



MAIN STREET

MARKETING NEWS

WHERE SMALL MARKETING IDEAS CAN ADD BIG
DOLLARS TO THE BOTTOM LINE

Q4 2022

2022 RECAP

In 2022, we've helped over 19 small businesses find a home in Downtown Bellefontaine, many of which fill out the first floor of the Historic Opera Block!

Small Nation's impact continues to grow beyond Bellefontaine as consulting takes us throughout Ohio and across the country.

History continues to be one of our biggest assets. With sponsorships

from local businesses, we've identified 14 buildings in the downtown with bronze plaques to make up the Downtown Bellefontaine Historic Walking Tour.

I am proud to say that Small Nation has made giving back to the community a priority. Efforts such as the Earth Day Downtown Spring Cleaning and funding youth sports

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Family based Ohio & Indiana Roofing



Family based Ohio & Indiana Roofing has been installing and servicing customers since 1986. Experts in repairs and installation of a wide variety of roofing products, they just wrapped up a very busy 2022 including:

- Roofing job that consists of approximately 50,000 sq. ft of metal roofing
- Brand new roof system which included 86 new skylights

- Partner project in Dublin with CBRE

Call 419-925-4095 for your commercial roofing needs.

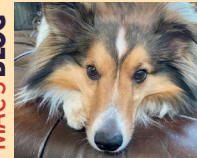


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Are You a Party Crasher?

MAC'S BLOG



In between working the crossword

puzzle and contemplating your daily horoscope, do you ever peruse Judith Martin's "Miss Manners" etiquette column in the newspaper?

One recent column dealt with the sudden increase in dog owners who insist on taking their pet everywhere they go: retail outlets, doctors' offices

>> turn to page 2

A little about Mac: Mac is Jason's 6-year old active Sheltie who loves veggies - green beans to be exact, but he eats all kinds of other vegetables too. Mac thinks that he is just as big as Zoe, but he's actually a little dog with a lot of confidence. He loves to play soccer and run outside, especially if he can corral other dogs in the neighborhood. He also enjoys stealing and hiding socks. Mac wanted to write a blog post, and we didn't have the heart to say no. We take no responsibility for the goofy things he comes up with. He does love to receive letters, though.

Mac's Blog

("Stop howling inside the MRI, Spot!"), and especially to parties where they weren't expected.

Now, I enjoy a chance to get out of the house and stretch my legs, but I understand the hesitancy of some humans to greet canine guests with open arms. (I'm not excusing the truly hostile ones, though – the ones who sing, "Be our guest, be our guest, after I administer the rabies test...")

Some follow Mr. Spock's philosophy of "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few" and fear the pooches will be too boisterous with the other guests. Others worry about potential damage to the new furniture. Even someone aspiring to be "the hostess with the mostest" can be leery of being known as "the hostess with the mostest blood-sucking parasites."

Most importantly, many humans have serious allergic reactions around furry creatures. When I was younger, I didn't quite grasp the concept. I tried to empathize with sniffing and sneezing humans by indicating, "Yeah, I wouldn't want Robert Frost, Emily Dickinson, or Walt Whitman crashing my party, either." That's right: I was getting pet dander confused with poet dander.

Common courtesy dictates that humans invited to a social gathering should first make sure it is acceptable to bring a pet along. True, some pet owners try to bend the rules, since it's easier to obtain forgiveness than permission. ("But...I thought you knew I was bringing Ol' Shep. No, I did not say I was bringing my new best friend as my 'plus one.' I said I was bringing my nude best friend. Shep lost his collar.")

Fellow canines, if your master does drag you along to a party, be sure to bring a gift. And if the host misunderstands the source, so much the better. If they hear "This came from Saks," don't let them know it came from sacks that toppled off the garbage truck.

And watch your language when it's time to leave. "I had a simply marvelous time, but I have a big day tomorrow and really must take leave of you" beats the heck out of "I've gotta scoot."

