

SHAWN STRAFFIN of West Burke, VT, is a musician, former high school football captain, and creative entrepreneur for as long as he can remember. Shawn has creativity in his genes. When he was young, Shawn's mother created a process to make tie dye tee shirts that were wearable in about five minutes. As a child, his family traveled a lot and Shawn helped his mother sell her creations at craft shows and festivals across the country. A mini-marketer at a young age, Shawn realized he could make money by taking lunch orders from vendors at these events and delivering them on his bike. He made money and the vendors were thrilled because they didn't have to leave their booths. Thus began Shawn's entrepreneurial education.

At 16, Shawn hitchhiked across the country with \$125 in his pocket. The next phase of Shawn's entrepreneurial education consisted learning about sales in the real world as he worked at various jobs and sold a variety of items to fund his travels.

As an adult, after many unsatisfying jobs, Shawn began the next phase of his business education, finding passion and fulfillment as a furniture designer at Lyndon Furniture in Vermont. With no education in furniture design and no clue how "regular" people applied for conventional jobs, Shawn laughs as he recalls sitting in the factory's showroom a decade ago for three hours until the owner of the factory agreed to hire him. In 2012, Shawn's furniture designs sold over \$3 million.

The common theme running through all of Shawn's entrepreneurial pursuits – from delivering sandwiches on a bicycle to delivering new furniture designs to some of the county's largest design firms – is a commitment to always ensure that what he does offers substantial value to his customers.

Shawn lives in West Burke, VT, with his wife and daughters.