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FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 2008

## Small Business Story: Mark Anthony Media

### First and last name

Mark Anthony Rudder

### Company name

Mark Anthony Media

### Website address

[www.markanthonymedia.com](http://www.markanthonymedia.com)

### Please describe exactly what your business does and your target market

My company does graphic design and branding, website design, website hosting, multimedia, printing, advertising and marketing. We have a contracted a pool of talent we use regular basis We also develop internet based tools for our clients like CMS (Content Management System) websites, contact databases or e-mail marketing tools. Our ideal customers are small businesses who need a big business impact. We help small companies with marketing efforts that help companies get noticed and drive sales.



### What makes your business different? What is that you do that makes your business unique?

There are a lot design and advertising companies out there -- but I think we are unique because of our creative skill and talent in these disciplines, level of customer service, our focus and understanding of various disciplines and marketing tools and how they can be best utilized and most importantly we don't just set out to do "creative" work. We want our work to make our clients money in the long term. Above all, if we don't do that, we have failed.

### Why did you decide to start your own business? How did you get into your particular business?

I always wanted to be an entrepreneur since college. I love the freedom and challenges it takes to be a successful entrepreneur, you are constantly thinking and constantly challenged. I also like the fact that you are responsible for the success or failure of your business. A lot of people look at it as risk, but I mostly see the rewards. I also wanted to be wealthy, and having the opportunity to create exciting projects and businesses from the ground up. Being an entrepreneur allows me to do two things I'm passionate about -- art and business.

### What's the best part of being an entrepreneur?

The best part of being an entrepreneur is that you get to do what you love doing. You aren't stuck in an office all day grumbling about your boss. It is also great that you are directly responsible for the success of your business. You really have a chance to build a lot of wealth and opportunities for yourself and the people close to you.

### What's the worst part of being an entrepreneur?

The worst part of being an entrepreneur sometimes, is that you only have yourself to blame when business is going slow. Also, for some entrepreneurs, not having a steady paycheck, can be an issue. But I think, that is good problem to have. It forces you to figure out, how can you have more money coming to you business on a regular basis. You get to ask yourself "What are you doing wrong and how can I change that?" A lot of the times, the solutions can be very profitable.

### How long have you been in business?

I've been officially in business since 2004. But before that I was doing a lot of projects for other clients when I was in school and also on the side while working for other employers.

### How did you raise the start-up cash?

It was mostly cash saved up from working from my former employer and freelance jobs that I done. I've slowly built my business brick by brick.

### Identify and discuss a few lessons you've learned as an entrepreneur?

The most important lesson, I've learned is to NEVER give up. It sounds cliché but I've seen a lot of young people start a business and then give up -- after trying it for a short period. You really need to have an iron will and focus. It is very easy to get derailed by negative people and not very ideal circumstances.

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Drop us a line at [blog@bizlaunch.ca](mailto:blog@bizlaunch.ca)

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I would also highly recommend reviewing your business constantly. Reviewing what services/products you sell that give you the highest margins. Where can you cut down on your expenses. What new products/services you can offer.

Also, you really have to listen to what your customers need or want and then evaluate how profitable those ideas can be. if you offered to other customers.

#### What advice would you give to an aspiring entrepreneur?

I would say take the time to understand your business and the industry as much as you can. Always keep a close eye on the books, again how much money you spend and where. Stay up to date on the latest in the industry whether by reading magazines or popular websites. You should also read and many general business magazines, blogs, websites as possible. They're usually always full of ideas on marketing, branding, accounting etc. Also keep a close eye on your competitors and what they are doing -- see if there is anything you can take from there arsenal to add to yours.

#### What are your goals and plans for the future?

Well, right now we just launched our new website. The new website is very significant because it really represents our creativity and our business model as a whole. So we are doing a lot more advertising and PR to bring more awareness to it. We've never really done any serious advertising until this point. We have mostly built our business on word of mouth, and some third party businesses that found us clients. So we are now looking to advertise and market heavily to expand out business.

But our immediate goals service wise are to get into more TV commercial production and to do a lot more websites for small businesses, as almost every business needs a website. We will be also launching a new e-mail marketing system for our clients in the next few months.

