



Daniels Pioneer Network

Meet some of the people who power the Daniels Pioneer Network.

Foodpreneurs

Meet four Pioneer-powered companies whose founders took their education, mixed in a dash of crazy and a whole lot of passion to cook up successful ventures in the food and restaurant industry.

Purpose. Passion. Profit.

Love Grown Foods | lovegrownfoods.com

Alex Hasulak (BSBA, 2008)

As a senior in high school, Alex Hasulak envisioned himself going into real estate development, which brought him to the Real Estate and Construction Management program at Daniels. But that plan changed the moment he met now-girlfriend Maddy D'Amato (BA, 2008) in 2007.



Photo: Maddy D'Amato and Alex Hasulak

D'Amato, a native of Aspen (and fabulous cook), made a mean granola, and Hasulak knew that with her passion to make a difference, they had a marketable product on their hands. "We made batch after batch of granola that year, taking samples to class, asking friends and teachers to give us feedback," he says.

And the feedback was clear: people loved their granola. After the pair graduated and moved to Aspen, they started working on the creation of Love Grown Foods. In May 2009, they hit the shelves of Aspen-area markets and specialty stores. By January 2010, Love Grown was sold in 80 Colorado King Soopers and City Market stores, and Hasulak and D'Amato moved to Denver to set up shop. By the end of 2010, Kroger—parent company of nearly 2,500 supermarkets and multi-department stores nationwide—stocked Love Grown in 1,300 stores.

It may sound like the hard part is over, but Hasulak says that getting onto shelves is only half the battle. "We're focused on building our business, perfecting our manufacturing process and keeping on top of the financial decision making," he says. Hasulak and D'Amato are also focused on bringing the right people on board as they grow, including Jason Lundberg (MBA, 2010; BSBA, 2009), whom they hired in November 2010 as chief operating officer, and investors KC Gallagher (MBA, 2002) and Craig Harrison (BSBA, 2003).

Hasulak is grateful for his business education, but says some of his greatest lessons at Daniels weren't academic. "Daniels helped me figure out who I was and what I wanted to do," he says. "I learned that you can make an impact through business. We don't want to be known as just a granola company. We want to make positive change and spread the love." •