

Why Are You Hiding
Your Uniqueness?

The Secret to
Smart Reinvention

Image Overhaul: 5 Tips for
Better Advertising

Successful *Independent* Business

Small Town, Big Save

How Business BootCamp
Changed One Downtown's Fate

Biz Success Stories:
THEY DID IT, YOU CAN TOO

MONUMENTAL IDEA!

The Crazy Cows That Made
One Man's Business Thrive...
see how on pg. 12



A New Destination for Small Business Owners

One thing's for sure: When you own your own business, you get to be the boss. Unfortunately, you get to be the boss of everything, and too often, that can be an overwhelming, and often lonely, experience.

Well, I think I have something for you that might make being the boss a little easier.

Some of you know that I'm a professional speaker and business consultant who has worked with independent business owners for nearly 30 years. In that time, I've consulted with more than 10,000 business owners in more than 500 communities, helping them learn how to make their businesses Consumer Destinations.

During all that time, I've always wanted to create a publication that could reach out to independent entrepreneurs and show them how to make their businesses more profitable, and help them bring more customers in their doors.

Welcome to our newest venture, *Successful Independent Business* magazine. This magazine is for you.

As you read through our first issue, you're going to hear success stories of owners just like you, located in large cities and small towns, achieving spectacular success by following the Destination process that I teach.

If you're receiving this and you're not a business owner, that's fine. We are also mailing this to community leaders, director of business associations, and franchise networks. You and your organization's members can benefit from this magazine, too.

This magazine was created to show you how other independent entrepreneurs are creating extraordinary results in a competitive world in an unforgiving economy. We designed it to give you ideas, insights, and real world techniques that you can apply in your business right now. You'll also notice that I'm featuring some top business authors and experts who will be sharing their advice with you. I wanted to bring in the voices of the best business experts in the world to create a resource for small business owners to hang onto, and be a source where they can find inspiration.

We've made it a mission of ours to be different from other business magazines. Unlike some publications that constantly focus on the next Mark Zuckerberg of the world who is designing the next online business that might or might not be around next year, *Successful Independent Business* will focus on the hundreds of thousands of small businesses that open their doors every day, all over the world: The

restaurants, the retail stores, the service businesses, and the professional practices who meet the needs of millions of consumers daily, both in person and online.

Don't you think we all need to be re-energized and re-inspired from time to time? I do! It's not always fun being the person that

everyone comes to when they have a question! That's why in every issue, we'll not only focus on success stories that you can learn from, but I'll focus on a specific part of my 14-step Destination Business strategy that you can take and begin working on in your business. At the end of the day, I'm hoping each issue helps you become more competent at creating your own Destination Business.

As you read the stories of these businesses, don't be impatient and don't get discouraged. There's nothing easy about running your own business, and not every success happens overnight. But little by little, small, incremental changes add up, and soon, the business you have right now won't look like the business you have down the road.

If you have story ideas, comments about our issue, or you know a great Destination Business we should be featuring, send your thoughts to me at Jon@SuccessfulIndependentBusiness.com. I'll respond to every email that's sent in.

So, until next issue, here's wishing that you find some amazing inspiration in this issue and I look forward to hearing about your successes!



Jon Schallert
JON SCHALLERT

PS: I hope as you read our magazine, I'm sure you'll want to share it with your peers and fellow business owners. If you don't want to give them your issue, you can always suggest they subscribe online at www.SuccessfulIndependentBusiness.com

Quit Hiding Your Uniqueness

A few years ago, the Minnesota Main Street Program brought me to Red Wing, Minnesota to conduct a statewide workshop on creating a Destination Business. While in Red Wing, I stayed at the historic St. James Hotel and ate quite a few times at the hotel's restaurant, Jimmy's Pub. Jimmy's Pub was amazing, decorated in oak wood wall paneling with wooden beams on the ceiling, but what caught my eye first was the historic oak bar. On one side wall was an intricately carved oak bar counter top that dominated the room.

I mentioned to the bartender that the bar was quite impressive, but said to him that I thought the entire bar top looked older than the actual hotel. He told me that my perception was right, and that the restaurant was built only 10 years before, but it was built to look historic, while the actual bar top itself was the oldest part of the hotel. He went on to explain that the back of the bar was more than 100 years old, imported from Germany, and reassembled here in Red Wing. "The bar counter came from Wisconsin, and it's also over 100 years old, but the fascinating thing about the bar top is that it's all cut from one piece of wood. There are no seams in this entire bar top."

And sure enough, when I looked at the bar top, it was composed of one 30-inch wide, 40-foot long piece of oak lumber, with not one seam or break in the entire piece.

After staring at it awhile, I asked him: "So how did they get this bar into this room if it had to be moved and kept together as one single piece?"

"That was a challenge," he shared with me. "They had to cut a hole in the ceiling of the restaurant and lift this entire bar, with a crane, five stories high, and drop it into place right here!"

"Wow! That's incredible! That must have really drawn some attention here in Red Wing," I said.

"Oh, it did," he told me.

"Do you have a photo of the bar being lifted into place," I asked?

"We do somewhere."

"That photo would be amazing to see in the bar, on the wall, or in the menu, so people knew what effort had to be taken to get this bar in place."

"Hmm..." he said. "That's a great idea. I'll have to see if we still have that photo."

I'm sharing this story with you because every day, when I'm talking with business owners about what makes their business unique, there are one-of-a-kind aspects about their businesses that pop out of their mouths, just like this one from Jimmy's Pub. And this example in Red Wing is not the only time it's happened. This happens so often that I know forgetting to highlight one's uniqueness is not a coincidence.

But here's something that I can't figure out: Why is it that owners unknowingly hide phenomenal aspects of their businesses?

