

starting a business

The *jobloft.com* team — Andy Lai, Lee Liu, Chris Nguyen, and Sundee Mokha — know how hard it is to start a business. Here are some tips they have for others just starting down this path.

- ▶ Have a business plan. Keep a pen and paper with you so that you can always write down your thoughts and ideas whenever they come to you.
- ▶ Honesty, openness and trust are key when building a solid team.
- ▶ Networking — don't be shy to talk to people when you go to various events, you never know who knows who.



- ▶ Never give up. If you truly believe that you have a great product and service, never take no for an answer.
- ▶ Find a mentor to help you along the way.

KAVITA GOSYNE FOR METRO TORONTO

Jobloft brings work close to home

A few weeks ago Statistics Canada reported the average daily commute into Toronto is 79 minutes by car and just under two hours by public transit. Personally, I spend three hours of my day commuting. When all is said and done, time on the subway or in the car in rush hour is simply time wasted. Ideally we would all work closer to home, right?

Knowing all the stats, four graduates from Ryerson University decided to do something different and take into account the distance between work and home with a new website called *www.jobloft.com*. Using the latest technology, they created a distance sensitive jobsite that helps you find jobs closer to home or school by plugging in your postal code.

The team of creators, Andy Lai, 23, Lee Liu, 23, Chris Nguyen, 24 and Sundee Mokha, 23, met while pursuing the same degree, Information Technology Management at Ryerson University.

"I came up with the idea when I was at the mall one day," recalls Nguyen. "I noticed a group of students

with a stack of resumés in their hands. They were handing out their resumés to every store that had a Now Hiring sign in the front. I told myself, "There must be a more effective and efficient way."

The website is designed for young people in the workforce. The jobs are specifically in the retail, food services and hospitality industries. It is designed for the technological savvy with features like SMS text messaging and a Google mapping system.

Aside from building the website itself, building a great team was also important to the group, who admit to butting heads from time to time. However, staying focused on the goal keeps it all in perspective. The group goes by the HOT philosophy — honesty, openness and trust.

"Learning to operate a business is difficult, but learning to work with others is a daunting task," says Lai. "At the end of the day we all know that what each of us do is for the

THE graduate

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From left, Sundee Mokha, Lee Liu, Andy Lai, and Chris Nguyen founded *jobloft.com*.

good of the company."

But these entrepreneurs don't take all the credit for their success. They say they are thankful for the support they've received from the network of family and friends they have.

"You never know who knows somebody," says Mokha. "Being able to get their business card is key."

The group also formed a mentoring relationship with the director of ITM at

Ryerson, James Norrie, who guided them through the process — a relationship they all say is invaluable. But in the end, the team was brave enough to weather the risks of creating their own business.

"I've always had this saying, 'Going from can do to will do is a quantum leap,'" says Liu. "Only dedicated people who believe in what they're doing will make that leap."

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FIRST jobs

What was your first job, and what did you learn from it that you are still using today?

“ My first job ever was teaching horse-back riding lessons. I used to show jump, I used to ride English when I was a kid so I had to give lessons to pay for the upkeep of my horse, and what I learned from it was patience. I learned how to be patient and how to take everything in stride.”

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