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CAN YOUR HIGH SCHOOL BUSINESS MAKE THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE?

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So many entrepreneurs are born full of business ideas. It's not unusual to hear an entrepreneur say, "I started my first business at age 12." And for those entrepreneurs who already have a business under their belts before they go to college, what can college do for them? If you're a student at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont, you can get college credit for the work you're already doing in your business. And while running your business, you can learn valuable skills such as accounting and marketing, and meet with advisors to help you grow.

The BYOBiz program is the brainchild of Champlain President Dave Finney. "The business owner coming out of high school typically has a lot of technical questions—like how do they set up the right accounting system or trademark a product?" Finney says. With professors who own businesses and have entrepreneurial backgrounds, that knowledge is right there for the taking at Champlain.

The BYOBiz program was introduced this past June, just in time for Champlain student Ben Kaufman to benefit from it. During his final months of high school in 2005, Kaufman started Mophie, a Burlington, Vermont, company that sells iPod peripheral accessories. With high energy and a strong entrepreneurial drive, Kaufman was looking for a college program that would meet his needs—and Champlain's policy that students can take coursework in their major immediately rather than waiting until their junior year was a big attraction for him. "I knew if I went to a traditional college, I would get bored pretty quickly," says Kaufman. "[At Champlain,] you start your major on the first day of your first semester. I [immediately] studied international business, marketing and accounting." And he could apply all the coursework to his existing business.

Even with a highly supportive program, Kaufman, 20, has found balancing the business and his schoolwork to be a challenge. Since he's started school, he's delegated most of the operational duties to a management team he brought in so he can continue to focus on the creative and development side. The strategy has pushed projected 2006 sales to between \$1 million and \$2 million.



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Bright idea: After starting an iPod gear business in high school, Ben Kaufman chose a college he knew would complement his entrepreneurial goals.

That kind of delegation can help any student entrepreneur make the transition from high school business to college business. Finney also suggests using all the resources available on campus to help you run your business, from students you can hire to handle various daily tasks to the list of professors and other business contacts you can turn to for help. "Find a mentor—someone who has experience, who's already done what you're trying to do," says Finney. "Become their friend; ask for their advice; ask for their help. Don't be shy. They want to help you. It's crucial to have an outside sounding board to bounce ideas off of."