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Business

# Young entrepreneur balances college and two businesses

By ADELYN WACHTER Grand Haven Tribune

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Erin Markovicz holds up her third-place award through the Michigan Collegiate Startup Challenge. Courtesy photo



Erin Markovicz, a 2020 Grand Haven High School graduate, has always wanted to be a business owner. But she didn't plan on owning two businesses by the age of 22.

Markovicz co-founded WoMa Bazaar, which officially started up in May 2022, to provide an "incubator space" to help other new businesses with the start-up process. Through WoMa Bazaar, short-term leases are given to new, college-aged entrepreneurs to test their business ideas and receive consulting.

Markovicz's second business, Eventifide, took off in Oct. 2023. That idea was born after Markovicz put on a festival to raise money for WoMa Bazaar and support small businesses. The festival hosted various vendors, new local music artists performing live music and numerous activities for kids.

One of Markovicz's challenges with finding available vendors was convincing them that she and her festival were real.

"A lot of times, at least right now, there's a big issue with being scammed," Markovicz said. "In my experience, when we hosted a festival in September, people would screenshot my Instagram and say that they're the only one taking a vendor booth fee because a lot of times when you have these direct selling events, you have to pay a fee to sell your product and to have a booth."

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For these new direct sellers and small businesses, vendor slots can be expensive. If they get scammed, they are losing out on money they could use to continue growing. Markovicz said people can create fake events or websites in order to convince entrepreneurs to give them money. [Report this ad](#)

Markovicz's new business would be an online platform that verifies events and proves to direct sellers, who want to sell their products at an event, that the event is real. It then further "streamlines the event management process through applications, invoicing and communication" Markovicz described.

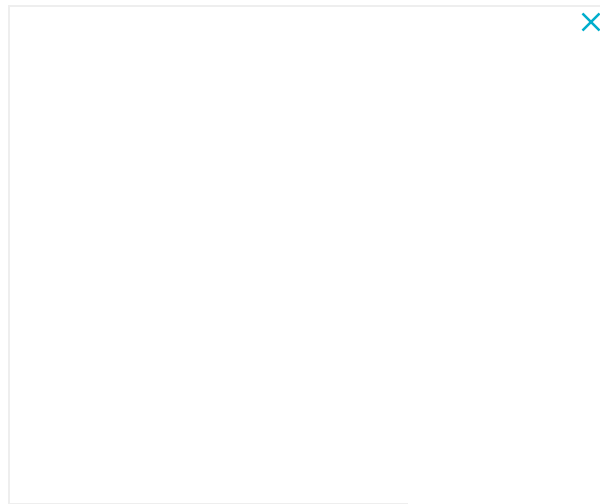
Through her personal challenges and reflecting on how many other young entrepreneurs struggle with the same challenges, Markovicz decided to do something about it.

"My passion is helping people, entrepreneurs and others I relate with because this is something that I'm doing," Markovicz said. "We work so hard to put something like a business together and take that risk.

"You don't want it to fail, right? Making sure that more people can start businesses and maintain businesses and get the support they need is really important to me."

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While running both businesses, Markovicz is a full-time student at Central Michigan University with a business management major.

Financial aspects are challenging trying to pay for school and put money into her businesses. With that, the Michigan Small Business Development Center offers free consulting and CMU has provided financial help for both WoMa Bazaar and Eventified through awards and scholarships.

Markovicz has attended workshops, bootcamps and has received mentoring through CMU. She is also a part of a scholars program.

“If I would have never gotten involved in the programming that I am today, I would have never started my businesses,” Markovicz said. “I would have never gotten a lot of the opportunities that I have.”

Markovicz explained how the percentage of small business success isn't high and the success rate decreases each year after starting up. Entrepreneurs can also wish to simply stop pursuing.

Sometimes it can be hard to stay motivated with all the activities Markovicz is participating in and her long to-do list, but her passion to help others and knowing that her ideas can help them keeps her going.

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“I think about my mission and both of these companies are ways to decrease that percentage,” Markovicz said. “This is something that I have wanted for a long time.”

After graduating this May, Markovicz plans to take a job as a district manager for Aldi while still continuing to build her own businesses.

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