

ABSTRACT

WAZGOWSKA, IRENE P. The Entrepreneurial Spirit: A Grounded Study of Textile Entrepreneurship among the Raleigh, North Carolina Business Community. (Under the direction of Dr. Marguerite Moore).

Entrepreneurship plays an important part in the economic make-up of urban areas across the world. Raleigh, North Carolina has its own budding entrepreneurial community; from data driven enterprises, to community development programs, creative endeavors, and various brick and mortar stores. A rich history of textiles in the state, and strong textile focused academic programs, should provide a supportive environment for those who wish to pursue their own textile related business. The purpose of this research is to establish a grounded understanding of textile entrepreneurship among the Raleigh, North Carolina business community. The study employs a qualitative long interview approach using Raleigh, NC textile entrepreneurs as informants (N=7). Specifically the study establishes an understanding of the manner in which local textile entrepreneurs define their role, their motivations for starting their businesses, and the challenges they face in this process. Further, the study identifies directions for entrepreneurship education and offers insight into advantages and disadvantages of the Raleigh area for small business/entrepreneurship development.

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The Entrepreneurial Spirit: A Grounded Study of Textile Entrepreneurship among the
Raleigh, North Carolina Business Community

by
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DEDICATION

To my mother, Jolanta Hopkins, who has never let me settle for anything less than my dreams. And for whose lifelong support I will forever value. To Dr. Moore who encouraged me take an idea and run with it. And to Ms. Tammy Lester who helped start the ball rolling.

BIOGRAPHY

Irene Patricia Wazgowska graduated from James Madison University with a B.A. in Studio Art and a B.A. in English. She began her graduate studies at North Carolina State University's College of Textiles in spring of 2013. She chose to pursue her studies as a result of a lifetime love for apparel, and her interest in the art and utility that textiles combine.

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1.0 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The entrepreneurial spirit and what makes an individual want to become an entrepreneur, is a matter of contention (e.g. Chouinard 2005; Hebert & Link, 1989; Rae, 2005; Watson, 2013). Entrepreneurship in itself is a complex concept that does not follow a clearly defined set of rules. Entrepreneurship is very much based in an individual's history, motivations, and experiences. While the risk-taking spirit may exist for all, the individual motivations differ. Thus entrepreneurship becomes a confusing realm in which no single handbook can be written nor followed (e.g. Chouinard, 2005; Hebert & Link, 1989; Rae, 2005; Ward, 2004).

The focus for this research is to better understand entrepreneurial activity for textile related businesses within a single community. This grounded research was conducted in Raleigh, North Carolina using local entrepreneurs in textile related businesses as research subjects. The research employs a qualitative long interview methodology to address the objectives: define entrepreneurship; identify individual motivations for starting a business; identify challenges that are encountered through the pursuit of entrepreneurial goals; identify future directions for entrepreneurship education; and to characterize the Raleigh area for entrepreneurship.

The Raleigh area provides a strong context for this research due to its historical proximity to the textile industry as well as its recent population and business growth. The population increased from 423,338 in 2012 to 431,746 in 2013 (United States Census Bureau, 2014). In November of 2009 CNN Money ranked Raleigh as the third best place,

among large metro areas, to launch a business. The website reported that for 2007 there were 27,659 employer establishments with 1-49 employees (CNN Money, 2009). The small business growth rate increased by 12.5 percent from 2004-2007 (CNN Money, 2009).

1.2 PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this investigation is to establish a grounded understanding of textile entrepreneurship among the Raleigh, North Carolina business community.

Objectives:

1. Define entrepreneurship from current entrepreneurs' perspectives.
2. Identify an individual's motivations for starting his/her own business.
3. Identify challenges to developing a business.
4. Identify directions for entrepreneurship education.
5. Characterize the Raleigh area for small business/entrepreneurship.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In order to better understand the textile community in the Raleigh area, local entrepreneurs' experiences are investigated. The network and growth of the textile community depends on the continued shared interest and support of these entrepreneurs, local government, and surrounding academic institutions.

By encouraging entrepreneurs to share their experiences using qualitative research, the opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the local industry can enable its successful growth. Raleigh has a strong foundation and as the city continues to grow, it is

likely capable of fostering a textile community that will bring increased value to the local economy.

Implications of this study can be far-reaching and not limited solely to the Raleigh area. While the research took place in Raleigh where the focus of the study and its subjects reside, there are themes that can be applied outside of this context. Entrepreneurship education is learned by tacit knowledge and personal practice, and the opportunity to learn from others can augment the process for aspiring entrepreneurs.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to operational constraints including time and access, a sample of textile entrepreneurs (N=7) were used for this research. Therefore, the experiences and perspectives of the subjects do not represent those of the full population of textile entrepreneurs in the Raleigh business community.

Though an interview protocol was used to direct data collection, interview sequences and settings varied between respondents. Further, the nature of data collection relied upon subject's ability to recall events which may not have resulted in entirely accurate accounts of their past experiences. Finally, the qualitative data are susceptible to subjectivity both from the researcher and subject's perspective. Efforts to reduce subjectivity, which is commonly dealt with in qualitative research, are evident in the objective driven design of the study.

2.0 CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 CURRENT ENTREPRENEURSHIP LITERATURE

Textile related entrepreneurship as a focus of research appears to be a new field of study. Though information does exist on textile collectives/organizations and non-profits; some of which address the nature of gender as related to textiles. But textile entrepreneurship for the individual/small business as a focus itself, does not have a significant presence in the field of entrepreneurship research. Therefore the literature that comprises this review is a collection of studies and work that relates to entrepreneurship as a general study.

Entrepreneurship literature that currently exists is largely found in business related textbooks, business related journals, and older publications by economists. A list of journals which is not limited to, are (refer to Table 1):

Table 1: Current Entrepreneurship Related Journals

<i>Journal of Small Business Management</i>
<i>Journal of Research in Marketing & Entrepreneurship</i>
<i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>
<i>International Journal of Management Reviews</i>
<i>International Small Business Journal</i>
<i>International Journal of Social Economics</i>
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>
<i>Small Business Economics</i>
<i>Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice</i>
<i>Journal of Corporate Citizenship</i>
<i>Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development</i>
<i>International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research</i>
<i>Journal of Business Venturing</i>
<i>Entrepreneurship and Regional Development</i>

2.2 DEFINING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2.2.1 Characteristics

Cunningham & Lischeron (1991) write that:

We continue to know very little about entrepreneurs, even though there is much interest and many publications on the subject. Much of the material is fragmented and highly

controversial... Indeed, many people who have long perceived themselves to be successful entrepreneurs would not fit some of the definitions which are now proposed (p.45).

No single definition for entrepreneurship exists. Different elements: life circumstance, goals, motivations, etc. are shown as determinants of how entrepreneurs begin their entrepreneurship endeavors. There are a number of existing models that depict the entrepreneurial leader (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991). Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) suggest that definitions of entrepreneurship vary widely and involve creating, finding opportunities, managing, controlling and changing. They believe that these definitions are based on criteria ranging from decision making, creativity, technical expertise/knowledge, experiences, and values. The individual who is considered a successful entrepreneur is described as having strong drives for independence and success, with high levels of vigor, persistence, and self-esteem (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991).

The term for entrepreneur was first introduced by the French economist J.B. Say around 1800. He defined the entrepreneur as someone who: “shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield” (Drucker, 1985, p.21). But as Drucker points out, Say’s definition does not tell us who the entrepreneur is. Say coined the term more than 200 years ago, and since then there has continued to be confusion over the definitions of ‘entrepreneur’ and ‘entrepreneurship’ (Drucker, 1985, p.21).

If defining entrepreneurship is a complicated matter, what is the best approach to take in order to better understand this subject? In *Defining Entrepreneurship*, Cunningham and

Lischeron (1991) introduce six schools of thought in an effort to organize research activity on the subject (refer to Table 2):

Table 2: Cunningham & Lischeron Six Schools of Thought on Entrepreneurship

<p><i>Assessing Personal Qualities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “Great Person” School of Entrepreneurship• The Psychological Characteristics School of Entrepreneurship <p><i>Recognizing Opportunities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Classical School of Entrepreneurship <p><i>Acting and Managing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Management School of Entrepreneurship• The Leadership School of Entrepreneurship <p><i>Reassessing and Adapting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Intrapreneurship School of Entrepreneurship (p.46).

From a different perspective Bohm (1968) considers the character of entrepreneurs as enterprising people who tend to express more originality than others. They are able to produce solutions that contradict or challenge established knowledge. They are also inclined to be more adaptable, and are prepared to consider a range of alternative approaches. Entrepreneurs are individuals who challenge the status quo, which can sometimes conflict with their colleagues (Fillis, 2000).

Drucker (1985) argues that entrepreneurship is behavior rather than personality driven. He asserts that at the foundation of entrepreneurship is theory rather than intuition.

He believes that anyone who is capable of facing up to decision making can learn to be an entrepreneur and to behave entrepreneurially (Drucker, 1985).

Kirzner (2009) refers to Schumpeter when addressing the qualities that generate successful entrepreneurial decisions. These qualities include boldness, imaginativeness, and creativity. “The Schumpeterian entrepreneur does not passively operate in a given world, rather he creates a world different from that which he finds” (Kirzner, 2009, p.146).

It appears that “efforts to isolate psychological or demographic characteristics that are common to all entrepreneurs, or are unique to entrepreneurs, have generally met with failure due to weak, disconfirming, or non-significant results” (Mitchell et al., 2002, p.95).

Therefore common demographic characteristics have not been identified by researchers to date.

2.2.2 Resiliency

Entrepreneurs experience uncertainty on a regular basis and must deal with it continually in their economic decisions (Hebert & Link, 1989). Herbert and Link (1989) define the entrepreneur as a:

[P]erson, not a team, committee or organization. This person has a comparative advantage in decision making, and makes decisions that run counter to the conventional wisdom either because he has better information or a different perception of events or opportunities. An entrepreneur must have the courage of his convictions and face the consequences of his actions, whether they produce profits or losses. Entrepreneurial actions are performed in all societies by individuals whose judgment differs from the norm. (p.47-48).

When relating entrepreneurship to the dynamics of economic life, the relations between people and the relations of people to material things are its base. Hebert and Link (1989) go on to write:

As economics became more like a branch of mechanics, it struck a kind of Faustian bargain in which its 'soul' was sacrificed for a better glimpse of the future (i.e., prediction). Yet this future should have been suspect all along, because the static method totally represses change, and dynamics *is* change. Change, in turn, is the province of the entrepreneur. (p.48).

A common question among researchers in this area is whether the entrepreneur provokes change or merely adjusts to change. Entrepreneurial action may mean the creation of an opportunity as well as the response to existing circumstances. The basic elements of entrepreneurship can be considered simply as perception, courage, and action (Hebert & Link, 1989).

In respect to the resiliency of entrepreneurs, particularly those within a creative context, their character is commonly described as that of an 'ideas person' who does not stay within boundaries (Kellet, 2013). The entrepreneur brings about change by developing new products, and capitalizing on new opportunities (Kellet, 2013). Thompson (1999) suggests that what entrepreneurship entails is not a flash of inspiration or luck. Instead it is the conscientious application of discipline to exploit resources which are already at hand or can somehow be found (Thompson, 1999). Thompson (1999) believes that entrepreneurship is rooted in flexibility and a willingness to embrace and champion change. In order to facilitate sharing and learning a constant flow of information to support the growth of the organization is necessary (Thompson, 1999).

2.3 MOTIVATIONS FOR THE CREATIVE INDIVIDUAL

2.3.1 Innovation for the Creative Individual

Considering innovation within the context of creative entrepreneurial pursuits, Suciu (2008) addresses the need for creativity in order to thrive in business. Suciu (2008) elaborates on the idea that business is a creative activity:

Success in business today demands constant innovation. Generating fresh solutions to problems, and the ability to invent new products or services for a changing market, are part of the intellectual capital that gives an organization its long-run sustainable competitive advantage. (p.152).

For the creative individual, this means the opportunity to take his/her ideas and turn these ideas into products (Suciu, 2008).

2.3.2 Business as a Sustaining Measure

Kellet (2006) proposes that creative ambition does not necessarily relate to businesses ambition within the creative industry sector. Kellet (2006) writes that those within the creative industry often develop their business as a result of the desire to continue with their artistic work. Therefore their motivations can be considered a reverse demands of the more traditional start-up (Kellet, 2006). The creative entrepreneur's focus is on the opportunity to continue his/her artistic endeavors, and utilizes the development of a business in order to sustain these pursuits.

2.3.3 Importance of the Creative Entrepreneur

We can consider creativity as a type of learning process where the teacher and pupil become the same individual (Peters & Besley, 2008). Thus we can characterize creative

entrepreneurial endeavors as those made by individuals whose work and product are uniquely their own (Kleinrichert, 2013). These creative individuals have the ability to educate others by demonstrating that creative motivations can result in successful entrepreneurial pursuits.

Kellet (2006) also highlights the important role that the creative entrepreneur plays:

As we move from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age, stories will become more and more important in our lives. The proliferation of information on the Internet has lessened its capital value and what is becoming more and more important is [the] way a creative mind works... In this new participatory era, the talent of the creative will become even more valuable. (p.9).

Creative entrepreneurial endeavors can help inform other aspiring entrepreneurs by providing an understanding of motivations through story and exchange.

2.4 ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

2.4.1 Importance of Entrepreneurship Learning

In *On Creativity*, Bohm (1968) speaks of the ability to learn something new. Bohm attributes this ability to the general state of mind of a human being. Following Bohm's logic, entrepreneurship does not depend on special talents, nor does it operate only in select fields (it is not limited to science, art, music or architecture). When it does operate, there is an undivided and total interest in what the individual is doing. In addition to this ability to learn, Bohm notes the important role of desire.

2.4.2 Innovation

As we consider the nature of entrepreneurs and their thirst to learn, we must also consider innovation as part of this enterprise. Innovation is the definitive tool of entrepreneurs (Drucker, 1985). Innovation represents means by which entrepreneurs exploit change in industry, in the way that things have been done traditionally, in order to provide opportunity for a different business or a different service (Drucker, 1985). Innovation is capable of being both learned and practiced (Drucker, 1985). In order to successfully use innovation, entrepreneurs must know and apply these principles (Drucker, 1985).

Drucker (1985) presents three key principles for knowledge-based innovation (refer to Table 3).

Table 3: Drucker's Three Key Principles for Knowledge-Based Innovation

<p><i>Knowledge-Based Innovation</i></p> <p>In the first place, knowledge-based innovation requires careful analysis of all the necessary factors, whether knowledge itself, or social, economic, or perceptual factors.</p> <p>The second requirement of knowledge-based innovation is a clear focus on the strategic position.</p> <p>Finally, the knowledge-based innovator – and especially the one whose innovation is based on scientific or technological knowledge – needs to learn and to practice entrepreneurial management. (p.115-119).</p>
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2.4.3 Teaching Entrepreneurship

According to Cunningham and Lischeron (1991), to understand entrepreneurs and their ventures requires information from each facet of the overall process. The authors

specify that entrepreneurs' personal perspective, their ways of identifying opportunities, their methods of acting and managing, and their mechanisms for adapting and reassessing each play an important role in the individual process. Gibb (2002) suggests that an approach for entrepreneurial learning is to consider:

Overall, a review of the importance of culture raises the issue as to what degree, in developing students' understanding of entrepreneurship, there is a need to create empathy with entrepreneurial: ways of seeing; ways of feeling; ways of doing; ways of thinking; and ways of learning. These can be key targets for the learning process and used to develop an understanding of how tasks are undertaken and things understood in different organizational and management contexts. (p.250).

2.4.4 Issues within the Current Curriculum

Although entrepreneurship education is currently offered within the academic realm, current curriculum is commonly criticized for a lack of relevance to the discipline (Gibb, 2002). Gibb (2002) points to Laukkanen and Johannisson who argue that business schools can act as sterile environments for entrepreneurship. This is because emphasis is put upon risk and analytical problem solving. There is a strong focus on large and medium-sized firms rather than small and individual enterprises.

Gibb (2002) goes on to address the issue of limited evidence that entrepreneurship is becoming mainstream within the curriculum of existing business schools. "The ability of schools to plan strategically, look for niches, link closely with their local environment and yet still pursue an international dimension in their work and embrace a broader view of society and of related people skills may be beyond the capacity of the traditional school"

(Gibb, 2002, p.243). He argues that it is necessary to focus upon the nature of enterprise in in the individual. This serves to provide a much wider context for entrepreneurship than that solely of business. The effective enterprising behavior of the entrepreneur can be determined and can provide valuable guidance across different organizational, social, and economic circumstances (Gibb, 2002).

2.4.5 A Holistic Approach to Entrepreneurship Education

It is universally understood that entrepreneurship education requires practical experience (e.g. Gartner, 2007; Gibb, 2002; Kirzner, 2009; Rae, 2005). This in fact is the most valuable aspect of an entrepreneur's education. "Learning must be explored as a contextual and active rather than a purely educational process" (Rae, 2005, p.324). As a researcher and educator, Rae suggests a need for a holistic model of entrepreneurial learning. This model must be adaptable to different groups, the levels of learning of each individual, and the different situations in which they might find themselves (Rae, 2004). This model is based upon 'practice-based theory' that involves action as opposed to theory. This approach requires a trial and error process, enabling the entrepreneur to learn what works and does not work for them. This model provides a potentially new approach to teaching and learning that is practice-oriented (Rae, 2004).

2.5 LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2.5.1 The Role it Plays

Entrepreneurship plays a significant role in local economies (e.g. Arzeni & Pellegrin, 1997; Kirzner, 2009; MacGregor & Hodgkinson; Steyeart & Katz, 2004, Thurik &

Wennekers, 2004; Watson, 2004). As Kirzner (2009) notes, successful entrepreneurship plays an enormously significant role in driving economic development and growth to achieve a prosperous economy (Kirzner, 2009).

MacGregor and Hodgkinson (2007) suggest that innovative clusters foster regional development. And that in turn these clusters foster innovation. They cite Enright and Roberts who “summarize a number of studies that connect innovation with innovation” and “they argue clusters are associated with informal, unplanned, face-to-face oral communication that is conducive to the innovation process” (MacGregor & Hodgkinson, 2007, p.19).

Considering the influence of clusters and geographic context on entrepreneurship, enables a shift away from the romantic figure of the lone and heroic individual who is willing to take risks. Instead, entrepreneurship can be viewed as the model for a society or as an infrastructure of conditions that enable creativity (Peters & Besley, 2008).

2.5.2 Community Oriented

The personal contacts that constitute entrepreneurial networks are embedded in, span, and connect places. These geographic networks help shape the entrepreneur’s identity and are an important aspect in enabling entrepreneurship (Hanson, 2009). Steyaert and Katz (2004) describe entrepreneurship as a matter of everyday activities. They point to the spatial production of entrepreneurship through socio-cultural processes. Neighborhoods and communities are affected through everyday activities. As a result entrepreneurship is brought out of its selective and selected circle of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial companies. The focus is shifted to the social processes in the broadest sense (Peters & Besley, 2008).

Entrepreneurial ventures provide the opportunity for growth within a community. In order for them to succeed, they must have at least at some level, the support of the community (Steyaert & Katz, 2004). This support system enables ventures to thrive and for new entrepreneurs to enter the field. It can be recognized that through the encouragement of business growth and creation, immigration of hardworking people, or even creating spaces where community members can exchange ideas, goods and services, the ubiquity and everydayness of entrepreneurship becomes more apparent (Steyaert & Katz, 2004).