"That photo would be amazing to see in the bar, on the wall, or in the menu, so people knew what effort had to be taken to get this bar in place."

What is it that causes us to neglect mentioning parts of our businesses that people would find fascinating?

Is it because owners judge what they think customers want to hear?

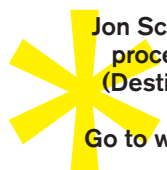
Is it because advertising reps tell us what they think we should advertise, and in that process, we subdue certain stories that we're not sure what to do with them?

Or is it that business owners believe their uniqueness is visible to everyone?

Remember that there are always more potential customers who know nothing about your business than those who know about it. And of those who have heard about your business, most won't understand it completely, most will have forgotten some aspect of it, and most will not have internalized your marketing message, even if they've heard it before.

There is someone new, every day, walking in to your business, experiencing it for the first time. Be ready to share what's truly different about your business with them. Every day, you have the opportunity to amaze someone who has never heard of your business before, and bond them to your business for life.

Your very best customer of all time might be the next person through your door. Don't make the mistake of assuming they know what's unique about your business.



Jon Schallert consults with independent business owners and speaks for associations and communities on his Destination Business process. When Jon is not speaking at conferences around the country, he conducts his 2½ day Destination Business BootCamp® (DestinationBootCamp.com), in Longmont, Colorado. Jon is also the founder of the online training network, Destination University® (DestinationUniversity.com) where businesses can access more than 150 webinars from over 50 authors and experts. Go to www.JonSchallert.com and access the Resources page to find free articles, learn about upcoming workshops and webinars, and download valuable business tips.

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Successful *Independent* Business

Issue 1

DEPARTMENTS

2 From the Publisher

3 Success Strategy:
Don't Hide Your
Uniqueness

5 Success Stories

7 Expert Advice: Josh
Linkner on Reinvention

8 Expert Advice:
Richard Carraro on Ads
That Work

14 Fresh Ideas

Come In
WE'RE
OPEN

FEATURES

10

Small Town, Big Save

Does your city's downtown need a boost? Some curb appeal? A few more customers? Pack your bags; it's time for Destination BootCamp.

12

Monumental Changes

Think outside the box—or sometimes on top of it—to put your business on the map.



TELL THE WORLD

TripleXXX Family Restaurant

When you own an eatery that makes it onto the Food Network, you know you're doing something

right. In Carrie and Greg Ehresman's case, a slot on the pilot episode of Guy Fieri's *Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives* was the jackpot for their burger joint near Purdue University in Indiana. It was attention well-deserved, says Jon Schallert: The place had a built-in story that sells itself to consumers. The couple just needed to get the word out. Enter Schallert's Destination BootCamp.

After Carrie attended BootCamp for the first time a little over 10 years ago, she knew they had to start capitalizing on the rich Americana history of the restaurant to reach a broader market: TripleXXX, before the name carried other, uh, connotations, was once an iconic root beer stand, founded in 1895, with locations that dotted the nation. It was the kind of place your grandparents would take their dates to split a five-cent root beer back in the day. Today, the West Lafayette outpost is the last remaining authentic TripleXXX "thirst station" (drive-in) in the world, still known for its "chopped steaks"—hand-ground sirloin. "When I met Greg, he was already doing great food," Carrie says. "He was a Midwesterner, and was keeping it a secret. It's very Midwestern to not be boastful."

Under Schallert's tutelage—the couple now attends BootCamps every year to 18 months to get "re-energized"—the Ehresmans have become media-savvy purveyors of straight-up nostalgia that draws customers from hours away just to grab lunch. After the first BootCamp, sales shot up 18 percent, and the couple slashed their advertising budget in half. In fact, business has been so good that they opened a second successful diner a few miles down the road. "As an independent business, you might think you're playing sandlot baseball in a T-shirt and tennis shoes," Greg says. "But whether you know it or not, you're playing in the big leagues. You have to play a bigger game."

2 N. Salisbury St.,
West Lafayette, IN;
765-743-5373;
triplexxxfamilyrestaurant.com



FIND YOUR VOICE

Olympic Hot Tub

When Alice Cunningham and her husband decided to open their Seattle hot tub shop in the '70s, neither had a relevant

business background. But they wanted a change from the bureaucracy of their desk jobs; they dreamed of a small business they could run together. Hot tubs were the newest thing on the market. "I said the immortal words, 'How hard can this be?'" Cunningham says. "And oh my gosh...so hard."

Fast forward to 2000. Business was stable after a couple of decades, but it wasn't taking off. That's when Cunningham heard Jon Schallert speak at an event in Seattle and promptly signed up for Destination Business BootCamp. "Hearing Jon, I thought, we're just working day to day," she says. "We're not seeing a lot of changes or growth. Jon taught us how to expect more."

One of her biggest takeaways from Schallert's Destination Success Network—which includes monthly newsletters, phone consultations, and access to the country's brightest business minds—was the importance of visibility. In 2008 when the economy plummeted (taking with it a key market of middleclass hot tub consumers), she launched the Olympic Hot Tub Blog to expand the company's reach. The idea: more blogs, better SEO, increased site traffic, higher sales. She recently surpassed her 800th post, and Olympic Hot Tub is the number one hit in many Google searches. In the past two years, the blog has ushered 100,000 people to the website. Needless to say, they weathered the recession and continue to thrive by regularly revisiting Schallert's arsenal of strategies. "Jon was so inspirational," Cunningham says. "Talking to him every month kept us in the game."

