30 | Business of blessing

31 | Honor through honors

32 | A parent's pride

FACULTY RESEARCH

33 | Increase incentives, decrease corporate pollution

34 | You say illegal, I say legitimate

35 | In the name of the company

36 | Don't skip on marketing or R&D to stay on top

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Philanthropreneurship

Gowalla Executive Andy Ellwood '04 discusses sustainable philanthropy

What would happen if the hustle of the entrepreneurial spirit were brought to the philanthropic world? What if every nonprofit organization had a for-profit business to sustain it?

What would happen if the passionate and the called gave no thought to whether they have the financial support needed to continue their work?

What if there was a truly sustainable model to create a lasting impact in the neediest communities?

These are the questions Andy Ellwood '04. As the business development executive at Gowalla, the location-based social experience service, Ellwood says he wants greater collaboration between nonprofits and corporate entities, creating sustainable wealth that supports both.

This idea was born when he was working as a sales executive for a private jet company. In his interactions with high net-worth individuals, he frequently heard them lament, though they wanted to support good causes, the ROI was low — that the money they gave was not utilized as efficiently.

This conundrum intrigued him. Generally the brightest minds in business don't work for nonprofits. What if he could help bridge that gap, injecting his entrepreneurial know-how into social causes?

His favorite example of this happened in August 2010. One of his first big projects at Gowalla, the project was a union between his company, AT&T and TOMS Shoes. Perhaps you've heard of TOMS. Slipper-like canvas shoes, they are replacing flip-flops as



Andy Ellwood '04 envisions greater collaboration between nonprofits and for-profits, creating sustainable wealth that supports both.

the footwear of choice on college campuses. When you buy a pair, a pair is given away to children in need. TOMS Shoes was approaching the milestone of its millionth pair of donated shoes. AT&T, a major supporter of TOMS, wanted to capitalize on the celebration.

The promotion worked like this: Gowalla users could "check in" at any place where shoes or cell phones were sold. Doing so would enter them in drawings for TOMS, AT&T smartphones and netbooks, and the grand prize, a trip for two to Argentina to participate in the "shoe drop" when the millionth pair of TOMS would be given away. Gowalla users could get a feel for the history of TOMS Shoes by taking a "trip," checking in at sites significant to the company (such as the first store where they were sold) and collecting "pins," like stamps on a virtual passport.

The promotion raised sales for AT&T and TOMS, and awareness for their global philanthropic work. Thousands of kids in Misiones, Argentina, received new, high-quality shoes — perhaps for the very first time in their lives. By every metric, this was success.

"We need more companies that understand the opportunity for impact that they have, not in one-time 'check it off the list' charitable contributions, but with a true understanding and integration into the very soul (or in this case sole) of their company's mission," Ellwood wrote in a blog post about the event.



While not every partnership Ellwood forges between Gowalla and other companies (such as Disney, CNN, the NBA, NASA and Whole Foods)

has a philanthropic spin, Ellwood's personal tagline

is "connecting good people with great opportunities." This includes giving a "philanthropreneur" flavor to every project possible. "The more I talk about it, the

"We need more companies that understand the opportunity for impact that they have, not in one-time 'check it off the list' charitable contributions, but with a true understanding and integration into the very soul (or in this case sole) of their company's mission."





Gowalla cooperated with AT&T and TOMS Shoes to raise awareness of their global philanthropic work. The pay-off? New shoes for thousands of children in Argentina.

more energized I get. What if we led with entrepreneurs and followed with clean water, education and healthcare?" This model would turn donations into true investments, so that a donor could give one time and make a difference perpetually as the business continues to grow.

Ellwood will keep developing this idea as he grows his own entrepreneurial toolkit by building Gowalla, which launched in 2009. Since then, the company has grown to 27 employees (he was the eighth hire) and 600,000 users. In his experience there

are three defining characteristics of an entrepreneur: persistence, hustle and self-coaching. He would know. He started his first business at the age of 12 — a business he sold, and which is still in operation today.

"The most successful entrepreneurs I know stick to it no matter what," he says. That means no expectation of vacations or working from 9 to 5. Work and life are fully integrated.

It can be lonely if you're the sole employee. There are no co-workers to celebrate successes or commiserate about

setbacks, no one to give feedback on your performance. Here, self-coaching is invaluable.

"You've got to look honestly at your work and see where there's an opportunity to improve, to make the business better," Ellwood says.

What happens when you put those concepts to work philanthropically? You improve your business — and you improve the world.

See more at andyellwood.com, or go with him on Gowalla at gowalla.com/andyellwood.

**SAVE THE DATE
June 11, 2011**

Mays Summer Learning Seminar 2011 ***Business in a Turbulent Economy***

Join us for a day-long seminar exploring challenges and opportunities in the turbulent global economy. This is a unique opportunity for graduates of Mays Business School to enhance their knowledge, network with fellow former students, and reconnect with Texas A&M and Mays.

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Mark Dautzer

Chief Economist and Research Director, Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University
"The Economic Outlook for Investors and Business Decision Maker"

and

Asgar Zardkoobi

T.J. Barlow Professor of Management, Mays Business School

"Domestic and Global Economies and the Implications for Human Resources"

Saturday, June 11, 2011 • Mays Business School, Wehner Building
For more information and to register, visit mays.tamu.edu/sls2011