

Tensaga Streetwear founder Matt Bustamante reveals how he built his brand on a budget

BELLEVILLE, QUEBEC, CANADA, October 12, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Because of COVID forcing everyone to shop online for the past 2 years, fast fashion e-commerce brands have taken over the social media space. Using massive social media influencers, their multi-million-dollar budget, and huge warehouses, they can sell hundreds of new designs every week — all at an affordable price.

One Vancouver entrepreneur is finding a way to compete with these brands on a budget using support from local talent.

Introducing Matthew, founder of Tensaga.”

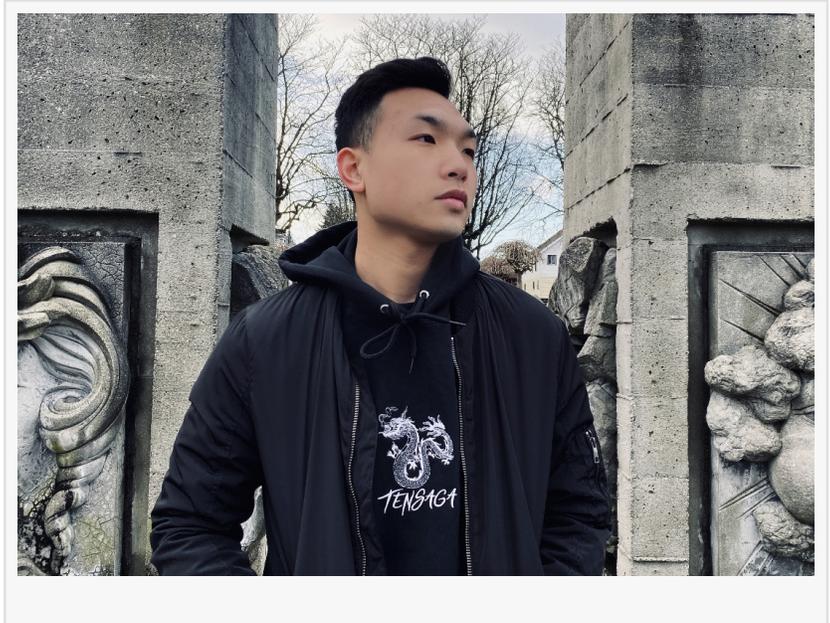
Matthew Bustamante is a 26-year-old university marketing graduate. Living in the most expensive city in Canada, he needed a way to make some extra money while putting his marketing skills to use.

Being a fan of streetwear throughout high school, he realized there was a gap in the market for affordable Japanese-style streetwear. Most American-based brands are too expensive for Canadians after currency conversion and shipping.

“In senior year, I knew I had the skills to make my own brand, and with some quick research, I found that there was a lot of small screen-printing business in Vancouver. After a few phone calls with these manufacturers, working with contractors, and getting some advice from Reddit, I was ready to dive in.”

Not having a large budget, he had to think of a way to build his brand. He took a page out of these influencer-based brands and did the same but at a small, local scale.

The first step — designing original Japanese-style artwork without the hefty price tag.



“Something most people don’t know about this fast fashion is that they just use generic stock photos. At the rate they create new products, they don’t have time to design original prints, so they buy stock art online in bulk. Do a quick google search, and you can find them online yourself!”

Matthew, on the other hand, collaborates with local artists that merely appreciate the free exposure. Not only is this method cost-effective, it makes the artwork much easier and faster to finish.

“They can really make what you envision, no details get lost through online communication.”

Next up was manufacturing in Vancouver while still keeping a decent profit margin.

“Overseas production usually required me to make at least 100 units of each color, something way out of my budget. Instead, I use local printing shops that had Canadian-branded blanks already in stock. This way, I could produce pieces at a very low minimum unit number, keeping me within my budget. Plus, this saves weeks of shipping time and fees from overseas.”

Finally, marketing. Matthew wanted it to appear that everyone in the city was wearing Tensaga, as the new “in-brand.” This marketing strategy is what Matthew says catapulted Tensaga to where it is now.

“It was quantity over quality for me in the beginning. When you get a large number of people showcasing your pieces, it gives you content to post, and it makes it seem like your brand is everywhere. If you take a look at the Instagram page, 95% of my feed is all user-generated content. This type of content is what makes the brand attractive and feel relatable.”

But how did he get so many people to showcase his apparel?

“The trick was to find micro-influencers, models, and generally popular” people in Vancouver that genuinely liked the “[Japanese streetwear](#)” aesthetic. Since my brand fit their “style”, influencers are usually down to promote by clothing for free by wearing it in the content they post on their social media accounts”

What’s next for Matthew?

Tensaga has successfully gained nationwide exposure, now receiving orders from across Canada. His next goal is to use this social proof to get into small retail stores in Vancouver, and eventually in locations all over Canada.

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