

Targeted Teaching Topic



MAKING IT BETTER

Venture Creation

Many people think that entrepreneurs are individuals who are incredibly creative, develop something totally new that has never been seen before, and take huge risks to bring that “something new” to market.

A better description of an entrepreneur would be “**someone who makes something better.**” Why? If you look around you, you’ll find many entrepreneurial ideas and ventures are simply adapting something already in existence, adding a new feature, enhancing a design, or marketing the “right product, to the right target market and the right time.”

The Cupcake Craze



In the last few years, one of the hot new entrepreneurial ventures, is a case in point of “making something better.” Yes, it’s cupcakes!

Cupcakes have gone upscale, in a similar way that the simple cup of coffee evolved into a huge business model spawning giants like Seattle’s Best, Starbucks, and others.

With cupcakes, it may be that it’s a form of comfort food...harkening us back to the memories of our childhood and the wonderful smell and taste of homemade cupcakes fresh out of the oven. But, these now scrumptious delights sell for \$1.50 each, \$2.50 each, and more!

Cases in Point

Entrepreneur magazine (November 2006) is one of several publications that have written about the “Cupcake Phenomenon.” Author Sara Wilson, in an article entitled, “Take The Cake,” writes about the New York City origins of one cupcake entrepreneur. She also offered case after case of how employees gained experience and expertise, then started their own entrepreneurial ventures. As with all good ideas, each gave rise (no pun intended) to other cupcake emporia. The article highlighted the amazing business progression and the value of mentoring of these individuals:

1996—Magnolia Bakery, founded by Allysa Torey and Jennifer Appel, opened its doors in New York City. Their “hook” was offering an array of “freshly made cupcakes, artfully displayed in a 1950s setting.”

1999—Appel ventured off to start Buttercup Bake Shop, another cupcake hit.

2003—Friends Peggy Williams and Debbie Weiner, who had worked at both Magnolia Bakery and Sugar Sweet Sunshine, started Sugar Sweet Sunshine. They caught the attention of customers with a ’60s and ’70s vibe and giving their cupcakes unconventional names like “Ooey Goey” and “Bob.”

2003—Lauren Reece, a manager for four years at Magnolia Bakery, started Billy’s Bakery. What she is proud of is her ability to meet the needs of customers with special orders; making her business less of a “cupcake factory.”

2003—Mark Libertini, a former manager at Buttercup Bake Shop, co-founded Little Cupcake Bakeshop with brothers Luigi and Salvatore LoBuglio. Year-end projected sales according to Libertini were to be in the six figures!



Sources: Wilson, Sara. “Take the Cake.” *Entrepreneur* Nov. 2006 <http://www.entrepreneur.com/magazine/entrepreneur/2006/november/168826.html>; Madison, Michael J. “The Cupcake Class and Its Contentment.” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* 1 April, 2007 <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07091/774200-109.stm>.