In the classic movie, The Graduate, starring Dustin Hoffman, Mr. McGwire gives Hoffman’s character Benjamin one word of advice upon his graduation, “plastics.” At least two recent Menlo graduates have taken that industry seriously.

When Pascal Niggli ’11 and Ramses Youssef met on their first day at Menlo, they had no idea that one day they would be entrepreneurs together. “Since we took the same classes and studied together for exams, we knew we were a great and efficient team. We did talk about business ideas, but we could have never imagined to ever be in the packaging field. In fact, people in manufacturing tend to be older, and in the last 40 years there has been little innovation in the plastic manufacturing field."

According to Pascal, "In September 2012, [founding partner] Chris Garcia approached Ramses with one of the Easysnap sachets. The Easysnap sachet is a monodose package, which can be opened with one hand and can contain any kind of liquids for food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals. Chris, at that time, was a sales person for Easypack Solutions in North America. Easypack Solutions is an Italian company that developed and sells the Easysnap sachets in Europe. At that time, the company wanted to expand to the US. When Ramses heard about the product, he recognized the huge potential and convinced Chris to build a company and acquire the exclusive rights for the Easysnap sachets for North America. Together they founded Advantage Line Global LLC (ALG), and later convinced [me] to join.”

With corporate offices in Santa Monica, California and manufacturing facilities in Memphis, Tennessee, Pascal shared how their college experience has helped in their venture. "Ramses and I were both accounting majors, and these classes turned out to be extremely helpful in our daily operations. The Menlo College community and location influenced our entrepreneurial spirit. Menlo College is full of sons and daughters of business people so there are a lot of discussions about business ideas and building a business.”

Starting a manufacturing business takes a big investment. “Thanks to our strong network, we were able to raise funds within the three F’s: friends, family, and fools. The good thing is that everybody loves our product. This makes it easier for us to find investors and customers. Sometimes they even approach us. We have finished our first two investment rounds and raised enough to pay for operations and the next 3 machines which will be arriving soon.” We have finished our first two investment rounds and raised enough to pay for operations and the next three machines which will be arriving soon.”

There is a huge upside potential to the business. "The US packaging market is a 30 billion dollar industry, and because the Easysnap product is unique, we are looking at a high demand,” said Pascal. “Thanks to a partnership with a strong industry leader, we will gain credibility and awareness in the packaging market within the near future. We hope that this partnership will drive our expansion plans in the US.”

Many Menlo College business courses help students learn how to adapt and stay nimble in a competitive environment that is often full of surprises and setbacks.

Said Pascal, “During our last months, we have realized that managing a business is all about problem solving. There were several times when we thought that there was no solution and business was over, but we always found a way to solve the problem. In these tough times, it shows how strongly your team believes in the company, the product, and the abilities of the management team.”

In the exciting position of having taken risk with an innovative product and services, Pascal and Ramses share this advice for Menlo students and alumni who may be considering the entrepreneurial route.

"Not long ago, we returned from a trip to Memphis where our production facilities are located. Our first machine had just landed, and we were able to hold our own first product in our hands. Let us tell you, holding your own product in your hands is a wonderful feeling. It is worth all the hard work that you put in and more.”