POSTED BY DANIEL AT [1:37 PM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  
LABELS: [SMALL BUSINESS STORY](#)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2008

## Understanding Import & Export Financing in China

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 3 LUNCH SEMINAR: Understanding Import & Export Financing in China (or "how to get paid on time")  
with Luc Fornier, International Trade Financing Manager, National Bank of Canada

In trading with China, what are the critical strategies that will ensure that you you get paid, and get paid on time? Understanding the differences between "Letters of Credit" and "Factoring" and can make an impact on your critical cash flow and when you get paid.

When: September 3, 2008; 11:45 AM - 1:30 PM  
Where: HKCBA Offices, 9 Temperance Street, 2nd Fl (near Yonge and Adelaide)  
Cost: \$20 (includes lunch); Free for confirmed Mission delegates  
Advanced RSVP, before 5 PM 9/2 are essential. Contact [carla@themandarinschool.com](mailto:carla@themandarinschool.com) or 416-581-8868 to RSVP.

POSTED BY ANDREW AT [1:29 PM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  
LABELS: [SMALL BUSINESS SEMINARS](#)

## This Will Make You Think Twice About Your Pricing

I don't typically read science blogs but I thought this article is very relevant to brand positioning in relation to price.

[http://scienceblogs.com/cortex/2008/08/expensive\\_wine.php](http://scienceblogs.com/cortex/2008/08/expensive_wine.php)

What do you think?

POSTED BY DANIEL AT [1:10 PM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2008

## Social Media for your Business

I just got back from the morning seminars at the [IncentiveWorks](#) conference and had the opportunity to hear [Phil Barrett](#) speak about Social Media and how it has evolved and how it will progress over the next 10 years. Interesting stuff. (He used a different type of video by [commoncraft](#)) It was also amazing to see just how easy it is for small business to harness the power of web 2.0 and use it to promote their product or service.

Take [Facebook](#), for example. 75% it's users check their account daily with the average visit time of 29.8 minutes. That is ludicrous compared to **every other website in the world**. Think about how this can help

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small business.

[Videoblogging](#), [RSS](#), feed aggregator, social bookmarking, and the [social media release](#) were amongst the other topics discussed. I highly recommend entrepreneurs get a basic understanding of social media... hey it can be free.

POSTED BY RENÉE AT [4:01 PM](#) [1 COMMENT](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

## Brand Matters for Small Business

There's more to a "brand" than having a great logo or tag line. And while Canadian entrepreneurs seem to recognize the value of brand, a recent survey indicates that these business owners lack confidence in their own brand and the marketing of that brand.

The survey, conducted by Ipsos Reid for HP Canada, indicates that 59% of small to medium-sized (SMB) owners polled say branding their business is a priority. However, less than half (45%) are very satisfied with their company's current brand, and only one in three (32%) strongly agree that they are confident they are making the right marketing and branding decisions.

The poll also suggests that there's uncertainty among small business owners as to what "brand" actually means. According to the survey, more than half (55%) of the 1,200 entrepreneurs surveyed define brand as their product or company name, while 29% say it is their logo.

As a result of the survey, HP teamed up with brand expert Cheryl Sylvester, co-founder of YourBrandMakeover.com to put together these tips on how to help SMBs build, express, and ultimately, gain confidence in their brand:

1. Look at brand as an investment in your company.  
Brand needs to be seen as a long-term investment that pays off over the entire life of a company. An effective brand will help attract clients and potential partners.
2. Determine what you want your brand to say about your company. Each brand is unique—SMBs need to ask themselves what makes their business or product unique?
3. Examine all customer and partner interactions.  
Brand is expressed in every business interaction—including the company logo on an email signature can go a long way to establish brand identity.
4. Develop marketing materials that can make an impact. Online resources help SMBs create marketing materials. Try HP Print Studio ([www.hp.ca/printstudio](http://www.hp.ca/printstudio)) for free business card, letterhead, and mailing label templates.
5. Make an impact with colour. A dash of colour can make any piece of marketing collateral more noticeable— and colour printing is increasingly more affordable with products such as the new HP Color LaserJet 1312nfi multifunction printer for only \$499
6. Continue to update your brand. Brand is always evolving and should always reflect the business as it is today, not how it was the day it started.

