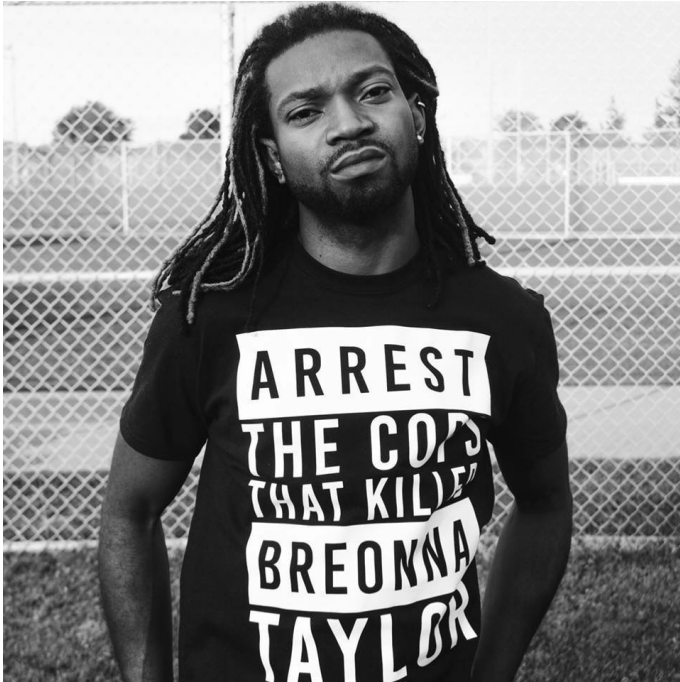


CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Thriving Brampton Small Business proves that Mentorship works



Mentorship is an integral part of starting, maintaining, and elevating a small business. Studies show that 30% of entrepreneurs who had just one interaction with a business mentor reported growth in their business. Nathan Thomas, the founder of Black Print Studios (BPS), is living proof that mentorship, particularly at a young age, can have a tremendous impact in the years to come. His online print shop is your one-stop-shop for all your printing needs. BPS provides print and graphic design services that are smart, bold, and creative.

This dedication to his craft sets him apart from the others

How it all Started

Nathan's journey as an entrepreneur started during his time at Seneca College's digital media arts program. One of his assignments was to create his own business. At first, he was just going through the motions, but some guidance and encouragement from his professor, Peter Dsouza, changed his tune. ***"I said to myself, if this guy believes in me – and he was the hardest professor in the program – then I can probably do this,"*** Nathan fondly reminisces. Taking his professor's advice seriously, Nathan looked for help to make his idea a reality. His search led him to the Brampton Entrepreneur Centre's (BEC) first-ever Summer Company program. Offered in partnership with the government of Ontario, the program provides an opportunity for 15 – 29 years old learn how to launch and operate a business. In 2012, he launched his first business, InFaction Entertainment, where he offered graphic design services.

Reflection and Redirection

Not entirely satisfied with InFaction, Nathan took some time away from entrepreneurship to regroup. ***“I started with the website thing and realized that I didn’t really like sitting in front of the computer for 8-10 hours... I didn’t see myself doing that as a career,”*** he explains. However, out of all of his initial service offerings, he noticed that he enjoyed the print projects because they were both creative and hands-on. So, Nathan got into the corporate print industry, working for top clients such as CIBC, Microsoft, McDonald's, and many others. During this time, he made sure to work in every department to learn the printing business from all angles. This attention to his craft developed his passion for print further and drove him to start his own print shop; thus, in 2019, BPS was born. With no marketing dollars and working part time, in one fiscal year, Nathan made \$10,000! This success is a testament to the excellence of the services offered at BPS. More than the profit, Nathan explains, ***“knowing that a client is trusting in my business with their ideas is a very real marker of success.”*** Client demand was so great that in January of 2020, BPS became his full-time job.



Reflection and Redirection

Having benefitted from the guidance of great mentors, it is important to Nathan that he pays it forward by mentoring youth. Although the new generation has the internet as a great advantage, he believes that access to knowledgeable mentors is invaluable. ***“The support systems in place, the knowledge that other people have done it and it is doable keeps me going. So, it’s very important that I can offer that to people in my community.”*** More specifically, Nathan is a champion for mentorship in the Black community.

As he explains, ***“for Black people, there’s already a stigma against us, of what we should be doing and what we can do. So, to have mentorship in the Black community is great because it presents options that several routes to success are possible.”*** Staying true to his beliefs, Nathan has helped quite a few friends and family get started on their own entrepreneurship journey by sharing his knowledge and directing them to programs such as BEC’s Starter and Summer Company.

Hope in the Future

The print industry consists of large companies that have been in business for years, but Nathan does not let this deter him. As he explains, ***“my mindset is never that I’m smaller than them. I always remember that these big companies were not always big companies, they were at my level once upon a time and they started the same way I’m starting.”*** Many of the BPS clients are people starting their own business. Since he has gone through the process himself, he knows just what other entrepreneurs need. ***“I get to offer them the full package, products that I know will be integral to their brand development,”*** says Nathan.



Some examples of Nathan's work

For those looking to start their own business, Nathan says, ***“don’t be afraid to fail. That’s where you learn and where you grow; through the failure.”*** As he looks to the future, Nathan hopes to see BPS grow into a storefront location and someday expand outside the Canadian market. With his passion for success and community, the future is beyond bright for Nathan and BPS.

To find out more about Black Print Studios, you can head to their website, or visit them on Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter.