

# Ivey Entrepreneur

www.ivey.uwo.ca/entrepreneurship

## Aunt Mary's Corp: Finding the right mix

*Hidden away in Somerville House is a regular looking classroom. The monotone consistency offered by white walls and whiteboards is broken up by a window with a view of the old Ivey building and a large, impractical, foam core cheque for \$15,000. It was a way to add a personal touch of interior decorating for Aunt Mary's Corp, now part of the first cohort of the new Western Accelerator.*



Aunt Mary's consist of three Ivey 2017 MBA candidates: Ryan Bauer, Erik Lapointe and Michael Palumbo, who are developing powdered beverage mixes that can balance and counteract the foul taste of medical marijuana and other essential oils. Patients can combine the powdered mix with water and their personal oil supplies, which offers a non-inhalation alternative.

Conceptualized during the Ivey New Venture Project, Aunt Mary's quickly evolved from a school project into a viable

business idea, winning the 2017 IBK Capital – Ivey Business Plan Competition, marking Ivey's first win since 2006.

As they settle into their new workspace, the team is hoping to find the right mix that will appeal to a growing market of licensed medical marijuana patients.

### Message and market

Aunt Mary's journey has had its fair share of road bumps due to its "association to the marijuana industry," a perception the team is quick to challenge.

continued on next page

## InstituteBuzz

### Entrepreneurship on a roll



InstituteBuzz  
By **Eric A. Morse**  
Professor and Executive  
Director, Pierre L. Morrisette  
Institute for Entrepreneurship

We have had a busy and successful start to 2017. The Institute ran the largest Business Plan Competition in our history, which included the first ever HBA Business Plan Competition, with the generous support of Spin Master Ltd, and the 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the IBK Capital – Ivey Business Plan Competition. Chairman and Co-CEO of Spin Master Ltd, Anton Rabie, HBA '94, was the guest of honour at our fireside chat and shared his storied journey from a founder straight out of university to heading one of the largest toy companies in the world.

Our annual Scholarship Dinner that brings together donors and student recipients was once again a tremendous success. It is always touching to hear students share their stories and aspirations with donors. This year, we also reintroduced Entrepreneurship Internships and are grateful to the companies and entrepreneurs who have supported this initiative.

We are widening our horizons by piloting two programs this spring. Firstly, we are supporting the Western Accelerator and have secured spots for those MBA and HBA entrepreneurs with great ideas coming out of the New Venture Project experience. Secondly, we are supporting MBA students who are getting hands-on experience and training in due diligence, working with PhD students from across campus on intellectual property developed at Western.

Our Entrepreneurship Bootcamps are continuing to grow in popularity at Ivey and Western. Additionally, we hosted our first Bootcamp for the next generation of our QuantumShift™ alumni. We are growing our practitioner offerings through a new next generation family business program and a new partnership with the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) that will help their clients grow and scale their businesses. In conjunction with the highly successful QuantumShift™ Program, we are the launch pad for Canada's most successful entrepreneurial companies.

We're thrilled with how the new year is shaping up for Ivey Entrepreneurship.

Contact us to join the excitement.



Pierre L. Morrisette  
Institute for Entrepreneurship

“We learned early on that there was some confusion with our product and that caused a lot of reticence to promote us,” said Lapointe. Therefore, Aunt Mary’s drew a clear line to note that they do not contain any medical marijuana. As soon as that was established, the concept was easier to accept.

“At the end of the day, we are a food product company. We’re not really supplying anything with medical ingredients in it,” said Palumbo.

Since moving into the accelerator and winning the competition, Aunt Mary’s has secured a partner to conduct R&D on developing the concentrated beverage mix. They are hoping to get four iterations of the powder and continue to process until they find a commercially-viable product. While they haven’t decided on packaging options of canisters, bottles or sachets, the team wants to ensure the mix is as concentrated as possible.

The team notes that there are around 100,000 registered licensed medical marijuana patients in Canada today. According to some estimates that number is expected to rise as high as 700,000 by 2020. Larger opportunities lay south of the border, where it’s thought to be a \$4-5 billion industry. However, Aunt Mary’s target market is in the oils and extract segment, which itself is growing and taking up a larger share of the pie.

**Becoming entrepreneurs at Ivey**

Palumbo always wanted to be an entrepreneur. Having worked in an entrepreneurial finance position prior to his MBA, Palumbo was fascinated by the people and their stories. He wanted to be on the other side of the table. Still, Palumbo never thought he’d be pursuing that journey while at Ivey.

Bauer didn’t expect to take the plunge this early either but knew he had a passion for entrepreneurship.

“When I was younger, I always wanted to open up a sports shop with my cousin, Steve Schnarr. We were going to combine our last names and call the place Schnauer’s; it would have killed,” said Bauer.