POSTED BY ANDREW AT [2:06 PM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2008

## Small Business Story

### First and last name

Tom Pauncz

### Company name

30WEST MEDIA GROUP

### Website address

<http://www.30westmediagroup.com>

### Please describe exactly what your business does and your target market (ideal customer)

We provide video and editing services for corporate, government and private events. We are specialized in producing marketing



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videos for speakers, trainers and real estate firms. We do everything from creating storyboards, graphics, special effects to delivering finished products in the clients' choice of format – web, DVD, CD. And we provide unique stock footage to a variety of clients.

**What makes your business different? What is that you do that makes your business unique**

Passion, creativity, attention to detail. We always deliver a quality product.

**Why did you decide to start your own business? How did you get into your particular business? (i.e., saw a market need, discovered my passion, found a partner, etc.)**

Photography and movies have been my passion since I was a teenager. One day, about 10 years ago, I went digital and bought a new video camera. On a lengthy overseas vacation with the new camera, I re-discovered what a wonderful medium moving images were. While obsessing about this passion to colleagues, I was persuaded to produce a short video for a soccer club's annual awards dinner. It was so successfully received that I decided that is what I wanted to do in my next career. It was portable – and I could indulge in my other passion – travel. And perhaps the two could be combined in some way in whatever part of the world I happened to be in at the time.

So, in time, I upgraded to professional equipment and launched 30WEST MEDIA GROUP. My website showcases the variety of media services we can provide.

We now have clients in Canada and the US who have been with us for number of years for whom we produce corporate videos, web commercials, promotional spots and pretty much **"anything we can point a camera at – we can capture it"**.

**What's the best part of being an entrepreneur?**

The best part is working for yourself – seeing your business develop and grow.

**What's the worst part of being and entrepreneur?**

You have only yourself to blame if your business doesn't develop and grow.

**How long have you been in business?**

Since 2001

**How did you raise the start-up cash?**

Self-financed from savings.

**Identify and discuss a few lessons you've learned as an entrepreneur?**

You can't live by giving away your services. You need to develop not just technical but marketing and sales skills.

**What advice would you give to an aspiring entrepreneur?**

Follow your passion. Think it through. Have a backup plan.

**What are your goals and plans for the future?**

Keep doing what I love. Spread the word to new clients.

POSTED BY ANDREW AT [12:08 PM](#) [1 COMMENT](#) [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)  
LABELS: [SMALL BUSINESS STORY](#)

## Small Business Story

Tia Sutherland

Realeza Presents...

[www.realezapresents.com](http://www.realezapresents.com)

[www.realezapresents.blogspot.com](http://www.realezapresents.blogspot.com)

Realeza Presents is a 2 year old sole proprietorship that



specializes in modern & unique alternatives for jewelry/accessory storage and organization. Currently, the product of focus is our "Jewelry Pillow".



The "Jewelry Pillow" functions as a hanging jewelry organizer and display. It is made in 100% satin and hangs on the wall by way of either a gold or silver chain. It is offered in a variation of colors and patterns and can be custom made to order. It is offered in two sizes, small (5 by 10.5 inches) and large (4.5 by 15 inches) and currently range from \$35 to \$45 in price.

Besides being the only unique alternative to the jewelry box, the "Jewelry Pillow" has many benefits which include the prevention of jewelry discoloration, tangling and misplacement. It also does a great job of conserving space and eliminating jewelry clutter. It is trendy and beautifully hand made, which aids in being the perfect piece of wall decor for any room.

In upcoming months, I will be expanding the product line to include other original organizational storage products, display products and our very own jewelry line as well.

Because my products are so versatile, my ideal client ranges from children to adults alike. Anyone who loves to be different, organized, and values their jewelry/accessories will benefit greatly from my products. I have also started to grab attention of the bridal industry, as my ring bearer pillow is like no other and my jewelry pillow makes for the most original wedding attendant gift.