1425 Dexter Ave. North,
Seattle, WA; 206-286-0700;
olympichottub.com
(multiple locations)





POSITION YOURSELF

The Boot Shack

Do you own a snazzy had-to-have-'em pair of leather boots that, truthfully, is terribly uncomfortable? You're not alone, according to the owners of the Boot Shack in St. Cloud, Minnesota, who say that 70 percent of their first-time customers are wearing the wrong size—and suffering. Luckily, the Boot Shack can remedy this problem. “We’re the only store in the country that measures feet like they did in the old days,” says owner Kevin Durken. This is what eventually became the store’s unique positioning statement that set them apart from competition—a marketing technique they learned at Jon Schallert’s Destination Business BootCamp.

Durken opened the store in 1980 with a dedication to customer service and old-fashioned boot-fitting, and that passion hasn’t dissipated. Today, the boot fitters still use a Brannock Device—you may remember the metal measuring instrument from your childhood—to customize a boot to the very nooks and crannies of your foot: from size three to 18 and widths AAAA to EEEE. He does not sell boots over the Internet in an effort to stay true to the quality of his services. But with the proliferation of online warehouse shopping sites like Zappo’s, the brick-and-mortar Boot Shack needed a marketing plan to trump convenience and convince customers that the custom fitting is worth visiting the physical store. “We weren’t advertising like we were a destination business,” Durken says. “Jon helped us realize what the store was, and helped us move forward to keep it a destination.”

With strategies that ranged from social media and public speaking to coining a company tagline (“The Boot Shack: Where The Boots Fit Better”) and the positioning statement, Durken revamped the store. Like Schallert knew they would, the customers came—from Texas, from California, from hours away to buy the perfect pair of boots. Business shot up by more than 10 percent last year. “In 33 years of business, [Jon] is the one single thing that’s helped us the most,” Durken says. “He takes you from a local business to nationwide.”

2221 Roosevelt Rd.,
St. Cloud, MN; 320-252-6872;
thebootshack.com



HAVE FUN AT WORK

Two Rivers

If you visit Brad Hewlett’s Two Rivers gift shop in Winnipeg, Manitoba, make sure to sign the petition to protect the Prairie Sasquatch. Of the nearly 75 shops in The Forks shopping district—Winnipeg’s most popular tourist destination—it’s the only place where you can do your part to prevent the killing of the elusive (if mythical) beasts. And, of course, buy an adorable plush Sasquatch as a souvenir.

While you’re there, you’ll be hard-pressed not to pick up a sample of Pancake Billy’s Chug-gable Maple Syrup. The bearded, bellied, lumberjack on the label? That’s the result of Hewlett’s Pancake Billy model search to find an iconic face for the brand.

The creative marketing schemes, both of which were covered in local TV news spots and newspapers, were inspired by Jon Schallert’s Destination University online training program. Hewlett and Schallert have never met. But for \$30 a month, Hewlett has access to live webinars with renowned business experts, social networking with other business owners, and a library of Schallert’s business trainings on everything from store appearance to high-tech marketing to leadership skills. The result: truly signature products, a fun in-store experience, and a buzz that draws in customers. “Jon tells you *exactly* what you need to do,” Hewlett says. “It’s easy, it’s step-by-step, it’s insanely practical, and it’s extremely effective. This stuff is like gold to someone like me who is willing to make the effort to introduce it.”



107-1 Forks Market Road,
Winnipeg, Manitoba; 204-947-0186;
theforks.com/shopping

The Road to Reinvention

How to get unstuck and find your way forward.

Josh Linkner

We live in a time of brutal competition. Fickle consumer trends, friction-free markets, and political unrest threaten the existence of many organizations. Nearly every industry is in the midst of massive upheaval, with the old stalwarts falling quickly to the new breed of innovators. Dizzying speed, exponential complexity, and mind-numbing technology advances exacerbate the challenges we face as leaders.

With economic threats like these racing toward you, how do you react? Do you stand frozen in place with fear and anxiety? Or do you leap into action, finding a new and better way forward? Renegade leaders choose to upset the status quo long before there's a need to do so. Instead of losing ground, these innovators are accomplishing dramatic growth and spurring tremendous economic gain.

Companies, communities, and individuals fall for many reasons, but one of the most common—and easily avoidable—is the failure to reinvent. Those who feel the most secure in the status quo are in fact the most vulnerable. Many organizations, once great, wither and die as a direct result of their deep entrenchment in the past. They discover too late that success isn't about cracking the code once and then enjoying the spoils forever. Instead, it's a moving target that we have to hit again and again. The disruption of ongoing innovation eventually topples any organization that fails to keep moving—to reinvent.

The good news about reinvention is that you don't need magic, genius, good looks, or vaults of cash to transform your organization or career. Instead, the required elements are open-mindedness, courage, and imagination. Unleashing your imagination is no longer optional and in fact, will become the lifeblood of your success. It's time to embrace your role as chief disruption officer, no matter where you sit on the organization chart. In fact, your company and your career depend on it.

The Eight Core Principles

1. LET GO OF THE PAST. The past is a great teacher, but it's a horrible master. Living in the clutches of the past can shackle your imagination and relegate you to thinking small. Imagine carrying around a backpack full of rocks, each representing some past injustice or setback. You'll never be able to play your best game unless you release the burden of the past and liberate yourself from its heavy load.

2. ENCOURAGE COURAGE. You'll never instill the spirit of reinvention in your team by making people afraid to express their ideas. Instead, encourage the people you work with to be bold—confident in their ability to innovate and courageous in their vision. Your whole organization will benefit from their bravery.

3. EMBRACE FAILURE. “Every bull's eye is the result of 100 misses,” the old saying goes. Yet we harshly condemn setbacks or any signal that doesn't indicate immediate success. Failure in fact is an essential part of the discovery process. As a leader, it's critical that you teach your team to consider mistakes and missteps a natural part of the pathway toward reinvention.

