



**McDAY**

Colabination | Press Releases



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## Colabination Hires New Employees to Expand Entrepreneurial Team

**AUGUST 2014 (PHILADELPHIA, PA)** – Colabination, a Philadelphia ecommerce startup, hired three new employees starting Aug. 12, 2014. Mike Shaer, Kellie Klein and Sneha Kumar joined the team as an expansion of the fashion technology company.

Colabination currently has seven employees and plans to grow exponentially within the upcoming years. CEO Scott Latham said, “I attribute a great deal of Colabination’s success to hiring and retaining the most creative, passionate, and inspiring people I have ever meet. We are thrilled to have three new team members on board who share our common belief in disruptive innovation.”

Shaer will serve as the new marketing manager of Colabination. Shaer joins the team from Referable, a marketing and advertising platform that he co-founded in 2012. For those who know him, Shaer is considered a “marketing guru” and “Jack of all trades.” In his new position he will aid in the development and execution of the company’s inbound and outbound marketing initiatives.

Klein graduated from the University of Miami in 2010 and since then has worked as a marketing specialist, experience coordinator, and intern for NYC fashion designer, Naeem Khan. Klein will serve as the new business relations and branding coordinator at Colabination where she will maintain oversight of company branding and acquisition initiatives.

Kumar is a recent graduate from the University of Pennsylvania where she holds a Masters of Science in Engineering. Kumar is the new business analyst intern and she will work closely with Shaer. Kumar remarked, “When I first met with Colabination, I was immediately drawn by their passion and their firm belief in the vision. It is great to be a part of a team of problem solvers who are intensely driven to change the status quo.”

Colabination’s website is expected to launch late fall 2014. The site’s platform focuses on brand discovery and customer interaction. Following the launch, users will be able to discover emerging brands from all over the world. Until fall, users can also visit Colabination’s blog to read and learn about upcoming designers.

## ABOUT COLABINATION



*Colabination’s mission is simple – empower fashion designers to be discovered. From designers creating the next generation of styles and trends, to anyone managing their own online identity for the first time, Colabination provides elegant solutions that set new standards for online shopping.*

## ABOUT THE TEAM

*Colabination is defined by a single conviction, change the world. Our insistence on providing this change is unparalleled. All of our team members are charged with violating the status quo, honesty, and intellectual rigor to their responsibilities in a never-ending quest for global evolution. We have high expectations of each other and collaborate as a team to build things we are all proud of. That mindset, along with our execution, has allowed Colabination to create revolutionary products.*

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## Small-Business-Saturday Sees Virtual Shopping With Colabination's Virtual Pop-Up Shops

*#DroptheLabel Campaign disrupts brand-only clothing habits and offers undiscovered fashion finds for holiday shopping*

**NOVEMBER 21, 2014 (Philadelphia, PA) - Small Business Saturday** is a perfect launchpad for Colabination's virtual pop-up shops and their disruptive "Drop the Label" campaign. On Saturday, November 29th, Philadelphia-based Colabination will introduce a limited soft launch of their online fashion runway technology, which allows independent fashion designers to establish an online presence quickly and seamlessly. Visitors to the Colabination website will be able to browse and purchase from newly discovered independent fashion designers, and "Drop" the auto-response to corporate, branded fashion labels that drives a lack of individuality in fashion choices for much of the general public.

Scott Latham, CEO of Colabination, phrased it this way: "A disruptive technology is one that displaces an established technology and shakes up the industry. That is our true goal, to shake up the fashion industry and give consumers alternatives to brand-only fashion. For the last twelve months, we have been perfecting our back-end technology which makes it simple for anyone to find interesting and undiscovered fashionwear and trends.

"Quite simply, Colabination is an online marketplace allowing independent designers to be recognized and now, holiday shoppers can actually browse and purchase completely new and until now, undiscovered fashion finds!"

