

Empowered

A monthly online publication published by Thompson Management Consulting, LLC for small business owners and entrepreneurs – APRIL 2016

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Talk About It Catering: Celebrating Five Years of Nothing But Goodness

By Austin E. Thompson, Jr.

We have a long history of fascination with food. If it looks delicious, and smells heavenly, we indulge. Important business deals are made over meals. Masterful creations are catered for Presidential dinners, and heads of states over which, intense international relations and policies are discussed. Families assemble on holidays and special occasions to enjoy one another over long standing family traditional meals. Catering has been a skill possessed by many for generations, and has grown into an important segment of the food and restaurant industry, whether catering for small meetings and gatherings, weddings, holiday events, or for large elegant banquets at conventions. In the \$70 billion dollar catering industry, caterers know, especially off-premises caterers, that quality of service drives business success, repeat business, and referrals. This is especially important for the micro business owner building a successful business.



As a caterer, food preparation and presentation are the cornerstones of your business. Paying attention to the details of preparation and presentation is what makes people return for future service, and even better, rave about your service. Since starting her catering business in 2011, Cassandra Underwood, Owner of Talk About It Catering, has made a remarkable impression on many with whom she has done business, and those who have had the privilege of partaking in her specially prepared meals. Talk About It Catering has received numerous recognition from the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce, the #2 chamber in the country, and #1 in the Southeast, such as the Business of The Month Award – January 2016, Fan Favorite Semi-Finalist – Pinnacle Awards, Woman Owned Business Nominee – Pinnacle Awards, and Minority Owned Business Nominee – Pinnacle Awards. At a recent 5th anniversary celebration for Talk About It Catering, held at the illustrious LONA Gallery in downtown Lawrenceville, Cassandra prepared a delectable selection of her favorites for her guests. The evening was wonderful, and the atmosphere was consumed with all of the well wishes for her five years of success.

Continued On Page 2



Celebrating Talk About It Catering's five year anniversary with Cassandra Underwood, Owner.

When asked how she felt reaching this magnificent milestone, Cassandra replied ***"It feels amazing. Looking back over the years, I'm so glad I didn't give up. I really didn't think we would see two years, but now we have made it to five years, and I look forward to 10 years"***. In addition, one of the hardest lessons she has learned on her journey is learning to say NO to people. In the beginning, as she embarked on her entrepreneurial journey, gaining exposure was her ultimate goal, and it seemed many capitalized on her vulnerability as a new entrepreneur. Cassandra explained that people approached her on numerous occasions about doing events at no cost, just to gain publicity, and learning to differentiate between those who were sincere about supporting her and those who were not, was a painful experience. As she states ***"gaining exposure doesn't mean you should not get paid"***. Talk About It Catering will continue to build and grow their successful BRAND, and grow their team of dedicated workers to continue serving their clients effectively. As far as building a recognizable and robust BRAND, Talk About It Catering does not cut corners. Each meal is personally prepared for its client, and preferring quality over quantity has been, and will continue to be a mantra for their business. In addition to event catering, Talk About It Catering prepares customized and personal meals for busy professionals who do not have time to cook. Cassandra thanks her customers for trusting her, as they could have called on other caterers. However, she is grateful for the relationships forged and new experiences which awaits her on her continued journey to give all of her clients ***"nothing but goodness"***. Let Talk About It Catering handle your next event. For more information, please visit their website at <https://www.talkaboutitcatering.com/>.

When Investing for Your Future, Put Time on Your Side

Contributed by Edward Jones Investments

As you probably know, 2016 is a Leap Year – and Feb. 29 is Leap Day. This oddity in the calendar may get you thinking about the nature of time. And, as an investor, you should certainly be aware of the importance of putting time on your side.

When saving and investing for a long-term goal, such as a comfortable retirement, you might be surprised at how big a difference just a few years can make to your potential accumulation. For illustrative purposes, let's look at three scenarios. (Keep in mind, though, that these figures don't represent an actual investment.)

