

Chad Tjugum – CSTCOINS, LLC

Background:

Entrepreneurship is something that I honestly feel has always been in my blood. My earliest memory of my fascination with money was in kindergarten, when a Junior Achievement volunteer came into our classroom, and opened a fresh roll of quarters. I remember being very excited when the volunteer handed out the shiny metal objects, having learned of their apparent value. Lacking the context of the true value of money, the quarter could have been worth anything, but it didn't really matter. I was hooked, and wanted to know how I could get more.

I started out my journey in business by selling toys at our annual garage sales, netting a few dollars in revenue. In hindsight, I learned the basic principles of scalability, and how important it is for business growth. I took these first lessons of businesses and began reselling anything I could. My initial focuses were on sports and trading cards, video games, and eventually rare coins. Increasing the price point of my items allowed me to better scale my sales numbers, which led to stronger profits. I enjoyed reselling so much that in 2016, when I was in 8th grade, I opened my first official company, Cstcoins, LLC. Since then, my company has grown to cover multiple different industries, and I am exploring various niches that I could target and be profitable in.

Overview:

My company, Cstcoins, LLC specializes in offering a unique selection of certified rare coins, bullion, and more to rare coin collectors and investors across the United States. In recent years, I have increased my focus towards "type coins", which are specific coin series that collectors often look for to fill in their collections. These type coins are easier to sell, and more plentiful when purchasing. Additionally, I have tapped into various niches, including the graded modern coin market, which has a very large online presence. These niches have a lot of room for growth, and have improved margins on traditional "type coins".

As a young entrepreneur in the rare coin market, I have the advantage over much of my competition when it comes to technology. With the average age of an ANA (American Numismatic Association) member being over 50, most rare coin sales are done in person. This limits many younger collectors across the United States who do not have access to local coin dealers. Using technology, I am able to hit different niches that in-person dealers simply cannot. Selling online has proven to be a key in my rare coin business, as most of my sales currently come from my eBay store.

In the last year, I have looked to expand my business and its profit potential by tapping into different markets. I have begun reselling sneakers, in addition to the rare coins that

I consider a staple of my business. Sneakers are another thing that I am passionate about, and are something I have found to be quite lucrative. A majority of my shoes are sourced directly from retailers during limited shoe releases, and then quickly sold online to collectors or consumers who are looking to wear the pair. This strategy has allowed me to learn and capitalize on the price fluctuations that are common of the near billion dollar secondary sneaker reselling industry.

With any of my company's niches, I strive to provide the best customer experience possible. I put effort in every step of my process, from photography to packing. I also strive to provide easy access to products, and quick shipping. With my selling process, I want my customers to have to think as little as possible from the time they finish checkout, to the time they open their package. eBay allows for this process to be automated, which helps the customer get a smooth experience. This, along with the easy promotions make eBay the perfect place to sell my merchandise, and thus eBay is where I sell to most customers. Additionally, I promote my businesses using a variety of strategies including social media marketing, direct communications with customers, repeat customer contacts, and more.

Personal Qualities:

If I could pick any three qualities to describe myself, I would say that I am versatile, future-oriented, and ambitious. My versatility has allowed me to enter a variety of different niches, and be relatively successful in each. Being future-oriented has allowed me to widen my perspective, and has helped me to celebrate the small victories in business, knowing that they will compound in the future. Out of the three traits that I used to describe myself, I would consider my ambition to be the number one reason that I have any success with my business. Because of my ambition, I frequently set high targets, and dream big. My ability to dream big is what motivates me every day to grow my business, and seek success larger than I know possible.

While the traits above are keys to my business, they are far from the only things motivating me to continue my journey in entrepreneurship. One of the biggest things that pushes me to be an entrepreneur is my fear of regret. I want to look back on my future and know that I created something, changed someone's life, and maybe changed the world. I view my current reselling businesses as a learning lesson, as well as a way to grow capital for larger business ventures that I will inevitably pursue in the future.

The Future:

I have big goals set for my future in entrepreneurship. First off, I am looking to continue to grow the reselling business that I have. I enjoy reselling, and feel that I am in a great position to grow revenues in the modern certified coin niche. To do this, I will have to make capital investments in high-demand inventory, which I have already been doing. This transition from type coins to modern certified coins will be a large switch for my

business, but through business connections, I have seen the market opportunity and am more than willing to secure my market share in the niche. For the sneaker side of my reselling business, I am looking to incorporate lower margin, bulk pairs into my inventory. This should help grow my customer base, and increase revenues overall.

In 2020, I am looking to capitalize on the experience that I have gained from reselling sneakers, to continue helping other young entrepreneurs enter the industry. I am currently doing this in the form of free content on a business Instagram page, and through a monthly subscription group. For better scalability of the sneaker information side of my business, I am in the process of changing from a paid group to other forms of sellable information. While I am currently working on this project, it is not something that I want to go too far in depth into in this submission, due to it being a relatively untapped market. I believe it is something I can secure a high market share in, and change the way sneaker reselling information is distributed. With this, I also would like to continue to grow my free sneaker reselling information platform (on Instagram), to provide starting information and free help to those looking to get started in the sneaker reselling industry.

The third (and final for the time being) project that I am working on, is a men's fashion jewelry line. I consider jewelry to go hand in hand with rare coins and precious metals, so I believe the venture is fitting. I am passionate about fashion and men's jewelry, and have seen a trend of my peers purchasing costume "fashion" jewelry. I believe that this is a niche that has potential, and I plan on starting this company very shortly. I would like to eventually invest profits to the point where I can afford to hold and offer a large selection of custom fine jewelry, as well as the traditional costume pieces.

With my growing business, outsourcing work is something that I see real value in. Within the next 12 months, I am hoping to be able to hire my first full time employees, to help pack and ship orders. This is a task that I sometimes spend hours on, and is something I would love to outsource. I would also like to hire a small business accountant, so that I can have extra assistance with the bookkeeping of my business. Even considering hiring an employee is never something I would have thought would have happened this early on, but the more I grow, the more I see the necessity.

My vision for my future is something I often reflect on. I see myself, within 5 years having a successful reselling business, where my company offers thousands of items on our online stores. I would like to have a team of employees, and have this business as automated as possible. While I am unsure of where my sneaker information business will head, I visualize a full sneaker media company in the coming years, focusing on different aspects of modern pop culture. Finally, I see myself owning and operating multiple brands, related to the men's fashion or lifestyle industries. I am extremely excited to see what the future holds for me, and the growth of my businesses.