To gather nationwide interest in their concept, Colabination developed the #DroptheLabel concept this month, and is reaching out to twenty (20) U.S. cities, with the intention of locating three (3) or more unique independent fashion designers in those cities. "These make great gift ideas for the holidays and it just made sense to launch our virtual pop-up shops on Small Business Saturday, since shopping local is one of our core philosophies," says CFO Ryan Erfer.

Colabination has already engaged designers and are partnering with local bloggers to write enthusiastically about their discoveries (see <http://colabination.com/blog/>).

CEO Latham adds: “It is our mission to put more power into the hands of the countless talented fashion designers, many of whom I have encountered in my career, who do not have the resources to really succeed, which honestly, means they need help developing brand recognition and revenue.”

In an explanation of their company’s name: Colabination, Alexis Canary, PR and Marketing Outreach Coordinator explains: “We uses “collaboration” and social media outreach to spread our message.” The Colabination team is connecting with local non-fashion brand partners in these twenty targeted cities– small bike shops, independent cafes and coffee shops, to themselves help spread the word, with Colabination then featuring these partners on the site.

On Small Business Saturday, into Cyber Monday and beyond, visitors to the Colabination.com site will see virtual pop-up shops from designers creating the next generation of style and trends, from twenty different cities around the U.S., including Philadelphia, Colabination’s headquarters, to Portland, Oregon, Austin, TX, to Chicago, Miami and Charleston and fourteen other U.S. cities.

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*Colabination is a fashion tech company, located in Philadelphia, and dedicated to changing how fashion is discovered, encouraged, distributed and purchased. Their technology is best described as a virtual showroom for designers, with virtual pop-up shops that allow individual designers to showcase their work.*

High-resolution images are available upon request. Please contact, Susan Stipa McDay LLC, tel.484.883.8808, [SusanStipa@mc-day.com](mailto:SusanStipa@mc-day.com) or Alexis Canary, Colabination, 908-489-1349, [alexiscanary@colabination.com](mailto:alexiscanary@colabination.com)

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## Colabination Welcomes Fashion Advisor Danny Noble

**SEPTEMBER 2014 (PHILADELPHIA, PA)** – Colabination launched its page on Angel List ([angel.com/colabination](http://angel.com/colabination)), a website for startups and investors, last month. Following the launch, award-winning fashion designer Danny Noble joined Colabination’s team as an advisor.

A Philadelphia-based ecommerce startup, Colabination, was invited to create an Angel List page designed to attract potential investors. The Angel List platform offers a basic profile to non-investors and a complete profile to potential investors. In addition to attracting Mr. Noble, Colabination soft-circled \$35,000 within the first few weeks on the site.

Noble started his career in England with the launch of his own brand, *Danny Noble*. Soon after, Nobel was recruited to work in America and quickly established himself in the fashion industry by working with magazines such as *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Glamour*, and *Women’s Wear Daily*. Currently Noble is a professor at Philadelphia University.

CFO Ryan Erfer said, “Danny is an invaluable advisor and mentor who understands the intricacies of the fashion industry and what it takes to build successful brands and businesses on a global scale. He provides incredible insight and direction. We are lucky to have him on board with Colabination.”

Colabination’s website is expected to launch in beta late fall 2014. The site’s platform focuses on brand discovery and customer interaction. Following the launch, users will be able to discover emerging brands from all over the world.

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## Award-Winning Designer/Educator Danny Noble joins Colabination Advisory Board

**NOVEMBER 21, 2014 (Philadelphia, PA)** - Danny Noble is a globally recognized fashion designer, with an exceptional track record of over 30 years of extensive influence in diverse areas including women's sportswear, intimate apparel, menswear and footwear. He has agreed to join the Board of Advisors of Colabination, a Philadelphia fashion tech company committed to empowering independent designers to be discovered.

In a recent interview, Mr. Noble enthusiastically described Colabination's commitment to helping designers navigate the "most complex industry around" as an effort that could dramatically change the independent fashion world. He said, "there are such a large number of truly talented designers who have trouble gaining traction in a world where finance, social media, production and cost of goods expertise can be just as critical as a great design concept."