2.5.3 Importance

As recent econometric evidence suggests, entrepreneurship is a vital determinant of economic growth. Communities that define entrepreneurship wherever they see efforts to improve processes, meet needs, and profit even in small ways are very likely to find themselves awash in entrepreneurial activity. The vehicle for documenting the everydayness and ubiquity of entrepreneurship throughout our societies can aid in proving how entrepreneurship is an integral and important part of society (Steyaert & Katz, 2004).

Thurik and Wennekers (2004) cite Ace when addressing his four consequences of the increased importance of small firms (refer to Table 4).

Table 4: Ace's Four Consequences for the Increased Importance of Small Firms

<p>(1) <i>a vehicle for entrepreneurship;</i> (2) <i>routes of innovation;</i> (3) <i>industry dynamics; and</i> (4) <i>job generation</i> (p. 145).</p>
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While academic institutions can foster the growth of entrepreneurial education within their curriculum, growth outside of these institutions must be considered as well. Though entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a local process, it is rarely studied as such. A limited number of studies have examined the relationship between entrepreneurship and place (Hanson, 2009).

This study aims to better understand the textile culture in North Carolina, by providing a grounded study of the greater Raleigh community. The study was approached as a local process that serves to present an understanding of the relationship to which Hanson (2009) refers. In addition it serves as an opportunity to increase awareness of the current textile community in the greater Raleigh area.

3.0 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this investigation is to establish a grounded understanding of textile entrepreneurship among the Raleigh, North Carolina business community.

3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to address the central purpose of the study the following objectives are examined:

The specific objectives are to:

1. Define entrepreneurship from current entrepreneurs' perspectives.
2. Identify individual's motivations for starting his/her own business.
3. Identify challenges to developing their business.
4. Identify directions for entrepreneurship education.
5. Characterize the Raleigh area for small business/entrepreneurship.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The long interview approach was employed in order to analyze the stories of the participating subjects. The grounded qualitative approach facilitated access to the individual entrepreneurs' perceptions and experiences through a narrative dialogue. This approach was suitable for addressing the study's objectives due to the contextual nature of the entrepreneurial experience.

3.2.1 Narrative Approach

Keeping in mind that life stories are socially constructed accounts of the story teller, they are therefore subjective. These narrative accounts are ultimately open to interpretation. Despite the inherent subjectivity of storytelling, narrative based research has the potential to generate new insights into entrepreneurship, and benefit entrepreneurs themselves as well as those who support, educate, or work with them (Rae, 2000).

The narrative approach is the use of the qualitative approach. When the questions sought for data are likely to cause the respondent greater difficulty, the qualitative approach provides a broader and more flexible net (McCracken, 1988). This approach offers the opportunity to glimpse into the complicated character, organization, and logic of culture (McCracken, 1988). “In other words, qualitative research does not survey the terrain, it mines it. It is, in other words, much more intensive than extensive in its objectives” (McCracken, 1988, p.17).

3.3 QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW DEVELOPMENT

The development of the qualitative long interview was designed to allow the subjects to tell their stories. These stories also include interpretation by the researcher, as a result of the process of transcribing each interview. An interview protocol was designed in order to facilitate the long interviews with methodological direction from McCracken (1988). Questions were developed in a flexible format to address the study’s objectives. The protocol was purposefully designed to allow subjects to elaborate while adhering to the five underlying objectives (Appendix C).

3.4 SUBJECT SELECTION

The subjects chosen to be interviewed (N=7) were either introduced to the researcher through personal introductions or through university and community related activities. Contact was made through email or in-person introductions. Requests for interviews were made via email, in-person, and over the phone. Following this process, a total of seven respondents agreed to participate in the study. All respondents are local entrepreneurs based in the greater Raleigh, NC area. Their businesses are diverse: apparel designers, an organic thread producer and distributor, an owner of a retail store for which apparel played an important role, a graduate student who uses textiles as a means to start conversation and to communicate a message, and an established t-shirt manufacturer. All subjects' identities have been concealed for the analysis and reporting.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

The personal interviews were conducted in-person by the principal researcher. The interviews took place at the subject's place of business or an agreed upon public location. They began in January of 2014 and were completed in March of 2014. Each subject was interviewed using a Sony ICD-PX312 voice recorder. The interviews were subsequently transcribed by the researcher using an Infinity Foot Control pedal and Express Scribe to transfer the audio to text. Individual subject interviews were transcribed with the nuances of speech, inflection, and pauses that existed in the audio. The principal researcher was conscious of maintaining the subject's character from audio to text.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The order in which the subjects are identified is based upon the chronological order in which the personal interviews were conducted. The personal interviews took place in systematic order based upon the original date of contact and participant agreement. Following the transcription of the subject interviews, the data were analyzed to address the study's objectives. Further, respondents' names are represented by letters in the presentation of the results.

Prior to analyzing the qualitative data, subject names were replaced by an alpha identifier (i.e., A-G). Using a content analysis approach, the seven transcripts were analyzed based upon their relevance to the study's objectives. The narrative data were organized into five categories corresponding to the research objective. Due to the nature of qualitative data the categorization of data into mutually exclusive categories was not always possible. The primary driver for the analysis was to address each objective, depicting subjects' viewpoints and experiences as honestly as possible.

4.0 CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO SUBJECTS

No singular template for entrepreneurial theory has ever been achieved because each story is unique. Entrepreneurs' stories are similar; it is the discourse that changes (Kellet, 2013, p.13).

Seven subjects were interviewed for this study. Each subject plays a different role within the textile industry in the Raleigh area. There was no specific order chosen for the interview process. Availability of subjects determined when they were interviewed. It is their stories that helped create the core of this thesis work.

4.1.1 Subject A

Subject A is a creator of organic textile goods. The subject began her career as a quilt maker, designer, and educator. She recognized the need for organic thread when she could not find a source for her own work. As part of her original business model, the subject seeks to improve the impact of the textile industry on the environment.

4.1.2 Subject B

Having partner-owned a company in California, Subject B is well versed in the apparel design and manufacturing industry. She eventually sold her half of the business. But the passion for designing returned, and with the reasonable cost of living in Raleigh, she decided to start a new business. The subject intends to become a larger force with a future brick and mortar store in the downtown area.

4.1.3 Subject C

Subject C has a background in jewelry design. Her original business model was a market approach in which she worked with six other artists. The market grew in popularity and helped prompt the start of a brick and mortar store. The subject joined forces with her siblings in order to open the storefront, of which textiles were an important retail product. The business has subsequently closed as of March 2014.

4.1.4 Subject D

Subject D began her career as an architect and moved on to retail after losing her job in 2009. She decided to pursue her passion for apparel by attending the Master's program in the College of Textiles at North Carolina State University. The "impetus" for her studies being the desire to start an eco-friendly business that promotes environmentally conscious textile designers and business. The subject formed the business with two partners.

4.1.5 Subject E

Subject E began using textiles as a tool for having conversations about opportunities in downtown Raleigh. While he was in graduate school at North Carolina State University, he and a friend, created textile products that utilized a map he had learned about in design school. Behind the design is a message that has translated into the start of another organization.

4.1.6 Subject F

Subject F started his business with one of his roommates as an undergraduate at North Carolina State University. Hand making men's neckwear began as a hobby and eventually the two created an online store. Since then, the company has expanded its apparel products

and grown to a four partner team, with a brick and mortar store. The store fills what the company sees as a void in the Raleigh apparel market.

4.1.7 Subject G

Subject G has a long established business. His company has seen high and low points throughout its years. The subject is actively involved in increasing the production of textiles in North Carolina, and utilizing the cotton grown in the state to manufacture domestically made apparel and goods. He continually works to improve the textile industry in the state and domestically.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Subject interviews were analyzed and data was collected in order to answer the questions posed by this thesis work.

4.2.1 Objective 1: Define Entrepreneurship from Current Entrepreneurs' Perspectives

A singular definition of entrepreneurship did not exist when interviewing each subject. Common themes were expressed over the course of collecting data. A general definition of entrepreneurship based on the researcher's data is: to take an idea and passion for something, and create a business and working conversation, while embracing risk (refer to Table 5).

Table 5: Definition of Entrepreneurship

Subject	Definition of Entrepreneurship
A	“Entrepreneurship means to me taking an idea and passion for something and making it into a business.”
B	“I consider myself a small business owner. And an artisan. I don’t really consider myself an entrepreneur.”
C	After the success of a collective bi-yearly handmade market: “And my sisters and I were talking about opening a business together, family business. And I was like: why don’t I open a shop that sells local goods. So that is sort of how it came to be.”
D	“...to me is just starting your own business.”
E	“And so we figured out, well how could we, what could we do, like basically do to learn by doing.”
F	“I think, you know, on the entrepreneurship side of things, for me at least it’s doing what you love regardless of the risk that may be present. And then ultimately the goal is develop something that is of use in some way.”
G	“Willing to take risk. Willing to try things that haven’t been tried before. The willingness to be your own boss.”

4.2.2 Objective 2: Identify an Individual’s Motivations for Starting His/Her Own

Business

Subject’s motivations for starting their businesses differ. One aspect in which this is representative is the point of life in which each started. Some started while undergraduates, others had worked in their field or area of interest, one was creating a family, and another had an idea but had to find complimentary business partners. Subject D’s idea began:

I have always been passionate about both fashion and sustainability. I just never knew how to connect them. And through my work with the US Green Building Council, I ended-up at a

conference where the New York chapter was talking about having had a fashion show that was eco-friendly. And I thought that was an amazing idea. So I wanted to do that down in North Carolina because I thought it would be fun, because I thought it would bring in new people into the green movement. But I didn't have the experiences, so I found, with the two other founders of [REDACTED], to help with that (Appendix C).

Motivations expressed by the respondents included the opportunity for freedom, pursuing a long held passion, starting a family business, a means to have conversation, being a catalyst for change and having fun. Some subjects started their business independently, while others had business partners. Though motivations for each subject were unique, the desire to pursue their passion was the driving force behind starting their own business.

Subject F addresses the fact that the entrepreneurial route is not:

A path to what a lot of people think is wealth and fortune... That's definitely the exact opposite of what it is. Because it's the, you know, from our experience and from what we're doing – it's always slow and always the opposite of what you hope is going to happen. So I think that, more than anything you have to love it (Appendix C) (refer to Table 6).

Table 6: Individual Motivations for Starting Business

Subject	Individual Motivations for Starting Business
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knew that having own business would mean ability to work from home and set own hours. • Provided the opportunity to be home for children. • Wanted ability to be a working mother. • Used these motivations as business model for artwork and sewing business.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Fell into” the industry • As a teenager had an interest in making and designing clothing. • One day decided to combine love for painting and love for textiles, and started doing surface design. • Ran production for a small business and learned how to dye and print on fabrics. • Around the time of running production, subject met close friend and eventual business partner who was designing clothing. • The two “just naturally” started working together.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started out as jewelry designer and created a collective with six other artists. • Collective was well-received by the local community and continued to grow. • At same time siblings had discussed starting their own business. A family business.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has “always been passionate about both fashion and sustainability.” But did not know how to connect them. • Through work with US Green Building Council subject learned about an eco-friendly fashion show. “And I thought that was an amazing idea.” • Wanted to create an eco-friendly fashion show in North Carolina. “Because I thought it would be fun, because I thought it would bring in new people into the green movement.” • Did not have the personal experience, and worked to form business with two other founders. • Being a catalyst for change.
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figuring out a way to “have conversations with people in Raleigh about the opportunities downtown.” • Subject and friend wanted to use a map to create conversation. • The two “learned that something simple like t-shirts was a simple way to kind of publically put [themselves] out there. And be able to have conversation.”
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was a multi-tiered process with several phases.

Table 6 (continued)

Subject	Individual Motivations for Starting Business
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject started making neckwear by hand as a hobby, while an undergraduate. It was for fun. Subject gave away pieces and sold some as well. • Subject’s roommate suggested they “make a business out of this.”
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject started business as an undergraduate.

4.2.3 Objective 3: Identify Challenges to Developing a Business

The subjects interviewed have each faced challenges in the development of their business. Obstacles included lack of resources and resistance to the introduction of new materials and ways of manufacturing or production. Practicalities of the development of a brick and mortar store were foreign to Subject C and required a great deal more time and effort than this individual anticipated:

When we first started out we had a lot of dreams. Like coffee house, yoga studio... juice bar and luckily that, we came to our senses before we tried to open something that was 4,000 sq. feet... I didn’t really know anything between running my own business as a jewelry business and doing this thing, compared to actually owning a brick and mortar shop. It was totally different (Appendix C).

Self-education became imperative to each subject. Some worked with limited resources and had to think creatively in order to continue with the development of their business. They had to find their own business voice and adapt to change when necessary. Subject G found himself having to re-evaluate his company when NAFTA came into effect. Over 100 employees worked for the company before NAFTA:

Well for us, I guess our wakeup call, our epiphany, realizing that we were going in the wrong direction – came early for [REDACTED]. And that happened in 1994 because of NAFTA. Prior to NAFTA we had a company, quite successful company. We basically had in our mission running a company based on a triple-bottom-line, people planet profit.

Then when NAFTA hit. Or even prior to NAFTA. The idea of why do I want to layoff people, to go somewhere and take advantage of their lesser regulations, environmentally and socially. To make a product to bring back to my market and to sell to my employees I just laid off (Appendix C) (refer to Table 7).

Table 7: Challenges to Developing Business

Subject	Challenges to Developing Business
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject’s organic approach to textiles was not initially embraced or understood. • Faced ridicule. • Was met with suppliers who were not open to changing/introducing new methods for growing cotton.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial textile business ended-up with subject selling share to business partner/best friend. • Developing business in Raleigh has been more difficult because there are no local suppliers. • North Carolina manufacturers do not work on small scale/cost is prohibitive.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial visions were not achievable. Had to revise brick and mortar model. • Did not understand details of a physical space, costs and meeting codes. • Did not correctly factor the amount of time required to prepare physical space for business. • Original business plan did not include realities of starting brick and mortar: permits, plans, hiring licensed individuals. • Had to let go of sellers whose products did not sell well. • Loss of popular skirt maker who could not provide continued product.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Trying to figure out if people even knew what we were talking about.” If they understood about eco-fashion and green-fashion. • Subject and partners did not know if designers knew how to design eco-fashion. Or how to find those that did. • They started from nothing. “Nobody knew this thing existed. They weren’t sure what to think about it.” • Limited financial resources. • Making their organization known and gaining support.
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources for e-Commerce, learning about ways to improve business. • Fulfillment issues. A lot of product and orders, but time consuming process that required self-education. • Realized that the course the business took was not what subject wanted to be doing.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Had an online presence but did not witness desired growth. • Found that wholesale was not something they enjoyed. • Had to re-orient the brand. • Limited traction in Raleigh until they opened brick and mortar shop.

Table 7 (continued)

Subject	Challenges to Developing Business
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of NAFTA meant less demand for subject's product. • Positive motivations of company: people planet profit, undermined by NAFTA. • Loss of contracts and business partnerships which meant loss of employees and having to downsize. • Disheartened by the fact that initial motivations for business and North Carolina economy both suffered.

4.2.4 Objective 4: Identify Directions for Entrepreneurship Education

The subjects suggest that entrepreneurship requires strong business acumen. For those who pursue creative endeavors, it can be particularly challenging. Business courses are often limited to business departments and programs. In order to provide other disciplines with real world business skills basic courses, such as accounting, should be provided. Those who have a creative focus must learn that as Subject C identifies: "You have your artistic pursuits versus the realities of running a business" (Appendix C).

Subject D addresses the challenge that is faced within entrepreneurship education, which is that while you can provide a structured curriculum "every business is different. The people who are in it are different. The things you run into are different. The structure you choose is different" (Appendix C). Without practical experience, a student's education may not find them well prepared for implementing what they have learned in their own entrepreneurial pursuits. It would be beneficial to shift focus to providing a more holistic approach to entrepreneurship education.

Subject E believes that entrepreneurship courses should tap into the passionate energies of students and "provide insights and understandings that enable [them] to take action on opportunities" (Appendix C). They must encourage creating a trajectory, while strengthening problem solving skills. While writing a business plan is considered an important aspect to starting a business, emphasis must be put on getting important information down that focuses on "the critical things" (Appendix C).

Academic universities can provide students with the necessary skills to successfully pursue their entrepreneurial goals. It must be remembered though that just as the mindset of an entrepreneur has to be adaptable to change, so must be those who provide entrepreneurship education. Subject F points to education being "rooted in tradition. And the way things have been done and are done. But that's kind of the exact opposite of entrepreneurship" (Appendix C). It is important for academia to keep this in mind when creating entrepreneurship curricula (refer to Table 8).

Table 8: Directions for Entrepreneurship Education

Subject	Directions for Entrepreneurship Education
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not currently see advanced education in sustainable textiles. • Does see NC State and others working on figuring this aspect of education out.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes that the biggest misconception of working as a designer is that it is primarily a creative endeavor. • When you are a business owner most of your time is spent dealing with the business end of things versus working as an artist.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes there should be a class on the basics of accounting. • One has to understand business. • You have your artistic pursuits versus the realities of running a business.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can sit in a classroom and learn but “every business is different. The people who are in it are different. The things that you run into are different. The structure you choose is different.” • Value in an accounting class or basic financial class. • How can you offer an entrepreneurship class as it is something that is learned through practice and experience. • You can teach people how to successfully run a business. “But if you don’t have the passion for what it is you’re trying to start, I don’t know why you would ever put yourself through all of this.”
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a master of your domain provides insights and understandings that enable you to take action on opportunities. • Formal programs do not guarantee success in industry because what you do in the working world is different from what you study. • Those that fail or those who are not solving a problem or are solving the wrong problem. • You must have a trajectory. • Those who have a real and gained interest are successful. These are the individuals who create a new experience or that solve a problem – a pressure point. • Academia can be very insular, but a move towards sharing values or opportunities with the general public could be valuable to the community and academic institutions. • Must be adaptable to change.

Table 8 (continued)

Subject	Directions for Entrepreneurship Education
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees entrepreneurship as a 50/50 thing, both taught and innate. • Everybody has a certain level of startup, entrepreneurial drive. But it is the ability to take risk that is the ultimately defines an entrepreneur. • Entrepreneurship basics are being taught pretty well. Example: NC State. • But philosophically there is the issue of what schools want to teach versus what is valuable/applicable on a day to day basis. • Academia places a big emphasis on lengthy business plans. Greater value would be “figuring out a way to educate somebody on how to write three to five pages very intelligently, get your information down there, but only focus on the critical things.” Must be adaptable to change. • “Entrepreneurship is about trying things and seeing what works and doesn’t.” • “Education is rooted in tradition. And the way things have been done and are done. But that’s kind of the exact opposite of entrepreneurship.” • It’s about breaking the mold and breaking the rules. But “how do you teach breaking the rules without breaking the rules?” • At the end of the day it is about the level of risk the entrepreneur is comfortable with. This cannot be learned. Though what is learned can be applied and help point an entrepreneur in the right direction.
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure you have the skill sets – i.e. how to write a business plan, capital needed, marketing strategy, a timeline. • An idea must become a plan in order to become a business. • Universities can play their part by teaching these skills. Specifically how to write a business plan as it helps to flush things out.