On the other hand, Lapointe never even dreamed of being an entrepreneur and was comfortable climbing up the ladder in the hospitality industry where he had spent much of his career. When the opportunity arose to choose the client or new venture option with the Ivey Field Project, he chose the latter as a fun departure from the norm.

“Being in an academic setting, it was a safe place to do it,” said Lapointe.

Together with two other friends, Bauer, Lapointe and Palumbo started pursuing the idea in July 2016. They wanted to tackle the foul taste many licensed users had to suffer through to consume cannabinoid and other essential oils. They started with a tea concept that evolved into what it is today; a collaborative process that ensured Aunt Mary’s was not anyone’s specific baby.

**Full steam ahead**

But what pushed a school project into becoming a real business?

For Palumbo, it was Presentation Day on November 25, 2016, when all the new venture teams had to present their ideas to a selection of experienced Entrepreneurs-in-Residence.

“You work on something that is a school project for credit but you don’t really show it to other people... It was after we presented in late November and saw other people’s reaction to what we had come up with that I realized that we might have

something; we might have a company,” said Palumbo.

“We needed validation and when we got it, it was full steam ahead,” said Lapointe, who points to Ivey Professor Eric Morse as being instrumental to where they are now. “When we presented, Eric came to us and said he heard great feedback and that he actually thought we would be a good team for the accelerator.”

The transition between school project and a business occurred over December when the team was given an opportunity to be part of Western University’s new business accelerator. It was a fresh start for the team and each member had to decide if they were going to commit to Aunt Mary’s full time or step out of the venture.

The opportunity to work full time in the accelerator and gain course credit made the decision easier for Lapointe, who rearranged his course load on his phone that very day to avoid conflicts.

Since January, Aunt Mary’s has been slowly discovering all the additional resources and contacts available to them at the accelerator.

They’ve progressed at a pace that wouldn’t have been imaginable without the space according to Palumbo and are hoping to cover as much ground as possible before they end their term in April.

“Three guys full timing it, you can get a lot done,” said Palumbo.

**SPIN MASTER-IVEY**  
**HBA Business Plan Competition**

Team Iris Technologies from Queen’s University won \$15,000 and first place at the inaugural **Spin Master – Ivey HBA Business Plan Competition**, held January 20-21, 2017. Iris Technologies is developing a computer monitor that does not trigger computer intolerance in concussion patients. Stimuli from computers, such as light and noise, can often trigger concussion symptoms. The team was represented by **Colin Harding** and **Conor Ross**.



**HBA SCHOLARSHIPS**

*Each year, Ivey’s generous donors help students to access the Morrisette Institute’s offerings through annual scholarships. Here are the recent recipients for 2017:*

**Diane Biscof Memorial HBA Scholarship:**  
Katie Newton, HBA '18 Candidate

**J. Armand Bombardier Entrepreneurship Award** (Donated by J. Armand Bombardier):  
Niki Kanani, HBA '17 Candidate;  
Danielle Sakher, HBA '17 Candidate

**John R. Currie HBA Award in Entrepreneurship** (Donated by John R. Currie, HBA '60):  
Monique Tuin, HBA '17 Candidate

**Don Lang HBA Scholarship in Entrepreneurship** (Donated by Donald Lang HBA '80):  
Adam Gapinski, HBA '17 Candidate

**Gudewill Entrepreneurial Award** (Donated by the Gudewill Family):  
Julien Bertone, HBA '18 Candidate;  
Tom Grainger, HBA '17 Candidate

**Jackson Family HBA Entrepreneurship Award** (Donated by the Donald K. Jackson Family Foundation):  
Dylan Scanlan, HBA '18 Candidate;  
Rinelle Wong HBA '18 Candidate

# The beat of entrepreneurship

**Ayush Vaidya, HBA '17 Candidate**, is the winner of the 2017 Pierre L. Morrisette HBA Award in Entrepreneurship Scholarship. Having pursued a number of ventures in the music production industry, Vaidya is hoping to launch an online marketplace for beats that connects recording artists and music producers.



Growing up, business ventures were merely a hobby for Ayush Vaidya, who had his eyes set on getting into medical school.

In Grade 10, Vaidya started an online casino on the popular multiplayer game Runescape. Players would bet on a roll of the dice that gave them a 40-per-cent chance of winning, in which case the casino would double their bet.

The gamble worked out pretty well for Vaidya and he made about \$10,000 off of the game, just spending an hour every day after school.

After joining the Junior Achievement Program, Vaidya realized that his ability to make money off of his hobbies could be so

much more. He made a further \$10,000 reselling snapback hats and other goods purchased from Alibaba, prior to the online retailer's popularity in North America.

**Making more out of a hobby**

With his split interest in business and medical science, the Ivey dual degree option attracted him to Western University. As he worked through his courses, Vaidya felt that there were more opportunities in the realm of business.