"What I liked most about Colabination's Scott Latham (CEO) and Ryan Erfer (CFO) was their ability to listen and gather ideas from those of us who have been around awhile, and frankly, I like their style. I met these two individuals on a hot, humid Philadelphia day and our meeting was held as we walked the streets of Philadelphia. Scott and Ryan never broke a sweat, even dressed so professionally in great-looking suits. That was impressive," laughed Mr. Noble.

Scott Latham, CEO of Colabination, is encouraged by Mr. Noble's involvement. "His thirty years as a designer and educator has already brought a level of intimate insight into our strategic planning. We have the passion and the education, and Danny has a way of giving us a reality check!" Mr. Noble is an adjunct professor at the Moore College of Art, and has taught at Philadelphia's University of the Arts previously.

Colabination is currently launching their Drop the Label campaign where [colabination.com](http://colabination.com) visitors are encouraged to visit Virtual Pop-Up shops, to be launched on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, Small Business Saturday. Twenty cities are involved in going underground to discover designers in those cities, and local bloggers, recruited by Colabination, are writing about their discoveries.

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**McDAY**

Colabination | Articles

## **Reliable path to financial success vs. jumping off the deep end into the profitable unknown**

This day in age your twenties are a time for trial and error. Turn down the wrong way and its forgivable, you are young right? Regardless of the leeway we have during these prosperous years we recognize that there are decisions to be made that will impact the rest of our lives.

Have you ever been faced with a decision that you know will impact the rest of your life? How about when that decision is between two alternatives that both have balancing pros and cons, opportunities for success and personal growth, and are equally appealing in terms of your desire to pursue them

A dilemma that is faced more and more by successful, business college students in today's age is that between pursuing entrepreneurship or investment banking. On the one hand, the sound of becoming a self made billionaire like Zuckerberg with the freedom and control to build a company from the ground up sounds like quite an appealing adventure. On the other hand, fitting into the elite career of a high paid Wall Street investment banker doesn't sounds too shabby either. Most would agree that pursuing a startup is much riskier than a career in investment banking, but for me the notion of "risk" is subjective depending on what you're talking about. Riskier in terms of making money: probably. Riskier in terms of enjoying yourself, learning and growing as a person, establishing yourself, and making connections: who knows. It really all comes down to the individual. Perhaps a closer look at the pros and cons of being both an entrepreneur and an investment banker will provide better grounds for a scale on which to weigh the options.

### **Entrepreneurship**

The life of an entrepreneur is thrilling and unpredictable. There is no other feeling like having an idea keep you up at night, rationing through strategies, thinking of action steps, development, networking, etc. The ability to live and work on your own comes with a lot of freedom and responsibility. It takes more than just a bright, determined, and motivated individual to be a successful entrepreneur. A successful entrepreneur is one who is *obsessed* with their vision and will go to the end of the earth to bring it to fruition. This type of ability and passion is not common among college students simply due to a lack of life experiences and a lack of confidence, but there are some that possess it. For me, the desire to be an entrepreneur stems from the urge to solve problems, put myself out there, and creates something I can call my own. In today's age, I genuinely believe that anyone can learn anything. With the Internet at the core of a fast paced technology race, knowledge is for the taking. If someone else out there can be an entrepreneur and build a company from the ground up like Lego bricks, then why can't I? It is all a matter of just diving off the edge, but it's not an easy jump.

Two factors that turn many college students away from entrepreneurship are the stresses that come from having to wear many different hats and the reality of college debt. As an entrepreneur you need to be a manager, marketer, salesman, financier, networker, developer, and a creative mind all in one. Jumping into all of these sudo careers, as a college student who normally has to choose just one career, is scary. However, the experience you can gain from doing so is incomparable to any other career and may be perceived as the opportunity of a lifetime. Moreover, with the average debt of a college graduate nearing \$27,000, \$29,4000 the financial uncertainties of running a startup become a serious factor. For students with college debt, a more conservative path to corporate America is the only practical option. But then again, as you get older and have an established job and family, it will be far more risky to quit and pursue a startup. The whole risk reward thing is clearly a recurring theme here.