Suppose, for example, that you decide to get serious about your retirement savings when you're 40, with the goal of retiring at 65. If you put \$200 per month, or \$2,400 per year, into the investments within a tax-deferred vehicle, such as a traditional IRA, and those investments earn a hypothetical 7% a year, you will have accumulated slightly over \$162,000 after 25 years. But if you had started investing just five years earlier, when you were 35, and you put the same \$2,400 into the same investments earning the same hypothetical 7% return, you'd end up with more than \$242,000 after 30 years. And if you had started five years earlier than that, when you were 30, again contributing the same amount and earning the same return, you'd have amassed almost \$355,000 by the time you reach 65. (You'll be taxed on the withdrawals; also, withdrawals prior to age 59½ may be subject to a 10% IRS penalty. Assuming you don't start taking withdrawals until you're retired, you might be in a lower tax bracket.)

Of course, these projected amounts could grow even bigger if you started saving earlier, or if you invest more money each year. But you get the general idea: The earlier you start investing for your future, the better the outcome is likely to be. Plus, by starting early, you can put in relatively modest amounts – but the longer you wait, the bigger your annual contributions must be to enable you to save the amount of money you'll need to help you enjoy a comfortable retirement lifestyle.

However, knowing that you should start investing early, and actually doing it, are two different matters. How can you consistently put away money for retirement?

Possibly the most important step you can take is to pay yourself first. If you wait until you pay your bills and take care of your other expenses before investing, you may never get around to it. Instead, set up automatic monthly transfers from your checking or savings account into an investment.

If you have access to a 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan, you've already got an automatic investment mechanism in place, because your employer takes part of your paycheck and places it in the investments you've chosen. Needless to say, you should take full advantage of your plan, contributing at least enough to earn your employer's match, if one is offered, and increasing your contributions whenever you get a raise.

By investing early and often, and by regularly increasing your investments when you can afford to do so, you can make time a key ally in helping you reach your important financial goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Thanks to Tondeleo Day for contributing. Listen to Tondeleo's interview on WATB 1420AM, April 9, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. on the Entrepreneurship and Business Empowerment Hour with Austin Thompson and Colin Tinto, as we discuss investment opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Do you wish to discuss your business plans for 2016? Are you ready to invest in a business and need to discuss what steps to take? Contact the offices of Thompson Management Consulting, LLC and we will be happy to develop an outline for you.

\$75

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Should Married Couples Be Business

Partners

By Austin E. Thompson, Jr.



I am often asked if couples should establish a business together, and whether they make good business partners. Now, I do not profess to be a marriage or couples counselor of any kind, but I do know that not all couples qualify as business partners. Well, at least, those who definitely have not demonstrated any cohesion or inseparability in their marriage. If there are red flags of concern, it is something to consider thoroughly before both of you enter into a business partnership which further agitates an already distressed marriage. You have to be honest with this reality. However, if you are absolutely engulfed in a loving marriage and you are one another's soulmate, and you find working collaboratively on projects brings the two of you closer together, the fun and adventure you both find in doing things as a married couple may transfer into a great business partnership. In either situation, carefully and thoroughly weigh the pros and cons.

Out of many things I enjoy as a business consultant is having an opportunity to meet and sit with a husband and wife duo (or a couple), who understand each other and are comfortable with setting out on a course of business ownership as partners in entrepreneurship. I love to see a husband and wife who are willing to extend their partnership in marriage beyond the nuptials, and further place their trust in one another as business partners. When I sit with a couple, I ask one honest question. "Can you both coexist as business partners, and is there a mutual respect for each other to allow your business to flourish?" More often than not, it is a confident assurance that they have discussed the arrangement and can transfer their love and respect for each other as husband and wife into a business collaboration, where both can leverage value-added skillsets from their partnership to grow a successful business. Partners have to complement each other, and find genuine value in what each individual contributes to the business. For example, one may be great at marketing, designing websites, and possess other technical acumen, while the other is comfortable with managing the books, budgets, and financial aspects of the business.

One may have connections to leverage small business funding, while the other is great at managing the operations. You have to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses to compensate where necessary.

If I meet with individuals, I would ask about a spouse. If coexisting as a couple is challenged by certain distress in the relationship, I would receive such comments as "she does her thing, and I do mine", "he has no interest in what I do", "we are cool as a married couple, but would not make good business partners". As these comments are made, I can determine that attempting to build a business together, while not carefully managing those factors which threaten the harmony in their marriage, could further exacerbate the distress of an already fragile relationship.