4. DO THE OPPOSITE. Throughout time, some of the biggest breakthroughs have come from innovators implementing a contrarian approach. Leaders who have experienced the pinnacles of success have dared to zig while everyone else zags. Doing the opposite—upending expectations, pushing through boundaries, running toward the thing everyone else is running from—is critical to stand out from the crowd.

5. IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES. Disruptive thinking takes a certain amount of faith. You have to be willing to explore the unknown and imagine outcomes you've never experienced before. The human brain is hardwired for imagination; in fact, our ability to project possibilities is part of our survival system. From our understanding of the workings of the universe to our knowledge of the microbes on our skin, almost every human advancement began as someone's wild dream. If we waited to see it first, we'd never have civil rights, advanced manufacturing, lifesaving medical treatments, or wireless Internet. Reinvention is born in the imagination. We have to unshackle ourselves from the bland realities of the present in order to imagine, and then create, a profoundly different future.

6. PUT YOURSELF OUT OF BUSINESS. The best leaders today realize that their job is to put their own companies out of business. They know that ongoing, far-reaching reinvention—from products and services to production and technology—is mandatory for survival. Top-tier companies constantly examine their offerings and the way they do business to find new approaches with greater impact. They are obsessed with finding a better way to do their work and are on a relentless hunt for outdated systems, processes, commu-

nication, and frameworks. Sometimes this philosophy yields a series of strong, incremental improvements that collectively move the needle. At other times, the gains from this approach are transformational.

7. REJECT LIMITS. The world is filled with nay-sayers, but if we accept the limits of their no-can-do thinking, progress as a society stops. Nearly every advance in civilization was met with an ice-cold reception. Thankfully, the best leaders have the courage to advance their causes despite the critics.

8. AIM BEYOND. Whether you are launching a product, opening a fashion boutique, seeking a job, or rebuilding a broken community, your focal point must be ahead of you. You need to move forward anticipating trends and changes in the competitive landscape. A solution that is spot-on in the near term may completely miss when it's time to go live, even if it's only a few months away.

It's your choice. Proactive reinvention is a route that leads to success in all areas of life if you firmly commit to embracing it. You are the only one who can make that choice. This is your time to slide over into the driver's seat and speed toward the enormous opportunities that lie ahead. Despite the obstacles, both real and perceived, that may be holding you back, it's time to shed your barriers in the same way a snake sheds its skin.

THE DECISION IS YOURS: disrupt or be disrupted.



Josh Linkner is a successful tech entrepreneur, venture capitalist, keynote speaker, and a featured expert in the Destination University online training program. Linkner is CEO and managing partner of Detroit Venture Partners and author of two New York Times Best-

sellers: Disciplined Dreaming—A Proven System to Drive Breakthrough Creativity, and his most recent work, The Road To Reinvention – How To Drive Disruption and Accelerate Transformation. Josh is a regular columnist for Forbes, The Detroit Free Press, and Inc. Magazine. He is playing a key role in the reinvention of his hometown of Detroit, Michigan. And... He also plays a mean jazz guitar.

For his full biography check out <http://joshlinkner.com/>. Follow him on Twitter [@joshlinkner](https://twitter.com/joshlinkner)

AD IT UP

ClownBike Advertising can share your business with the world—and make the world listen.

Richard Carraro tells it like is. And the ClownBike Advertising owner is not afraid to tell you that your advertising sucks. The tough-love brand of guidance earned him a guest-speaker role in Jon Schallert's Destination Business BootCamps, where he urges small business owners to take a good, hard look at their advertising strategies.

Based in Sea Cliff, New York, ClownBike is a one-man agency that aims to bring affordable, effective advertising to small town, Main Street businesses. Bonus: Carraro brings 20 years of national advertising cred to his work. As a former creative director for a Madison Avenue firm, he's spearheaded ad initiatives for big-name clients such as Nabisco, for whom his award-winning Snack-Wells campaign drummed up a \$420 million sales run. These days, his outside-the-box concepts are generating buzz on a different scale. "I take national creativity and bring it to local advertising," Carraro says.

Most local promos, he says, are a waste of money. "Everybody hates local advertising because it doesn't work," Carraro says. "But you have to recognize the problem before you can fix it." Here are five things you're doing wrong with your advertising, and what you can do about it.

THE PROBLEM: DIY ads.

Business owners are great at running their businesses. But chances are, they've never worked in advertising. They're not sure what resonates with consumers. And even if they've conjured up a brilliant concept, they probably lack the tools to execute it properly. "If I worked with a restaurant, I'd tell them that I know absolutely nothing about running a restaurant," Carraro says. "I guarantee I would burn that place to the ground within a week."

THE FIX: Delegate, delegate, delegate.

The ROI on hiring a professional is worth it. "Remember: When hiring a person or agency, you are really paying for two things: concept and execution," Carraro says. "If you're not super impressed by their portfolio, don't hire them. If you don't see the magic now, it's not going to happen on your job."

THE PROBLEM: Same old, same old.

Too many ads have similar messages and imagery. "It's the most common mistake in advertising," Carraro says. "When your advertising looks like your competition's, the two ads blend together and cancel each other out. Audiences get easily confused and quickly turn the page."

THE FIX: The opposites rule.

"Do the opposite of your competition," Carraro says. It might feel bold to stray from the standard. But there's no winner when the score is all tied up. Give readers a way to distinguish you from the crowd.