## **Investment Banking**

When compared to going for entrepreneurship right out of college, investment banking sounds like a much more reliable path to financial success and a fulfilling early career. The high salary coupled with a rigorous, fast-paced work life is an appealing opportunity for young and hungry college students. Not to mention, there is something elitist about being an investment banker. Wall Street is home to some of the wealthiest and most prestigious financiers in the world and is a breeding ground for some of the country's smartest college students. After working on a variety of projects with other bright individuals and superiors, you will be sure to achieve a wealth of knowledge and individual growth. If you love finance like I do, the work at an investment bank will be very mentally stimulating. Projects in line with advising a multi-billion dollar M&A transaction are incredibly interesting and demanding. While the life of an investment banker is tireless, it is definitely very rewarding. Investment banking Analysts earn some of the highest salaries among college graduates. As someone who wants to pursue finance as a career, and make a lot of money, investment-banking sounds like an obvious choice. But of course, a position at an investment bank will not be handed over on a silver platter, nor is it for everyone.

Two of the main reasons deterring students from pursuing investment banking after college are the feasibility of entry and success in the industry and the amount of hours that are required on the job. Most bulge bracket and top boutique investment banks only recruit at the most prestigious universities and business schools. They want to see tailored resumes, superb academic records, and experience in finance. The behavioral and technical interviews take lots of practice and are what make or break your entry into a firm. The competition is always well tailored so it is necessary to prepare accordingly. For those without a lot of finance experience or not studying on a recruiting campus, the journey is even harder. Aside from the process of getting the job, the work-life balance is another deterrent to being a banker. Working 80 to 100 hour weeks is extremely demanding and there is no doubt that it takes a toll on you. Again, the job is not for everyone and that is why the selection process is so difficult. The banks need to make sure they are hiring the right person for the job.

## **Reviewing the “Risks”**

So what can you take from all of this? Whether or not to pursue entrepreneurship or investment banking (both of which are incredible opportunities and choices, might I add) is a decision based on a number of factors. Every person will evaluate the pros and cons of the two careers differently, but some of the main factors that I look at are whether I will be able to make money, establish myself, make connections, learn and grow as a person, and enjoy myself. As I weighed the opportunities of both entrepreneurship and investment banking under these credentials, the decision remained close to deadlock. Either way, it is important to realize the following: success stems from being a great person who does great work. If you are both a great person and do great work, you cannot go wrong in either industry. And let's face it, there's time to try a number of careers so don't stress too hard about one or the other. Just be the best.

## **So what did I decide to do...**

After a long hard internal and external battle I blindfolded myself, walked out to the edge of the cliff and jumped... The world of entrepreneurship is everything I expected and more. I underestimated the amount of hours.

## **Diary of a Startup: Innovation**

The word innovation has several implications. Tack on “innovative” to any sales campaign and you can guarantee people are going to take a second look. If your product or service is considered innovative then it must be technologically advanced, never been seen or done before, and “the next best thing.” For example, the single cup coffee maker, the camera you attach to you head while surfing and the larger-than-life smart phone that serves as your own personal secretary.

In the world of startups we know that innovation and entrepreneurship go hand in hand - the concepts basically intertwine. Ever wonder why there is such a need for innovation? Or perhaps what is necessary to create a product or service that is considered innovative? Here are a few things I have found throughout my experiences as an entrepreneur that are essential for innovation:

### **Ability to adapt**

Living in our consumer generated society, it is easy to understand why we must adapt to customers’ needs. In the initial stages of developing Colabination’s website, our team hit the streets with an iPad and asked potential users what they truly thought of our product. While we received a wide array of positive feedback – every once in awhile a user would point out something they thought could be improved. After rounds upon rounds of testing and adjusting our platform we realized the value of adapting to our consumers needs and wants, even if it meant changing our original product.

