

Meet Taylor Miller: Blogger, entrepreneur, life changer

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

It isn't often you meet someone so driven to support the gluten-free community—a person who not only understands how isolating it is to have celiac disease, but realizes there are more ways to help people with celiac or those transitioning to the gluten-free diet and works to create new ways to connect people with gluten-free products. Taylor Miller, 20, owner of GlutenAway, is just that person. He has been blogging for only five years, but thanks to his passion and creativity, he has become an entrepreneur and his blog has morphed into a marketing company.

Miller pioneered online and local hands-on events targeted at those who cannot afford to travel to gluten-free events. In July 2014, he launched themed sample kits that can be ordered online for a small fee and began offering online expos that can be attended from home for free. He began conducting monthly live events, called Sample Saturdays, in 2016, where attendees try new products and learn how to work with them. These services were simply not offered until he came along.

The GlutenAway blog has transformed into a company providing event staffing, demo services, marketing campaign fulfillment and social media management for gluten-free companies. He has succeeded where many bloggers fail—turning his blog into a soul-fulfilling career that actually pays the bills.

But how did it all start?

GFL: When were you diagnosed with celiac?

TM: I was fortunate to be diagnosed with celiac disease at 13. Many people go years undiagnosed with celiac disease or gluten sensitivity, so I was one of the lucky ones to be diagnosed so young. It was tough at that age, but I know it would have been much tougher if I went on undiagnosed any longer.

GFL: When did you start blogging?

TM: I started blogging at the age of 15, just



five years ago. It began as a passion project. I realized that no one else around me understood celiac disease and many kids and teens seemed upset about being gluten free, having no role model to look to. I wanted to be that role model as a teen and a soon-to-be young adult. What was stopping me? Nothing! This is when GlutenAway was born and it's been the best decision I ever made.

GFL: How and when did the blog evolve into the sample kits and online expos?

TM: Blogging was only the beginning of the GlutenAway journey. For the first three years, it was all about writing and creating recipes as much as I could. But once I turned 18 and graduated high school, I had to decide, "Do I want to go to college like everyone else? Or do I want to follow my dreams and make a career out of doing what I love?" Since then, the sample kits and online expo [were] born. I found a way to promote the products I love, work with the companies I love and help the people I so dearly want to help—all this while learning to grow a business, make a living for myself and, most importantly, helping others. We started creating sample kits and shipping them right out of our house. Our home became our business center full of boxes and samples. The longer we did it, the more it caught on and grew.

GFL: How did you get the idea for the online expos?

TM: The idea came when I began to travel to gluten-free expos. I would constantly hear, "I wish they were closer to me!"

This got me thinking, why not try to create a virtual version of these expos where anyone around the U.S. can attend for free? The idea built until it officially hit the market in July 2015. Now, there is an online expo people [can] attend from home!

GFL: When did you start the consulting arm and how many clients do you represent?

TM: The consulting and representation of companies came soon after the online expo began. We began to develop relationships with the companies that participated in the online expos. They saw the value and customer reach our services could provide and it grew from there. I've been fortunate enough to consult for companies like Sonoma Flatbreads, Enjoy Life Foods, Canyon Bakehouse and many more. Since the beginning, I've worked with more than 75 gluten-free companies, big and small.

GFL: Where does event marketing fit in?

TM: Over the years, we've been fortunate enough to partner with Gluten Free & More, [which] puts on the Gluten Free Food Allergy Fests around the U.S. One of the biggest needs we found for companies is good representation at these events. It's hard for brands to find people that they trust to represent them at these events—this is where we come in. We've worked hard at building close, personal relationships with these companies who now trust us to manage their booth, hire staff and even lead cooking demos.

GFL: The Sample Saturday Events are such a unique creation—how did it come about?

TM: Sample Saturday events started in September 2016 at our office space in Florida. In the space, we set up sampling stations, conduct live cooking demos, and send attendees home with each recipe and sample bags full of products from each station. Companies sponsor these events by sending products for the staff to sample and recipes to prepare.

The idea came from attending expos and noticing there was something missing. As great as the expos are, they lack the close, intimate, social element that many people want when it comes to gluten free. People want to learn how to use products in recipes, not just taste them. We found that people want to build relationships and socialize with others



who know first-hand what it's like to live gluten free.

Now, we hold monthly gluten-free events with recipes to try and a very close, social element. These events are held once a month and have around 150 people attend from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You could compare it to a wine tasting, but with gluten-free products and food! They've gone great so far and are exactly what has been missing from the gluten-free community over the years.

GFL: When did your mom, Laura McCutcheon, get involved in the business and how does she impact its growth?

TM: My mom became involved once the online expo and sampling program began. I didn't have much marketing experience at all. Writing, blogging and using social media were always my strong points. Since she's come on, she's managed a lot of the business development and behind-the-scenes marketing. She's allowed me to become a lot better at my job and, honestly, GlutenAway wouldn't be where it is today without her.

She makes an amazing business partner, but she will always be my mom first.

GFL: Was it your plan all along to grow GlutenAway into a marketing company?

TM: It was never my plan to do marketing as a job. I always focused on blogging but I obviously couldn't write forever if I wanted to make a living. Since I started so young, I didn't know what I wanted for myself and that's honestly been the exciting part about the entire process. Along this journey, I've figured out what about my jobs make me happy. I am still figuring out what I want to do. Luckily, I'm fortunate enough to help people be gluten free along the way.

GFL: What makes you want to continue GlutenAway?

TM: Turning my hobby into my career has been the biggest blessing I could ever ask for. Dealing with my illnesses as a teen has been hard. Trying to start a business at the age of 18 has been hard. But truly nothing is more rewarding than knowing that I can make the

lives of those in a similar situation, health wise, a little bit easier. I love getting to use my own hardships to help others. I love feeling that I can make a difference in someone's life just by sharing what I've been through or what products I enjoy. Sure, GlutenAway used to be a hobby, but now it's my job and, honestly, it's the best job I could ever ask for and one that I hope to keep doing as long as I live. If I can spend my career helping those who are gluten free, nothing could be better.

GFL: What's next for GlutenAway?

TM: There is much to come for GlutenAway! I will always be the person handling the social media and interacting with those who are gluten free. It's what I love most! But as the business grows more, I will find many more opportunities presenting [themselves] as well. We'll have a very cool online program coming out by the end of the year. I can't say much now, but I promise you it will be something that will make cooking gluten free much easier—and all from the comfort of home.

HATCH

Gluten Free

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