

Vladimir Drobot, 22, Omsk

Head of Regional Committee for Youth Entrepreneurship OPORA ROSSII

In addition, Vladimir:

- served in intelligence;
- has made three parachute jumps;
- completed a 3-year forest survival course;
- participates in the Sparta project;
- life values: the people around him (family, sweetheart, friends, colleagues).

“I was employed by an electrical fitting company as a project manager, but never lost hope of coming up with my own business. And four months ago, I succeeded in gathering a team of like-minded people to help me launch the Quadro design studio.

Switching to printing and design was an accidental move. I came across a friend who told me about the success of one of his other friends. He opened an instant printing shop. The ‘convenience’ format means we can rely on a good turnover due to interest on the part of individuals. This market is not very competitive and the project entry cost of RUB 150–200 thou is quite acceptable.

Initially, in order to earn enough money to buy essential equipment, the company had to provide mediatory services. We picked orders, performed a design layout and outsourced printing projects. In this way, we soon earned enough money to buy printing equipment, though we had to invest some of our own capital as well, to the tune of some RUB 70 thou. Those were necessary costs but now we have a full production cycle.

When a designer joined our team, it was a key event for our young business. Not only did this specialist raise the quality of projects to a new level; she also introduced the studio’s co-founders to a future US investor.

First, the foreigner placed several orders with our printing shop as a regular client. Apparently we passed this test successfully and he proposed that we co-operate. The prices for our services were quite competitive for the American market, which is why the American partner saw advantages in such an international project.

We’ve already completed four major projects for our overseas clients. This not only means foreign exchange proceeds, but an important share of our portfolio. The opportunities for remote work allow us to communicate with clients in any part of the world. We’d like to take advantage of this opportunity. The western market is preferable for us because of the positive foreign exchange balance and a more convenient system of settlements. Foreign clients just drop money into the e-wallet in PayPal, whereas Russian companies are caught up in bureaucratic red tape with endless agreements and invoices.

In some distant future, we plan to open a small US branch to avoid time difference problems and to be more expeditious working on the orders from our western clients. Our American friend has already promised us his help with a US office.

What else should I say?

It’s very important for business to know where you are now and where you’d like to be in some time, that you might adjust your policy and lead your company towards a set target. To navigate

successfully in the world of business, you must know your destination, lay out the plan for reaching it (your travel route), and constantly map a route, tracking your mileage. How can you possibly reach your destination if you do not even know what it is?"