### **Competition**

Competition drives innovation in any marketplace. When one company develops a new innovative product or service, their competition heads back to the drawing board to figure out how they can make they can make their prototype even better. When this happens, you have to ask yourself, “What makes us stand out among the rest?” I used this question while developing Colabination’s platform knowing that our customers and critiques would question our uniqueness.

### **Willingness to fail**

Without failure, we never learn from our mistakes. I hate to be the bearer of bad news but in many cases your first prototype is destined for failure. Failing is not a new concept in the startup world – but often deters potential entrepreneurs from following through with their dreams. This is why it is important in the beginning to accept the fact that you might fail and continue on with the belief that in the end, your idea will be a success.

### **Create disruption**

At Colabination, we place a high value upon changing the status quo. For our developing marketplace, we imagine a world full of collaboration and innovation amongst businesses everywhere though a common value put on creation and disruption.

All in all innovation will continue to drive changes in our society. Consumers crave products and services that are technologically advanced, revolutionary and transformative – rather more simply put, “bigger and better.” As I have realized, the value put upon the word innovation, is not susceptible to change.

We've all seen it: a group of teenagers or twenty-somethings hanging out at lunch, in a park, at the bar, but instead of interacting with one another, they're completely absorbed by their phones, typing away. While older generations might scoff at this sort of behavior, those of us who find technology fascinating know that right in their hands, those teens have access to the entire world with just a few swipes and clicks. The world is changing, and as leaders of startups, it's crucial that we learn to adjust.

Simultaneously, as Philadelphia's manufacturing industry grows rapidly, it's up to us, the entrepreneurs, not to just keep up, but to remain one step ahead. Philly's manufacturing is at its highest since March 2011, according to a [Business Outlook Survey](#), which is comparable to the thriving manufacturing market in Seattle. When I look at these two cities, I can think of a few things they have in common: creative minds, a laid-back but still city-like feel, and most importantly, a huge growth in technology.

I attribute this growth in manufacturing largely to the growth in technology in these cities. Just as Seattle is known for being a "bio-tech hub," Philly's focus on technology is growing rapidly, and at Colabination, we aim to use this fact to our advantage. Millennials keep up with technology unlike any generation before them, which is what makes it so crucial for us to connect to them in this way, part of the reason Colabination identifies as a "fashion-tech" startup.

Through our social media sites, we've learned millennials likes and dislikes, and it's important to keep these things in mind when moving forward. Here are a few of the things I've found to be extremely important:

**Aesthetics:** It's important that your site is accessible, but it also needs to be pleasing to the eye. Colors that pop, a plethora of graphics (we all know millennials believe that *graphics > words*), and a simplistic but aesthetically pleasing look can really go a long way. This doesn't mean going crazy and adding a million things crammed together on your page; just keep it interesting. If people like what they see, they'll continue to explore your page, your startup, your mission.

**Humor:** Honestly, who doesn't like to laugh? I don't think it's even fair to say that millennials love humor because I think it applies to all ages. Posting funny, quirky things will undoubtedly catch the attention of people, and once you have them laughing, they'll certainly start paying attention. I even got featured on [Tech Cocktail](#) just by being my everyday zany self! All it took was a matter of opening myself up and allowing the world to see Colabination's funny side. With the creativity that flows through every startup, I'm certain you have members of your team who have some great jokes up their sleeves. Being humorous doesn't mean you're any less of a business person, it just shows that you're willing to work hard and love having fun while doing it.

**Videos:** Through our work with Colabination's social media sites, our head of marketing, Alexis Canary, and myself have found that millennials love videos. If well-respected news sources can get away with using video to get information across, why can't your startup? After a day of school or a day at work, many people on your website or other forms of social media are wiped out from reading. Let them relax and watch a video about your startup, about an event you put on or attended, or any other information you think is relevant.

**Calls to Action:** Create situations in which people can get involved with your startup. If they're interacting, even if it's just online, they'll feel like they're a part of what you're doing and become much more invested. Invite people to events, suggest that they read articles about your startup, and encourage them to support other startups (don't forget the [importance of collaboration!](#)) Remember that the more you interact with these millennials, the more they'll continue to interact with you.

