



SURVIVING  
COLLEGE

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## 5 Companies Launched from A College Dorm Room



Big companies such as Facebook, Google, and Dell all started out on humble college campuses. From these success stories, it seems that college is the perfect time for [young entrepreneurs](#) to create and develop billion dollar businesses. But there are also small companies started from a college dorm room that are making big waves in the business world.

Here are five companies that demonstrate the ingenuity and innovativeness of college students:

## 1. Russian Pointe (founded in 1998)



Aleksandra Efimova was a Russian immigrant attending Eastern Michigan University when she began working with a Russian company to bring their ballet shoes to the US market. Her efforts have led to the birth of a highly success shoe brand that can be found in dancewear stores all over the US and Canada.

## 2. Higher One, Inc. (founded in 2000)



Higher One is a Yale success story, with three undergraduates launching a college financial aid service for fellow students. Their initial goal was to simplify the process of receiving financial aid refunds, but they have since expanded to include various other financial aid services as well as teaching college students the basics of financial management.

### 3. ModCloth.com (founded in 2002)



Susan Gregg Koger's dorm room at Carnegie Mellon University was filled to the brim with vintage clothes that she had purchased. The obvious solution was to then open shop in her own living space to sell them. Little did she know that people's passion for vintage clothing would lead to a highly successful online shopping site where ModShoppers could purchase the one-of-a-kind clothing that she still personally selects and buys.

### 4. Kiva.org (founded in 2005)



Jessica Jackley and Matt Flannery weren't technically students when the idea for Kiva Microfunds was conceived, but they were still swayed by the inspiring ideas of higher education. Two years after hearing a speech on microfinance at Stanford, the non-profit organization Kiva was born. Its purpose is to support small businesses in developing countries. Internet users can lend money to borrowers through Field Partners' loans, and when profit is made the money is returned.

## 5. Give Water – PurBlu Beverages, Inc. (founded in 2007)



Ben Lewis was a student at the University of Pennsylvania when his unique line of charity water really took off. For each bottle sold, 10 cents of the proceeds are donated to a specific charity. Give Water has dedicated its donations to environmental causes, children in need, and breast cancer and muscular disorders research. The color and design of the label on the bottle indicates which charity consumers are supporting with their purchase. Since its 2007 launch, Give Water has even expanded into a line of canned energy drinks.

**Do these success stories inspire you to start your own college dorm room business?**