4.2.5 Objective 5: Characterize the Raleigh Area for Small Business/Entrepreneurship

Raleigh has a growing economy. The city's "unemployment rate has fallen steadily over the last few years, from 7.8 percent in 2010 to 6.1 percent in 2013. The city's unemployment rate has also remained lower than county, state and national rates during this time" (City of Raleigh, 2014). For the aspiring entrepreneur/small business owner it means greater potential to succeed in the area. The subjects interviewed have witnessed the physical and economic growth of Raleigh's textile community. Subject A has seen the increase in

local avenues for local designers to show their work. “There’s a lot more fashion shows than there used to be” (Appendix C).

In addition, there has been a growth in the local movement. Subject B sees an enthusiastic community within Raleigh. “There’s a lot of interest in more people having textile-based businesses here” (Appendix C). This has meant greater community support for the subjects interviewed. On a larger scale, North Carolina is continuing to strengthen its production of cotton and presence of apparel and textile manufacturing. Subject A thinks that “there’s a growing surge to use North Carolina cotton” and provides Cotton of the Carolinas as an example (Appendix C) (refer to Table 9).

Table 9: Raleigh’s Textile Community

Subject	Raleigh’s Textile Community
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “You’re seeing a lot more local designers and avenues for local designers to show their work. There’s a lot more fashion shows than there used to be.” First Friday has a lot of people in textiles showing their work. Raleigh Fashion Week as well. “And so I think Raleigh’s really changed as far as that goes.” • “I think there’s a growing surge to use North Carolina cotton.” Example: Cotton of the Carolinas. • For those who are interested in getting into the industry, especially Raleigh or North Carolina: “Find a niche where there isn’t any other competition. You got it all to yourself – you’re gonna have some success. It’s just a matter of building awareness and putting yourself out there.”
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Subject B the passion/bug for designing did not leave. Raleigh has a lower cost of living and provided the opportunity to revisit this interest. • There is a very enthusiastic community in Raleigh. People are very proud of the city. And proud that people are starting businesses in the area. And they want to be supportive. • In terms of textiles it is a bit trickier as there is not a critical mass of people designing. Initially it was Raleigh Denim and Subject B. And because others were scattered around it was not as easy to identify them.

Table 9 (continued)

Subject	Raleigh's Textile Community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “There’s a lot of interest in more people having textile-based businesses here.” People from the College of Textiles and from the design departments at NC State and Meredith have communicated this. They want to see opportunities for their graduating students. Thus far “it doesn’t seem like that has translated into a concrete change.” • “I’ve definitely seen an uptick in people starting these kind of businesses.” Example: Lumina and Symbology. • But Raleigh doesn’t have a lot of resources that a city like L.A. or New York does. As a result there are more hurdles which makes it more difficult for local entrepreneurs. • It would “be a lot simpler if there was somewhere here that I could physically go to and easily have them produce my stuff.” • Subject B would love for production to take place in Raleigh. “I mean I’m working on how to hire somebody because I can’t see any way else, see any other way. I’m sure that’s why Raleigh Denim are doing their production in-house. I mean I don’t know them, but I’m assuming that’s why they’re doing it because they probably couldn’t find anybody to sew for them. They had to make their own factory.” • Cost of living in Raleigh is “at least at a minimum encouraging people to stay here.” Students that are graduating out of programs in the area see that there is support for them if they wish to stay.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has witnessed growth in the local textile community. Example: Raleigh Denim and Redress Raleigh. “They’re growing and really kind of keeping the movement strong.” • In terms of Subject C’s store: “I do like that all of the artists that we sell here are really trying to stay local. Or try to stay in the United States if they can afford to do that.” • Subject C’s store creates the opportunity to connect everything, people, together. There are other opportunities to connect, examples include: SPARKcon and the ArtWalk. These can also be the starting place for budding entrepreneurs.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I was just very passionate about this idea. And it doesn’t seem to exist elsewhere. So... I felt like I had to create it myself.” • Subject D’s organization wants to focus on how North Carolina has a thriving textiles industry. And the resources that exist in the state. This continues to come up in panel discussions and seminars that they have. They also want to provide an eco-fashion platform that exists nationwide.

Table 9 (continued)

Subject	Raleigh's Textile Community
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I think the main way we’ve been supported locally is just finding, like champions or people that are really excited about what we’re doing. But they’re not necessarily, like, you know high level people or something. I mean they’re not necessarily the CEO of some corporation. It’d be like a group of students from NC State or AI or Institute in Raleigh-Durham, is very excited about what we’re doing. And we partner with them a lot.” • Raleigh’s mayor has been very supportive over recent years. It is important and means a lot to the organization, that someone in the local political office is supportive of them. • The organization is able to contribute locally through its yearly shows. And designers have gained national exposure through these shows. • Subject D has spoken to Mary Ann Baldwin, one of Raleigh’s City Councils, about the opportunity for more grants and means to find funding for small businesses/start-ups that aren’t high growth. Those that are not high return investments, but instead are creatively focused. Subject D would also like to see these opportunities extended to social entrepreneurs.
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject E took an idea and created a local conversation. “I think people showing pride for their place is fairly, especially some of these smaller cities, is awesome.” • Raleigh is completely different than six years ago, both physically and communally. “People are much more supportive. There’s a lot more connectivity between different industry interests.” • People appear to be rallying around cities and there is the opportunity in Raleigh to create fun and unique experiences that “can thrive and take root.” • There is more flow and cohesion. “Everyone kind of now understands that we all kind of have to work together to make this place as great as it can be.” • Subject E has witnessed Raleigh’s growth. And continues to aid in this growth by volunteering a lot of time from strategic planning to task force, and participation in local operations: “And support everyone that’s trying to make Raleigh better.”
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With a brick and mortar store Subject F has a physical presence in Raleigh. This footprint in the city has led to a greater acceptance as it shows an attempt to put down roots. “Having something physical, where people can come in, see us and talk to us. Kind of all of those interactions, have improved the acceptance from everybody here in Raleigh and the Triangle.” • Raleigh is a city on the rise with a lot of potential. • There is a void in menswear in the city, of which Subject F’s business wants to fill in order to “give guys locally something to kind of latch onto.”

Table 9 (continued)

Subject	Raleigh's Textile Community
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In respect to local events: “We’re actually, we’d love to see something here in Raleigh eventually. But again it’s kind of growing that base of people who are interested in the industry. And actually dressing well on the men’s side.” • “We want to just continue to get involved in projects we see enriching kind of the Raleigh fabric. The Raleigh culture and community.” • The cultural creation is important. Subject F and partners have worked on a lot of behind the scene projects. • Having a brick and mortar has provided the opportunity to connect people in the city. These connections are part of the goal of helping Raleigh continue to grow. • People are looking for made in the USA, so there is a lot more manufacturing taking place in the country. • Places like Royal Park USA in Burlington are bringing back industry to North Carolina. • There is a re-birth of apparel and textile industries in North Carolina. • Subject G spoke with Pat McCrory (NC governor) and Keith Crisco (Secretary of Commerce), about how North Carolina is well equipped with resources. • “We have some of the biggest spinning operations in the world with Frontier and Parkdale. The infrastructure has been greatly weakened by global trade deals. But there is infrastructure here to knit, finish it, cut it, sew it. So we’ve got a starting point. • “So I think North Carolina is by far the best state position wise to lead the re-birth of apparel in the US. Just because of the location.” • Subject G has noticed an influx of designers and other small apparel businesses, and operates as a conversation starter and filter, for those who are interested in starting their own apparel business. • Points to Raleigh Denim and Lumina as successful businesses. Cotton of the Carolinas provides a broader state impact.

4.2.6 Additional Findings

Another theme that became apparent through interviewing each subject is the importance of environmental and community impact. For some of the subjects, the environmental impact of their business was the driving force. And for others their businesses’ carbon footprint played a significant role in their decision making process.

Community was also an important aspect to each of the interviewed subjects. The role they play within the local community and the support they receive or have received, were commonly spoke of. Their desire to play a valuable part of the community and to follow sound business practices, helped inform their economic pursuits.

5.0 CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 FINAL SUMMARY

5.1.1 Objective 1: *Define Entrepreneurship from Current Entrepreneurs' Perspectives*

Based on the researcher's data, no single definition for entrepreneurship was defined. This analysis follows Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) that no single definition for entrepreneurship exists. Results of this study suggest that definitions of entrepreneurship vary widely and that these definitions are based a wide range of criteria. The data shows that criteria suggested by Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) is prevalent in each subjects' entrepreneurial process. The suggested criteria: decision making, creativity, technical expertise/knowledge, experiences, and values were expressed by each respondent in varying combinations (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991).

Bohm (1968) considers the character of entrepreneurs to be that of individuals who express more originality than others. Again, "efforts to isolate psychological or demographic characteristics that are common to all entrepreneurs, or are unique to entrepreneurs, have generally met with failure" (Mitchell et al., 2002, p.95). If we are to look at the data collected in this research, the subjects do not directly identify a singular characteristic to define entrepreneurs. Nor do they approach entrepreneurship as a theoretical concept. Their definitions have been developed from personal experiences which have helped inform their broad understanding of entrepreneurship.

Herbert and Link (1989) define the entrepreneur as a person who operates independently. This individual has a comparative advantage in decision making and the

courage of his convictions to face the consequences of his actions (Herbert & Link, 1989, p.47-48). The researcher's data suggests that a limited number of subjects initially worked independently, and that all subjects have at some point worked as part of a team or in a business partnership. This leads the researcher to believe that successful entrepreneurship is not based solely on the individual endeavor, but becomes a collective endeavor.

Refer to Table 10:

Table 10: Defining Entrepreneurship

Involves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making • Creativity • Technical expertise/knowledge • Experiences • Values (Cunningham & Lischeron, 1991)
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No singular characteristic to determine
Individual Endeavor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes a collective endeavor

5.1.2 Objective 2: *Identify an Individual's Motivations for Starting His/Her own Business*

While there is a conceptual understanding of entrepreneurial motivations within entrepreneurship research, this study found that these motivations can be simplified. The researcher's data shows that the desire for freedom, having passion for one's pursuit, owning a family business, communicating a message to the public, promoting change and having fun, were motivations for starting a business. The individual motivations of the subjects differ,

though many pursued creative endeavors, and had the desire to continue with their artistic work (Kellet, 2006).

Suciu (2008) addresses the need for creativity in business and suggests that creativity provides the opportunity for a business to thrive. The creative individual is able to take his/her ideas and produce work that is uniquely their own (Kleinrichert, 2013). This allows the opportunity for the creative individual to operate independently and to play a valuable role in the economic market. The researcher proposes that as we know these individual's exist and are active in their communities, we can address Kellet (2006) who suggests that their collaboration and sharing of experiences will continue to become more valuable.

Through the course of learning the story of each respondent, the researcher has established that the underlying passion for the individuals' pursuing his/her own business is the driving force. This was communicated throughout the individual interviews and found in the data. The researcher proposes that the difficulty in defining entrepreneurial motivations for creative individuals does not lie in the lack of information, but rather in the lack of gathering and interpreting individual stories. There must be a shift of focus from theory to practical research. If we are to truly understand the entrepreneur, we must investigate those who are living and breathing entrepreneurship in their everyday lives.

Refer to Table 11:

Table 11: Subjects' Motivations for Starting Business

Subjects' motivations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom • Passion • Owning family business • Communicating a message <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting change • Fun
Subjects' motivations II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative strengths
Singular motivation identified by subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion for entrepreneurial endeavor

5.1.3 Objective 3: *Identify Challenges to Developing a Business*

This research found that the subjects faced challenges ranging from: issues of supply and production; development of a brick and mortar store; facing ridicule because of resistance to something new; limited financial resources; difficulty in reaching an audience; finding the direction that the business had taken was not the desired route; discovering that wholesale was not the means in which the business wanted to operate; limited traction in Raleigh when the business had solely an online presence; as well as the introduction of NAFTA in 1994.

Some of the respondents pursued their business as a result of creative/artistic endeavors and spoke to the difficulties that were faced due to their lack of business acumen. These respondents began their entrepreneurial endeavors with the interest in continuing their creative endeavors, but the realities of business quickly set-in. The business responsibilities were new to these individuals who had previously operated solely in the context of creating. The respondents discovered that accounting was one of the integral parts of having a

business, which was mostly if not entirely foreign to them. Perhaps the biggest challenge to these creative individuals was realizing that their artistic pursuits were preceded by the realities of running a business.

It must also be remembered that challenges to developing a business are not limited to the initial development of the business. The subjects faced challenges from the start, but have continued to find themselves having to adjust as they face new and different challenges. While the subjects acknowledge these challenges, they have been able to adapt to change and to address the issues that they are presented with. It is this willingness to be their own boss and to deal with the uncertain that enables them to continue as entrepreneurs.

Refer to Table 12:

Table 12: Subjects' Challenges to Developing Their Business

Business related	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of business acumen
Subjects' individual challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply & production • Development of brick & mortar store • Resistance from public • Limited financial resources • Reaching an audience • Wrong direction for business • Limited traction in Raleigh • NAFTA
Subjects' individual challenges II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative endeavors vs. realities of running a business
Common challenge faced by subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued challenges as nature of running a business

5.1.4 Objective 4: *Identify Directions for Entrepreneurship Education*

Bohm (1968) suggests that entrepreneurship is not limited to a specific field or skill. What entrepreneurship does require is the ability and the desire to learn and pursue one's entrepreneurial goals (Bohm, 1968). The underlying motivation of passion that the subjects spoke to was communicated as being the most important reason to pursue entrepreneurship. This research suggests that for those individuals who wish to pursue their entrepreneurial goals, they must first ask themselves whether they have a passion for what they are doing. This should be the initial step in the introduction of entrepreneurship education. According to the data, this passion is required as the path of entrepreneurship is not an easy one to follow.

According to Drucker (1985), innovation is the definitive tool of entrepreneurs. Drucker (1985) believes that innovation is capable of being both learned and practiced, and that entrepreneurs must know and apply these principles. The subjects included in this research did not identify or define innovation. Instead they identified the need to create a new experience or solve a problem that hits a pressure point. The tool of innovation (Drucker, 1985) was instead addressed as the ability to take risk; being what ultimately defines an individual as an entrepreneur. Further, the data identifies the need for an idea to become a plan, in order to become a business.

Cunningham and Lischeron (1991) propose that in order to understand entrepreneurs and their ventures, focus must be upon: the entrepreneurs' personal perspective; their ways of identifying opportunities; their methods of acting and managing; and their mechanisms for reassessing and adapting. Gibb (2002) suggests that there must be an understanding of the entrepreneurial: ways of seeing; ways of feeling; ways of doing; ways of thinking; and ways

of learning. The researcher's data identifies the need to be a master of your domain. With mastery the opportunity to provide insights and understandings, enable the individual to take action on opportunities. The data suggests that the opportunity to be taught entrepreneurial skills does exist. This opportunity must also include having the innate entrepreneurship ability. Therefore there is the potential for academic institutions to help teach relevant entrepreneurial skills.

While academic universities can play a role in the development of entrepreneurship skills, the curriculum is often criticized for a lack of relevance to the discipline (Gibb, 2002). The data suggests that while an individual can learn about entrepreneurship within the classroom setting, it is difficult to apply the curriculum to the individual business. This is because there are differences in: types of businesses; the people who run them; the structure of the business; and the issues that each business faces and must deal with. In addition, evidence shows the lack of relevant education for specified areas of focus.

According to the data there continues to be the philosophical issue of what schools teach versus what is applicable to day to day entrepreneurship practices. The question of how entrepreneurship can be taught when it is something that is learned through practice and experience, was repeated among the respondents. It is suggested that formal programs do not guarantee success in industry because what an individual studies is different from what an individual does in the working world. In addition, academia can be very insular, and therefore may fail to include the shared values or opportunities from the general public.

Perhaps what is most detrimental to entrepreneurship education is that education is rooted in tradition. The data shows that this is the exact opposite of what entrepreneurship is

about. In fact operating with the mentality based on what has been done, results in a stagnant entrepreneurship education system. This is because entrepreneurship is an evolving process that requires adaptability and the willingness to change.

This study found that academic institutions can play an important role in entrepreneurship education. While we must remember that entrepreneurship is about breaking the mold, we must also recognize that while breaking the mold might not be easily taught, it can be embraced. A more holistic approach to entrepreneurship, or a ‘practice-based’ model, enables the entrepreneur to learn what works and what does not work (Rae, 2004). Academia can provide financial courses, education on writing business plans, and guidance for the aspiring entrepreneur. In addition, universities can establish relationships within their community: between existing entrepreneurs; the city and government; and entrepreneurship related organizations.

A holistic approach to entrepreneurship education can provide insights for the aspiring entrepreneur. These insights can enable the student to become a master of his/her domain. With proper guidance and aid in creating a trajectory for the student and their business, entrepreneurship education can help balance the learning process. It must be remembered that a significant part of entrepreneurship is the level of risk that the individual is willing to take. Though this cannot be taught, academia can equip its students with the necessary skills that help point them in the right direction.

Refer to Table 13:

Table 13: Identifying Directions for Entrepreneurship Education

Determine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passion • Ability to take risk
Desire to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn • Pursue entrepreneurial goals
Identify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to create new experience • Solve a problem
Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become master of domain
Existing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for break from tradition
Teach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyday business skills • Business plan
Approach for education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holistic

5.1.5 Objective 5: *Characterize the Raleigh Area for Small Business/Entrepreneurship*

Kirzner (2009) notes that successful entrepreneurship plays a significant role in driving economic development and growth to the economy. In 2009 CNN Money (2009) ranked Raleigh as the third best place, amongst large metro areas, to launch a business. Raleigh has an unemployment rate that has fallen steadily from 2010-2013, and which is lower than county, state, and national rates. The data supports what appears to be a strong market for entrepreneurship in the city.

For Raleigh designers there is evidence of growth within opportunities to show one's work due to the increase in local fashion shows. First Friday, Raleigh Fashion Week, and SPARKcon are a few examples of different avenues for this type of exposure. These avenues

also help in displaying the enthusiastic community within Raleigh. The research also identifies a Raleigh pride that the city's dwellers have. The community is proud that people are starting businesses in the area and are supportive in the growth of local entrepreneurship.

In respect to the growth of Raleigh's textile community, the data suggests that there is much needed growth. While there appears to be interest in people pursuing textile-based business, there are difficulties associated with production and manufacturing. Available facilities are limited in the state and do not necessarily have the desire or capability of working with smaller textile-based businesses. Despite the lack of local resources (both financial and product related) there are some entrepreneurs who have persevered.

Businesses such as Lumina, Raleigh Denim, Symbology, and Judah Ross have helped set a pace and momentum for Raleigh's growing textile scene. The data also suggests that there is evidence of interest from the local government in supporting the development of entrepreneurial ventures. The mayor has shown support as well as one of the city's councilors, Mary Ann Baldwin. In addition to the support of those in political office, organizations such as HQ Raleigh and Innovate Raleigh, serve to provide a forum for entrepreneurs.

This research found that some of the respondents have experienced a greater acceptance with a physical location in Raleigh. Having a brick and mortar store means the desire to set down roots, which in turn has been recognized by the community. A physical space has also helped in the promotion and growth of their business. For both professional and personal reasons, it appears that a separate workspace has been beneficial to the development of a subject's business.