**Reach:** Expanding your reach is crucial as a startup, as getting your name out there is what allows you to grow. One option to help you with this is "boosting" your posts on Facebook, which is generally inexpensive and can take a post that only about 35 people would normally see and ensure that around 1000 people see it. It's important to remember to create a target group when doing this so that you know your post is going to be seen by people interested in things similar to your startup. When using other social media platforms, remember your audience so that they will not only glance at your posts, but also like or share them to increase your reach as well.

As the world of technology changes, so must we. With millennials as one of our main targets, we need to cater to their love of the ease of technology and aim to grab their attention.

## **What are you trying to accomplish?**

The main goal of Colabination is to provide talented new designers with a platform where they can develop a strong online presence and sustainable business. After experiencing the difficulties and hurdles of designers through my past companies, Flight Crew Clothing Company and Main Line Lifestyle Magazine, I recognized that the fashion market needed to change. For new designers, it was seemingly impossible to get noticed when trying to compete with already established name brands. However, this didn't mean that these new designers weren't artistic, creative, and passionate, and this is what made me look to create an outlet for these talented individuals. Colabination provides this platform by both telling the designers' personal stories and placing them in an environment where they can be organically found by users, creating customer loyalty.

Simultaneously, I hope to increase the collaboration between startup companies, especially those in the Philadelphia area. When I first started working on Colabination, I immediately received encouragement and help from other Philly startups, and it really made all the difference. Rick Nucci, local founder and president of Philadelphia Startup Leaders (PSL) was one of the first to welcome us with open arms, and he helped point us in the right direction. Similarly, Rob and Jake of RJMetrics agreed to meet with me and helped me out as well. I believe Rob put it like this: "Absolutely anything for a fellow Philly Founder." It is my belief that through these connections, startup leaders can work together to challenge the status quo of the business world as it is now and help one another through collaboration.

## **What's the revenue model?**

Colabination will earn a 15% commission on anything sold on the platform, allowing us to collect revenue as we also provide a place for business for designers.

## **Do you have an office? Where?**

Currently, the University Science Center in Philadelphia is providing us with a home for Colabination. The open space allows us to move around, evokes our creative side, and gives us the chance to collaborate with members of other startups with whom we share the space. At the same time, we also have remote spaces within the office where we can hold meetings when necessary. The generosity of the University Science Center further goes to show that collaboration is necessary for startups to grow.

**How many people are on your team?**

Colabination consists of [XX] employees at the moment, and the small size of our startup allows us to work closely with one another, increasing both our productivity and creativity. Each member of our startup shares the same goals for Colabination but provides his or her own individual point of view, so as CEO of Colabination, it has been easy to guide them in the direction of constant collaboration.

**Tell me a bit about yourself - what you used to do, how old you are, where you live in Philly.**

I view myself as a lifetime entrepreneur. By the time I was 15, I was investing in the stock market, and I realized I was meant to be in the world of business. After growing up outside of Philly and taking college level business classes in high school, I attended and graduated from Penn State University with a degree in Communications. The combination of business savvy and communication skills I have gained allows me not only to understand the intricacies of businesses, but also how to interact with others in order to find success. I currently live in [XX], giving me an up close and personal place in the city to work not only with my employees at Colabination, but also to reach out to other startups to engage them in productive collaboration.

I was the founder and CEO of Flight Crew Clothing Company and Main Line Lifestyle Magazine, where I learned valuable lessons that have helped me grow into the CEO I am at Colabination today. Although I am only 22, my past experiences with startups have already shown me that the world of business needs to be changed to give a chance to those who aren't already established in the business community, particularly the fashion-tech community. Upon this realization, I thought to myself, "If not me, who? If not now, when?" I realized that I needed to be the one to help alter the status quo of the business world, rather than waiting for it to change. From this idea, Colabination was born.