JASON... from Page 1

activities are some of our highlights of the year. Team members have even challenged each other physically to participate in races such as the Nationwide Children's Half Marathon that support great causes!

2022 was also a year of recognition and collaboration. Small Nation and Bellefontaine were awarded the MORPC Collaborative Achievement Award and Ohio Magazine recognized Bellefontaine as one of Ohio's Best Hometowns.

From the Small Nation team, Shannon Reese was recognized as Young Professional of the Year by the Logan County Chamber of Commerce and Jason Duff was recognized as one of the top 500 influential people in Ohio by Ohio Business Magazine.

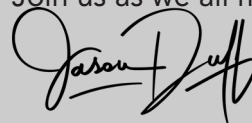
Because of the high demand of office space, BUILD Cowork + Space will be expanding into an annex location on the second floor of the Historic Opera Block, creating the Opera Suites by BUILD.

Finding talent continues to be one of the most pressing issues across the country, so we've completely revamped our Hometown Opportunity solution! This platform allows counties and municipalities to tackle their workforce shortage issues head on.

The Small Nation Podcast has recorded over 30 episodes and continues dropping episodes weekly. We are also excited to announce a new YouTube series documenting one of our most transformational projects yet, the Historic Opera Block. The episodes are filmed in documentary style with goals to form a feature length documentary.

We are incredibly proud of the accomplishments of our team and community in 2022. 2023 is shaping up to be our best year yet. In this next year, we're going to be launching and opening Bellefontaine's Rainbow Row with five storefronts and seven short-term rentals and we will see the opening of BUILD Marysville. We will also be launching our first education program - an online course around Small Town Success.

Join us as we all make 2023 our best year yet.



Destination Chocolate and Gift Store, Queen of Hearts, NOW OPEN in the Historic Opera Block

Shary Duff is no stranger to the Downtown Bellefontaine retail scene. For over fifteen years, she owned and operated Peach Tree Books & Company, a destination boutique in itself that featured lines such as Waterford Crystal, Swarovski, and Vera Bradley. After stepping back from retail for a few years, Shary is back with a new store – this time offering fine chocolates, hand-painted pottery, and more.

Open in the Historic Opera Block is Queen of Hearts Fine Chocolates & Gifts. The shop, located at 112 W. Court Ave., is beautifully curated with a restored tin ceiling, marble floor, and custom cabinetry by Heirloom Cabinetry & Customs. Gorgeous chandeliers grace the ceiling, shining light on the gourmet chocolates and luxury gift items around the store.

Among the featured items includes DeBrand Fine Chocolates, handmade with the highest quality ingredients. DeBrand's chocolates, out of Fort Wayne, Indiana, are made in-house with traditional European recipes for products such as Salted Cafe Caramel, Rosemary Citrus, Pistachio, and more. Queen of Hearts has a full-service chocolate bar with both individual pieces and boxed chocolates served at a perfect 65 degrees.

The crown jewel of Queen of Hearts is MacKenzie-Childs. This original Victorian farm design is world renowned for its home furnishings and colorful whimsical patterns and many of the products are still created at the farm in Aurora, New York. This show stopper is a main focus of the store.

"I believe pottery is meant to be enjoyed on both a functional and visual level. These pieces will catch your eye on a table and be the piece you turn to over and over again and enjoy using," said Shary. "Queen of Hearts is excited to represent

this beautiful hand-crafted pottery and will represent MacKenzie-Childs with tremendous enthusiasm."

Other products available in Queen of Hearts Fine Chocolates & Gifts include Cherry Republic, Shirley's Popcorn, Tortuga Premium Rum Cakes, and the designs of Patience Brewster, one of the foremost designers in whimsical and unique Christmas ornaments, reindeer, and home décor. Cherry Republic's cherry products are made with tart cherries grown in Michigan's Northwest Lower Peninsula, where the company grows 75% of the country's variety of Montmorency cherries. Shirley's Popcorn, a locally handcrafted gourmet popcorn, comes straight from Bluffton, a short 50 minute drive from Bellefontaine. Tortuga is known for the world's best rum cakes and are a Caribbean recipe imported from the Cayman Islands.



