

# YAN LYANSKY *on the move*

For Yan Lyansky, *CST '93, '02*, a stagnant life is not worth living. This is the philosophy of his business, DownTube, and his approach to teaching at the university level. Never standing still, Lyansky combines his passion for cycling with his mathematics expertise to offer unique bikes for consumers on the go and to create an active lifestyle for himself.

Lyansky designs, tests, imports and sells folding bicycles through his Web site, DownTube.com. The business, which he started as a bicycling resource site while he was a Temple undergraduate, has grown into an enterprise that grosses more than \$2 million annually.



JOSEPH V. LABOLITO

His growing online business, which has sold more than 3,000 bikes, caters to individuals on the move.

Serving boaters, RV enthusiasts, pilots and environmentally conscious commuters, the bikes weigh 25 pounds and fold to fit in a carrying bag in just 10 seconds. And DownTube bikes are ideal for the financially minded consumer, selling for roughly half the price of many standard bicycles. "We have a unique product at a phenomenal price" Lyansky says. "That's why we're accelerating past the competition."

With Lyansky's business savvy, DownTube is spreading across the globe. He is now established in the United Kingdom and has plans to expand into Japan, the largest bicycle market in the world. Lyansky attributes his success to efficiency and hard work. He runs the business entirely on his own, designing each of the bicycle models himself and employing just a few people to help with distribution. "I'm lucky enough to do what I want to do," he says. "But I work pretty hard. It's not a Forrest Gump kind of thing where success just happens. It's more than just luck."

Augmenting his online business, Lyansky, who earned his doctorate in mathematics from Temple in 2002, also has maintained visiting professorships in mathematics and computer science at various universities. However, for Lyansky, his teaching career is not aimed at tenure or earning accolades, but at fully living

his life. "I use my teaching gigs to travel and to have a good time," he explains, "I teach for enjoyment and I would lose that with tenure-track jobs."

With this mentality, Lyansky has held teaching positions at Temple, the University of the Virgin Islands, Furman College in South Carolina and currently at East Carolina University, not far from the Outer Banks. In many of these places, Lyansky also sets up a local DownTube store to help advertise his unique product. Although his business is primarily an online venture, he uses the stores as "a place to hang out and have a good time" while designing future bike models.

Although he stays busy with teaching and DownTube, Lyansky is always looking for ways to keep moving. He is a formidable chess player who has defeated the World Junior Speed Chess champion and an expert mountain biker. Sustaining his own love of biking, he has now cycled across the entire country on two separate occasions. "If I do the same thing for too long, I get stagnant and unproductive," he says. "Therefore, I try to move twice a year." Traveling from one university to the next, constantly dreaming of new bike designs and expanding his business overseas, Lyansky, with the help of his folding, portable bikes, is always on the move.

— STEPHANIE KOLLM