

Student Entrepreneurship, Forbes Features & Funding Podcast Reflection

During this podcast, I focused on the differences between the entrepreneurs that were being interviewed. With Sift Local, Sam was on the hunt to create his vision, which involved doing many unknowns, whereas Sheldon was on the hunt to expand the reach of his existing product, which involved copying processes that have been developed over time and where people have massive amounts of expertise in. These entrepreneurs are two very opposite people when you boil it down to their type of business and their work. Where they are similar is in that they are both leading people and teams towards a goal, which is to help people.

The founder of Sift claims he had an entrepreneurial eye his entire life, but he didn't put it into action until lately, with the Sift start-up. He focused on solving a problem involving events and the management mess that surrounds them by making an all-in-one application to get work done effectively. Since Sift is a SaaS company, he faces many challenges that are amplified by the fact that he is focused on staying in Gainesville. For example, funding is much harder to come by. He explained that "If X and Y don't match up, expanding is what needs to be done", but he expressed a strong preference to stay local.

Many of the lessons that Sam has learned were reportedly gained from his time working for a software company. I have come to believe that before I start a software company of my own, I should work for one to get the in's and out's of what there is to know and what failures there are to endure. All before I lay my money out on the table for gamble.

On the other hand, Sheldon's Cocovana coconut opener works much differently in the market than Sift does. To start, Cocovana is not the first coconut opener to exist. A simple search on the web shows countless options for purchase, all of the different designs, colors, and feel. Also, putting together a single product, or line of products requires a much different skill set than putting together a piece of software. Regardless, Sam is clearly hustling. Through sleepless nights and crammed classes, his discussions with Chinese manufacturers are no easy task. Figuring out where he was going to get his products when they would come in, and if they would be the right specs are of more concern. His greatest concern though is competition. In a market that he is not the first in. It's a battle to know who can deliver the most value to the customer at the highest quality and lowest price.

I can relate to Sam much more than I can with Sheldon. Sam seems like he has it very hard, because he has to chase people and ideas as they run from him. On the contrary, Sheldon made a product that people are chasing him for. If entrepreneurs could be split into two extreme groups. I would consider Sam the visionary, and Sheldon the executor. Sheldon finished the product, now he's selling it. Sam is selling the vision, to help others make the products they want with it. I like to think I am more of a visionary because creative ideas always come to me, but tangible results do not come as often. However, life does not work this way. There are not two exclusive groups, we are all a little of both. Hearing from both of these entrepreneurs opened my eyes to the reality of being a hustler in school, with a vision and no finish line in sight. I love it, and I am inspired to cruise forward with my dreams.