The two things that I'm certain I was born with are creativity and the need to be my own boss. I've always been an entrepreneur at heart, as I have managed myself as a fashion model for the past 12 years. I am also a writer and Certified Image Consultant. Even though I have worked, and still work for some great companies, my ultimate goal is to become 100% self-sufficient as a business owner. At 27 years old, I feel like I'm not too far away from that.

I always like to tell this story, because coincidentally, the success of my jewelry pillow came by accident. I had a jewelry box like everyone else and dealt with the annoyances that come with one. One evening, I was searching for my favorite pair of chandelier earrings and found that one of them had hooked on to another piece of jewelry while in the box. I have A LOT of jewelry, so I was literally fighting to detangle the earrings I was desperately in need of. After struggling to detangle the mess, the earring I was fighting for broke, which made me very upset. So at that point I said to myself, "There has to be an easier, more efficient way to store my jewelry". My jewelry means a lot to me and every piece is special, even "royal" in its own way. So I immediately came up with the jewelry pillow concept, so that my jewelry will always be presented to me with class, care, and exceptional style.

I absolutely love the life of an entrepreneur. Being able to implement my creativity and have my voice heard all without boundaries is a feeling that is like no other. I obtained such great gratification and I am so proud of what I am and strive to become. I can honestly say that the only difficulty I have come across as an entrepreneur is the need to do things the right way financially. I started with the little savings I had, I am funding everything out of pocket right now which can be stressful at times. But through it all I have further learned financial responsibility and the importance of budgeting, as there is always a positive to what we may consider negatives. I've also learned to accept help when things get overwhelming, and never let your pride get the best of you. Build partnerships, not friendships. Never stop networking! Networking can be done anywhere at any time!

To all upcoming entrepreneurs: Don't ignore the fire burning within you! Do what you're driven to do, and stay focused! Be self-motivated, because most times, those who you will look to for motivation will let you down. Don't EVER give up on your dreams, whatever they may be. Know that what you put into it is what you get out. So give it your ALL. And believe in the Law of Attraction, because it is only the truth. Positivity will only bring you the positive. I promise!

Along the way, I've been discouraged and warned of the disadvantages that come along with being a young, black, female entrepreneur. But I've taken what some look at as hurdles as great, God given opportunities. I still have a ways to go, and a lot of work to do. I want to bring my online store to heightened success. I also plan on opening a chain of specialty gift retail stores, and having only the

most unique designer's showcase and sell their work. There's a lot to be done, and many dreams to reach. But I truly believe that it won't be long until I'm sitting back, smiling at Oprah, thanking the Lord for all of his bestowed blessings.

POSTED BY ANDREW AT [11:57 AM](#) [1 COMMENT](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2008

## Small Business Jingle

Take a mid afternoon break and do something fun...How about creating your own small business jingle? The [Jingle Generator](#) allows you to easily create a fun jingle for your business. You can chose to type in your content and have an automated verbal greeting, or even better, you can call in your own advertising.

It takes 10 minutes.

It's FREE

It's FUN!

POSTED BY RENÉE AT [3:04 PM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2008

## Small Business Story: Monkey See Monkey Do Childcare and Development Centres

### First and last name:

Deanna Collarile

### Company name:

Monkey See Monkey Do Childcare and Development Centres

"Tell me, and I'll forget. Show me, and I might remember. Involve me, and I will learn."



### Website address:

[www.monkeybizz.ca](http://www.monkeybizz.ca)

### Locations:

Oakville and Burlington

### Please describe exactly what your business does and who you cater to

We are a childcare facility that cares for children from 15 months to the age of 10. We offer care to families that are looking for full time or part time care. Our programs are geared towards toddlers, preschoolers, Junior and Senior Kindergarten, before and after school and summer camp.

### What makes your business different? What is that you do that makes your business unique?

We are an arts focused centre that offers classes in French, Yoga, Music, Salsa Tots, Sign Language, Kids at Computers and monthly offsite excursions and special visitors.

### Why did you decide to start your own business? How did you get into your particular business?

I became a mother and that time came that I needed to return to work. I wanted to open up a Childcare and Development Centre for children to flourish academically, physically and socially. It was important for me to balance work and family life. I also wanted to watch my children reach their milestones and be apart of their world.

