



'By May I'd made over £1,000'

The pandemic has made life difficult for teenagers who want to earn some cash. Most of the weekend jobs in retail and hospitality they would traditionally have looked for have **fallen by the wayside**. Meanwhile, babysitting is less frequent as parents have fewer opportunities to leave the house. Rising to this challenge is a new generation of teen entrepreneurs who have set up their own businesses. We spoke to some to find out how the pandemic had spurred them to go it alone.

A Laurence Moss

When 16-year-old Laurence Moss heard that his exams had been cancelled as a result of the Covid crisis, he decided to throw himself into the social media marketing business he began two years ago. After working several hours a day during lockdown, he is on target to hit £20,000 in **revenue** this year.

Moss's business, Greedy Growth, grew out of a hobby he began when he was 13, **curating** content he found on Instagram. 'I had pages about motorbikes, travel, cars, cats and dogs. I gathered viral content and pushed it onto the pages. It was purely for the fun of it,' he says.

While his peers were 'playing Fortnite*', Laurence found himself being approached by brands that wanted to buy sponsored posts to reach the 350,000 followers he had built up in his Instagram communities.

Rather than settling for earning the occasional £100 here and there, Laurence decided to launch his own company to offer Instagram-specific marketing services. He offers advice to firms that want to increase their reach on the platform.

At the age of 14 he launched Greedy Growth's website and began earning a few hundred pounds a month, paid into his personal bank account. About a year later, at the end of 2019, he was earning £500 to £1,000 a month.

Now back at school studying A-level philosophy, maths, history and economics, the majority of his earnings are reinvested into the business, meaning he has not profited enough to pay tax. Although he may occasionally splash out on a pair of shoes, he says: 'I spend money as if I don't have a lot of it and I would never tell my friends the amount of money I'm making.'

B Sidney and Ozzy O'Neill

Brothers Sidney, 17, and Ozzy O'Neill, 15, from Brighton, began designing and making T-shirts when the work they had planned for over the summer dried up. 'I was supposed to have paid work experience but it **fell through**,' Sidney says. 'It is a lot harder to get jobs these days, so it was definitely motivation to start something ourselves.'

After months of boredom during lockdown, the pair decided to turn their **doodles** into a business.

'I showed a design to a mate and he said "That would look really good on a T-shirt". I went on to YouTube and looked at making T-shirts at home. It seemed really easy,' Sidney says.

In August the brothers started selling T-shirts printed with three designs. A monkey on a skateboard was the central brand concept.

Using £100 saved from birthdays, pocket money, babysitting and selling clothes, they bought 40 plain T-shirts for £80 and spent £20 on packaging, shipping stickers, etc.

Next, they borrowed a **heat press** from a friend, set up Instagram and Facebook pages and a Shopify website, charging £20 for each T-shirt and an additional £1.99 for shipping. To create a buzz, they offered discounts on social media, working closely with local skaters. The stock sold out within a month, creating a profit of £500. 'The money goes straight into my bank account and then I move half to my brother's account,' Sidney says.

The boys, who are now back at school doing A-levels and GCSEs, plan to spend about £175 on more T-shirts.

'Now we have got a lot of schoolwork, it is a really good way to passively earn money as it only takes 20–40 seconds to press a T-shirt and the post office is 30 seconds down the road.'

C Olivia Bassett

Spotting a gap in the market, 17-year-old Olivia Bassett started selling affordable **fleece** toys for dogs in August. Since then she has made and sold more than 75, making more than £230 profit. 'I have been a dog trainer all my life,' says Olivia, who has four dogs of her own. 'We go to shows and I was always looking at the dog toys and the ridiculous prices. I thought there was no need for them to be so expensive.'

At the beginning of March, Olivia decided to try to make her own toys, researching the process on YouTube. 'Fleece is really good because the toys don't snap, they stretch,' she says.

Olivia sourced fleece from her local market in Birmingham and soon found interest from other dog trainers. With one £5-metre of fleece she can make three long toys.

'I set up a Facebook group and started selling them in mid-August. I also started advertising on different pet Facebook groups and went to dog club events to sell directly.'

Olivia makes five varieties of toys ranging from £2.50 to £8, plus shipping, and accepts payments via PayPal® or cash. The toys can be made to order, allowing clients to specify the colours.

Now in her second year of A-levels, studying biology, chemistry and psychology, Olivia is able to fit her business around her schoolwork. 'I make the toys while watching TV or even while I am having an online college lesson from home. They take between 10 and 45 minutes to make depending on the design.'

She hopes orders will grow, as she continues to save for driving lessons. 'I haven't got any work experience, which makes it harder to find a job, and anyway there aren't any jobs going in my area.'