

## Tried and True Business Ideas

Turn a classic business idea into your next big moneymaker.

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There's a simple reason some businesses tend to always do well. People love food and convenience, so burger joints and pizza delivery will always be in style. There's always a market for back-to-school products and Christmas tree decorations, too, so retailers have a tried-and-true formula for those seasons. And when it comes to college guys, it's a good bet that they'll always love a good swimsuit calendar.

That's exactly what entrepreneurs Ben Leis and David Freedman were banking on. The two childhood friends came up with a concierge business for sports professionals while Leis was at the University of Miami and Freedman was at Arizona State University in Tempe, but during the planning phase, they decided the business would be too much to handle. Looking for a simpler idea, the pair holed up in Freedman's house, brainstormed and landed on the idea of a swimsuit calendar featuring the girls next door: Arizona State University students. Eight weeks later, they'd formed StudentBody Marketing and already had the Tempe12 calendar out. "It was extremely fast," says Leis. "Eight months later, we had our second calendar out."

That type of immediate recognition is one of the benefits of a tried-and-true business idea--there's no need to explain the concept to potential customers, as people are generally pretty familiar with these classic ideas. "Because they're tried and true, a market for that type of product or solution has been demonstrated somewhere along the line," says Sherry Hoskinson, director of the McGuire Entrepreneurship Program in the Eller College of Management at the University of Arizona in Tucson. "It might be that the original product or service wasn't timely. And by coming along and assessing the new needs or the new [demographic, an entrepreneur is] perking it up to meet a newly validated need." The benefits of such an approach are many: Since you're learning from past incarnations, you can likely avoid common missteps, and your initial investments tend to be lower than a start-from-scratch type of business.

The challenge is researching your current market to see if the tried-and-true idea will fly today, she says. You might need to innovate in some way or make it fresh for your audience. "You're not actually innovating the idea itself," cautions Hoskinson. "You're just bringing innovation to the way it's presented."

Leis and Freedman, both 25, did have to make one adjustment to the idea--instead of selling the calendars to students, a tactic that wasn't moving many units of their first calendar, they sold advertising to companies such as Budweiser, Corona and Sobe, and gave the calendars to students for free--launching their revenues well into the six-figure range. Today, StudentBody Marketing distributes its calendars to 21 college campuses, each featuring young women from that particular school--one calendar model even garnered an interview on the Howard Stern radio show. Says Freedman, "Tempe12 is a household name at [these] colleges." Now that's a classic success story.

### Summer Session

Attention, non-business majors--want a quick introduction to entrepreneurship? Check out [Babson Business Edge](#), a three-week summer program specifically for juniors and seniors. Held May 29th-June 15th, the intensive course includes business plan presentations, virtual business simulation and a real-world case study. Cost is \$6,300 (financial aid is available). Deadline for applications is March 30th.