

Perfect fit: Microsoft apps and social media drive success for sneaker reseller

Sometimes you know early on what you want in life. For Umair Anees, that came at age 12. “I played basketball when I was younger, and my mom would take me shopping and the first thing I’d buy was sneakers,” he says, excitedly. “I’d have torn shorts and a torn shirt, but I didn’t care as long as my sneakers were nice.”

Fast-forward to 2019. Umair is a busy college student studying Information Business and Information Technology. Textbooks and data dominate his daytime studies, but behind it all, the shoes remain. His sneaker reselling side hustle (@Restock on Instagram) is thriving, in large part due to Umair’s savvy understanding of social media and of tools like Microsoft Excel and Word, but also because of the passion he puts into it.

“It helps me get through the rougher parts of school,” he says. “Especially doing homework. It’s like, ‘Alright, I can finish this homework then I can look at some new sneakers that are coming out!’”

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Umair first started reselling shoes in high school, mostly to friends. He had a knack for finding rare and highly desired models and providing an avenue for buying and selling them. At the time, he’d market his inventory the old-school way—by stapling flyers to telephone poles. But not anymore. Online marketplaces are where it’s at nowadays, and Umair has become a leader in the space.

“As the technology grew, the audience grew as well,” says Umair. “Once I found out how to buy and sell sneakers consistently, the first thing I did, because I knew Instagram was the biggest sneaker platform online, was start there. And once I got the @Restock handle, I started posting all the inventory I had.”



That inventory has grown to include t-shirts, hats, hoodies, even consignment items. It's a lot to keep track of, especially for a full-time student, but Umair's side hustle is exhibit A of how to run a small business efficiently using digital tools and mobile technology.

Now, says Umair, when he encounters a new item, he takes a picture and posts it on the spot. Boom, instant availability. "Mobile technology helps my business because I can keep track of inventory, reach customers anywhere, take pictures, post straight to Instagram, make money pretty much anywhere."

"Technology helps me reach a wider audience in a shorter amount of time," he adds. "It gets a lot of eyes on items, so it's easier to grow and sell things quicker."

To keep his business on track, Umair turns to Microsoft Excel. "It's my lifesaver. Inventory lists, sales, price, what they sold for... There's algorithms to find out totals real quick. I don't have to keep adding them up. Excel spreadsheets are the way to go."

"Once you get the spreadsheets going," he summarizes, "it's easy."

And, he says, having the Word app on his phone is a huge timesaver. "It's just less information that I have to carry around in my head. Having the Word app, I can save a file and then look at it when I get back to the store. It makes my business mobile."

All of which gives him the extra time he needs to focus on other important things, like connecting with his customers—both online and at his retail location. "One of the main reasons I opened the business was so I could have a platform to connect with the sneaker community. They can come to the store and hang out, talk sneakers, and just chill."

Umair has big dreams. He talks about opening a bigger store, maybe a chain. Yet he admits he has a lot to learn and a long way to go. He speaks humbly about his role in the community. "I wouldn't call myself an expert on sneakers. I'm still young and there are a lot of people who know more than me. But I always try and share what I know, and how I know it, so other people can be just as successful as I am."

As far as where his side hustle ranks in priority, that much is clear. "Work is number two and school is number one. My mom, my parents are strict like that. They're like, you gotta go to school. It doesn't matter what you're doing."

Something tells us that the mom who took Umair shopping for shoes in the first place is pretty proud of his success—and all the success that is to come.