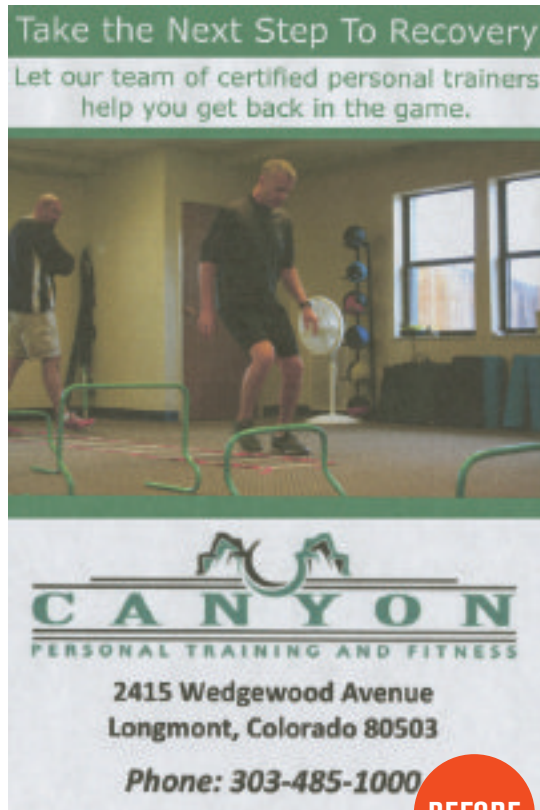
BEFORE



AFTER



Experts



BEFORE



AFTER

THE PROBLEM: Lost in the clutter.

Even if your ad is different than your competition's, it could still be drowning in the rest of the page. Do your typeface, photography, and concept jump off the page among all the other words, logos, and numbers?

THE FIX: Go avant-garde.

"Be willing to let go and take a chance," Carraro says. "Advertising to me is the Wild West. There are no standards, and people are just all over the place." Find a concept that breaks through the noise. No one ever got noticed by blending in.

THE PROBLEM: Emotionally challenged.

Do people laugh, cry, think, or smile when they see your ad? If it doesn't evoke an authentic reaction, it's not going to have a lasting impact. "Dumping letters, numbers, and bad photos into a little box is not an ad," Carraro says. "I had a client who spent \$36,000 per year to run an ad designed by the publication. It looked like a big, generic business card. My client sheepishly said, 'Well, they did it for free.'"

THE FIX: Build entertainment value.

"Business owners need to make an investment in their ad designs and logos before they spend a dime running them," Carraro says. "Breakthrough advertising touches emotions. You always need a visual (and concept) to suck people in; then they will read the words or go to your website. I try to make each ad funny or sad or beautiful. I try to entertain people."

THE PROBLEM: Not worth keeping.

The sign of a good ad? People retain it, just for the heck of it. They stick it on the fridge because it makes them smile. Most ads get tossed with the garbage, never to be thought of again. Where's the value in that?

THE FIX: Create a good brand image.

"A brand image is a key visual that represents and sells your business to the world when you are not there to sell it yourself," Carraro says. "A brand image is not disposable. [They] are not based on product or price. A brand image is about waving your freak flag and telling the world why you are special...They can be used for everything from a business card to a billboard."

More info: ClownBike Advertising, 516-521-3282, clownbike.com



BEFORE



AFTER



Small Town, Big Save



***Does your city's downtown need a boost?
Some curb appeal? A few more customers?
Pack your bags; it's time for Destination BootCamp.***



Once a month, the townspeople of Burkburnett, Texas gather inside Hayes General Store for “pickin’ and grillin’.” For any northerners out there, it’s just like it sounds: Guitar playing, hot dogs and burgers on the grill, chatting with your neighbors while you shop. Two things are remarkable about this. First: The town has a legitimate, thriving, mom-and-pop general store that sells a little bit of whatever you need—cue the nostalgia for yesteryear. Second: This community spirit began with one man and his teachings: Jon Schallert and his Destination Business BootCamp.

Burkburnett is a small town of 11,000 near the Texas-Oklahoma border. It pulls in a healthy amount of revenue from thriving independent businesses and shops downtown. But it wasn’t always that way.

For 20 years, the town was home to a Wal-Mart that accounted for a full quarter of the town’s sales tax revenue. When the chain announced in 2007 that it was shuttering the Burkburnett location to open a superstore 10 miles down the road in a different municipality, company officials asked what they could do to soften the blow of the impending revenue void—a serious hardship for a small town whose economic wellbeing was built around the financial windfall of the megastore.

That’s when the town’s Economic Development Corporation, spearheaded by then-president Charlie McCullough, suggested that a group of Burkburnett’s small businesses take a trip to Destination BootCamp. Helmed by international speaker, consultant, and business expert Jon Schallert, the two-and-a-half-day intensive training in Longmont, Colorado is designed to invigorate, revitalize, and inspire small independent businesses with innovative marketing strategies—from storefront display to signature products to community collaboration—that can transform them into “consumer destinations.” As McCullough puts it, the shops learn how to become “more than just that place you pop into when you need a roll of toilet paper.” Instead, they learn to bill themselves as destinations that attract shoppers and visitors locally and from beyond their marketplace.

When six or more businesses from the same community attend BootCamp, the group, like Burkburnett’s contingency, becomes part of Schallert’s Community Reinvention Program (CRP), which includes six months of follow-up. During that timeframe, Schallert will schedule a visit to the community, provide one-

on-one consultations, hold monthly meetings by phone, send each owner monthly newsletters and audio CDs with expert advice, and more. “Everybody came back with a lot of ideas,” says McCullough, who owns a manufacturing company for trench-digging equipment. “You learn a lot about things you’d never think about. [Our businesses] put a lot of those ideas into play. When Wal-Mart did move, they just took up the slack. Our sales tax revenue really never dropped. It started increasing, and it’s increased every month since then.” Ultimately, Burkburnett hardly noticed the departure of the big-box store and the revenue that disappeared with it.