Here are a few things to consider, if you and your spouse (partner) may be considering going into business together:

1. Are you both strong enough to handle the disappointments of co-owning a business without egregious finger pointing and blaming?
2. A business may not be profitable until 3-5 years after start-up. Are you both in it for the long haul?
3. Can your marriage sustain the long hours and demands of growing a business? The leisure time you both enjoyed before starting the business is dissolved as growing the business places an acute demand on your time.
4. Do you both enjoy tackling challenges together, or are you mostly doing your own individual things?
5. Is your spouse supportive? Does he or she have your back unconditionally?
6. Can you two work together, and where are you emotionally at the time you are thinking of starting a business together? Do the slightest think that one does irritate and annoy the other? Does this contribute to yelling and unkind insults?
7. Is there unconditional trust in your personal relationship?
8. Is one of you simply in it for the money and flexible time, while the other is breaking his or her back to grow a long-term sustainable venture? Are you compatible?
9. Can you both agree on scheduling periodic free time and short get-a-ways to continue investing in growing your personal relationship, as you grow a profitable business?

These are some of the honest questions and key points you must ask yourselves before diving into a joint business venture together. Do a SWOT analysis to evaluate your partnership as a couple, to guide you better as you consider joint business ownership. Be honest about your weaknesses (W) and what threatens (T) your relationship. There may be things to work out before you enter into joint business ownership. Doing this preliminary evaluation will save you much heartache and disappointment in the long run.



**Atlanta-Fulton Public Library &
The Wolf Creek Branch
3100 Enon Road
Atlanta, GA 30349**

Small Business Owner's Workshop Series

**Saturday, June 11, 2016
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

WRITING YOUR BUSINESS PLAN

Knowing the critical components of an effective business plan can help you achieve business success

**Saturday, July 9, 2016
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH**

Writing a Strategic Plan to capitalize on your organization's mission, goals, objectives, vision, and SWOT

**Saturday, August 13, 2016
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

YOUR FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Learn how effective budgeting, financial analysis, and forecasting can help grow your business

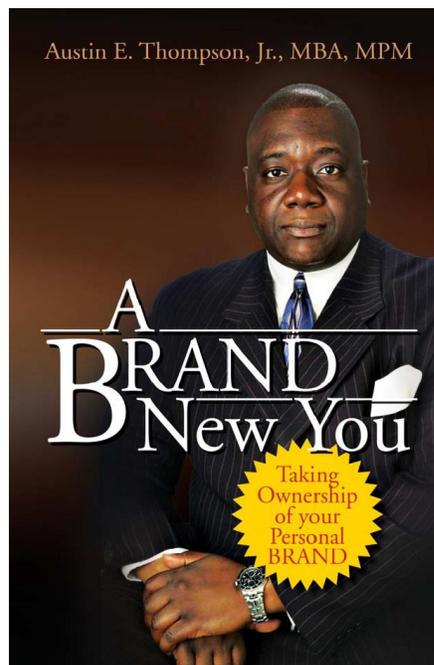
*All for-profit and non-profit organizations are welcomed
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Business Classifieds

Have your business advertised in our publication to over 1,500 subscribers. Thompson Management Consulting, LLC promotes small businesses and entrepreneurs, and our subscriber database is growing fast. Be empowered, and invest in your continued success. Visit us at www.tmconsultingllc.com and send your comments or questions to info@tmconsultingllc.com



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Upcoming Business Events

Gwinnett Association of Business Entrepreneurs – GABE

Free Networking & Business Meeting

Vendor Tables \$25.00 – Advertise your business

The Lona Gallery

176 W. Crogan Street, Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Tuesday, April 19, 2016

6:30pm to 8:00pm

Refreshments Always Served

For Information: Carmelita Marcia (404) 509-0690

The Carib & Company Show Entrepreneurship and Business Empowerment Hour

Presents:

**Tondeleo Day, Financial Advisor
Edward Jones Investments**



Live In-Studio Interview on WATB 1420AM Radio

Listen Online at www.watb1420.com

Saturday, April 9, 2016

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Hosted by:

Colin Tinto & Austin Thompson

Show Sponsored by:

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Entrepreneurship & Small Business Summit 2016



Registration is required,
and there is no cost to attend.