### What's the best part of being an entrepreneur?

Working for myself enables me to be more involved in my daughter's lives. Most of all it gives our family maximum quality time together. I have the best of both worlds. There is so much more time to concentrate on life's simple pleasures.

### What's the worst part of being and entrepreneur?

Endless hours of work go into a business when it is your own. As an owner you are the human resource department, receptionist, consultant, mediator, teacher ect.... You are truly the "BOSS"

### How long have you been in business?

8 years

### How did you raise the start-up cash?

Borrowed 20K unsecured line of credit the bank and a very good business plan.

#### Identify and discuss a few lessons you've learned as an entrepreneur?

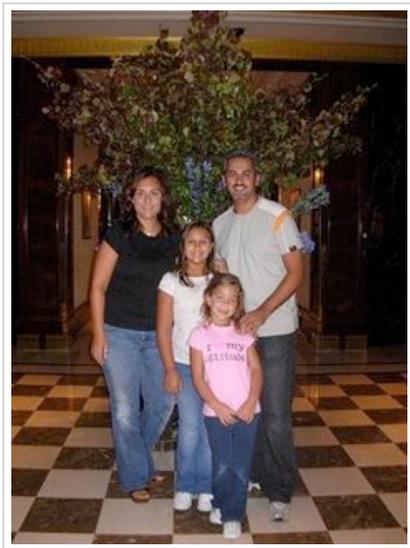
It is your company and your integrity that sets you aside from any other company. Stay true to your clients, this will help you continue to build a solid foundation and a true partnership.

#### What advice would you give to an aspiring entrepreneur?

The sky has no limits. Nothing is impossible. Try to find a mentor that will assist you along the way. This will help minimize any costly errors. Make sure that you research your market to maximize your revenue.

#### What are your goals and plans for the future?

I had always planned to have three schools. This year I reached my goal and expanded yet once more. I opened my third Childcare Centre. Right now life is good.



POSTED BY DANIEL AT [3:54 PM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#) [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

LABELS: [ENTREPRENEUR STORY](#)

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## How saving a few pennies today can cost you in long run

I just read Seth Godin's post [The Bitter Taste of Nickels and Dimes](#) and it had me thinking about small business.

Seth talks about how large companies such as Whole Foods have obligations to their shareholders that leads them to make decisions on a margin only basis. In entrepreneurship you don't have the same obligations and for this reason I prefer giving my business to local small businesses.

In the neighbourhood around our offices I have had two polar experiences with independent restaurants.

The first [Ravi Soups](#), a local eatery just around the corner from our offices owned and operated by master chef Ravi Kanagarajah defines excellence. Not only do they provide an exceptional take out lunch (the curried beef with pineapple salsa and spinach wrap comes highly recommended) but they pull no stops to accommodate to their customers. Ravi ensures he personally hands over the magnificent soups and wraps and warmly greets customers, they stage an annual [pay-what-you-want](#) buffet and in my experience if I was ever short a few pennies they just laugh it off and tell me to come again.

I experienced the complete opposite at a local shawerma joint that for their sake will remain nameless. Firstly when I walked in I was not greeted, just kind of stared at until I made my order. The prudish shawerma was then served to me we just as much panache, cold yet greasy, but I guess you get what you pay for. when I came to pay, the cashier insisted I paid before I ate, which is typical for a fast food joint, however I was a dime short, which is really my own fault but her response was what really got me. She insisted that I paid her the balance which must have been less than 50 cents; I actually had to pay with my debit card instead. Needless to say I have never returned and I give any visitors to my neighbourhood the same warning against eating there.

Now as a small business, in fact any size business, how much is that dime worth to you? If you are prepared to pay \$50 a lead for advertising, is it really worth 50 cents to lose a customer for life as well as having them bad mouthing your brand? Are you running your business according to today's bottom line at the expense of customer loyalty? Excellent customer service is the cheapest and most effective marketing tool, how are you capitalizing?

POSTED BY DANIEL AT [10:49 AM](#) [0 COMMENTS](#)  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#)

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