Schallert’s program has boosted small-town success across the United States. More than 30 communities in 15 states have sent groups to the CRP, from Rocky Mountain resorts and Great Plains farm towns to small Rust Belt cities and metropolitan

years. Jeff Hofaker, former director of Phillips County Economic Development, says the shared destination marketing concepts have reshaped the business environment. “They look more at, ‘How can we make an atmosphere, an environment, that’s conducive to everybody working collaboratively?’” Hofaker says. “That’s one of the things [Jon] emphasizes at conferences—how to bring people in, attract people from a farther distance. It creates this bond.”

Hofaker explains how the owner of a cosmetics service developed a collaboration with a flower and retail shop. “Everybody won,” Hofaker says. “People would come in and say, ‘This is neat, you’re offering another business’ wares.’ I call it cross-pollination.”



suburbs. The crux of the camp is a 14-point Destination Strategy—Schallert doesn’t make it available online to the public—that he has developed over nearly 30 years of working with small businesses, including 10 years at Hallmark, the birthplace of the Schallert Method. “The purpose of this program is not only to change the owner’s business,” says Schallert, who has trained more than 700 business owners through his BootCamps, “but to change several businesses at once and change the entire marketplace.”

With that transformation comes a new sense of camaraderie for the community—something Schallert encourages and cultivates. And camaraderie demands a major shift in competitive focus. In re-positioning themselves as destination businesses, owners consider each other allies in the effort to draw out-of-market customers.

Take Phillips County, Kansas—population 7,000. A team from the county has attended the CRP the past four

And so the story goes for towns and Main Streets across the country. In the mountain hamlet of Steamboat Springs, Colorado, Tracy Barnett is the Main Street manager; after hearing Schallert speak at a regional meeting, she took 11 business owners to Destination BootCamp to bring the traditional ski-town retail to another level. “It was helpful for these businesses to have other businesses to talk to if they had a question or an idea,” Barnett says. “That was the biggest benefit of going to the BootCamp; everybody heard the same thing at the same time.”

Tom Humphrey, the Community Development Director for Central Point, Oregon, met Schallert more than a decade ago and was an early subscriber to his monthly program. Humphrey is taking his fourth group of business owners to the CRP this year. After the first group’s six months of follow-up conference calls with Schallert ended, the owners decided to

continue the calls with each other on their own. “That became a monthly meeting for those of us who were alumni, and we could invite other people to the group,” Humphrey says. “It was the basis for the next group going [to BootCamp]. You get other folks pulled into destination planning.”

That ballooning of enthusiasm is exactly what happened with Burkburnett, McCullough says. After BootCamp, the town held a business expo in the community center to showcase Burkburnett’s retailers to the public. For a time, businesses would stay open late to host customers for a shopping happy hour of sorts; they dubbed it “Main Street Madness.” And owners began to invite other owners to tour their businesses so they could refer customers. “It was amazing how little we knew about each other’s businesses,” McCullough says.

In addition to the intangibles, there’s always the bottom line. Some community estimates suggest that their businesses have seen sales increases as high as 40 percent after BootCamp and the Community Reinvention Program; others say the community gets \$8 back for each \$1 it invests in the program (fees are \$1,500 per attendee). As such, many local and state agencies offer financial assistance. For instance, Wyoming’s Workforce Training Grant program pays BootCamp tuition and most expenses for participants. The cities of Laramie, Worland, and Torrington, have participated in the CRP.

The effect on business owners was immediate, says Wyoming’s Goshen County economic development project director, Amy Duke. “They’re already implementing a lot of Jon’s ideas,” she says. “They’re thinking about cross-promoting. They’re holding each other accountable. There’s nothing out there like it. We would have had to hire 10 or 15 consultants to get what we got from Jon. It’s priceless.”



MONUMENTAL CHANGES

Think outside the box—and sometimes on top of it—to get your business on the map.

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Ever seen a building with livestock grazing on the roof? If not, you've never been to Baker City, Oregon, where York's Covered Wagon grocer and sporting goods store boasts two of 'em—and two more on the sidewalk out front. OK, sure, they're not real, but they're pretty realistic life-size oxen replicas, and they stand sentinel outside the store paying homage to the city's heritage as a waypoint on the Oregon Trail. Look closer, and you'll notice that the mural on the side of the building is quite possibly the world's largest map of the Oregon Trail. And then, there's the drive-through window that's been reconfigured as one end of a covered wagon.

The store has become somewhat of a

landmark, thanks to former owner Dennis Dorrah, who attended renowned business consultant and speaker Jon Schallert's Destination Business BootCamp in 2006 and 2011. A major strategy Schallert covers in the program is "product spotlighting" and "creating a monument" in your business as a means to make yourself stand out from the surrounding humdrum retail. Four months after attending his second BootCamp and installing the oxen, Dorrah reported record-setting monthly sales increases from 8.49 to 17.2 percent in 2011, with record high gasoline prices. The following is an excerpt from an update that Dorrah wrote to Schallert: "... I think the oxen are doing us some good. I think they are possibly catch-



Oregon Trail fans stopped—and shopped—at this monument.

"PEOPLE WANT
TO HEAR STORIES...
TO FEEL LIKE
THEY'RE FINDING
SOMETHING
ONE-OF-A-KIND."

ing attention and then, travelers take more notice of the Oregon Trail Map mural. Lots of folks are stopping, getting their pictures taken with the oxen ... The oxen and mural [were] designed to draw out-of-towners, which is working, but [it] helped with locals also ...” Business was so good that Dorrah was able to sell the store, retire, and pursue other lifelong interests not long after that.