Please go to
www.nsbw2016.com
to complete registration,
view 2 day workshop agenda
& view all event information

For additional information,
please contact:
Austin Thompson
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Email: info@nsbw2016.com

Invited Organizations:

- Small Business Administration
- Small Business Development Center
- Local Area Chambers of Commerce
- Mass Mutual Financial Group
- Business Plans & More, Inc.
- Rosemont Capital Solutions
- Oyegun Law Group
- Greer Business Solutions

Please see back of flyer for Forum and Expo Information



3RD ANNUAL

Entrepreneurship and Small Business Summit
In Celebration Of
National Small Business Week
May 19 - 20, 2016

9:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M.

(LUNCH BREAK INCLUDED)
Lunch sponsored by LeGomier Caribbean Restaurant

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The Conference Center at
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Get insight from some of the **Top Business Leaders in Georgia**

- BUSINESS SCHOOL COLLEGE FAIR (RECRUITERS ON-SITE TO DISCUSS BUSINESS PROGRAMS)
- PROFESSIONAL BUSINESS PANEL DISCUSSION
- FASHION EXPOSE BY DESIGN FAZE BOUTIQUE
- KEYNOTE SPEAKER'S ADDRESS

For additional information, please contact:

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• TO **VIEW** ALL EVENT INFORMATION

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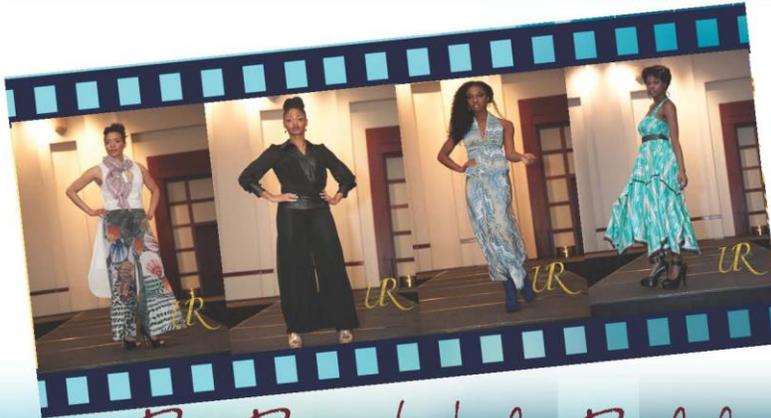
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SMALL BUSINESS FORUM AND EXPO OF THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS SUMMIT NSBW

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2016

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Business 2 Business Expo – Exhibitor Registration

Saturday, May 21, 2016

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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To register as a Business Exhibitor, go directly to www.nsbw2016.com. Complete the online application and view vendor guidelines.

For additional information, kindly contact Austin Thompson at 404-587-3949 or via email at austin@nsbw2016.com



Refreshments by Rapid Gourmet



Please note a change in location for the workshops to our new location, Discovery High School (May 19th and 20th)

