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are unfamiliar with should first get a job related to the business to learn the ropes.

Jack Spear, president of the Bryan-College Station Chamber of Commerce and the SBDC, says experience and advice are essential to starting and keeping a new business.

Nationally, 80 percent of new businesses fail within their first five years, he says.

"A lot of personal tragedy that happens in small business start-ups doesn't need to happen," Spear says.

The high failure rate can be reversed through programs like the SBDC and SCORE. Businesses that consult these training programs average only about 20 percent failure and 80 percent success, he says.

"We work with people in qualifying them," he says. "Many people in business should not have gone into business."

The SBDC also helps small businesses match up with investors.

"The foremost thing small businesses need is money," he says.

The SBDC often looks to small business administration loans and banks for venture capital funds, he says.

Spear also stresses the importance of getting all the licenses required for a particular business. He sees many relatively minor infractions that could have been easily prevented. Sometimes these small violations can cost businesses \$1,000 a day, he says.

"Going into business is the American way, but we certainly need to know what we're doing," he says.

Texas ranks fairly high as a new-business state, Spear says.

required the initiative of someone with entrepreneurial spirit to take the initial risk.

Spear says Bryan-College Station is a good area for new business. With A&M and all the research it produces, many research companies have been attracted to the area.

He says more than 30 research companies have come to Bryan-College Station in the last five years.

J.D. Joyce is one enterprising student who made it in the cut-throat world of new business.

A Bryan native, Joyce began a small snow cone business when he was a junior at Bryan High School. Today, Joyce is a senior political science major at A&M and still owns J.D.'s Old Time Snow Cones on Texas Avenue.

He started his business with a personal loan from his mother and went to work.

The biggest problem Joyce ran into while setting up the snow cone business was his age. When he went to get permits to open the business people either wouldn't help him because he was too young or they would sit and teach him everything there is to know about their department.

He says when he decided to start a business, he wanted to do it fast. He didn't have time to sit and listen to speeches about that office's particular purpose in government.

Once he got past the long-winded permit agencies, Joyce didn't run into many other problems, except for small, everyday business occurrences.

Joyce got the idea for starting a snow cone business after working as a waiter for a local restaurant. He decided he wanted to go into the restaurant business, and

Joyce set up his shop keeping in mind the principles set forth by Stanley Marcus in his book, "Minding the Store." After reading the book, Joyce decided he could set up his small snow cone business with the same attitude Marcus had used when developing Neiman-Marcus. Joyce believes in superior quality and excellent service.

One of the points of maintaining the excellent service Joyce strives for is keeping consistent hours. He says that once he has set hours, he makes sure there is someone at the store during that time.

Joyce has customers that come from as far away as Snook just to get snow cones. He stays open during his hours no matter what the circumstances, because if a customer comes to his snow cone shop when it is supposed to be open and finds it closed, he doubts that customer will ever return. That kind of dedication is important to the business' success.

"If you are going to open a business, you've got to give it 100 percent," Joyce says. "If you're not willing to, you won't succeed. It really takes dedication, and lots of it."

He says that when he first opened his business he was working about 80 hours a week and going to school. Since then, Joyce has gone into the real estate business at Brazosland Realty and has other people working for him at his snow cone shop. He says that trying to manage the snow cone business from his realty office down the street is difficult.

Although Joyce has been successful with snow cones, he has also known defeat in the

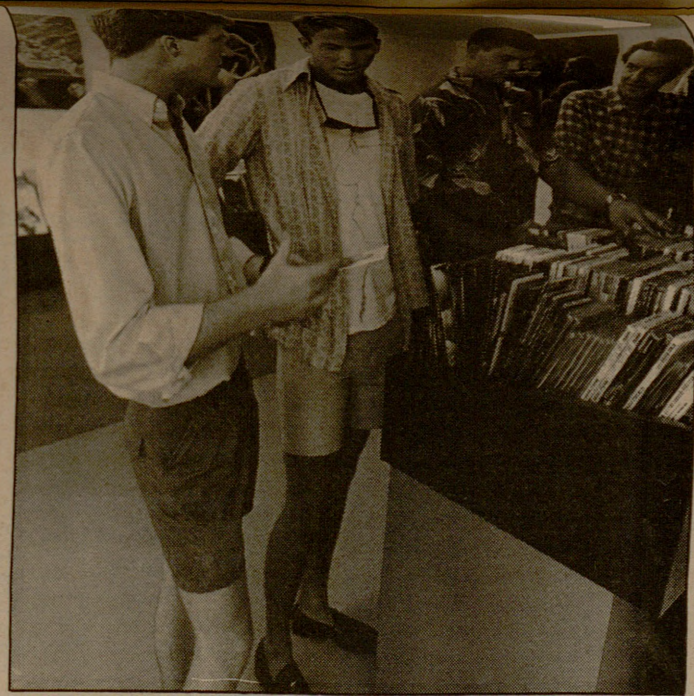


Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

Digital Audio Exchange owners Baker Hart (far left) and David Gilbert (far right) talk with customers Shannon O'Neal and Wayne Harrison.

business world. Three businesses he attempted to start never got off the ground. He has tried to start a restaurant, a second snow cone shop and a fruit stand. Failure came in the form of loan rejection, zoning problems and a partner who backed out.

