

Pushing Beyond

BY TAYLOR ARNOLD

I recently had the opportunity to attend and event called “Pushing Beyond,” and it had such an impact on me that I had to write a story about it. Pushing Beyond is a new initiative that is dedicated to helping young professionals and students hone in on their passions and learn what it takes to make the jump towards achieving their dreams. This is one of my favorite topics, and I was so thrilled to see someone else my age finally speaking out about it.

Dan Lack is the visionary behind this organization, and on July 1, 2009, he launched this group with a presentation at Georgia Tech. Over 100 young professionals gathered to meet and hear from three of Atlanta’s youngest entrepreneurs: Garrett Gravesen, CEO of the Global L.E.A.D., Haley Kilpatrick, Founder and Executive Director of Girl Talk, and Aaron Arnold, CEO of Music is My Business. For two hours, Lack facilitated an interactive discussion with each of these young leaders as they shared the secrets of their success.

An Atlanta native, Lack always knew he was destined for entrepreneurship. “I was the number one seller for Sally giftwrap in first grade,” he says. “I reclaimed the title for the next four years, then moved on to lemonade stand 2.0. I sold beverages on election day.”

He held on to that passion to be a self-starter and a go-getter and interned with Clear Channel in high school. “I wanted to learn about the music business, so I called the Roxy, which was owned by Clear Channel,” he says. “I worked my way into the door and got an internship. I learned all about concerts and how to market them.”

Lack went on the University of Georgia to study finance and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. “I got a number of job offers with financial consulting firms, but realized I wasn’t interested,” he says. “I knew deep down I was much more interested in being an innovator and a creator.”

After becoming the youngest ever president of the Atlanta Jaycees, Lack took the network that he had and created what he calls “a building of big minds.”

“It was a three-day weekend retreat for people from all over to come and talk about what we were working on and how we could help each other and get to where they wanted to go,” he says. “In March of 2009 I came back from that and

spent six weeks on a mini vision quest. What did I want to do next? What were my personal values? What is the next step for me? This is a challenging set of questions to go through as a young professional.”

From there he came up with the concept for Pushing Beyond. “So many young people live by the pressure that society puts on us to go out and get a job as soon as possible that pays the most and gets the best benefits,” he says. “So many of us took what came our way and woke up three years later and were miserable. Most of my peers here in Atlanta were unsatisfied in their jobs, so I wanted to speak out about this and get more young people to follow their passion.”

So he launched Pushing Beyond with a nationwide interview series called *Follow Your Passion*. “It features people who really honed in on their passions,” he says. “The goal is to gather stories of people living passionately and get them to speak out.”

He uploads a new interview every Wednesday, and now Lack is traveling across the country to meet CEOs, athletes, musicians, artists and philanthropists to feature in this series. “It is about bringing this conversation to the table to share how they conquered their fears,” he says. “I am trying to target young professionals and college kids because I am 24 and I feel exactly what they feel. I can relate, and that’s how I know it will work.”

As for the future of Pushing Beyond, Lack is not afraid to dream big. “Five years from now I hope we are on our fifth series and have a community of people that loves who we are and what we do. I hope that the content and the tools that we are creating help people impact their communities. I would love to be Tony Robbins for young people. I too want to build a successful company that serves the community.”

At the end of the day, there is one book that keeps Lack inspired. “*The War of Art* by Steven Pressfield has one of my favorite quotes,” he says. “Never forget: This very moment, we can change our lives. There never was a moment, and never will be, when we are without the power to alter our destiny.”

For more information visit www.pushingbeyond.com.



Dan Lack