"I'll have products in my store from \$10 and less to \$2,000," Shary added. "We are opening pure imagination and bringing big city shopping to Downtown Bellefontaine and the community."

Queen of Hearts is just the newest addition to the Historic Opera Block, a 10 storefront, 40,000 square foot historic building in the downtown. "Being a part of the Historic Opera Block brings back some



great memories for me and every time I look out at the Courthouse, it makes me feel comfortable – like this is home. Opening this store brings back all the joy and love I had in my store at Peach Tree Books & Company,” Shary mentioned.

“I remember going into Shary’s store as a kid and being filled with excitement,” said Shannon Reese, Marketing Coordinator for Small

Nation. “Shary is a veteran of the retail industry with decades of experience and knowledge. I can’t wait to see all the great things she will do with this store and being a part of the Opera Block.”

Queen of Hearts Fine Chocolates & Gifts is open seven days a week and in the evenings. Learn more and follow for updates on their Facebook page and Instagram at @queenofheartsdowntown.



Essential Tips

$$\text{Cost per lead} \times \text{Leads needed to reach customer goal} = \text{Marketing budget}$$

How Much Should my Business Budget for Marketing?

We hear it all the time from small business owners: I just don’t have the budget to do any marketing! However, marketing your business doesn’t have to cost a fortune. Smart marketing investments can result in huge returns for your business.

The Small Business Administration recommends that small businesses invest about 6% to 7% of gross revenue in marketing and advertising.

Instead of guessing, you can use your sales goals to help you set a data-driven budget. First, determine how many new customers you’d need to reach next year’s revenue goal.

Then, see how many new leads you need to generate to reach that number of customers.

Next, determine your cost per lead (divide the total amount you spent on marketing by the number of leads generated).

Finally, multiply your cost per lead by the number of total leads you need to reach your customer goals.

Need help with reaching your marketing goals? Marketing Essentials, based in New Bremen, supports local businesses in their digital marketing and sales efforts.

Submit your marketing and sales questions to connect@mktgessentials.com.



Popular Lima Boutique, Simply Torn, Expansion in Downtown Bellefontaine



On Friday, October 7, downtown Bellefontaine welcomed the newest boutique, Simply Torn.

Now in her sixth year in the fashion industry, Lauren Stepleton's original store opened in Lima, Ohio. The success of the location has gone so well that she, with the help of her dad, wanted to open a second storefront. After reaching out to Small Nation and touring Ohio's most loveable downtown, she knew it was the perfect setting for her second boutique.

"The whole downtown vibe is a perfect fit for Simply Torn. We love the established shops and

restaurants and wanted to be part of this culture," Lauren said.

Located at 129 W. Columbus Ave., Lauren chose this space as it was nestled among local favorites including UNBOXED by Nikki, Undertone Beauty Bar, Salon Platinum 121 and the Poppy Seed Boutique.

Simply Torn's niche focuses on trendy and affordable clothing, ranging from Western/Bohemian styles to everyday casual wear. The styles are fun and appropriate for any age. They will also carry a shoe line and a number of accessories.



"We try to focus on generational shopping opportunities so mothers and daughters can take a shopping trip together and both find favorites. Also, our goal is to

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Popular Lima... from Page 5

purposely carry limited quantities in each style so you won't see everyone in town wearing the same piece you selected."

"It has been a pleasure to work with the entire Stepleton family and to see the father/daughter experience of creating this second location," says Keyne Strickland, Leasing Manager for Small Nation. "Lauren is excited to collaborate with neighboring businesses to create even more opportunities for the community. We are happy they chose Bellefontaine for their newest journey."

For regular updates, you can follow them on Facebook at Simply Torn and Instagram at @simplytorn14 and order online at www.thesptb.com.