In addition to the growth and support of Raleigh’s textile-based entrepreneurial community, there is evidence of growth of the textile scene within the state of North Carolina. Cotton of the Carolinas, an organization that helps in the support of state-grown cotton and its production, works to improve the state’s cotton industry. Places like Royal Park USA are encouraging the return of textile manufacturing to the state. Frontier and Parkdale, which have some of the largest spinning operations in the world, have the ability to improve domestic production. The potential for the growth of textiles in the state will mean the growth of textile-based businesses in the Raleigh area.

This research suggests that the continued involvement from entrepreneurs, the community, and local academic institutions will mean the continued success of textile-based entrepreneurial endeavors in Raleigh. The respondents have witnessed how the city has grown both physically and communally in the past six years alone. As Raleigh continues to grow and to embrace the local entrepreneur, the city has the potential to become a thriving community of entrepreneurs.

Refer to Table 14:

Table 14: Characterizing Raleigh’s Community for Entrepreneurial Endeavors

For the artist/creative entrepreneur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More opportunities to show one’s work
Existing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raleigh pride • Successful businesses • Enthusiastic community • Support from local government
North Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong cotton industry • Growth of textile production/manufacturing

5.1.6 Summary

Through the course of this research, it has been determined that those who choose to pursue entrepreneurship commonly have a strong passion for their field of interest. In addition, they must be willing to take risks and be adaptable to change, as entrepreneurship is a continually evolving process.

Data from the study suggest that while the passion must exist it must also be remembered, particularly for creative endeavors, that entrepreneurship is business oriented and requires skills in multiple areas. As a result, when considering entrepreneurship education, it is valuable to offer accounting and financial related courses in curriculum targeted to non-business related majors. Certain entrepreneurial skills can be taught within the academic environment, but it is important to combine traditional coursework with practical, field experience.

In respect to Raleigh's textile community, there has been growth over the past years. This is due to the environment created by local academic institutions, cost of living, and the support of the area's community. The potential for further growth exists and can be facilitated by partnering academia, entrepreneurs, the local government, and community.

5.2 IMPLICATIONS

Implications of this research have the potential to be far reaching and not limited to those who wish to pursue textile-based entrepreneurial goals. While a single definition for entrepreneurship does not exist, common motives can be used to help determine the entrepreneurial route. The insight provided by this study points to the necessity of having a

passion for one's entrepreneurial pursuit. Though passion cannot be taught, it can be addressed for those who are serious about their entrepreneurial endeavors. In addition, challenges are an inevitable part of entrepreneurship and equipping entrepreneurs with the right skills, can better prepare them for these endeavors.

Academic institutions might consider this study when looking for areas of change and further development in their current curriculum. While this research's focus is on textile-based entrepreneurship, the themes that are represented can help inform necessary business skills for entrepreneurship. In respect to the focus of Raleigh in a geographic context, the data collected within this study does not have to be limited to the city, and can have potential implications of entrepreneurial endeavors on a larger scale. The five objectives addressed in this study can help inform current entrepreneurial endeavors, entrepreneurship education, and entrepreneurship research. This thesis work has the may be considered when encouraging the success for those who are in, are focusing on, or have goals of becoming an entrepreneur.

It must be noted by the researcher that the focus of this thesis work shifted over the course of doing research. The initial goal was to learn about what lead to the emergence of local textile related businesses in the Raleigh area. Beginning with the literature review process, a recurring theme that occurred was the issue of entrepreneurship education. Although it has long been studied, there has been no formal or standard method for teaching it. This is because entrepreneurship cannot be taught in a traditional curriculum format. Not only is it broad, it is unpredictable and depends largely on the individual experience.

Interviewing entrepreneurs in the Raleigh area served as an opportunity to gather insight from those who are operating their own businesses. They provided their personal experiences

and thoughts on what would be valuable skills that can be taught within academia; in order to better prepare the aspiring entrepreneur. Another theme that became apparent through interviewing each subject is the importance of environmental and community impact. For some of the subjects, the environmental impact of their business was the driving force. For others their businesses' carbon footprint played a significant role in their decision making process.

Community was also an important aspect to each of the interviewed subjects. The role they play within the local community and the support they receive or have received, were commonly spoke of. Their desire to play a valuable part of the community and to follow sound business practices, helped inform their economic pursuits. Entrepreneurship can be a complex enterprise, but for the individual who is passionate, willing to take risk, and cognizant of making a positive contribution – the journey can be rewarding.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

This thesis work provided a sample of textile entrepreneurs in the Raleigh area. Future research would include a larger sample and ongoing communication with entrepreneurs in an effort to understand the entrepreneurial process. The purpose of this research was to establish a grounded, deep understanding of a community of textile entrepreneurs. The findings provide a beginning to understanding a complex and dynamic application of entrepreneurship. Therefore, generalization is not an objective of this particular study and does not reflect an average entrepreneurial experience.

This study has limitations due to time and access. Therefore the subjects in this sample represent a small segment of textile-based businesses in the Raleigh area. The respondents' accounts of their entrepreneurial endeavors are subject to variances as a result of the interview process, both from the interviewer and interviewee. The continued importance of entrepreneurship can encourage more organized research and thus academic clarification of entrepreneurship. This clarification can then inform entrepreneurship education for those aspiring entrepreneurs, by teaching them sound entrepreneurial skills. Further studies require identifying motivations, challenges to, and the logistics of starting a business in order to better provide these skills.

5.4 FUTURE RESEARCH & RECOMMENDATIONS

The opportunity to interview students, faculty, government officials, and consumers could shed insight on other factors that can be attributed to textile entrepreneurship. Future research would include a larger sample group and consider other cities (regional, country, and continent) for the focus of this study. Different industries can also be considered as a focus of study in future research.

Entrepreneurship research within the realm of textiles has the potential to help further develop this entrepreneurial route. Future research should consider existing entrepreneurship studies, but must focus on the individual stories in order to effectively comprise the data. It is important to gather more in depth information in order to establish what sound skills and attributes are needed for successful entrepreneurship. With further research, a more significant understanding of entrepreneurship can be established.

In order for Raleigh's textile community to continue to grow successfully there must be dialogue between current business owners, local academic universities, and the community. Conversations must also take place between entrepreneurs and the local government. The opportunity to interview students, faculty, government officials, and consumers could shed insight on other factors that can be attributed to textile entrepreneurship. From education to economics, and everything in-between, the future of Raleigh's textile scene is reliant upon a community effort and strong support system.

In addition there must be movement towards increasing resources within the area. There is a lot of potential for growth, with the existing environment and the enthusiasm of those who are currently working and being educated in Raleigh. There will be increased value when local academic institutions join forces with Raleigh's textile community. With increased interest, there is the opportunity to create a thriving textile community that can put Raleigh on the national map.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval

North Carolina State University is a land-grant
university and a constituent institution of the
University of North Carolina

Office of Research and Innovation
Division of Research Administration

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Campus Box 7514
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7514

919.515.8754 (phone)
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Jennifer Ofstein, IRB Coordinator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: November 22, 2013

Title: The Entrepreneurial Spirit: What had lead to the recent emergence of local textile
business and organizations in the Raleigh area?

IRB#: 3633

Dear Irene Wazgowska,


The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101. b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review. This approval does not expire, but any changes must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: FWA00003429.
2. Any changes to the research must be submitted and approved by the IRB prior to implementation.
3. If any unanticipated problems occur, they must be reported to the IRB office within 5 business days.

Please forward a copy of this letter to your faculty sponsor, if applicable.
Thank you.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Ofstein
NC State IRB

Appendix B: Consent to Interview

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

The Entrepreneurial Spirit: What has lead to the recent emergence of local textile businesses and organizations in the Raleigh area?

Irene Wazgowska

Dr. Marguerite Moore

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?

To learn what has lead to the emergence of local textile businesses and organizations in the Raleigh area. To include: the motivations and goals behind their business endeavors. And the successes and failures that have been encountered.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview which will be audio recorded. Approximately two hours of your time will be requested. Questions will be asked related to motivation, success and failures of the business/organization. Relevant business oriented questions will be included. Follow-up through email may be also be requested if any post interview questions arise.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study.

Benefits

The opportunity to educate others in the textile industry.

Confidentiality

The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. Data will be stored securely in the College of Textiles: Academic Programs & Distance Education Office. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Compensation

You will not receive anything for participating.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Irene Wazgowska, at 404/441-9492.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled."

Subject's signature _____ Date _____
Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

Common Themes:

1. What does entrepreneurship mean to you?
2. What recommendations do you have for improving entrepreneurship education?

Textile Business:

1. Where did the idea/passion for your textile business begin?
 2. Why did you choose to pursue your own business?
 3. What were your initial business plans? Did you find that they changed early on?
 4. What research if any was involved?
 5. Who is your target market?
 6. Where did your initial capital come from? What did you learn about the financial concerns involved with starting a business?
 7. What were some obstacles or challenges you faced? Are there any that you continue to face?
 8. Were there any failures? If yes, how did they help inform future decisions?
 9. What are the successes that have resulted?
 10. Why Raleigh? What makes this a good market?
 11. Is there competition? Or have you found a supportive network?
 12. How do you see the impact of your business: socially (contributing to the community), economically and environmentally?
 13. Do you have plans for the long term growth of your business?
- Design & Product
14. Where does the inspiration for designs/products come from?
 15. Where and how do you source your materials? What have you learned about this process?
 16. Where do you sell your product? Do you have an online presence?
 17. Do you do any sort of marketing?

Brick and Mortar Store:

1. What were your initial visions for your store?
2. Why bring textiles into your business?
3. How have you incorporated them into your business model? And into the physical store itself?
4. What do you look for in terms of design and quality?
5. What strengths do you look for in a product?
6. What determines products that are kept? When and how do you consider new ones?

7. Was part of your goal to support local textile businesses?
8. Have you witnessed the growth of the local textile related industry?
9. How do you think the Raleigh area fosters creativity in the industry? How does it cater to businesses like yours?

Organization:

1. What were the motivations for starting your organization?
2. What were your initial goals?
3. What obstacles did you face?
4. How have you been able to support local businesses?
5. How do you think the Raleigh area fosters creativity in the industry? How has your organization been able to contribute to the process?

Appendix D: Subject Interviews

Subject A

Can you describe what entrepreneurship means to you?

Entrepreneurship means to me taking an idea and passion for something and making it into a business. I love to sew. I love to do handwork. I love organic things from the environment. And combining those things meant ... putting together a business that could make me a living or at least some money doing those things; that I wanted to do anyway.

If you can remind me where the idea or passion for your business began.

It started, well as far as wanting to do it as a business, it really came from a lot of different things. I knew that having my own business meant that I could set my own hours and could work from home if I wanted to. And my goal in life, one of the things I wanted, was to have children and to be at home for my children. But I also didn't want to be a kept woman, I wanted to have a career and all that. And so the artwork and the sewing business model that I used, came out of that. So I didn't rent a space. You know I didn't want to own a store. I didn't want to you know work at or manage a JoAnn's. Or something like that. I needed to develop a model that was consistent with the way I wanted to live. So my style came first. And then the business wrapped around it.

And so the business facilitated that for you; working from home.

And everything I did was, I was capable of doing from home. And I at one point did get a studio, and there was a specific reason for that as well. But everything started from home and we bought our home with the idea that my business would be housed there.

And in terms of your original business plan/s did you have, did you write anything down?

No, I don't believe in writing a conclusion. What is this? What is going to happen when I do this? Because we have no idea. We can make all the plans we want to but we don't know what the conclusion is going to be. So what I did was stick with my idea of what I wanted in life, lifestyle, and tried different things. Depending on what doors opened for me. And what customers asked for, that was the most important thing. You know if I was doing, I started out with quilts, and then people started asking me: well do you do table linens? Well okay yes. The answer's always yes: because if I can make a quilt I can do table linens. So that's how it started, one thing after another. And then people wanted to know where I got my fabrics. Well, I was dyeing them myself. So okay then – will you dye them for me and sell them to me? Okay, yeah. So we do fabrics. What about thread? You know, and then just one thing led to another. And everything grew.

Those initial small steps. In terms of the Raleigh area, have you seen the textile business grow/what has been your experience here?

Yeah. It's been quite amazing to me. When I first got here, everything from the farmers to the universities to the consumers – were not into organic at all. The farmers ridiculed me publicly, you know at the farmers market. "Is she looking for organic? Ba haha." And everybody's laughing. And I'm thinking the farmers market is where you're gonna find the organic stuff. Not here.

The cotton farmers I talked to were belligerent: I'm not doing that, my daddy did it this way with chemicals and that's how it's gonna go. So I found North Carolina very backwards.

There weren't the organic products that I wanted to buy. And the only place to get organic clothing was online. And slowly the grocery stores started taking off and things...

The 90s?

Mmmhmm... the 90s. Yeah. Mostly. I got here in 89 so, the organic grocery started to take hold I think, Whole Foods had a lot to do with that. And then once that became more stylish and cool to be green, then of course things started popping-up everywhere and in order to be competitive at all you had to be, have something organic or something light on the earth. And then the, in 2008 when everything crashed, then everybody started buying local. And so local and organic became much more prevalent and everything changed then too. So that's when all these individuals that were trying to do fashion, [who] weren't able to break into the world market or the national market, but once you go local then they're able to build a market here. And so sell locally. And so the whole the whole fashion market changed. And that's when Redress Raleigh got really, started to get some traction and organic, my organic thread really took off at that point. And that's when I went out and had to get a studio away from home too...

Everything else crashed and my business tripled. So it was a real interesting flip-flop in the society.

And do you think Raleigh fosters a certain community? Is there a sense of community for textile designers, businesses and organizations?

You know there is now, and I wasn't really into fashion all that much early on. It was much more housewares, so I can't really speak to how it has always been. But at the same

time you're seeing a lot more local designers and avenues for local designers to show their work. There's a lot more fashion shows than there used to be. The whole downtown revitalization and the first night, not first night, first Friday – that has fashion shows in it, it has a lot more people in textiles showing their work. There's the Raleigh Fashion week, maybe it went on before but it wasn't really in the public eye. And now it's acknowledged and people really know it and know to expect it. And so I think Raleigh's really changed as far as that goes. Like NC State has changed, they almost, well NC State, Duke, and anybody didn't have much going on as far as local and small entrepreneur training. When I got my interns from the fashion design school there, they all of them, were just very upset that they were only being trained for large corporate jobs. And they came to me to get the small studio experience - and what's it going to be like to have my own shop. What's it going to be like to start my own business? How am I gonna run it? And I just had lots and lots of kids coming in. And I would do three and four kids at a time, and didn't really have the work for them, but they would come just to be there and learn stuff for no money. And they were just spending their time learning something that they wanted to know that wasn't offered.

And now I think there's more that's offered, because the whole paradigm has shifted. We're buying our clothes from the smaller makers now and a smaller manufacturer is much more nimble and reactive to what goes on. They make a dress that fits just you if you want it. So people are taking that as part of their way to assemble their wardrobe now. Rather than what's at the mall.

And as education goes how do you think you can incorporate that into a traditional curriculum?

I think that, I think that because is there is no advanced education in the kind of work that I'm doing, that the university is going to have to change their standard of who their professors are. I've been asked to speak at NC State a lot of times and have been training kids for a long time. And I would never be hired because I don't have a Master's or a Doctorate. But the amount of experience that I have and the years of experience that I have in the market, I could teach anything. And I've been asked to teach, but they won't hire me when they find out that I don't have the higher degree. Well there isn't any higher degree in sustainability. At least there hasn't been. So it's a, a what do you put first. Do you put first the teachers that have a higher degree no matter what it's in and hope that they can teach sustainability? Or do you hire somebody you really know, knows sustainable textiles and markets and all that kind of stuff. And put them in place to create the higher degrees. Chicken and egg.

But the good part is that I see NC State and others really working toward figuring that out. There is a sustainability program over there and they do call me quite often for different things. And it's all over the school, it's not just the fashion design or something like that. They're having films brought in and and lots of different things. And Duke same thing. I'm going over there and lecturing and talking with business, the business school people - Master's level students and, and just talking to them about how I run my business. And my business model and and why and what, and all of that sort of thing. So they're reaching out, they're just little... important.

Can I ask what you would consider your biggest success?

The thread. Organic cotton thread. Yeah, it was not even on the radar. I worked for years to find a thread company that would be willing to go into it with me. And that believed in organic enough. And YLI Corporation was the company that went into it with me. They're very small. In my, earlier in my career I went organic. I was a quilt designer. And I made quilts the way I thought they should be made. Which was different from the way the custom was. I can't say the industry, because it's a home thing. But I started using very thick threads to show my illustrative patterns of quilting on the quilts. And different colors and things like that that weren't being done. And my designs were very very popular. And the thread manufacturers would, I guess I should back up and say – my designs are continuous line quilting designs. And when I had a large collection of designs done, I went to a publisher and the publisher took me on tour. And that's where I made a really big splash was in the international quilt market in Houston.

And so in Houston, whenever I would be there with my quilts and my new designs for spring or fall or whatever it was, the thread designers, or the thread manufacturers would come over and see what I was using. I mean they would be standing peeking at my threads trying to figure what weight it was. I was just picking up stuff at garage sales and and whatever I could get it if it looked right to me, then that's what I used. And so they started putting out the kinds of threads I was using. That's how variegated thread came about and and heavier threads being used on quilts, so that quilting shows up more and contrasting threads on the tops of your quilts. Then when I started to say organic, you can't see that it's organic when you look at it, so there was no way for them to market that. But YLI, Jim Miller who owns YLI, I'd been after him about doing this for a couple of years. And he

finally went to a thread symposium in Japan and they were talking about organic. There was no organic thread on the market. Why isn't anyone making organic thread? And he finally came back and said: Julie I think you're right. And did it.

It was really difficult. I wanted to find a North Carolina thread manufacturer. I wanted it to all be North Carolina cotton. No one would do it. No, no spinner in the United States anywhere was willing to do it for me. And I really really worked finding it. Finally YLI contacted a company in Peru. So we had our first thread done in Peru. And that it was finished up here. So it was kind of two stages.

And then the finisher we had here went out of business. And so we had all this Peruvian cotton thread and we're still drawing from the first load we had done. And then, Jim Miller again was at another symposium and he ran across Ferbatex which developed scan-fill thread, a very small spinner in Holland. And they put out 34 colors. And well Jim and I worked out what colors we thought needed to be out there, and then they took our advice. And they took our advice and came out with this range of colors. And so I'm now their North American distributor. But they don't have distributors in any place else. So I sell it all over the world. Except in Europe itself. I refuse to have it sent over to me from Holland and send it back again. There's just putting too much carbon back into the product that way.

So I sell to Australia, New Zealand, and South America and North America and Africa... Asia. Whoever.

Finally, can I ask what advice you have for those who are interested in getting into the industry? Especially in Raleigh or the North Carolina area.

