WHILE other students were busy studying, Abdul Basit Abdur Rahim Nasution was hard at work, earning over RM100,000 in sales per month.

And he did it before graduating as the recipient of last year’s Chancellor’s Award from Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UniRazak).

The hardworking 24-year-old started his printing business in May 2010.

With help from the varsity’s Bank Rakyat School of Business and Entrepreneurship lecturers, he built the business from scratch and started raking in five-figure sales within a few months.

“...targeting RM2.4mil for sales this year,” said Abdul Basit.

The road to success however, was not easy.

At the beginning, Abdul Basit enrolled in an engineering course at a local private university and worked part-time to make ends meet.

“I worked at a large home furnishing company and it was there that I developed my communication and marketing skills with people from different backgrounds.

“I later worked with a frozen food company as a finance executive and that helped me understand better the accounting and book-keeping process,” he said.

As a child, Abdul Basit was interested in science, especially chemistry, but all that changed when he entered matriculation.

“...asked a local food shop if they would be interested to order some custom-made T-shirts. They agreed.

With the profits from the T-shirt sales, he ordered name cards to further promote his business.

He took on a partner and within two months, they were grossing RM50,000 per month in sales. It was not always smooth sailing though.

His partner moved to a new house which made it difficult for them to meet and coordinate their plans.

Business slowed down and at one point, Abdul Basit even considered quitting the business.

However, he was determined not to fail and took on more partners who were experienced in the accounting and management aspects.

“My forte is in sales and operation, which complements the strengths of my partners,” he said.

Abdul Basit credited his drive and ambition to his parents who sold nasi lemak by the roadside in Kuala Kangsar, Perak.

At the age of four, he was already helping them to sell nasi lemak.

When asked how he found the time to balance his work and studies, he replied: “Each day has 24 hours. Eight hours for sleeping and another eight for studying. The question is, what do you do with the remaining eight hours?”

Juggling studying and running his own business proved to be no easy task.

He was frequently called out by his lecturers to stop answering business calls in class to avoid disturbing other students.

“I am very grateful to the lecturers at UniRazak. They helped me develop my business skills and kept me aware of issues such as accounting, supply chain, management and others.

“They would check with me and ask if I had done certain things and their help was invaluable,” he said.

Abdul Basit’s business prospered and he eventually got married in 2011. He also performed the Haj with his father in the same year.

The young entrepreneur has expressed support for his alma mater and will return to the varsity to encourage and support budding entrepreneurs.

He is currently embarking on a franchise business scheme to assist other entrepreneurs within universities throughout Malaysia.