Lyn Borcharding in Spanaway, Washington used a similar monument strategy to invigorate the business in her dog grooming and pet shop. As of October 2013, Woofers Grooming & Goodies is home to the world’s longest dog biscuit buffet. Thirty flavors (turkey and pumpkin or honey and blueberry for those discerning pooches) and 600 pounds of dog treats stretch in a colorful smorgasbord down the storefront—all the result of an aha-moment at BootCamp last summer. The best part, and a big selling point with her customers: Borcharding donates 10 percent of the gross sales from the biscuit bar to a local dog shelter. “I did not consider myself terribly creative,” she says. “I was more of a business person. But sitting in that room with all the other business owners, I came up with the idea for the biscuit buffet, and I shouted it out. It came from all these tidbits from Jon, and the creative juices just got flowing.”

Schallert has been in the business of, well, businesses for 17 years (before which he spent a 10-year stint with Hallmark honing his marketing expertise). In the early days, he’d run 70 to 90 workshops a year. A

state agency would bring him in to speak to 15 or so small business owners, and then he’d move on to the next state—kind of like a road show, he says. But the back-to-back small business tours, interviews, and discussions were the best way to get educated on the many, many types of niche operations trying to make it. These days, his speaking schedule and expanded offerings, including the extensive online, webinar-based Destination University, allow him to run about 30 workshops and three BootCamps a year.

Schallert’s BootCamp is based on a 14-point business process, each step a chapter’s worth of information. The first eight points are about analyzing your business and identifying what sets it apart from your peers. For example: product differentiation. How unique is the product or service you’re offering? Can a customer purchase this elsewhere? If it’s one-of-a-kind, do people know you carry it? Most consumers, says Schallert, anchor to two or three things they associate with a place: an outrageous dessert on the menu; quirky celebrity paraphernalia; a colossal cowboy boot. Does your business have an anchor item? Could you create one?

Step by step, Schallert asks you to take a hard look at all facets of your business: your marketplace; your finances; how you measure up to your competitors; whether your time as the owner is being appropriately and efficiently distributed. It’s an eye-opening experience that usually leads to some critical conclusions about behavior patterns and stepping out of the comfort zone. “You have to get them to burrow down to the things that matter,” Schallert says. “It gets at the very core of how consumers see your business.”

The next six principles, once you’ve got a good grasp on your unique story, are about how to get your message out to the world. The challenge is drawing in the customers. But if you’ve created a destination with a memorable enough monument—and Schallert says about 60 percent of his clients do something fairly dramatic with their businesses—word of mouth will do the work for you and the buzz will generate itself.

Case in point: If you’ve visited the Good Earth Garden Center in Little Rock, Arkansas, chances are you saw the center’s adorable marmoset monkeys, George and Abu, frolicking in their enclosure (hint: bring the kids if you haven’t; it might be




the only garden store they’ll willingly visit with you). Maybe you stopped to admire the picturesque antique truck-turned-planter, overflowing with colorful blooms, parked on site. Most likely, you snapped a goofy photo with the nine-foot gorilla statue and posted it to Facebook with a clever comment: “Just monkeying around with the fam!” And boom—500 people in your network wonder why there’s a giant gorilla at the Good Earth Garden Center, and what else might be hidden in this treasure trove.

As such, guess where your Little Rock friends are going the next time they need seeds for the garden or mulch for the landscaping out back? All this because Good Earth owner Gregg Curtis took Schallert’s monument lesson to heart. “If we’re going to say we’re a destination, we’re going to have to prove ourselves a destination by thinking outside the box,” says Curtis, who changes the monuments every six months or so. “You can see something different here every season.”

His efforts have more than paid off. Since attending BootCamp in 2008, Curtis and his team have racked up an impres-

sive list of accolades. Good Earth has been featured on HGTV as one of the country’s 13 must-see garden centers; approached by *Southern Living* magazine for a “don’t-miss destination” article; voted (multiple times) one of the 100 most revolutionary garden centers in the country by trade publication *Today’s Garden Center*; and earned myriad consecutive “best of” titles by various publications.

Bottom line: Sales are rocketing. By how much? On the last Saturday of April this year, Good Earth checked out 900 customers. “Seven years ago, we might’ve touched 300 on the same weekend,” Curtis says. “My takeaway: Think outside the industry. You get so stuck in your ways. The BootCamp was just a paradigm shift for me. Don’t be afraid to kick ideas around.”

And, as Schallert reiterates in his materials, don’t forget to invite the rest of the world to check out your monument. You’ve got a giant, two-story, size 877 leather boot in your shop? Advertise it. Tell your customers how and why you created it. “People want to hear stories,” Schallert says. “To feel like they’re finding something one-of-a-kind.” 



Tips for Texting

If part of your consumer base is under 25 years old, pay special attention: Text messaging can be an effective way to market your business if executed properly. It's quicker than talking on the phone, and 90 percent of texts are read within three minutes of being sent, so says Crystal Vilkaitis, president of mobile marketing and social media company CrystalMedia:

► Texting works best with exclusive, limited time offers. Try something like: "For just 48 hours at our store, you'll receive \$20 off your purchase," or "Come into our restaurant and use the code XYZ to receive a free dessert when you order an entrée."

► If you're a retailer offering a special deal to shop online, it's important that you have a mobile-friendly website, too; visit dudamobile.com to explore ways to make your existing site mobile-friendly, or to create an entirely new site that's compatible with desktop, phone, and tablet.

► Build your text message subscriber list by asking customers to opt-in while in your place of business, and reward them with something special.