Along with business, Vaidya developed a passion for music. "I bought a mic, tried rapping and discovered I was horrible at it."

Despite the early setback, Vaidya

discovered he could make good beats and found a whole new world of music producers who were making a living selling their beats. With the money from his previous ventures, Vaidya paid a developer and graphic designer to set up a website to market his beats and launched Everest Media Group with fellow HBA '17 Candidate David Aideyan.

During their second summer, Vaidya and Aideyan had the opportunity to work on Everest's next evolution at the Propel Summer Incubator. They pursued a platform that could help musicians create their own fan clubs but found the

continued on next page

MBA SCHOLARSHIPS

**Pierre L. Morrisette HBA Award in Entrepreneurship**  
(Donated by Pierre Morrisette, MBA '72): Ayush Vaidya HBA '17 Candidate

**QuantumShift Fellow HBA Entrepreneurship Award** (Donated by QuantumShift Fellows): Gordon Sun, HBA '18 Candidate

**Tevya Rosenberg Award in Entrepreneurship** (Donated by Tevya Rosenberg, HBA '73): Nafisa Haque HBA '17 Candidate

**Paul Sabourin HBA Scholarship in Entrepreneurship:** Iliia Khairtdinov, HBA '17 Candidate

**Nelson M. Davis Scholarship** (Donated by Nelson M. Davis Trust Fund): Megan Wambolt MBA '17 Candidate

**Pierre L. Morrisette Institute Scholarship** (Donated by the Pierre L. Morrisette Institute for Entrepreneurship): Varun Sivaraman, MBA '17 Candidate

**Schulich Award for Entrepreneurship** (Donated by Seymour Schulich): Najeeb Ul Haq, MBA '17 Candidate16

process too difficult to execute. They also automated many of the repetitive tasks and marketing on the website prior to being admitted to the Ivey HBA Program.

"We heard that HBA can take over your life, so it worked out pretty well since we had automated most of the work for Everest," said Vaidya.

### The Big Picture

Vaidya's biggest lesson from HBA has been to think about long-term goals and strategy to meet the evolving needs of a particular industry. This lesson was reinforced during his summer internship at Wealthsimple, a fintech company created by Michael Katchen, HBA '09.

Seeing the layout of the company's executive strategy documents, Vaidya noticed a stark similarity to what he was learning at Ivey. "I literally went home, copied their format and how they laid out everything, and did the same thing to plan the next steps for Everest," said Vaidya.

By looking at the big picture, he realized that the Everest model was not going to be viable with the increasing competitiveness of the music production industry. However, the analysis opened the door to a new venture, Beatcamp.

Beatcamp is a marketplace website for beats which connects recording artists with music producers. With a catalog of thousands of beats, Beatcamp allows artists to browse, license and download beats that they want to use in their songs.

"Instead of competing with everyone, we're making a marketplace so that they can sell through us," said Vaidya.

During his internship, Vaidya also met his team members Pei Li, who had experience developing software for high-growth startups and User Experience Designer Richard Yang. Together the three of them took part in the inaugural Spin Master Ivey HBA Business Plan Competition on January 20-21, 2017 and won the 2nd place prize of \$4000.

As the team moves forward, they are hoping to hire more developers to have Beatcamp running by the end of the Summer. While his previous ventures often included outsourced designers and developers, Vaidya is happy to bring everything in house and work as a team.

"If technology is what you are doing, you should understand how it works," said Vaidya, who has taken up coding during the past year.

He will soon begin work at a major Toronto-based consulting firm, from where he hopes to learn more from a corporate experience. With Beatcamp running full-time simultaneously, he doesn't expect too much sleep.

"It really comes down to priorities. For me that meant not spending as much time with my friends, or going out in HBA1. A lot of my time after Ivey cases was spent working on my business. You have a set amount of time in your day and you have to prioritize what is important to you. If you really want to pursue your business, you have to put the time," said Vaidya.

## EVENTS & INITIATIVES



### Entrepreneurship scholarship 2017

The Institute hosted donors and recipients of the Ivey Entrepreneurship Scholarship Awards at Toronto's National Club on January 26, 2017. Meet our HBA and MBA recipients of the 2017 Entrepreneurship Scholarships.



### Deloitte Entrepreneurship Bootcamp

Team Intelli-AMS comprising of **Chanakya Gupta, MBA '17, Michelle Lo, MSc '18, Priya Kesh, Hapreet Zingh, Peter Dabic, Ying Tang & Damien Deng** won the Deloitte Entrepreneurship Bootcamp on February 3-5, 2017.



### Family Enterprise Stewardship: Preparing the Next Generation

A five-day intensive program for Next Generation participants to enhance their overall abilities and understanding of family business. Starts September 11 at the Ivey Tangerine Leadership Centre. To register, visit [go.ivey.ca/stewardship2017](http://go.ivey.ca/stewardship2017)