Yeah, North Carolina – I think there’s a growing surge to use North Carolina cotton. We did finally, I say we because it wasn’t just me, but Eric Henry and a group called Cotton of [the] Carolinas – Eric Henry put it together. Manufacturers from the “dirt to the shirt” is their motto -of local and also organic. He convinced a farmer to make organic cotton. Or to grow organic cotton. So my, the first crop of certified organic cotton came out in 2012, 2011 or 2012 – I bought a bale of it and I still have it. 450 pounds of organic cotton that were hand-spun. But getting involved in that, there is – yeah you’d be the cutting edge of everything. And I think a lot more of that from the dirt all the way through manufacturing could be done here. Right now it’s only t-shirts, but it could be anything. And I think getting, you know, partnering with all the people that Eric already has set-up there and getting some new designs out like that, could really really grow.

So find a niche where there isn’t any other competition. You got it all to yourself - you’re gonna have some success. It’s just a matter of building awareness and putting yourself out there.

Subject B

Subject B is well versed in the apparel design and manufacturing industry, having partner-owned a company in California. The subject intends to become a larger force with a future brick and mortar store in downtown Raleigh.

I would like to ask you to describe what entrepreneurship means to you.

You started with a hard one. I guess I don’t really consider myself an entrepreneur. That’s, to me you know - I’ve been in business, this is my second business, so I’ve been in

business for myself... for off on and on for six or seven years. And the word entrepreneur seems to be something fairly recent, it's a word that comes up frequently, more recently. I consider myself a small business owner. And an artisan. I don't really consider myself an entrepreneur.

As a small business owner can I ask where the interest and passion began for your textile business?

Well I sort of fell into it honestly. You know when I was a teenager I had an interest in making clothing, designing clothing, and then I sort of... took a long break from that while I was going to university. And my original passion was painting, actually, so I went. My goal was to have a life as a working artist. And I went to art school for a while. And then, I don't know, life sort of took me in a bunch of different directions. And I ended-up working for a retail art store doing management. And I was really unhappy. And one day I just decide that I wanted to combine my love for painting and my love for textiles, and start doing surface design. So I don't know where I got this idea, it just occurred to me that that's what I wanted to do. And less than a month later I had found a job working for a woman who made hand printed silk scarves. And I worked with her for I think two-and-half years. And I ran production for her. I learned how to dye and print on fabrics. And around that same time I met my friend [REDACTED]. And she was designing clothing and we just naturally just started working together.

So we put together a five piece collection, which was tiny. And we sent out photographs and line sheets to about 20 stores. We got on CitySearch, because Yelp wasn't around back then. And we found stores that we thought might work for our line. And we sent out line

sheets and photographs and we got one call back from a woman who had six stores. And she was this kooky French lady. And she asked us to come down to LA because she was going to be in a trade show in LA, and meet with her there. And we did. And she placed an order for \$30,000 worth of jackets.

And you know, I think we were just sitting there kind of shocked. And she said: contact my office we'll give you a deposit. And she gave us, not usual in the business, but she gave us a deposit and that's what started our business.

And within four years we had grown to, signed to 60 stores around the country. And it was just, it was a real rollercoaster, and sort of learning as we went. Because neither one of us had industry experience or anything. I mean we knew how to make clothes and we knew how to design. But all of the other parts of the business were completely new to us.

And then I got really burnt out. And I... basically... my business partner/best friend bought me out of the share of the business. And I spent two years working for a fabric importer and wholesaler. And then we moved here and I started my second business.

What led you to start your business here?

I think the passion, or the bug, just never really left me. And so... the cost of living is a little bit lower here, and I figured that I might be able to make it work. It felt like an opportunity to re-visit... something that I loved to do. And the goal was to do it in a little bit different way, to focus more on retail than on wholesale. And keep the business smaller and not get to that crazy hectic level that we were at with the other business.

And how would you say that Raleigh has embraced you? Or the community?

Yeah, I would say it's definitely, there's definitely a very enthusiastic community here and people. I think people are really proud of Raleigh. They're proud that there are people starting businesses here. And they want to support people that are doing that. I've definitely felt that.

And specifically when it comes to textiles?

That's a little trickier I think, just because there's not the... I don't know what you'd call it, a critical mass of people doing what I'm doing. Like when I moved here, really it was Raleigh Denim, and that was it; and me. And then a lot of students and people kind of at that level. It didn't seem like, I mean maybe there were a few other people, but they were sort of scattered all over. And it's really hard to kind of, you know, it's not easy to identify who all these people are.

I think there's a lot of interest in more people having textile-based businesses here. There's definitely, you know I've talked to people from the College of Textiles, from the design department and NC State and Meredith. And all of them want to see more opportunities for their students who are graduating. But so far it doesn't seem like that has translated into a concrete change, and you know, the number of people designing clothing businesses here.

Any reason why you think? But you've witnessed growth?

Yeah for sure, there's Lumina, you know Symbology, there's people coming up who are sort of... I've definitely seen an uptick in people starting these kind of businesses. I think it's, you know, it's two-fold, or maybe more than that. Just in general it's a hard business to be in. It's really competitive and it's a really tough business to be in. It's hard to make it in the

clothing industry, just in general no matter where you are. And Raleigh doesn't have a lot of the resources that if you lived in L.A. or New York, or even in San Francisco where I lived... you know, I could go, there was a place in San Francisco I could go to buy sewing machines, patten paper, thread... all I had to do was drive across the Bay Bridge 20 minutes and go grab some more pattern paper. And there's nowhere like that here. You have to order it. And there's not any real fabric outlet. I mean you're stuck with JoAnn's or Hancock. I mean most of the fabric I buy is from New York, from jobbers in New York. Or from the company I used to work for in California. So it's shipped from China to California and then from California to me, you know which is not ideal. And especially when you're picking fabric you want to be able to be somewhere and touch and feel it. So all of those things, they don't seem to be very, oh and grading services and that kind of thing... those things don't seem very significant but when you add up all of those little, you know – hurdles. It sort of just makes it more difficult.

And the biggest one I think is, it's not like there's a bunch of places to have your stuff made around here. So I'm still having, the bulk of my stuff is still made in California. And that means shipping things back and forth. It means really, longer lead times, it means... more complications during production because there's gaps in understanding between me and the person who's sewing. So things go wrong. Right now I'm dealing with a quality control issue where some of the stuff that was made for me in California is defective. So we're shipping things back and forth across the country trying to get it worked out.

And that would just be a lot simpler if there was somewhere here that I could physically go to and easily. And have them produce my stuff. So there's all of that and I can see if

things keep going the way they're going, maybe that's going to be different in 10-15 years. But a lot of these small designers, without the sort of support, are going to, they're not going to make it for 10-15 years. That's a long time to keep, you know, sort of pushing away at this.

So it's challenging and I come into it with a little more experience and, and I do have contacts from my time in California. I have people that I can use there to do my production. I already know jobbers in New York and I have a lot of friends all over the country who are designers that I can reach out to. But a lot of these folks don't have those things. You know, if you are just getting out of school you don't have any idea of where to start really.

So two questions from this then: would you like for your production to take place here in Raleigh?

Oh yeah, I would love that. I mean I'm working on how to hire somebody because I can't see any way else, see any other way. I'm sure that's why Raleigh Denim are doing their production in-house. I mean I don't know them, but I'm assuming that's why they're doing it because they probably couldn't find anybody to sew for them. They had to make their own factory you know.

And then the other aspect of things, when you were talking about students coming out and just getting started, and not having a clue... what kind of advice or what do you think is important when it comes to academia and educating designers? Because they learn the design aspect but then are clueless on the business.

Right. Well yeah, like I had a friend who graduated from a, and it's not just limited to Raleigh, she graduated from a program in California and she did it the right way. Went to

design school, graduated, and she would call us all the time asking us how to do stuff because they don't teach that. They don't teach how do you find a manufacturer, you know, how do you make spec sheets, how do you, you know... a lot of stuff I don't even know. What kind of sewing machine is right for which kind of stitch or fabric. I mean I know what I know. I know how to do what I've learned how to do, but... and then there's the business side of it which I think that's the biggest misconception I've come across. Because I've talked to a lot of people who are coming out the school, and they'll call me or email me and ask me for advice. And I think the biggest misconception is that it's primarily a creative endeavor... and it's really not.

I mean there is creativity to it, and you are, you know you're getting to design for a portion of the year. But I think... what they don't realize is that most of your time is going to be spent dealing with the business end of things. You're a small business owner, you're not an artist.

How would you say that you've been received in Raleigh? Through your business and your interest in being part of...

Ummmm... I don't know. I think that people mostly have been very welcoming and very, you know, they seem very excited. I haven't had any negative responses, that's for sure.

I ask because, beginning my studies I understand this used to be a textile state, and then for many different reasons a lot of the business and manufacturing facilities closed. But there seems to be an emergence in the local Raleigh area. But as you were saying that's just something recent and it's still slow and steady in terms of its growing.

Well I guess you know, I mean, in my attempts to find someone for example to manufacture for me here... people do seem very excited. But the biggest hurdle I've found is that the companies that are here or the manufacturing that is here... they don't really, I think they're just looking for someone that's looking to make hundreds of t-shirts. They're not, when it comes down to the nitty gritty of it... small independent designers like me, we have to have like a little bit of a diverse – we don't have to – but this is how it's been done and I don't know – I guess there's a couple schools of thought. I guess is what I'm trying to say. But the school that I come from is... you're producing a small amount of a diverse range of products. So you're not just doing t-shirts. You're doing separates and dresses and jackets. And you're marketing those items to small boutiques who may buy a size run of maybe two maybe four different styles. So it doesn't amount to a whole lot. So where you get the volume is, maybe you get 10, 15, 25 boutique owners to buy that amount. Then all of a sudden you have something that you can produce. But you're still producing a broad range of products. You're not just producing t-shirts. And with each product, if a manufacturer just wants to make one thing and you're bringing them your line and saying: I need you to make six different styles or 15 different styles, but it might be 25 or 50 of each one – they're going to roll their eyes at you. That's the response... I mean they don't actually roll their eyes at me... but I think that's where it becomes difficult because they look at that and see: well that's not profitable for me.

And they're also charging an hourly rate which is, you know when you come from California that's totally unheard of to me. I've always paid per piece I've never paid per hour. Certainly not \$25 an hour. Which, I mean I don't know maybe they price it out like that

because they're working with a small designer and they feel like they need to charge more in order to make money producing for someone like me. But it doesn't make sense for me financially. If my ladies in California charge me \$13 an hour to make a shirt. And making the same shirt here in North Carolina will cost me \$30, what am I going to do? I'm going to choose to produce in California, even with the shipping it's still cheaper.

So what do you think it would take for individuals here to... to match I guess, the manufacturing, prices and...

I mean I don't know. I would love to sit down in a round with some manufacturers. I'm sure that they come with those prices, you know that they're not coming up with them from nowhere. But I think that just based on, when I'm looking how to price out my products, if I'm paying that much for my manufacturing – that's pushing my product into a totally different price range. It's switching me from this sort of middle range that I'm in now... I'm not super cheap, but I'm not a luxury brand either. I'm in the middle. My prices are between \$50-300. And most of them are in that \$100-150 range or \$180. Retail. And if I'm paying \$30 to produce something, that's going to push my price point up and

I'm gonna lose all my customers and I'll have to try to appeal to a totally different customer base. So there needs to be some kind of... some kind of negotiation. I think they'd have to kind of change what they are... if people want to have manufacturing businesses in the state they want to employ people, they have to pay attention to that.

If they want designers like me to be producing with them, be their customer, and... yeah I don't know what the answer is. But it's definitely difficult. It's difficult.

I don't think that the answer is... I don't make any concessions and they totally change their business model. Which is sort of what it's sounding like I'm saying. I'm just saying that it's not sustainable for me to pay that much to have my stuff, my goods produced. It doesn't work for my business model.

Kind of time will tell I suppose. What do you, what would you say an organization like Redress Raleigh is doing for the local textile community?

I think they've done a lot of really great things. And first and foremost just kind of bringing... putting a light on the conversation. Bringing the conversation into, out there. I think that's starting the conversation is what I'm trying to say. They're starting a conversation. And, I mean they've been incredibly supportive of me which I'm so appreciative of. And I kind of see them as being... they want they really want to be partners in sort of changing the landscape in Raleigh for designers.

Do you think you see that, amongst other things, encouraging people to come to the Raleigh are because of the cost of living, because of... is there an opportunity for growth?

I don't know if I know enough about, if I have that broad of a view to know if that's true or not. I mean I would imagine it's at least at a minimum encouraging people to stay here. Students that are graduating out of the programs that are kind of seeing that there's support for them if they want to stay here.

And this is circling back around, but for those – because you shared your story about how you got lucky in the beginning of things – but in terms of advice for those who are entering into the industry. When it comes to capital or even just... where do you start?

Yeah, I would say the biggest thing that I, or biggest mistake that... or if I was going to do it all over again, I would do differently. Is that I would really spend the time to write a business plan and really kind of delve into... I'm not a good planner, a long term planner that's not something that comes naturally to me. I just usually start doing and see what happens. So I've been working with a mentor for about a year now trying to develop some of those planning skills. And I think this really helped a lot.

So if I was going to start from scratch, and what I always say to people is write a business plan. Don't do anything until you do that part of it first. It's not fun. I always, it's one of those things where you feel like tearing your hair out. It's not a fun process, but I think it's a necessary process. And yeah, if you always can work for somebody else, that's a good thing too.

And, you know I also think that just knowing, just be really honest with yourself about how much you want it. Because it is a hard road to walk. It's not... an easy process.

And finally since you do, you have that insight now. In terms of your growth, whether it's long term or for the next two years, what are pursuing for yourself? Or what do you have set as goals?

Well I'm in the middle of working that out, I guess for the next year or two. The goal is to get into a physical space, a studio slash storefront kind of space. And to solve this manufacturing issue. Whether that's hiring people to work in-house or going to New York and working with a manufacturer there... unless there's somebody in North Carolina you know...

That you haven't found?

That I haven't found yet. I think that's my best option. And then also my other goal is to continue to work on having a life work balance. Because that's something that has always been a challenge for me as well. So continuing to grow the business without losing my... without losing the rest of my life.

Subject C

So what I'd like to begin with is asking you how you would describe entrepreneurship.

I started out as a jewelry designer. And found a collective we call the [REDACTED]. We all used to work together for, under a jewelry designer, as apprentices. And decided to start doing local shows together. And we were so successful at kind of branching out to the community. Like we, first started out with the Boylan ArtWalk. It was mind blowing how well received it was. We were like: why don't we do this all the time.

So we would do every show together... and there's seven of us you know, so sometimes people can be there and sometimes people can't. So it would always work where we would support each other's jewelry and set each other up. And then we decided to put on a local show called the [REDACTED], because we wanted more. So we do that twice a year.

And I think that was growing so much and doing so well and people asked: do you do this every weekend? And my sisters and I were talking about opening a business together, family business. And I was like: why don't I open a shop that sells local goods. So that is sort of how it came to be. Where they can sell here, but then we added – it's up to 60 artists now. So that's how it began. Because we were like why not have a shop every day?!

And then [REDACTED] had been working as a medical massage therapist. And [REDACTED] had studied Reiki and was studying to be a yoga teacher. And so we were like why don't we just form this together? And with the [REDACTED] it was across the board how many different artists there were. So there was a bath & body person who makes the most amazing stuff. So we got her to work here doing facials with her own products. So it kind of all melded together.

When it came to the initial space itself, what did you envision?

When we first started out we had a lot of dreams. Like coffee house, yoga studio... juice bar and luckily that, we came to our senses before we tried to open something that was 4,000 sq. feet. And brought it down. I didn't really know anything between running my own business as a jewelry business and doing this thing, compared to actually owning a brick and mortar shop. It was totally different.

And I didn't even understand something like price per sq. foot. And what that calculated into. So I'm very very glad that didn't work out for us. We were about to sign the lease on a 4,000 sq. foot space and they upped the price per foot, per sq. foot. I think like \$4 dollars and we were like: we better not do this, because this isn't what we budgeted. And then quickly found this spot that we have now.

And just between, we had a business loan for \$27,000. And we were like: we're rich!... But that wasn't true because I didn't understand electricity. Just putting the lights and even though it was pretty well lit, to come up to code, because this place hadn't been updated in over 20 years. And the laws had changed. So before we could open anything, just that alone was \$5,000. To make it green.

I'm very lucky that we didn't do what we were first thinking of doing. And actually most of the build-out was done by a good friend of ours that worked for Habitat for Humanity. And he did the construction in trade for massage. So we didn't actually have to give him any cash. It was like over the first three years, yeah, because he loves massages. Yeah, that worked out great.

But mostly it was us painting, and floor tiling. And... it took us four months just to redo the space before we got it open. Which we were thinking: well we'll open the next day, it's a coat of paint. And yeah, just pulling permits and getting all of that. And apparently massage is still considered adult entertainment... so you have to have - I think it's three licenses.

So that took time.

It took time for that. And then the retail. Just combining all these things together - I think we have six different licenses. Just to put it on. Which is also like what?!

So you had the initial vision which was to incorporate a lot. When it came to actually implementing or deciding on what you were going to bring into the store...

It was whoa. Even just...

You had to pair it down.

We had to pair it down and then... I had done a business plan. I had spent a year on it like really figuring things out. But even that, I mean that, even now I laugh at it like really? I think I read business for dummies or something like that. And I was like I've got this. I've been in business for years. But, it doesn't talk about permits and plans, and things like that. And first we hired an interior designer, thinking she could do the blue prints for the space. But you can't go to the city with blue prints from an interior designer. It has to be an architect

who's licensed in business. And so that was \$3,000 that we lost like that. But we loved the floor tiles because that was her idea. But it was just like whoa. We learned a lot so quickly.

So it took a while to go through all of that before we could even get to the vision. We're open!

So once you did have everything in order, because there's different retail aspects to your store to your business. When it came to textiles – how and why did you decide to incorporate them? And which ones?

I love, I've always loved Judah Ross. Which is Oami Powers. Her stuff is amazing and I think it took me two years to even get in the store. Because when you're starting out like that, you can't really afford to do anything but wholesale to keep your records going. So we're consignment mostly. We've been trying to shift more to wholesale. But I think it's kind of a risk for textiles. Unless you know the company and you can afford to do... because basically you're just giving someone your goods with no money guaranteed. Unless it sells.

So I think after a while she was like: okay they're doing okay, let me try a couple of things. And then it started going much better. And then we started having trunk shows with her, which are always fantastic.

So she was one I wanted right away.

Flytrap who is Jody Cedzillo, I knew would be great in here. And she has been. I think since she has started selling here she has been the number one seller every single month. She and Monica, who does the bath and Ablutions fight. They go back and forth, but... yeah I think it's the cost and the quality that people really like; the originality of her designs. And

same with Judah Ross, you can look at it on a hanger but if you put it on – it's, you have to buy it. Which is another reason we have the trunk shows.

They were the beginnings definitely. There's, I used to do shows around the country, so it was not necessarily local when we first started. So we had Red Prairie Press which is out of Baltimore, which I loved their designs too. And then I Heart Fink. I don't know if you've seen her stuff... she does her own patterns and screen prints her own material. But it's goorgeous and it's very unique. So I think when we opened I was just looking for something really different that nobody else had. Or you know, that Raleigh just didn't have.

I think the beginning was with people who had done the [REDACTED] before. It was kind of my inspiration because we have to jury it every time we have it. There's usually over 100 applications, so I would find people who might not have been voted into the show with all seven: 'but I love they're stuff. When I open a store I'm going to use this person's card and contact them.'

So when it comes to the design of your store itself, how do you choose to incorporate textiles? Just based on location within the space?

