

BUSINESS INCUBATOR

Aaron Barkenhagen '07 Turned His Coursework into His Life's Work

Bootlegger Brewery's tasting room is consistently crowded with fans of proprietor Aaron Barkenhagen's traditional and unusual brews, including Black Phoenix, a chipotle coffee stout, and Knuckle Sandwich, a punchy ale that lives up to its name.

Bootlegger was conceived while Barkenhagen was earning a B.A. in business administration/entrepreneurship at Mihaylo. He drafted his business plan for the brewery during New Venture Creation, an entrepreneurship class.

Barkenhagen then signed up for another required course, New Venture Launch, where he "got out and did something" – as assigned by his professor – and found a location for his business. One year later, in 2008, with the help of his dad, Barkenhagen introduced Bootlegger Brewery in a downtown Fullerton warehouse.

"Bootlegger Brewery is different. It's not a brew pub," says Barkenhagen, who had been home-brewing for 10 years as a hobby before launching his enterprise. "We have tasting on site, but it's more like an open warehouse."

Barkenhagen also sells to outside buyers, including Vons, BevMo, Whole Foods and Total Wine. This year, the brewery doubled its production, totaling \$1 million in sales.

"It's exciting to see things grow so quickly," adds Barkenhagen, who has advice for potential entrepreneurs with their own ideas brewing: "Just go out and do it. You've got to have a plan, and you've got to get real-world feedback. Mihaylo helped me do both." **M** *Geri Silveira*



Aaron '07 and Patricia Barkenhagen at their brewery. Aaron drafted the business plan in a Mihaylo entrepreneurship course.