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You're Never Too Young to Start Building Your Business

BY MILUN TESOVIC | FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2010 10:51 AM ET

Milun Tesovic was just 16 and living with his parents when he hatched his small business plan. Nine years later he oversees a staff of 10 at his fast-growing music lyrics website.

In 2001, I was 16 years old living in Vancouver with my family and like most teenagers, I was looking forward to getting my license and trying to figure out how to get my hands on a car. I was very interested in computers and the Internet and I started paying attention to some of the trends in online searches. I studied charts and consumer reports and what I kept coming back to was music lyrics, something so simple and one of the most searched for topics on the Internet in spite of the lack of content available.

In high school I wanted to start a business, because I was interested in the Internet and loved music, I quickly became almost obsessed with what — at the time — was just a hobby. I registered the domain name for www.metrolyrics.com and I created a website. I did my own design and all of the programming and I started to build a database of lyrics that were already available for free. I would rush home after school to work on the site, spent my weekends glued to the computer and even my free periods at school — every chance I got I was working on MetroLyrics. I didn't know yet if or how this would turn into a profitable business, but at the time I was just hoping I would make enough to buy my first car and I felt strongly that there was a need for this kind of site and that if I built it, they would come.



As MetroLyrics started to take shape, I shared it with my classmates and friends that I had made in the programming and design communities. I asked everyone for their feedback, and after making some tweaks to the site, I asked them to send it to their friends. The momentum grew from there. Traffic picked up quickly and it was profitable almost immediately. In fact, it was when I received my first check from Google that I and my parents (I was still in high school after all ...) realized this might be more than a hobby and we

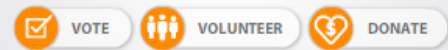
set up a meeting with my parents' friend Alan Juristovski who became my business partner. Alan and I put together a business plan and set out to grow the company, though at this point, we were both still working from home. He had given up a career in chemical engineering and I, well I was looking at colleges and started attending Simon Fraser University in Vancouver in the fall of 2007.

By 2004 publishers had started to send us unsolicited products for giveaways and wanted to partner with us for promotions, so we knew the music industry supported what we were doing. We wanted to take the next step and secure a license for the content we were providing. The legality of what we were doing had always been a top priority for me but when we started, nobody was offering licenses for this content. It took three years, countless meetings, endless phone calls and a lot of negotiation, so when we signed a deal with Gracenote in 2007 to license their entire catalog of lyrics and ensure that copyright holders get paid each time their content is viewed on MetroLyrics.com, I knew we had made it. That is when I knew this little hobby of mine had turned into something real and might actually be a career.

We were the first lyrics site to get a license and we quickly became the most visited site for lyrics on the Internet. We hired our first employee, a friend, in 2008 and in February 2009 we moved into our first

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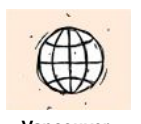
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office and hired five more employees. Today we have around 10 staffers working full-time in the office running what is the third largest music site on the Internet behind only **MySpace** Music and **Yahoo!** Music. Within the past year we have redesigned the site to make it more user friendly, we launched two iPhone apps and we hired a direct sales force. We have over 43 million unique monthly visitors and that number is steadily rising. I plan to graduate this year and work full-time on MetroLyrics, which should be a breeze after spending the past nine years working full-time on the business while also in school.

And I was able to buy myself that car.

To support other small businesses, check out **Small Business Saturday** on Facebook.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Milun Tesovic is the Co-Founder and CTO of MetroLyrics. He started [www.MetroLyrics.com](#) at 16, following an early passion for technology that led him to create the most popular online lyrics property in the world. Today, Tesovic combines his role as CTO of MetroLyrics with his work as a student at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia. He was named the 2009 National Student Entrepreneur Champion and the Global Student Entrepreneur Champion by Advancing Canadian Entrepreneurship (ACE) Canada, and received the Simon Fraser University Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2008. MetroLyrics has been recognized as a Red Herring Canada Top 50 company, and has been awarded the Burnaby Business Excellence Award.

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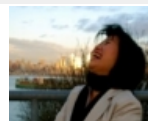
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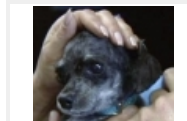
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