Yeah, based on location within the space, I wish we had more. We've tried a few different artists but I get kind of picky about the quality, especially if it's a screen printer. We tried doing like a local person, I won't name names, but it wasn't great quality and it wasn't a great quality t-shirt. And they just kept coming back. And they kept getting returned cause somebody would give it as a gift and they wouldn't like the way it felt. Or it didn't wash right or that sort of thing.

I really like working with artists who, who are really thinking about the quality of it. A lot of the artists will use American Apparel or Next Level, which are soft and feel good but they run a little bit small. So you kind of have to know what the next size up, if you're thinking this or that.

And then the design has to be really unique for a screen print, because we also tried doing another local artist who does more graffiti stuff and it didn't it just didn't sell here. So it's just, I don't know the customers...

It had to fit.

Yeah and it's been more involvement with the community. Like, I know somebody who does this and I think it would be great here. And so sometimes word of mouth will get someone in here.

We had an artist from Texas for a while that just made A-line skirts, but they're adorable. But it was a college roommate of a friend of mine who lives in Texas and has five kids. So she, she was selling great. But then I think the kids got a little bigger and she you know, got overwhelmed. But it's usually dictated by the community. If something isn't going well, we have in our contract that if you don't have a single sale in three months – just come get your stuff. I mean we'll try it, but if doesn't sell – just here you go. You know, no hard feelings.

On that note, have you noticed anything about the local textile community in Raleigh?

Whether it has grown? Or whether...

Yeah, I think definitely, well Raleigh Denim is a huge success. I think Redress Raleigh too... it seems like they're growing and really kind of keeping the movement strong.

There's a new company that I haven't gotten in the store yet. I haven't actually talked to. But I think they're called Mindful Supply. And they... only use North Carolina cotton and make their own sweatshirts, t-shirts, and things. And then they screen print them locally. And they're really simple designs right now. But one of our best customers bought a hoody at the [REDACTED]. And I've seen her seven times since the [REDACTED] and usually she's dressed-up and looks fantastic. She's been in that hoody every single time. And I was like I need to find if they can do consignment. Because I was like, she loves that hoody! And I think it's just got a pink North Carolina on it. But it must be the way it feels. She's always in it. I'm like oh my gosh, I gotta check out this company.

But I do like that all of the artists that we sell here are really trying to stay local. Or try to stay in the United States if they can afford to do that.

Is that something you like to promote in your business?

It is, yeah... yeah, like Flytrap and her scarves – she started having someone cut them locally. And then she's stamping them made in North Carolina. And people love that, you know, they wanna know that it's from their state. And also sending it to other people. We have a lot of customers that will say: haha California, and this is from North Carolina. So there's definitely a sense of community and supporting essentially the US and knowing it's not made in a sweatshop somewhere.

What part do you feel that you get to play, just in the community here?

I think it's kind of connecting everything together. Like we had a show not that long ago called the Mash-Up. Where it was the artist working with other artists completely out of their skill level. So Oami from Judah Ross worked with a lady who makes the stuffed animals.

And they made dresses and t-shirts that were basically... the artist who makes the stuffed animals like a comic strip. But Oami designed it and drew everything out and then made this beautiful dress out of her idea.

And it went back and forth like a local sculptor who works at the science museum that restores all of the animals, made tiny sculptures for jewelry. And it was like little trophy heads with the lady who makes like, peapod necklaces.

So I think it's a good connection or a base where people can either work together or get inspired. I mean everybody seems to be like – I want to make something now. After they walk through here, which is always nice. But I try to keep it for, because I've heard so many times for working shows that I don't wanna hear somebody say: oh I can make that. I want it to be like, oh no you can't! I want it to be something that you haven't seen before.

So that's kind of how I curate the show.

Bringing people together from different mediums.

Yeah... and when we do First Fridays too, I try to feature one of the artists in here. Cause visual artists get to have openings and receptions, so I try to do that with somebody in here like – this is the new handbag that she made and let's celebrate that. So I've been getting to the point where I'm doing two artists at a time, so everybody gets to have a night.

But, yeah it does seem to be a good connection for the community. And helping other businesses too, like Visual Art Exchange and connecting people, like to Artspace if there's classes.

How do you think, obviously you guys get to play a role in the community, how do you think other individuals in Raleigh foster creativity in different mediums – but specifically within textiles?

Well there's Kim, I always say her name wrong. It's not Kershine. She does beautiful silk scarves. And she kind of started off small. And I think I met her because we had a hospice charity fundraiser and she just donated a scarf. And then she came in and started meeting different artists. And now she's selling, I think at like five different shops around town with her scarves. And really really getting into it.

So I think it's, people just need somewhere to go, you know, with their – how do I start and how do I begin. And then there's basic steps I think... like making connections, doing shows and doing some of the, like the runway show that... what is it called? That SPARKcon puts on. That's always a good thing to get connected there. Cause I think that kind of lets everybody know where you are. And...

That you exist?

That you exist. And it seems like everybody starts by doing shows. Like the [REDACTED] or the ArtWalk, and it kind of builds up until they can start their own business.

And what about the Raleigh downtown area. Have you seen a growth in terms of business and vitality or has it been stagnant?

Yes, when we first opened there were, I think there were like three great restaurants. And Stitch was here. Which is Holly Aiken's handbag shop. She and I used to work together years ago in a coffee house... It was like all these old coworkers of mine were starting

businesses down here. But it was like she and I for a while for retail. Like you go there, because we get a lot of tourists because of the convention center. So they were like: what else should I see? And I'd be like Stitch. And she'd probably say [REDACTED].

And then, since then, for the handmade community – DesignBox opened-up a shop in the front and... let's see there's Deco Raleigh now. There was Gather but it didn't last very long. But there's so many new shops. Like it's, there was no retail, it was restaurants. Great restaurants, and more restaurants coming in. But there wasn't a lot down here to spend people. And now we have a map. And now we circle things.

So I think downtown is growing by leaps and bounds. And I think it's spreading out.
Any sense as to why?

Why downtown's growing so well? I think there's a lot more here.

A good friend of mine who moved here, I think it was from Arkansas... it was like seven years ago, was so excited to live in a big city. And she came downtown and she was so sad because there was nothing here. And there really, the only thing I think I ever came downtown for was Father & Son. The furniture store. And it really has grown so much. And... there is a lot to do now.

I had a cousin in town, I think like two years ago. And I hadn't been walking around at night in a long time, and I was like: what is happening, where are all of these people coming from? It was amazing. And then a marching band came down the street. And Raleigh Times was slammed. And that was one of the first restaurants that came in. And I was like – whoa Raleigh has a night life downtown.

Yeah, cause it seems like it was kind of spread out ready everywhere. Like, you know, you didn't really come downtown unless you needed something specific. And now it's definitely... people will come down for an event. Like the blue grass festival that was here was huge. And it seems like there's always an event downtown, that like we make jokes about: them opening Fayetteville Street so that they can close it every weekend... But there's something always going on.

So I think there's a lot more planning and it's more accessible. And it is, I think people who did start businesses showed other people – wow that's going okay, you know I could do it too. I think that keeps growing and growing. And there's a lot of help here with the figuring loans and how to – and with the pop-up shops now too – I don't know if you noticed that. Like empty spaces are letting people take shops from time to time, to try to just get the word out about them.

Do you know who's behind that or...

In the beginning I think it was Greg Hayden with Empire Properties that was, he was restoring the buildings down here, but then turning them into businesses. So he has Raleigh Times, Morning Times... he's got Sitti, Gravy, I think – there was Duck & Dumpling, but that's gone. The Pit. And then Ashley Christensen has Poole's, and came in. And I think they're battling for the most downtown.

But I think it was getting some of those, like Neomonde to open-up a restaurant downtown. And places that people already knew were great. Because we still hear all of the time that people are scared of downtown.

Really?

Really. And people are scared of Moore Square. So there's definitely, there was definitely a need to show people that it was okay to be down here. That it's not crazy and it's not scary. And apparently maybe it was at one time. I mean I hear stories about [what was] behind us was crazy, from people who had rented spaces before us in the past. But it's been fine the whole time that we've been here.

And they have the Downtown Raleigh Alliance. They have people that just walk around all day... that give you directions, they clean-up litter, they will help you get your car started if it's broken down. So they definitely put money behind: let's make it seem safe and... And it's definitely blossomed into a great city.

I was in D.C. in September, and every person I said – you know I'm from Raleigh – they're like: I'm gonna retire there. And I was like, really? Both my cab drivers said that, just random people on the metro. I was like, really? Raleigh? Because it still seems like, I've been here 20 years, but I still feel like: do people know what's happening here? But, but it's changed a lot.

It's on the radar.

It's on the radar for sure. I was like all of the cab drivers are going to move here. We'll get good cab service one of these days.

Let me ask you, obviously this has been a learning experience for you. And when it comes to the education system, how do you think within textiles and crossing over into other mediums for the creative-minded, because businesses isn't always highlighted. What would you hope to see in future academic programs?

I definitely think, cause it is – I think it is hard for a creative person – to understand QuickBooks. It's, I feel like it's two different parts of your brain. But some you know, can. But I've tried to give a couple of artists lessons and I felt like I was going to get punched in the face. Because you really do have to do this. Like, you have to do this. And they're like: no I don't, there's gotta be a way around this. And I was like, no really this is what you have to do.

It's boring data entry, but you have to do it. And they're like: there's gotta be a simpler way.

So I think there should be a class on the basics of accounting, sales and use tax, or... just basics of what you're going to have to go through. Because I was shocked. I really thought that when we opened, I would be making jewelry and doing window displays all day long. And that is not it at all. It is like, checking inventory and doing reports on what sold. And then, you know, quarterly reports. But I make sure every day that I have time for doing something creative as well. But I think I stopped making jewelry year one of the business because I didn't have time.

So, but just recently we hired employees of the store who love QuickBooks and data entry. So that's really helping a lot. So I'm finally gonna try, I went to school for fine art. So I'm finally going to try to have my own art show here.

But I thought – oh I'll have one like once a year. I've never had a show here. So that, there is a side to that. You really do have to understand business. And I don't think that I was prepared. Even though I owned my own business. Like I understood sales of use, but it was definitely a lot more loose than having a brick and mortar shop.

But yeah, I definitely think we have the creative side covered with Penland. I think we're so lucky to have the design school at NC State and more classes and things like Penland. And I think that's great. But I think there has to be a business side to that. And I think places like Ornamentea - I don't know if you're - she's actually done classes where she explains how to run a business. Which I think is helpful.

And one, a book that we're published in a couple of years ago, is called Handmade to Sell... it is all about how to run your own business. Not necessarily a brick and mortar, but it helps - it is all about insurance and how to take care of yourself that way. And how to take a good photo if you're gonna have a good website. What not to do and that sort of thing.

I think there are people coming out with things like that. Like how to do this, because I kind of feel like the momentum of it can be just kind of slowly hit. And it was great. And everybody was like wow this is wonderful and there are so many shows around the country. And then people started opening shops. And then realized: oh my gosh, this is not the same.

That would be good to see, basics, QuickBooks, things like that. That's what I wish I had learned. Although I had, another job I had basic QuickBooks training. But it was inventory, it wasn't like - oh you have to do payroll and you have to do...

Whole different ballgame.

Whole different ballgame. Yup. Two other people did other things there that I didn't touch. So, yeah, so it has been very educational.

Subject D

To begin with I would like to ask you to describe what you think entrepreneurship is.

Oh man. We're starting with loaded questions right off the bat. Oh okay. What I think it is.

Or what it means to you.

Okay. Well those are two different things I guess.

Then what it means to you.

Okay. To me, well those are kind of tied together. I guess the reason that I'm kind of not sure how to answer is because as part of my Master's degree I actually did take an MBA class. And part of the MBA class was related to managing the growth venture. Which is largely related to growing a business of some sort. I also took a PhD seminar on entrepreneurship, so both of those things were extremely informative. But they also somewhat changed my view on entrepreneurship.

So a lot of people feel like it's this person who's come up with some crazy new idea and they're gonna make a million dollars, sell the company, and that's all it is. But in all honesty most people who are technically entrepreneurs, which to me is just starting your own business – aren't doing anything super unusual. And they're not necessarily intending to sell the business for millions of dollars.

I also don't think there's anything wrong with that. I think it's interesting no matter what - when you try to start your own business. Having done it now. It's tough even if there is a model there. And you don't want to sell it for millions of dollars. So, I don't necessarily think the focus on the high-end entrepreneur is to want to sell things for millions of dollars is, is what we should be focusing on in that particular field.

Now going back to your motivations for starting [REDACTED]. If you can share that story.

Sure. Okay. So... my motivations for starting [REDACTED]. I have always been passionate about both fashion and sustainability. I just never knew how to connect them. And through my work with the US Green Building Council, I ended-up at a conference where the New York chapter was talking about having had a fashion show that was eco-friendly. And I thought that was an amazing idea. So I wanted to do that down in North Carolina because I thought it would be fun, because I thought it would bring in new people into the green movement. But I didn't have the experience, so I found, with the two other founders of [REDACTED], to help with that... But we haven't been a business that long. We only became a business in 2012.

And the reason behind becoming a formal business is that, well there are a few. Some were just logistical and business oriented, like financial reasons. Like we were reaching the point where the amount of things that we were doing couldn't just be done by an amorphous organization.

...

So logically we needed to become a business. And then, I mentioned I had gone through a lot of changes in that particular time period. In 2009 I lost my architecture job. And then I worked in mainstream retail. And so by the time I went to get back my Master's at the College of Textiles, I really felt like Redress Raleigh is what I really wanted to do with my life. Or at least try it.

So my entire reasoning for going back to get the Master's was based on starting that business. So... I guess that's how it started. It kind of, it wasn't quite that linear. But that's how it started.

So your initial goals then, when the three of you came together, starting – not intentionally starting a business – but just saying: this is what we want to accomplish. How are we going to do it? How did you guys work that out?

Well, luckily the goals that were really in my head that I felt were missing from the Raleigh scene, really... what's the word, meshed with what [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] want too.

The impetus for the show, for the fashion show itself, was that we felt like that there was not a show that showed innovative fashion that was wearable, washable, and accessible. And those three weren't, or what we came up with in the beginning, and are still words we use today. Because to us eco-fashion needs to be, you know, something people can wear on a daily basis. It looks good. It can't be made out of newspaper. And then it can't cost \$800 for a sweater. That's just not going to work out.

So that was the impetus for the show. There was always kind of an underlying vision and, which is still there too. Which is being a catalyst for change within the fashion and textiles industry. I don't if we had ulterior motivations in terms of eventually turning into business. It was, it has kind of been this organic process of seeing what worked and not worked. And what's possible.

But the underlying being a catalyst for change has always been there from the beginning.

And initial obstacles that you guys faced. I imagine you still do, but what were the bigger hurdles?

Just, particularly with becoming a business or the organization in general?

Beginning with the organization and then going into the business itself.

Okay. Okay, so in terms of from the very beginning... some of it was trying to figure out if people even knew what we were talking about. Like we didn't know if people knew what eco-fashion was, green-fashion was. If designers even knew how to design that. We also didn't know how to find them.

So in the beginning we had a lot of students in the show. Now we've progressed into a lot more established designers in the show. And that's largely because we figured out how to find people. Like we've really built-up a network of people who know about us. Whereas in the beginning we started from nothing. Nobody knew this thing existed. They weren't sure what to think about it.

Are you saying strictly locally? Or nationally as well?

Not anymore. With the conference last year, we really, we received national attention for that. And we had speakers from around the country. So, we don't feel like we need to stay local for like, the designers and the show. Or the speakers we bring in. We obviously still want to focus on how North Carolina as a state has a thriving textiles industry. And the resources we have here. That always comes up in panel discussions and seminars that we have. But we want people to be seeing innovative, eco-fashion whether it's from here or Tennessee. Because we want to provide that platform.

Then leading into that, can I ask about how you guys have been supported locally? And then how you are able to support businesses and designers locally yourself.

Oh okay... how have we been supported locally? Okay... I think the main way we've been supported locally is just finding, like champions or people that are really excited about what we're doing. But they're not necessarily, like, you know high level people or something. I mean they're not necessarily the CEO of some corporation. It'd be like a group of students from NC State or AI or Institute in Raleigh-Durham, is very excited about what we're doing. And we partner with them a lot.

I will say that the mayor, of all people, has been extremely supportive for the past few years. And has introduced a couple of our shows. And that means the world to me to have someone, you know, who's in political office and changing the way things work in the city – to be like: what you're doing is cool. That just makes me feel a lot better about spending so much time and energy on something.

I wouldn't say there's a lot of support in terms of, like grants or loans or even competitions. Or things like that. But that's largely because of the business structure. So like I mentioned that kind of determines a lot of things.

So we're an S Corporation, we're not a 501(c)(3). And that has for someone reason caused some issues with both getting sponsors and getting any kind of grant. Which is kind of insane because it doesn't mean you make any money. Just because you're not a non-profit, doesn't mean you make a profit.

...

So, you know I think we would love to support local designers and companies infinitely more than we do. Just because we're so passionate about it. And we feel like we want to

grow this community so much that it's important to do that. There's only so much we can do obviously. Because we have limited resources.

So... we have done various things to see what works and what doesn't work. Like we were offering consulting for a while. But our designers aren't really at a level where they're able to afford something like that. And so we've decided that we would rather focus on events that are free to members. So we have a membership and something they've expressed over and over again is the opportunity to network and meet other people. And like, learn from other people's experiences. And we found that to be a lot more effective than offering one on one consulting, and things like that.

The other way we feel like we help support the local community is literally through the show. And all the marketing that goes into that. I mean last year the people who were involved, the designers in that show, had national exposure. I mean through the video that came out after the show, through all the pictures, through the people that attended. That's pretty impressive for all they had to do was apply. And that's it.

Can I ask how you think the Raleigh area fosters creativity and creativity in the industry specifically?

Okay. Sure...

Does it? Does it not?

I always have mixed opinions on that. I guess. So I think it does foster creativity in terms of the fact that there are creative people here. And that they're doing amazing things. Like all of the designers that we've worked with and even people in like, architecture or graphic design – different forms of design. I think there's a lot of creative people here... I do think a

lot of them are still struggling. Like most of them I knew who were in architecture have either moved or gone to a different field, or done something kind of totally different with their lives. Because that industry kind of died a bit in like, 2009.

And... and the fashion designers that we work with, pretty much all have a second job doing something else. I don't know that that's necessarily bad. I mean, I think that that's going to happen regardless when you have a business. There's a time period where there's overlap and you have to do something else to sustain yourself. But... and I've talked to, like the city manager- the new city manager and Mary Ann Baldwin, one of the City Councils, about this. The whole: it'd be nice if there were more grants, or more ways to find funding for people who are like [REDACTED]. Or people who are similar. That are literally like small business or start-up, that isn't going to be high growth, or high return investment. That is creatively focused.

What kind of response have you received?

Actually, Mary Ann Baldwin though and that... was agreeing with me totally. She's the one who brought that up. Because they have, like arts grants through the city. And she brought that up to me in the meeting. And I was like, do you have to be a 501(c)(3)? And that started the conversation going, that she thinks that they should open it up for others as well. So serving businesses that can prove that they're more of a social entrepreneurship kind of thing. That they're trying to do good while being in business.