Joyce has also suffered from a poor business decision. Three years ago he decided to start selling peanut brittle during the snow cone off-season. He wanted to do everything first-class, so he bought 2,500 printed peanut brittle canisters.

Today, he still has 1,000 canisters left. He pays a warehouse to store them, and is still learning from that mistake.

"In the future the stakes will be bigger," he says. "It's worth learning it now rather than learning it later."

Even after all the success and failure, Joyce says he still likes trying.

"I enjoy looking at something and trying to figure out how I can make it work," he says. "Even if something doesn't work out, you've still learned something about trying to make it work."

Of course learning isn't the only reason Joyce is motivated.

"The thing about risk is, if it works you usually come out pretty well," he says.

Another reason Joyce says he goes into business for himself is because the rewards are more directly related to the amount of work put into the business.

Joyce went into real estate because it's like owning a business.

"If you're willing to work hard, you get rewarded for it," he says. "I've always been one who likes to get paid according

to the effort I put into it."

Opportunity exists in many forms. For Billy Moreland, it came in the video business. Moreland, a senior accounting major, is the owner of It's Showtime, a video and VCR rental store on Texas Avenue. He says he got the idea for his business when he and his wife wanted to rent movies but didn't have a VCR.

Moreland says he saw the opportunity for money to be made and capitalized on it.

He went to his parents and asked for a \$25,000 loan. He came back with only \$12,500 and his work cut out for him. His parents only lent him half the money, saying that if he was really willing to make a business successful, he would have to work at it.

"It was like a sword hanging over my head for the first year," he says. "It was scary and it still is."

Although Moreland had no experience and says that the business could have failed in its first month, It's Showtime now boasts over 3,000 movies and 25 VCRs.

During the time he has owned It's Showtime, he has had to adapt to the ever-changing video rental market. Moreland started out with the idea to rent mostly VCRs. But he says people who came to rent them wanted to be able to rent their movies in the same store, so he expanded his video stock. Then, he says, everyone began having their own VCRs and the VCR rental market fell. He expanded his video stock once again.

He says that while his initial investment was fairly large, today it would probably cost \$75,000 to successfully start a video business.

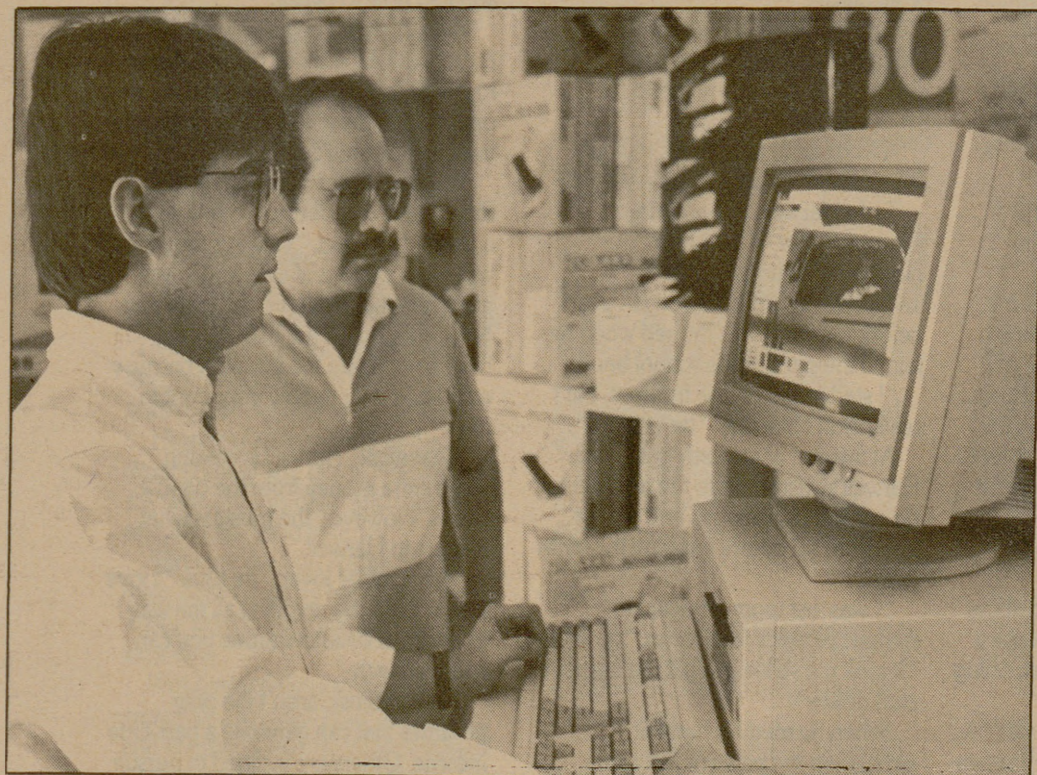


Photo by Kathy Haveman

Computer Access owner and entrepreneur John Flynn, class of 1986, shows a graphic display of a Ferrari to one of his employees, David Cole, a senior petroleum engineering major.