

Nerds nix unemployment and start their own business

What would you do if your employer was bought out and you were laid off a few months later? If you were one of four self-described “nerds” you would start your own business.

That’s what 22-year-old Shane Thompson, 24-year-old Aaron Wood, 26-year-old Ryan Winsborrow, and 22-year-old Paul Iafolla did. Together they created their own small business in the GTA with the intriguing name of “Nerds4Hire”.

As their Web site (www.nerds4hire.com) says, “We cater to all home computer users, including students and seniors. Nerds4Hire is dedicated to being friendly and patient, and to providing effective solutions for small and large computer related problems.”

The Nerds do everything from the most basic computing to complicated networking. Thompson explains, “I’ve taught people how to use a mouse and sometimes we’re working

on networks, which can cause a lot of headaches, but we can do it.”

They charge their clients \$65 an hour, which Thompson says, “is a rate that home users are comfortable with and a rate that corporate entities are definitely comfortable with.”

Their corporate clients are mainly small- to medium-sized businesses.

To start their business, they secured a line of credit from Canada Trust. Thompson believes that Canada Trust’s readiness to back Nerds4Hire reflects an improving attitude to young entrepreneurs, “If they’re willing to give a line of credit to four young guys that’s pretty impressive.”

As Thompson acknowledges, to begin with he and his partners “didn’t know that much about business.” So they took a Young Entrepreneurs course co-sponsored by the Town of Markham and the provincial government. “It was \$125 for a weekend course. It was definitely helpful.”

“Two of us also did a three month program at the Richmond Hill Business Centre learning bookkeeping and business basics. They also assigned us a business coach, who is a retired former VP of Coca-Cola Canada, and he gives us very good advice.”

The company seems to be on the right track. “Our business is growing. It’s a slow progression, and it takes time, but we’re doing all right already, and we’ve only been around since January. The demand is there,” said Thompson.

With their workload increasing, the four are thinking of hiring someone to take care of bookkeeping and other administrative responsibilities. Eventually they hope to increase the number of employees providing customer support.

Looking to the future, Thompson recognizes that the success of Nerds4Hire demonstrates that there is a significant demand for their type of enterprise. “Some competition is coming up, but our edge is that we really care, we keep the price reasonable and the service excellent.”

Thompson and his partners have no regrets about their decision to open their own business. “It was a good thing for us because we really enjoy doing our own thing.” The four say that their current success is mostly the result of a lot of hard work. And they know that hard work is what it will take to keep their company growing.

Their advice for potential entrepreneurs: “Stick with it, it takes time, but stick with it if you know that your idea is good.” Thompson adds, “good customer service is critical, because without it people won’t call you back. Just do your best and be honest, if you’re honest you’ll be fine.”

If you’re wondering how they chose their company name, Thompson explains, “people kept calling us nerds, so we decided to use it.” After talking to Thompson you begin to think a better name for the company might be “Entrepreneurds.”



From left to right: Shane Thompson, Aaron Woods, Paul Iafolla, and Ryan Winsborrow are Nerds4Hire. Their clients include home computer owners, and small- to medium-sized businesses.