National Small Business Week 2016 – AGENDA				
3rd Annual Entrepreneurship and Small Business Summit				
The Clyde L. Strickland Center for Entrepreneurship Discovery High School 1335 Old Norcross Road Lawrenceville, GA 30046				
Thursday, May 19, 2016				
Target Audience	Workshop Title	Facilitator	Classroom #	Time
Pre-Startup and Startup Businesses	Mindset Makeover: Are You Ready for Entrepreneurship	Tina Greer – Greer Business Solutions, LLC	6	9:30am – 10:25am
Pre-Startup and Startup Businesses	Developing An Effective Business Plan	Bob Lamp'1 – Business Plans & More, Inc.	6	10:30am – 11:25am
Pre-Startup and Startup Businesses	Legal Steps to Starting and Managing a Successful Business	Abi Oyegun – Oyegun Law Group	6	11:30am – 12:30pm
Lunch Break (12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)				
Pre-Startup, Startup, and Established Businesses	The 5 C's of Credit	Small Business Administration (SBA)	6	1:00pm – 1:55pm
Pre-Startup, Startup, and Established Businesses	How To Do Business With The Government	Small Business Administration (SBA)	6	2:00pm – 2:55pm
Pre-Startup, Startup, and Established Businesses	A Winning Marketing Plan and Campaign	Thompson Management Consulting, LLC – Austin E. Thompson, Jr	6	3:00pm – 4:00pm
Friday, May 20, 2016				
Target Audience	Workshop Title	Facilitator	Room #	Time
Established Businesses	Effective Financial Management with Quick Books	Business Plans & More, Inc. – Bob Lamp'1	6	9:30am – 10:25am
Established Businesses	Micro Lending: An Alternative to Bank Loans	Rosemont Capital Solutions – Tom Briggette	6	10:30am – 11:25am
Established Businesses	Retirement Planning for Small Business Owners	Joe Fernandez – Mass Mutual, The Piedmont Group	6	11:30am – 12:30pm
Lunch Break (12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.)				
Established Businesses	Health and Nutrition Management for Busy Entrepreneurs	Dr. Jennifer Rooke – Morehouse School of Medicine	6	1:00pm – 1:55pm
Established Businesses	LinkedIn for Small Business Branding	Gregg Burkhalter	6	2:00pm – 2:55pm
Established Businesses	Your 30 Second Elevator Speech	Small Business Development Center (SBDC)	6	3:00pm – 4:00pm
<p><i>Business owners are strongly encouraged to maximize the opportunity of attending ALL scheduled workshops, regardless of target audience. We have identified and confirmed all speakers for the workshops above. PLEASE GO TO WWW.NSBW2016.COM TO REGISTER and for continued updates.</i></p>				
SMALL BUSINESS FORUM AND EXPO The Conference Center at Georgia Piedmont Technical College 495 North Indian Creek Drive Clarkston, GA 30021				
Saturday, May 21, 2016				
Saturday- 5/21/2016	Theme: "Empowering Entrepreneurs – Growing Entrepreneurship"	Speakers, panelists, and exhibitors/vendors are in the process of being identified and confirmed for the Forum ↓	15 & 16	9:00am – 3:00pm Exhibitor setup begins PROMPTLY at 7:00 a.m. Official program begins PROMPTLY at 9:00 a.m.



Entrepreneurship and Small Business Summit 2016

Meet the Workshop Facilitators

May 19 – 20, 2016

www.nsbw2016.com



Tina Greer
Greer Business Solutions,
LLC



Bob Lamp'1
Business Plans and More,
Inc.



Abi Oyegun
The Oyegun Law Group

U.S. Small Business Administration



Austin E. Thompson, Jr.
Thompson Management
Consulting, LLC



Tom Brigette
Rosemont Capital
Solutions



Joe Fernandez
Mass Mutual Financial



Dr. Jennifer Rooke, MD
Morehouse College School of
Medicine



Gregg Burkhalter



Panel selections are in the process of being confirmed and finalized for the Small Business Forum and Expo on May 21, 2016. All pictures, bios, and a final agenda will be available in the May 2016 issue of Empowered.

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About Empowered Business Newsletter

Empowered Business Newsletter (EBN) is published by Thompson Management Consulting, LLC as an online vehicle to provide business related information for small business owners, entrepreneurs, micro enterprises, solopreneurs and business professionals who support small business development and growth. The EBN is not produced in hard copy format. Articles in the EBN are written by small business owners, who contribute to the success of each newsletter by providing insightful and informative articles for the small business community. Moreover, the EBN promotes small businesses, spotlights entrepreneurs, reports on business, political and economic activity which affects small business owners, and highlights developments from Thompson Management Consulting, LLC. The EBN has a direct distribution to over 1,500 contacts, who receive the publication via email and share it with their contacts. Copies in PDF format can be retrieved from our website at www.tmconsultingllc.com. We invite small business owners to submit subject matter "Business-related" articles for publishing, along with a head shot and brief bio. All submittals are vetted carefully to qualify for our readers. Finally, we encourage small businesses to advertise with us and support a publication looking out for the concerns of small businesses.

About Thompson Management Consulting, LLC

Thompson Management Consulting, LLC works with small business owners and entrepreneurs who are primarily in the 0 – 5 year range of the business lifecycle, those in the seed and start-up to expansion phases. We assist with business plan writing, marketing, feasibility studies, project management, financial and budget analysis, business event planning, and business training. Thompson Management Consulting, LLC produces an Annual Entrepreneurship and Small Business Summit in celebration of National Small Business Week, and hosts a monthly radio program, The Entrepreneurship and Business Empowerment Hour on WATB 1420AM. We are A+ accredited by the Better Business Bureau, and hold memberships in the Gwinnet Chamber of Commerce and Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Additional information can be found at www.tmconsultingllc.com/about.html.