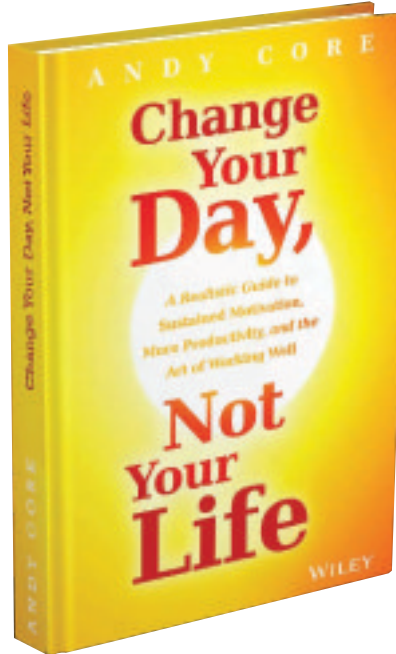
► Promote your text messaging option to your email list, your Facebook likes, and your Twitter followers.

► Suggested companies with good business text offerings: SimpleTexting.com and EZTexting.com

On The Bookshelf:

Jon Schallert's Pick

If you're like most busy adults, you probably want about eight more hours in the day to whittle down your to-do list. You multitask, you gulp coffee, you don't sleep enough, and you're probably stressed out. That's why Schallert recommends to all his clients a new book by Andy Core: *Change Your Day, Not Your Life*



Your Day, Not Your Life (Wiley, March 2014). Core is a professional speaker on the topics of productivity, employee engagement, and motivation, and he's penned an insightful and profoundly practical guide to revamping the way you attack each day as opposed to your bigger picture life. Core says humans fall into the categories of strugglers, strivers, or thrivers, and certain environmental triggers—or rather, our reactions to those triggers—can impact the outcomes of our days. "Andy's book is written for hard-working adults who can't seem to find the time to do all the good things they'd like to do in a day," Schallert says. "His book breaks down into simple steps the process that any person can use to have a more personally satisfying life. You can pick it up and start on any chapter, and you'll find something that you can walk away with."

Andy Core is one of over 50 business authors currently contributing their expertise in Destination University, the online training library for independent business owners. You can listen to Andy's newest webinar: "How to Thrive at Work and Stay Motivated in a High-Demand Schedule" when you become a member of Destination University. To learn how to join, go to DestinationUniversity.com.

TECH TOOLS: POCKET APP



Business owners need to stay up-to-date and in-the-game in their fields, which demands constant engagement with new ideas, relevant content, and interesting articles. Translation: You probably fill every spare minute—whether you're in a waiting room at the doctor's office or you've arrived early to meet a friend for lunch—exploring your favorite news stream or industry trade site on your smartphone.

The problem is time. How often do you get one paragraph into an article or 30 seconds into a video when your name gets called or your friend shows up? You exit out, and just like that, your content is gone.

Solve this problem with the free Pocket app, which lets you save whatever you're viewing in a centralized location—you can sync all of your devices—with one click of a button. You can pull it up later at any time to pick up right where you left off; you don't even need an internet connection—a traveler's dream. Download it on iTunes or Google Play or sign up directly on the site.

Get it: getpocket.com

INSPIRATION:

The Importance of Excitement

"If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm."

—Vince Lombardi

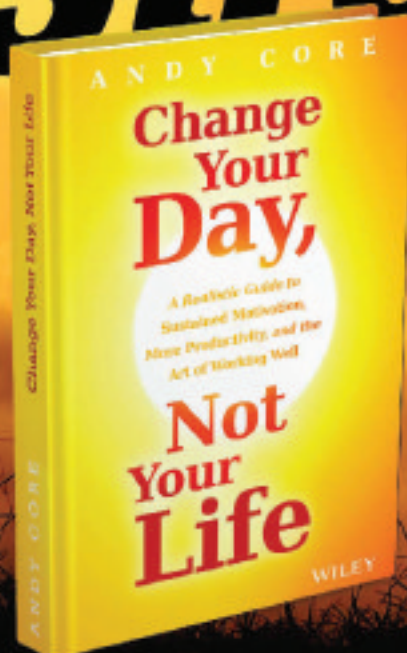
"People who never get carried away should be."

—Malcolm Forbes

"Success is going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm."

—Winston Churchill

Accomplish More Stress Less



“This book is an indispensable guide to succeeding in a high-speed world.”

Vince Poscente,
New York Times Best Selling Author of *The Age of Speed*

Stop for a moment and consider your average workday. Do you rush to get things done but still fall behind? Is the pressure of your work such that you “crash” when you get home? Do you want to live healthy, but never have the time or the motivation to do so?

The very nature of modern life is hectic to an extent that could not have been imagined just a generation ago, leading to ever-present concerns over work-life balance.

But despite the fast pace of everyday life and work, there are many who live a daily life that results in increasing motivation, productivity and wellbeing.

Change Your Day, Not Your Life shows you how to become one of those people. And, he does so with a very simple premise – you don’t have to change your life, you only have to change your day.

Core will show you the four key characteristics that differentiate “thrivers” from their less productive cohorts, “strivers.” You’ll learn how to better approach your work from a mental standpoint and accommodate both balance and productivity. With *Change Your Day, Not Your Life*, increased motivation and productivity are just a day away.

ANDY CORE is a credentialed, award-winning thought leader on increasing employee engagement, productivity, and wellness motivation. As an author, speaker, columnist and live TV host, his talent lies in helping hard-working, conscientious adults thrive at work and in their personal lives.

- Recipient of 2012 Top5 Global Speakers in Health/Healthcare
- Voted Twitter Top 100 Productivity Experts to Follow for 2014 @andycore



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