Now going back to education, because when it comes to entrepreneurship - running your own business, and you actually are a graduate of the College of Textiles... What do you, how

do you feel about that whole process? Students who intend on going and opening their own business, but yet not having the skills. What's your insight into that?

Okay. Man I have so many thoughts in my head.

You can share them all.

Like I mentioned the way I did. The route that I took before my Master's degree was a little bit not what you were supposed to do. However I was really glad that I was able to do that. Because... if I had gone through a thesis, I think I would have regretted it. I did not realize going into the Master's degree that I wouldn't be able to do what I thought applied for. If that makes sense? Like you know, when you have an application and you have the essay and all of that stuff. And what I wrote in my essay had nothing to do with what my thesis became. Which is largely why I stopped doing it.

I, for some reason I feel like the College of Textiles Master's program is kind of young honestly. Like, they're still figuring some things out. Like what works with the students and what doesn't. Because one of the other things I really struggled with, which isn't necessarily related to entrepreneurship, but would have helped for the field that I'm now in. Is that there is no basic class for someone who is not coming from the textiles background to the textile background. Yeah. I don't know if that's changed.

But they apparently had one at a one point in time, because I found it in the – wherever you search for classes thing – but they don't have it anymore. And that, that was really tough. Because there's still some things I feel like I don't know that I wish I had been able to learn through the Master's degree.

Now in terms of entrepreneurship... So one of teachers I had, I feel like is a pretty well known in terms of entrepreneurship at NC State. And he's very opinionated on it. And in some ways I agree with some of the things he says. Because, I mean you could sit in a classroom all day and learn and talk about entrepreneurship. But it really doesn't matter until you're doing it. Like, I mean there's, I don't know if there's any way that I could've prepared for some of the things that have happened. Just because, like I mentioned – every business is different. The people who are in it are different. The things that you run into are different. The structure you choose is different.

What would have been good for me to do while I was there, was to be, to take more of an accounting class. Or some basic financial class. But... I didn't really think about that when I first entered the Master's program. It's just not something I thought I was going to do.

So that's the one thing that, in terms of entrepreneurship, I wish was there. Just the basic accounting stuff. But otherwise...

Within the College of Textiles? Or strictly within the school of business?

I'm sure it is in the school of business.

But would it be valuable?

I think it would be valuable for anyone who wants to be an entrepreneur, that doesn't have a financial background. I mean the, accounting and taxes and all of that is definitely the hardest part of the company. I don't know that, I mean I guess for me it's kind of funny for me to have an entrepreneurship class. I mean for me, even though I've taken – the seminar was more like discussions of papers and that was just interesting because it was different views on entrepreneurship – but I just think it's just funny, to like, what would you learn in

the class? Like how to be an entrepreneur. I don't, that idea just strikes me as kind of funny because it's not really for the faint of heart.

It's not something you can teach?

I mean you I think you can teach people how to successfully run a business. But if you don't have the passion for what it is you're trying to start, I don't know why you would ever put yourself through all of this. Like I really just don't know. I mean... if it's, I mean there are some people that maybe just want to start a business and sell it and make money. I guess. I don't know. But to me, like, I guess I'm one of the people who fell into being an entrepreneur or something like that. Because I was just very passionate about this idea. And it doesn't seem to exist elsewhere. So... I felt like I had to create it myself.

I don't know if you can teach it. That's like a whole nother like, that's pretty much what the PhD seminar was all about. So, it's like a way longer discussion.

*Now do you guys, is Raleigh, will Raleigh continue to be the place in which you grow?
Or what do you guys envision for the future?*

That's like the million dollar question right now.

It's the one that, you know I still think we're trying to work out what that is. What we realized over the past year, is that you really have to have a strong foundation before you start growing out. Last year was a very very very busy year. So... we would love to do things in other cities. But like I said, I think you have to have a strong foundation here before we start doing that. And I don't think that's established quite yet.

I have gotten interest from some other people, like Asheville is one that comes up a lot. And then Charleston would be amazing. Even Wilmington and that kind of stuff. But

figuring out the point of going to another city, because the other thing that we learned, because we did a show in Durham this past year. Was that... you need to be kind of careful about doing that. Like you can't, it's not one of those things at least in terms of that particular model, where you can say: hey we're coming to your city come see us. It's like you really need to get people more invested in it. Who live in that city.

So that was a learning experience that I'm hoping will be different this year. Because we do want to go back to Durham in the fall. But I would really like to get the people of Durham involved. Or like the sustainable blog which focuses on independent businesses in Durham. Because to me the point would be to showcase the fashion and textiles in that particular city. Not to be like, hey – Raleigh's bringing stuff to you. That's not the point.

So that's what I would say would be the tricky part and the part that we need to figure out. Yeah.

Subject E

So you were telling me about the start of [REDACTED].

So it was, basically figuring out a way to... have conversations with people in Raleigh about the opportunities downtown. And me and a friend had been throwing ideas back and forth. We were looking more towards a blog, or website, or something like that. And we were like we just don't have the means to do that. And so in other conversations outside of that, I realized that a map that we use in design school –that is very interesting and unique and abstract – was a really easy way for me to talk to my parents about opportunities in downtown.

And then we realized that it's beautiful. And so we figured out, well how could we, what could we do, like basically do to learn by doing.

And we learned that something simple like t-shirts was a simple way to kind of publically put ourselves out there. And be able to have conversation. And for our time, see if people were interested in this as a good. And then we would receive money.

And then if like anything, we didn't set-out to create a t-shirt brand or anything like that. It was more so just a medium to have our conversation, and to make money while having that conversation.

...

And so we played around. Went to a local arts market downtown. Rented 75 tees. And people loved them. You know, we made about \$1,000 bucks in a night. And we were like, oh, wow.

...

So we just kind of, I was still in grad school, my friend was working. So just kind of nights and weekends. Doing research and learning about e-Commerce, and learning about sourcing, and other products and printing. And all this other stuff. Not knowing our ass from our elbow.

And we never had more than one or 200 hundred shirts in stock ever. You know, we took a trip up to a market in New York and somewhere else, just to see. And we realized that there's a lot more out there than we thought.

And it's funny how this was only three years ago, but two-and-a-half years ago. But it just... the access to information was so different then. And the...

How so?

The resources. Everything from e-Commerce sites to... just communities of people that, of ways to find out about all the things that are happening or doing. Like different sales channels online. Like so many things have come online in the last two or three years, that totally...

Didn't exist?

Yeah. That didn't exist.

And so it's just, everything from things like Fab.com and flash sales. Like these channels that allow someone who has a few products that people like, to just generate enough revenue to do something with it.

And so have you taken advantage of them?

Yeah. So I have. So, so I was still in school and two semesters later, like the following summer, my friend didn't want to continue. And so he kind of just took half the cash and left. And so I was like, well I'm not just gonna continue, I need some direction.

So I did a Kickstarter project. Threw it out there. Let the crowd decide. And ended-up raising close to \$40,000k. And promised like 15 or 17 cities. We already had a library of cities, but we didn't have the means to produce them. So we offered a lot of products, a lot of cities, and... fulfillment was a bear. I had no resources, no one to talk to through all of this. It took me two months to fulfill everything. To manage all of the postage, and shipments, and printing. I was doing it all out of my apartment.

Here in Raleigh?

Yeah. And I have some pictures that are just ridiculous of that. And, and so you know, this was I guess about two years ago.

And so in December of 2011 I launched, from all of the leftover excess inventory, I launched the e-Commerce site. Did great that holiday. But then after that, after Christmas I was like: this is not what I want to be doing. This is not why I went to school. So I kind of went back to other projects that I'm interested in. And so that's when I actually installed the, the [REDACTED] signs.

I don't know if you've seen those at all? But it's like minutes by foot rather than miles by car.

Only vaguely through your website.

Okay. And so it was just this simple kind of conversational piece. To say hey, it's not too far to walk places in Raleigh. As we're starting to live closer together, there's gonna be less room for cars. And there's gonna be need - to be more room for people.

What do you mean by as we continue to live closer?

Raleigh. And cities in general. More people live in cities now than they ever did before. So people are starting to live closer and closer together, than they have over the last 50 to 60 years.

...

It was just a simple kind of conversation. And I guess all of my approaches have been very simple in delivery. And so I hung the sign and ended-up, a resident loved it. Shared it with Atlantic cities, part of The Atlantic publication, put it on the front page. BBC reached out. BBC came to town. All this commotion. They were you know, they were illegal so the

city had to take them down. But then people threw their hands-up because the city took them down. Because they were like: why'd you take them down? This is great. So they figured out a way to put them back up.

...

I gifted the signs to the city. And they were able to put them back up. And assume liability for them.

And then since, since then it's just been this crazy rollercoaster of ins and outs, and ups and downs. Till finally, the past six/seven months I've been working on [REDACTED] full-time.

But, but you know the first sign went up in January of 2011. And that was right after I launched my website for the e-Commerce site for [REDACTED]. And so I was still in school, but I continued working on [REDACTED]. Added some products, added some cities. You know made enough from things like Fab, and these other flash sales sites and stuff like that. To put this together, to you know, pay myself a little bit. Cover expenses. And I've, you know I've traveled a little bit, gotten myself into some of these more national conversations about how cities are growing and evolving with, as cultures and values change or shift. And... and then a year ago, after the e-Commerce site had been up for a year. And as [REDACTED] was still just a project, that was still continuing to get attention and resonate across the globe really. People mimicked it and I don't know how many different countries, 30 or 40 different countries.

And we threw a template up online so people could kind of re-create them and re-mix it. And they loved it. And it was until this year that I realized through BlueCross and through the city, that there could be greater demand for something like this.

But I tried hiring someone a year ago to kind of run [REDACTED] and take it into new markets. Like into, I saw a large demand for them in the wedding market, as wedding gifts. And then also things like hotels. Like larger distribution channels that value unique art and, and would be consumers at a larger scale.

Because I can't, I can't even remember the last time I printed t-shirts. I think I printed t-shirts the last time, a year ago. The t-shirts were, you know I had 17 cities, men's and women's, different colors and it – it just was such a nightmare logistically to try and manage that. And the margins don't make any sense. People don't want to pay any money for t-shirts. And when you have t-shirts that are very specific to a place, then your market is very small.

And I didn't know anything about that when I set-out. I didn't, you know, have any idea what I was getting myself into.

So I've really waned down on the t-shirts. And I basically...

And canvases as well?

Well the canvases are made on demand. So if someone orders one, I produce it. And the totes have no mark-up, you know, no margin. And I have to order such large quantities, it wasn't, it's something great. People love it. When people see it in person they love it. But it does not sell online. It's so hard, people buy it because they see someone else has it.

...

So I've... I'd say 99% automated everything. I deal with customer service inquiries, which is maybe a dozen a week, maybe a little bit more. And then... and then I also work with the logistics company. They have all my inventory. And I send two emails a week with orders. On Wednesday night and Sunday night. And then they pack however many orders there are, of basically prints and the remaining totes. And ship it out.

...

And so I, so I kind of was fairly thrown off. So I had to spend two or three weeks figuring out how to automate everything. And getting shipping pallets and get huge flat files for all of the prints. And so I rent a truck and bring it all over to the logistics company.”

Are they based in Raleigh?

“In their warehouse. Yeah they're based in Raleigh.

But now that's said, I spent the time to get it organized. Now it's very minimal effort on my part. And so I now, now I might actually introduce a few more city prints. Because I have those channels set-up. And the prints I really like... they're not gender specific, they're not color specific, they're neutral. And they're much easier for people to wrap they're head around. It doesn't matter body style or size, it's very simple. And people know what a print is. And it's a conventional size that people can get a frame for.

As much as you want things to be interesting and unique and everything else, unless you're really connected to it – you need the path of least resistance.

So you want these things accessible as conversation starters then?

I mean it's great to have those conversations. I think people showing pride for their place is fairly, especially some of these smaller cities, is awesome. And it's a way, I see it as a way for people – when they hang them in their house – like they use it as a storytelling piece.

What people love about our maps, is that it's all the buildings. So you can literally tell a story through it. And you don't just have this piece of art. It actually has real data, it's place specific and to scale and everything like that. So you can really start to tell a story of the city through it.

And so that's why I think people have continued to really enjoy it. Because it is so unique in that aspect.

Just as an aside, how do you think your education/where you were initially during your studies, helped this idea grow?

Well at least behind the mission and all of the actions, was the kind of value set and design thinking that I gained in school, and the network that I built within the planning and urban design community. Kind of the sense and awareness and understanding of how these big systems work - that kind of make cities tick. And then tapping into really simple ways to kind of either disrupt, or impact those systems and communications.

And when it came down to the business of things, did you, was it all brand new to you?

Again I'd just say, kind of, from having an education in design, I think that really helped me grapple with a lot of unknowns. Not having best management practices, or set standards, or anything like that. Kind of shooting from the hip. And designing these systems kind of from the ground up. Definitely takes longer, but... you know, it also allows for there to be those moments of opportunity that you didn't expect.

Well and I ask you this because there's an issue of entrepreneurship education and, it's like, how can you really teach people to be entrepreneurs because it's just something that either they pursued for themselves or that they fall into. And it's like, how do you help people? But what curriculum can there actually be?

Yeah I think it's like if, if you are a master of any sort of domain then you have insights and understandings that other people don't. That can allow you take action on those opportunities that you see. I see that as real opportunity for entrepreneurial activity.

I kind of, I'm personally not a huge fan of all of these doing it to just do it. Like going and getting your MBA on entrepreneurship. I mean I see that as being, I think there's a huge benefit, but I think it's different. I think that those are the people who are trained to manage a little bit of risk and the perceived expectations of when they get out of school. And what they'll be doing is just different.

To me it seems, it just makes no sense, to kind of think yourself in a problem in an industry that you don't know that much about. I have to think that's one other reason why so many companies fail. Because they're not actually solving a problem that they, either they're not solving a problem, or they're solving the wrong problem. As opposed to what they think.

Now that's very generalized. Very generalized. But... I guess this is from my personal experience. That people that I see coming out of school that just want to start something but don't actually have any trajectory, any interests, seem to flail.

It's everyone who has a real interest. And has gained that interest. Whether it's through school. Or whether it's through professional experience or something – I can make that

better, I can create this new experience, or solve that problem. It's more of a pressure point for them versus anything else.

That's where mine have come from. Issues that I've seen in school. Frustrations with, you know, too wordy or verbose, like insular ideas within academia. That you're not sharing these values or opportunities with the general public. And that's what really, what a lot of my work has been around.

And getting back to Raleigh, because I've lived in different places, but there seems to be a North Carolina pride. And a sense of Raleigh pride as well. How do you think, have you seen the community grow in terms of supporting one another?

In the last six years it's a completely different place.

It is?

Completely different. Physically and kind of... communally. It's, people are much more supportive. There's a lot more connectivity between different industry interests. You know what I think is really neat is that people are really kind of rallying around place. Not just North Carolina, neighborhoods, cities, like even though people are very different – everyone still likes to drink, and eat, converse. And create fun and unique experiences in Raleigh. And I think that now the city is helping create an environment that more experiences and unique experiences can thrive and take root.

And so I think that there's a little bit more flow and cohesion now. It's still kind of a cluster, but at least people are aware of other people that are out there. Cause I know that when I was in school, that was not the case.

Everyone kind of now understands that we all kind of have to work together to make this place as great as it can be.

You've seen the growth?

Very much so. It's crazy, yeah.

And how do you get to support local business yourself? Or organizations?

Well more than I probably should. I've kind of volunteered a lot of time to help with, everything from strategic planning to task force, to you know participation. I will pretty much meet with everybody, even though I'm going to have to draw the line soon.

Well thank you.

And, and you know like offer insights, feedback, support. I think it's super healthy to support other people who have moved here, who are starting things, etc.

When you are in the entrepreneurial world there are serious ups and downs. And I can tell you that I would not still be doing anything in this world if I was still working out of my house. It just wouldn't have happened. I would have probably thrown my computer through the window.

Just because you go insane working by yourself in isolation. Because there's so many emotional ups and downs. And awesome and terrible, things that happen. That get thrown your way on a weekly or daily basis. And it's a lot of - it is just how you manage risk. So the more the people who can help alleviate those ups and downs. To keep a little bit closer to that kind of moderate level of comfort, you know, the better.

But it, me personally, I just try to support everybody. And if I see an opportunity to share some critique or to fix something, or improve it, then I will. But I think that, you know,

whether it's being naïve or idealistic – I guess I've just tried to remain positive about everything that's happening here. And support everyone that's trying to make Raleigh better.

Subject F

To start off I would like to ask you to describe what entrepreneurship means to you.

I think, you know, on the entrepreneurship side of things, for me at least it's doing what you love regardless of the risk that may be present. And then ultimately the goal is develop something that is of use in some way.

Whether that's for pleasure or some type of good, or for a combination of all of those things. But I guess there's two sides of it for me. The one thing it is certainly not. Which it's sometimes easier to answer questions that way. Is it's not an easy, I guess, path to what a lot of people think is wealth and fortune. And being well known and things like that.

That's definitely the exact opposite of what it is. Because it's the, you know, from our experience and from what we're doing – it's always slow and always the opposite of what you hope is going to happen. So I think that, more than anything you have to love it.

On that note can I ask how [REDACTED] came to be?

Sure. So I guess it's multi-tiered, several phases. We started the company when we were in undergrad. Myself and one of my roommates did. It was more of just a hobby at that point. I was making...

And you were studying.

I was in Architecture at State. And I just decided that I was going to make some neckwear by hand. And started doing that on the side. Kind of giving a few pieces away. I sold a few pieces. Just kind of for fun, someone who I really didn't know.

And then one of my roommates came to me and said: hey let's try to make a business out of this.

And so that was kind of the first phase I guess. Of the company. Was me just hand-making some neckwear. We started selling it online and growing it that way. And that lasted for a little while.

Our first, I guess, big transition was at the beginning of 2012. Kind of end of 2011, beginning of 2012. And so we, we basically did that through 2010 and 2011. We kind of kept it small. We grew in that time period, but nearly like we are now.

So had you always had an interest?

I've always had an interest in making clothing and fashion. I've always enjoyed being fashionable, I guess, as a person. But I never, like when I went to college, the thought of going into fashion and textiles never crossed my mind. That wasn't something that I thought I would do for a living. I actually really enjoy building and design, on that side of things. And so I actually started out as an engineer. And realized that I was much better at the design side than the technical side.

It was never really a plan to be in fashion. We, we just kind of took what we loved to do and started doing it on a little bit bigger scale.

Can I ask how you went about growing the business?

In the early phase, in kind of that 2010/2011 period, we really didn't do much. We had a little website of our own, we actually had an Etsy site at that point. We just kind of let it grow organically, word of mouth. We started doing quite a few weddings for people who wanted custom neckwear. So we were doing that on the side.

And then in 2011 I guess it was, we did start to do wholesale accounts with our neckwear. So we started introducing our neckwear in stores. And so that kind of aided in the growth of what it was at that point.

In the Triangle area?

In North Carolina. Yeah, we started a branch, kind of in that 2011-2012 transition, we started branching outside of North Carolina. The brand itself was evolving during that time frame. We were in that 2010-2011 very southern inspired. Not that we aren't now, but it was more of the fraternity, prep, bright colors – kind of that side of things. I would have lumped us into the category of southern proper, southern tide.

Well yeah, bowties are a very southern thing.

