

Bagels: Just the Beginning for Chinda Eleonu  
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Photo Credit: Picbear post by @juju\_eatsfood

It's Thursday; it's 9pm; and it's time to set up. With a few helpers by his side, Chinda Eleonu walks through west campus, toaster and fresh bagels in hand. The crew arrives at their secret location, assembles their station, and checks their order status. It only takes a minute until bagels are popping from toasters and lathered with various spreads. Once the product is wrapped and bagged, runners disperse to various dorms to hand-deliver Toasty Boys.

Toasty Boys is Chinda's simple, yet exciting creation. The brown-paper-bagged small business provides warm bagels of various flavors to residents of west campus with the night-time munchies. Strategically designed, Toasty Boys thrives with its well-thought-out details and planning. Many student startups are ambitious and short-lived, and yet Chinda believes that Toasty Boys is special. With a full plate of college activities and responsibilities, Chinda makes sure to give Toasty Boys a fair chance at becoming one of his most creative and successful accomplishments.

"We don't see this as just some thing we're doing. It's not a side project," says Chinda, with an eager, song-like tone. "We know that Toasty Boys will be big." He speaks in such a convincing and enthusiastic way that you can't help but be interested in his project.

Toasty Boys, like any great invention, was born from necessity and desire. Browsing the internet late one night, Chinda and his friends discussed how they rarely ate breakfast since coming to college. Together, they decided to shop for a toaster to make it easier to eat before heading to class in the morning. They speculated that once people found out about the appliance, peers would be coming in to use it all the time. When one of his friends joked about charging an entry fee before letting people use the toaster, Chinda realized he could develop a scheme and make a profit. Realizing that he needed to provide a service that was worth paying for, the idea of a late Thursday night bagel delivery service was born.

Toasty Boys stays open from 10pm until 2am, allowing its customers a cheap and easy snack when most other establishments are closed. This is only one of the many

deliberate and calculated decisions that Chinda made to ensure that Toasty Boys stays ahead of the game. When finding a place to buy the bagels, Chinda originally was going to pick the closest option: the Star Market down the block. But, he realized that with BU having students hailing from all over, especially the large percentage from New York and New Jersey, he needed a quality product that would impress even the most pretentious bagel connoisseurs. From testing out various types of toasters, to making a weekly 45 minute trip for the bagels, Chinda continues to make business moves and developments that are effective, simple, and sustainable.

Although Chinda's business thrives, it is not a particularly easy thing to accomplish. College life often adheres to a very strict and mundane schedule. Between classes, homework, clubs, and social life, very little time lends itself to the more enjoyable and creative interests of students. Therefore, finding something to not only stand out from the average student, but also to bring you excitement and joy can be a challenge.

Ivan Reyes, a fellow BU student whose business emerged around the same time as Toasty Boys, speaks about the difficulties of running a business while attending as rigorous a school as BU. "It's hard to balance because you can get carried away with your week," says Ivan. His project, The Print Company, sells and delivers custom T-shirts through an Instagram account. Although the upkeep of social media and responding to orders may easily become unmanageable, Ivan says that "the key is to remain consistent."

Despite the effort required, college startups have become somewhat of a trend. With the rise of technology and social media, student startups nowadays have an advantage: an easier way to advertise their business. For example, just last year, two freshman roommates served sushi from their dorm room. They operated through an instagram account that promoted their restaurant, The 803, which is named after their room number. Elias Goodman, the next-dorm neighbor to The 803, told the Boston Globe that “[word] spread because of the Snapchat filter [the showrunners] had for it.” After growing to a circulation of about 30 customers on their working nights, The 803 made headlines. Eventually, the business created such a commotion and following that they were given a pop-up restaurant in Manhattan with a real sushi chef.

Just like The Print Company and The 803, most college run businesses operate through social media. For Toasty Boys, snapchat is their headquarters. To order, you simply add Toast Boys as a friend on snapchat and then send a message with your name, room number, and order. Sometimes, Chinda says, customers will request a specific person to deliver their bagels or even take pictures of their delivery boy with the signature bagel bag and post it to their social media. This type of closeness to its customers and fun aura about Toasty Boys is what sets it apart from other BU student businesses.

Since creating Toasty Boys, Chinda reports a following of at least 8 more college start-ups. “I love the innovation,” says Chinda about the growing number of college student startups. “Everyone is going off the beaten path.” Students are continuing to

use their skills and cultivate their ideas, but success in such ideas requires planning and balance.

While the idea occurred to him in the fall of 2017, Toasty Boys has been in business since February of 2018. The delay in creating the business was due to Chinda's desire to design the best, most realistic strategy. Because of the difficulty of maintaining a good business and his heavy workload, he decided to first decide what would make Toasty Boys the most sustainable for his own schedule and preference. Over the first semester, he selected a day and time that fit his schedule, experimented with toasters, and spoke to residential staff about the rules of operating in the dorms. Current rules state that no large kitchen appliances are permitted in dorm style living. Chinda took this seriously. "We don't want to be limited by rules," says Chinda about Toasty Boys. "We wanted to make sure that when we look back, we didn't jeopardize the business." Eventually, Toasty Boys and its crew found their home in a top secret location somewhere in west campus. As the leader of the company, he took control and made sure to fool proof the idea to save Toasty Boys from being burned.

Chinda is not new to being a leader. In high school, he wrote and directed plays with friends as well as planned his class's senior prank. Even during the first hectic semester at college, Chinda starred in and directed his own play with BU's Stage Troupe. When he thinks back on his life, he recalls always being one who took control of his life by creating. "I never wanted to start a business that was too serious," says Chinda, leaning comfortably against the dorm room desk chair. He finds that keeping

his ideas lowkey, developing them, and then slowly expanding them over time is the best way for his projects to come into fruition.

In respect to Toasty Boys, Chinda's right-hand-woman is fellow freshman Ilana Basman. Ilana helps Chinda organize and operate Toasty Boys. "I wouldn't be able to do it without her," says Chinda about his business partner and good friend Ilana. Ilana saw potential in the idea. Days after the idea of selling bagels was thrown around, she offered her help to Chinda if his intentions of starting the business were serious.

While the effort from all members of Toasty Boys contributes to its success, Ilana notes that Chinda brings something special. "It's just the energy he brings in," says Ilana, "People are excited to buy because they know he is behind the process."

Chinda truly is the heart of Toasty Boys. In the uniform days of college life, creating a brand that's unique is key to making a name for yourself. Chinda has done this. He has put his heart and soul into this project--and he is not stopping now. For the future of Toasty Boys, he has big plans which, of course, he cannot disclose. "Everynight is exciting, man," says Chinda with a wide and bright smile. "If you can have fun with your work, no matter what, in the end you'll be successful."

Through the struggle to find something in college that is truly yours, Chinda emerged ready to hit the ground running. Being part of a growing trend on college campuses, Chinda must continue to grow and impress with Toasty Boys. His enthusiasm and pure love towards Toasty Boys and his other projects leads me to think

that Chinda knows what he is doing. I predict that Toasty Boys will not only stay around for a while, but also that it will rise to the top of BU news and culture.

Chinda is making a name for Toasty Boys in BU's West campus, and it's time for you to know it.

#### Credits

Primary Source:

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