

Health enthusiast goes 'all in' to create GMO-free energy bar

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Northeastern University student Josh Eichel has harnessed his passion for health and wellness to create his own line of all-natural energy bars, the flagship product of his company All In Nutrition.

Unlike the vast majority of his competitors, his bars are free of [genetically modified ingredients](#), fortified with super foods like spirulina, and packed with grass-fed whey protein from New Zealand.

"I wanted to create a product that you wouldn't feel guilty about eating," explains Eichel, E'18.

As a fitness fanatic, he worked with a dietician and food scientist to perfect the recipe for the energy bar's first two flavors: maple and dark chocolate cayenne. Since launching the product in September, he has sold approximately 18,000 bars through his website and is now looking to expand his reach into grocery stores like Whole Foods, nutritional retailers like the Vitamin Shoppe, and online marketplaces like Amazon.

Known as "Wicked," the energy bar's name pays homage to the slang term popularized by Bostonians, but the product itself is quickly gaining national recognition among the fitness elite. In April, Iron Man, the world's leading bodybuilding magazine, named Wicked the most innovative protein bar on the market today, saying that it's "for the guy who is concerned about the numbers attached to his scale, his bench press, and his blood pressure." The write-up called attention to the bars' impressive list of all-natural ingredients—organic cashew butter, organic cacao, organic dates—and noted that the dark chocolate bar "brings the heat with a palpable dose of fat-burning cayenne pepper."

As Eichel puts it, "Wicked has a unique texture and an insane moisture level, which separates it from a lot of other bars that are chalky and dry."

The 10-year plan

At first glance, it might be surprising to see a fourth-year mechanical engineering major working to perfect a protein bar. But dig a little deeper, and you'll realize that his academic program and experiential

learning opportunities at Northeastern have prepared him to launch, sell, and then promote a successful product.

His two co-op experiences—first as a mechanical test intern at Bose and now as a manufacturing quality engineer at Apple—have been instrumental to his success as a first-time business owner. They've taught him valuable lessons about how to run a company and have even compelled him to explore the possibility of spending his entire professional life dedicated to managing his own business.

"I've learned how to manage a supply chain and provide a viable and high quality customer experience," says Eichel of what he learned on co-op. "I now have real world experience and broadened my knowledge of the [consumer product] industry."

His 10-year business plan for All In Nutrition is divided into two phases: First, he wants to expand the brand to include "additional product lines that no one has ever seen before" and then he wants to sell the company. For now, though, he's content to work hard to prove to prospective customers that his energy bar is the best the market has to offer. To that end, he'll be attending this weekend's FitExpo in San Jose, California, and then launching a Kickstarter campaign to raise money to support the development of his forthcoming sweet potato-flavored bar.

"All In Nutrition is a different kind of nutritional brand," Eichel explains. "You haven't seen, smelled, or tasted anything like our bars before, and we're doing it with the highest quality ingredients."

Provided by Northeastern University

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