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Birmingham alum becomes second casualty of The Apprentice Boardroom

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University staff, students and alumni are among the biggest fans of fired *The Apprentice* candidate, Tim Stillwell.

Tim Stillwell and the Burrito Van on campus

Tim's time on the popular BBC One show was cut short last week when he was fired for failing to project manage the girls' team tasked to create a new flavour of beer.

'I had so much more to give, but it was definitely a good learning experience,' he says.

Hard working Tim (BSc International Business, 2011) already has his own business, having launched The Burrito Van while completing his final year at Birmingham. It quickly became a popular spot on campus and an employer of 15 student staff, after Tim wrote the company's business plan as part of his degree and completed his dissertation on organic food, achieving a first while managing the flourishing enterprise.

The opportunity to apply for series nine of *The Apprentice* was too good to turn down. *'I never expected to get on,'* he says, having beat thousands of competitors to the coveted position of one of 16 hopefuls to become Lord Sugar's next business partner. *'I saw it as an awesome opportunity to expand my business as I genuinely thought I could win, and at 23 years old, I had absolutely nothing to lose.*'

Of his exit last week, Tim says: *'I have never had to manage such massive personalities and I am proud that I stayed true to myself during the time on the show. Everyone assumes business is cutthroat and you get ahead by backstabbing, but that's not who I am and business isn't like that. I was the Project Manager and so I accepted the responsibility for failing the task'.*

'Everyone in the team worked hard and perhaps I should have taken different people into the boardroom but I stand by my decision, it is just a shame that I didn't get the opportunity to pitch my business to Lord Sugar.'

Tim was hoping to go into partnership with Lord Sugar to take his Burrito business nationwide, eventually diversifying into health drinks as part of his food chain. Since his time on the show, Tim has been approached by Westfield and is set to open a second outlet of the company in their Merry Hill shopping centre next month, with plans to expand further in the region in the future.

Does he have any regrets about his time in the competition? *'Speaking up at the end of the first episode was a mistake,'* Tim admits. '*I just wanted Lord Sugar to have a good impression of me from the start. Looking back I was probably too keen and should have bided my time.'* He believes it was this outburst that convinced Lord Sugar to make him Project Manager in week two and while he may regret it, he says it has taught him to be more relaxed in his approach to business, openly admitting he still has a lot to learn.

Tim will be remembered for his endless energy, enthusiasm and good-natured approach to the competition. He quickly established himself as a popular candidate among his peers and the media, initially chosen as an odds-on favourite by one newspaper. *'It was nice to go into the boardroom and have the girls defend me – it could have easily gone down very differently. I would encourage any young people with business ideas to just do it – what have you got to lose? There are lots of people willing to help and you learn so much along the way.'*

Tim's business venture is supported by the University's Entrepreneurship and Innovation team who helped Tim make his idea a reality. *'Tim is such a wonderful role model to other students and graduates,'* says Alison Sharp, Enterprise Lead. *'He has used his own personal experiences from living in Mexico to come up with a simple idea which has successfully adapted to the UK market. His drive and passion has enabled him to progress fast and it is a pleasure to have supported him with his first business.'*

For more information about Tim and his business, visit **www.timstillwell.com (http://www.timstillwell.com)** or **www.theburritokitchen.com (http://www.theburritokitchen.com)** .

To find out more about Entrepreneurship and Innovation at the University, visit **https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/ei/index.aspx (https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/employability/ei/index.aspx)**

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