Yeah very. Luckily for us they've kind of come into vogue in other arenas now.

But yeah, so we kind of started out in that range of things. We were doing wholesale and then as we looked to 2012 we knew we wanted to add some new items to our collection. We were trying to figure out how we were gonna do that. Right at the end of 2011 we actually went to a trade show, a wholesaling trade show, and had the realization, the reality that we hated wholesale. And that we didn't really like the industry. Or that we weren't really fitting into the industry that we were in. Which is kind of the southern menswear market.

And so we came back from that. 2012 we started to re-orient the brand a little bit. Still staying true to the southern roots. But a little more modern. Doing things, that you know, those brands aren't willing – and started heading in that direction. Which is what set the trajectory for us in 2012/2013 and I guess now 2014.

Well now that you guys have a brick and mortar store, and even before then, how were you received by the local community?

Definitely better, anytime you have a physical, you know, footprint in a city – they tend to kind of accept you a little more. You've made some attempt to put down roots. Before that we were getting traction in the local area. But not nearly as much as we have since we opened.

We had some articles written, but people were still having to go online and purchase. At that point, kind of in that 2011/2012 we were completely online on our own site. Even if you were in Raleigh, people knowing that we were in Raleigh, you still had to purchase online.

So since you know, having something physical, where people can come in, see us and talk to us. Kind of all of those interactions, have improved the acceptance from everybody here in Raleigh and the Triangle.

What's your hope for Raleigh, here? Since you guys have set down roots here.

I mean Raleigh's on the rise as a city. And we see a lot of potential. We also see a void in the market for menswear. There, you know, we talk to guys who come in all the time and we say: hey when you think about where to go to shop, where are you going to go? And they always kind of sit there, and you know: I don't really know. There's nowhere that I would

really tell, if I had a friend and they were coming into town, and they wanted to go somewhere – there's nowhere I would say: hey you have to go to... you know - here.

So that's really the void we want to fill. Especially this year. In the past, like our physical presence has just been us. But we're expanding to include other pieces down there, like shoes and things like that. Here in Raleigh.

To give the guys, you know the brands that we associate with, kind of digitally with if you will. We're trying to bring a lot of those here to Raleigh. To give the guys locally something to kind of latch onto.

And how did you guys create those relationships? Is it just a matter of liking the products, or liking the individuals? How did you end-up working together?

A little bit of both. I mean we like the products. We really, our big goal at least, is that we never want to sell anything... obviously the majority of what we sell is the things we make. Which makes it easier, we're producing them so we know what goes into those. But if we bring something into our shop, we never want to sell something that we haven't tried ourselves. So I mean the first step is...

You have to be believers?

Yeah. So we have to figure out if it's even a product we think works well. And then the nice thing about the menswear, especially as we've transitioned from what I've considered to be the Americana heritage kind of menswear industry. Which has emerged over the last you know, year or so, everybody's extremely collaborative and willing to work together.

We've met people at events we've been in. That's how we've met a lot of people behind the brands. And so just through knowing them...

Local events?

No. Typically there other places. Like the most recent one we did was in Richmond. We've done one up in Baltimore, one in New York, you know they're usually in bigger cities.

We're actually, we'd love to see something here in Raleigh eventually. But again it's kind of growing that base of people who are interested in the industry. And actually dressing well on the men's side.

But yeah, once they know us and we know them, that relationship's much easier to build for actually selling something.

So you guys are here to stay?

We surely hope so. I mean we've been growing, the shop has been growing, we've been really excited about that. The shops only about a little over 12 months old. And it's grown every month, which is great. And I think the, the key for its continued growth, and actually establishing you know ourselves here in Raleigh, is adding to you know, what's going on down in the shop. Bringing in those brands but making the reason for that, is ultimately making a source of not just clothes but information. We want to be a source for these guys coming in, and saying like: you know what would work with this. Because that's, for the most part the problem with guys. That it's not that they don't want to dress well, they just don't necessarily know how to dress well.

On the information side of things. Entrepreneurship education. There's the whole issue of whether it's something you can teach. And if so how do you go about teaching it. What advice, I mean we have the College of Textiles here, and for anybody who's interested in

getting into business or design. What advice do you have... what can university systems do to improve chances for their graduates? From your own experience.

That is, that in itself is something that could be debated. And I have debated it with people. You know I think... the best answer starts with kind of the root of the question. Whether it can be taught or if it's just something that's innate in somebody. And I think it's a 50/50 thing. I think everybody has like a certain level of that start-up, entrepreneurial drive in them. And ultimately, really when somebody says is it taught or is it innate, I think what they're actually talking about is the risk side.

I think on the entrepreneur side, teaching just the basic schools... which a lot of colleges are already doing – like NC State does that pretty well already. But I think, where the short coming is, is philosophically there are a lot of great things that schools always want to teach you how to do. You know, large class flows, doing cash flows and kind of all the really mundane stuff for lack of a better term.

And while all of those things are good, they're, you rarely use those on a day to day basis when you're actually in a startup. So I think the thing that can be improved upon is like, okay I don't, this is cash flow which is a bad example, we use them pretty frequently: it's identifying the things that you use frequently like cash flows, and really teaching that. Versus, you know, some of the things they try to teach. Like, somebody's gonna kill me, but business plans – while they have their place – I feel like business plans in general are kind of a waste of time. At least the type of business plan that's like 25 pages, with every little detail kind of figured out.

I'm much more of the mindset of like, three page business trajectory if you will. Because in any startup, like things just evolve so quickly. They change, you have to adapt, and you know, you can't really – a 25, a three page document can be adapted and molded very quickly. Twenty-five pages, it becomes a weight, you know, an anchor that kind of holds you to the bottom of the ocean and doesn't let you go anywhere. And maybe you can drift one way a little bit or the other, but now you've, you know, mentally you've set yourself on something. And I don't think that's, that's not really the point of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is about trying things and seeing what works and doesn't.

So I think it's figuring out a way to educate somebody on how to write three to five pages very intelligently, get your information down there, but only focus on the critical things... I mean, traditionally I've had enough education at this point, traditionally education is rooted in tradition. And the way things have been done and are done. But that's kind of the exact opposite of entrepreneurship. It's about breaking the mold and breaking the rules.

So how do you, I guess there's a whole nother, I guess how do you teach...

Breaking the rules?

Yeah, how do you teach breaking the rules without breaking the rules?

And then I mean, then at the end of the day it's just about what level of risk are you as an entrepreneur comfortable with. And I think that's, that's what really dictates. That's what can't be taught. That's just something that you as a person, you feel you're either extremely comfortable with taking a lot of risk. Or you don't. But applying that to what you've learned, that a lot of times is what can kind of point you in the direction of what you should work on. What you should start up. Because there are industries that are, technology for example, is

extremely risky if you're kind of on the cutting edge. So if you're risk adverse, you probably don't want to be out there. Because your chances are about 95% that you're going to fail.

But then there are plenty of industries that aren't that risky. You know, so maybe focusing somewhere, so...

Even though you said 50/50, do you think it takes a certain personality?

Umm... I don't think it takes a certain personality. I do think there are personality traits that tend to lead somebody into entrepreneurship. Because I guess, a good example is, my original partner and he's still with the company. We're polar opposite ends on the risk spectrum.

I am very risk seeking. And he is very risk adverse. And so we kind of balance each other out. You know, I'm the one who's going – yeah let's just buy it, let's just do it! And he's the one who's – no, no, no like we need to plan, like we need to figure it out. And so that, you know, those two things are complete opposites. But where we do, like kind of the traits that we are very similar on, is we absolutely love creation. You know, putting something into creation and then we are... we're both very, even though he's risk adverse, and I'm risk seeking – when things do fail, we bounce back quickly.

So I think that love and that kind of resilience, those are traits that tend to kind of run through a lot of the entrepreneurs I know. I don't think you can be an entrepreneur and not be resilient because failure is kind of the name of the game.

It sounds like you're actually fortunate because you kind of balance each other out.

We're very fortunate. We probably wouldn't have gotten as far as we have, if we didn't have each other. And I mean we have other partners now who kind of fall in different places

on the spectrum. And we all sort of balance each other out. There's four of us now. And two of us are very risk seeking. And two of us are risk adverse. It just kind of happened that way.

And it has been, I think that would be a piece of advice, is find somebody that can kind of off-set you if you know you're one way or another. Because I know I would've already toppled-off the edge if I didn't have him to kind of, you know, step back and say – hey let's figure things out. But nor would he have driven it, you know, as quickly as we have if he didn't have me.

You guys are fortunate that you get to live your brand as you were saying.

Yeah.

That's a decision, or I think that will be the hard part as we continue to grow, is we will have to step out some. The way you bridge the gap though, as I do a lot of the designing and then one of our other partners is working a lot on the designing right now, we have to step back and take on more all-encompassing roles. Making sure people do what they're supposed to do, what they need to do. You know it's bringing in designers who also believe in you know, the product, the brand. And have that mindset that they're okay with forging their own path, if you will. Versus, there are a lot of designers, there are plenty of them who want that hard laid out kind of process. And how you get there.

So you know as cliché as it is, is hiring good people, creating a team that works well together. Kind of all those very entrepreneurial catchphrases and keywords and things like that. That's how I think we'll have to evolve as we grow.

And finally I'd like to ask you about your role in Raleigh. And what part you want to play.

Sure. Yeah I think, I mean Raleigh's a great city already. We wouldn't have put down roots here if we hadn't seen great things going on. Great potential. You know I don't really know what exactly the future holds. I think for us as a group, as a brand, me individually even – we want to just continue to get involved in projects we see enriching kind of the Raleigh fabric. The Raleigh culture and community, and all of that.

Are you guys active now?

We are some now. I mean we try to stay as involved as we can. And we continue to try to become more involved.

Can I push you for examples? Or areas in which...

I mean obviously we're in fashion. So we're very interested in food and arts, and you know things that are involved in some sort of cultural creation. So working with people on those fronts. And similar projects we work on, you know, are more – we have something that is in the works right now. That are very [REDACTED] forward. We haven't done anything, I guess us, as individuals we haven't done anything like that recently because of trying to get the storefront up and running. So those will be coming up in 2014.

But you know in 2013 we worked on a lot of projects that we were kind of behind the scenes on. Just sort of pointing people in the direction. Resources, and you know, that in itself is a very cool place to be - is when people start to recognize that you have met a lot of people. You have some connections. And you can start to see things come together because you make nice, meetings with people and things like that. I think that, you know that is a great part of having the storefront here.

A lot of people walk through our doors. We meet a lot of people. We get to know a lot of people. I mean at the end of the day, that's what's going to make Raleigh continue to grow.

And a lot of projects that we've started to see happen, that's what makes those projects happen. We have people walk in who don't really know who to talk to about something and we're just, you know, it's a lot like a restaurant. You're kind of by fortune, a lot of people come through and so you can start to say: hey, you know, the perfect person for you to talk to would be so and so. I'll connect you to them.

...

It's, I mean a ton of people. We've gotten to know Bida Manda around the corner. We know Van, he went to design school. So that's how I knew him before he opened his restaurant.

But you know one of the things we've talked a lot about too is just the eastern side of downtown. The Moore Square area, but it's evolving. So you know as we look into 2014, I think one of our big goals is kind of as a community of stores and restaurants, and things around here – is how can we aid in the development. So hopefully, fingers crossed, some cool things will be coming out of that in 2014.

Subject G

Just to begin, I would like to ask you how you would define, or rather what entrepreneurship means to you.

Wow, starting off with some heavy stuff here.

Willing to take risk. Willing to try things that haven't been tried before. The willingness to be your own boss. The willingness to see your own destiny... The willingness, to step-up you know, to do things that nobody else wants to do.

So, ultimately, in my opinion, doing all that to either improve the community, the environment, or the product that we make – is what drives me from the standpoint of being an entrepreneur.

...

Well for us, I guess our wakeup call, our epiphany, realizing that we were going in the wrong direction – came early for [REDACTED]. And that happened in 1994 because of NAFTA. Prior to NAFTA we had a company, quite successful company. We basically had in our mission running a company based on a triple-bottom-line, people planet profit.

We were very very fortunate and can't really attach any particular things at [REDACTED], but we've always had those values built in [REDACTED] since day one. We've, employees are by far our most valuable employees. We've always had some type of healthcare, some type of retirement. For whatever reason, and again I can't really attach, it might be you know, the garden I had behind my parent's house growing-up.

I've always had an interest in being aware of our environmental impact. And what can we do to minimize it.

So prior to NAFTA, those things were there but other than us doing internal care – you know Nike, Tommy, GAP, Polo – we were rewarded and compensated for acquired product, immediate delivery dates and competitive prices. And again we're competing in the US market. And we were very successful at that. Well over 100 employees worked here.

Then when NAFTA hit. Or even prior to NAFTA. The idea of why do I want to layoff people, to go somewhere and take advantage of their lesser regulations, environmental and socially. To make a product to bring back to my market to sell to my employees I just laid off.

Who are your customers?

Three main channels of customers. We have customers that are not in the apparel business. But they have values similar to ours. So when they go out and giveaway a product, sell a product, whatever they want to do. They want to make sure that product has their same value. That could be Organic Valley, Cliff Bar, Sierra Club, Green Peace, Seventh Generation. I mean these people have similar value sets. Cooperative grocery stores. Farmer's markets.

But they're not in the apparel business. But they're in the same situation. Yeah our t-shirts cost more. But they understand why they cost more. Because they're in that same arena. Organic Valley milk costs more. Not because Organic Valley makes more money, because how they treat the animals and milk and all that. So that's probably 50% of our business.

The other 50% are actual brands that sell to like, REI or to catalogue companies and things like that. They're actual apparel brands - that are apparel brands that have those same triple-bottom-line soul that we have. So they, again they're small brands. Successful, a couple of them very successful. But when they go to like an REI, they want to be able to say the highest quality, the most sustainable, made in USA product.

They design the styles, they design the artwork. They basically work in and out of our supply chains. But they basically make the blanks. And then we do the [REDACTED] print and dye, package it and ship it. But they do all the marking and that. So you don't see, in that channel, you could dig around a little bit. You could do some research and find the connection, but it's not out, you don't see [REDACTED] on the product. You don't see [REDACTED] [REDACTED] when they go to trade shows.”

Speaking of customers. How many of them are North Carolina based? Or the percentage?

“Hmm, that's a tough one. Other than the brands who we work with, because one of the brands is in Virginia. The other brand's in Wisconsin. The two big brands we work with... Well it's interesting, it was prior to the last recession, it was growing very fast because of the connection of the Cotton of [the] Carolina's.

And now what I'm seeing, because people are looking for a made in the USA. So we're starting to do a lot more stuff around the country because, you know, we're basically made in USA – even better.

So I mean I would say 60% is North Carolina, and you know we do, I keep getting invited to these things about export... And we do maybe, way way less than 1% goes overseas. But I have a few people in Europe and stuff like that. We just sent something to Saudi Arabia the other day.

You know we don't pursue that business, long term it doesn't make sense. Long term, I mean we do, the craziest thing we do, we actually have blanks made by American Apparel in LA. They ship them to us, we print them, and we ship some of them to our clients on the

west coast. Craazy! But I mean I need the business now. So you know we're doing things long term, we're growing our local business here and hopefully, knock-on-wood, by this summer we'll be doing cut and sew here in Burlington.

Oh really?

Yeah. There's a place on the other side of Burlington, matter of fact going in the original Burlington Industry plant, where textiles started in 1923. It's a company called Royal Park USA. It's a separate company, we have no legal or financial connections, other than I know the president very well. And we're trying to move some programs. And we'd love to move some of our American Apparel stuff over there. Cause it's just crazy.

And we're doing that because I need shirts. They make a good shirt. And, you know, that's all I've got right now. But I know that long term that just doesn't make sense.

Well do you see then, this sounds like a great partnership, but also just the apparel industry/textile industry re-growing here? Or is there a re-birth?

Oh yes. There's definitely a re-birth. And I think the benefit that North Carolina has, matter of fact I've talked to our last governor. Probably wouldn't have a conversation with our current governor, we don't agree on too much... But the conversation I had with him and Keith Crisco, the Secretary of Commerce, is that North Carolina, the standpoint usually in the top three, top five cotton growing states. So we produce it here.

We have some of the biggest spinning operations in the world with Frontier and Parkdale. The infrastructure has been greatly weakened by global trade deals. But there is infrastructure here to knit it, finish it, cut it, sew it. So we've got a starting point.

So what I've seen anywhere in the US, like if you go to Texas or Alabama, states that grow a lot of cotton – they have zero infrastructure other than growing the cotton. They can grow it and gin it. Ultimately it's gonna start coming, it's already coming here from the standpoint of spinning. All we just need to do is capture, that yarn is being shipped around the world, and leave it here.

So I think North Carolina is by far the best state position wise to lead the re-birth of apparel in the US. Just because of the location.

And what about on the smaller scale, just in terms of designers or other small apparel businesses. Have you noticed an influx there as well?

Oh very much so. I mean we probably, that is probably one of my biggest jobs that I do – is I'm the upfront person for conversations. And I probably have... ten/twenty a week you know, with people who have a brand, want to do something. I'm the filter to make sure, you know, have they thought this thing out. Do they have any money? Do they have a plan? Because I can't let them get into our business, and soak-up our people's time, because at the end of the day we have to produce a product here. And I can't, if you can't enter this great idea and just took hours a week of time, but you didn't really have a plan or didn't have money or whatever. So I'm that filter, but there's no question the opportunity is best for the small startups because, you know the big box stores... it's not going to match, the prices aren't going to work. There's a growing base of consumers that see that value.

Look at the story of Raleigh Denim. And the success that they've had. Lumina's another one. Yeah, I think there's tremendous upside.

But how can you help students who are interested in doing their own thing, and starting a business? What advice would have for academia and...

Yeah. Cause I had a similar conversation. The Elon University, which is just a couple miles down the road, they've got about 55-100 students. And I've sort of wanted to advise their entrepreneurial program there. And we had a meeting the other week. And they were laying out: this is the class schedule. Or the... the program of classes they have to take for a degree. And I says, what I would suggest is, because you get people who are in the academia world and their in their own world, in their own thing. Is that it's, the marketplace is moving so fast. It's a lot faster now than when I was in school. Is you've gotta, you know, when you start building those programs, or those classes, reach out to the business community and get some input from them.

Because the thing that I'll never forget about, this was 1978/79. I was at UNC and I had already started my business. And this was one reason that I left UNC and didn't finish my senior year. Because I was taking a marketing class with about 120 some students. And here I had my own business, and this guy was giving a lecture, and this guy was like 10 years out of date. I mean this guys was, not that he wasn't a good professor and good thing, it's just that his information is – is ancient – and he's wasting my time.

And that's what I was telling these professors at Elon. You know, you gotta be current. And it changes so quick, you know, be – get some people that are on the front lines and in the real world. And get them in there. And get them talking to your classes.

...

Well I mean it basically goes to, you know, make sure they have the skill sets. How to write a business plan. And when you write a business plan, those things of what kind of capital are you going to need? What kind of marketing strategy are you gonna need? What kind of timeline? So at least you basically put... it basically starts building a, you know, ideas are great, we all have ideas. But you basically gotta put a plan together to take that idea and make it a business.

And making sure that the college/university is teaching skills. How to write a business plan. And it flushes those things out.