Meet Darin Hohman of Dark Horse Productions



If you haven't had the opportunity to "meet" Darin Hohman, now is your chance! Recently, Small Nation chatted with Darin, owner and operator of Dark Horse Productions, to learn more about his background, company, and the services he offers. (Fun fact: Darin won an Emmy® Award while working for Toledo's PBS Station, WGTE.)

Dark Horse Productions provides video and photography services to a wide range of corporate and non-profit clients, specifically producing marketing, recruitment, and training videos, as well as product photography and corporate headshots. Using the latest technology in the industry, Darin and his team create videos and photos that help clients bring their visions to life.

Small Nation: What made you decide to start your own business?

Darin Hohman: Dark Horse Productions started as a need. I wasn't planning on starting a company but decided to leave a job where I was unhappy. Within a few weeks, people I'd met through various agencies and freelance gigs reached out and asked if I could create videos for their companies. It all began with one phone call. From there, I made it up and figured it out as I went along.

SN: How did you choose the name of your company?

DH: The name Dark Horse is an amalgamation of a lot of ideas and over-analysis. I didn't want to use my own name, but I wanted to reflect the rural area I call home. The first inspiration for the name came from my love for old cinema and the history of film. The first motion picture ever captured was "The Horse in Motion" by Eadweard Muybridge. Dark Horse is a combination of the first motion picture, an easy/familiar phrase, a representation of the rustic/rural landscape, and an homage to my initials, DH.

SN: Can you describe a project you're most proud of and why?

DH: I'm proudest of the non-profit work we do. Whenever a video can help an organization further its mission, our work makes a difference and improves the community. We've worked with several United Way organizations, Healthcare systems, and local schools. Those are always rewarding experiences.

Additionally, the team had the opportunity to go

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Meet Darin... from Page 6

into the operating room and record three heart surgeries in a day. Those videos will go on to teach and inform other physicians and hospital staff and to help promote that hospital's capabilities and emerging technologies regarding heart valve replacements.

SN: What are some of the most rewarding aspects you've experienced with Dark Horse Productions?

DH: The most rewarding aspect of my job is delivering a video or a portfolio of pictures to a client that helps them. When we deliver a product, and it energizes them, we feed off of that. Because I am easily bored and need to be challenged, I am always thrilled

when a client wants to try something new.

SN: What are you looking forward to most in 2023?

DH: I'm looking forward to working with all of our ongoing clients and the fresh challenges they bring to us. I'm excited about a couple of large-scale projects with new clients and our addition of technology. We have just added another cinema camera and the latest drone to our arsenal. We also plan on starting construction on a larger studio space, which will solely be dedicated to catering to client requests.

To get in touch with Darin, visit <https://darkhorsepro.com/>.



Small Nation speaks at Public Relations Society of America International Conference in Grapevine, Texas



Small Nation Founder and CEO Jason Duff was selected to speak at the annual Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Conference at the Gaylord Texas Resort and Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas on November 14th, 2022.

Celebrating PRSA's 75th anniversary and their first in-person conference since 2019, the conference features industry thought leaders include keynote speakers Emmitt Smith, retired National Football League Hall of Famer and author, Marlee Matlin, Academy Award winner for her film CODA, and lead anchor of BBC news, Katty Kay.

The theme for the ICON 2022 conference was the Power of Influence. In collaboration with Associate Professor of Public Relations at Ohio Northern University Dr. Alisa Agozzino, Ph.D. and Small Nation Project Manager Ann Donnelly Hamilton, Duff presented at the professional development section of the conference on "The Power of Small: How Small Nation Revitalized a Community Through Strategy That Favored Niche-Market Partnerships, Effective Storytelling and Creative Digital Content."

"We were excited to bring the Small Nation story and strategy to the public relations industry in order to share how we

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Small Nation... from Page 7

capitalized on both the communication aspects and training needed to highlight our approach for successful initiatives in small towns," said Duff. "We have proof that the strategies Small Nation has put into action can positively impact society and become an influential entity of communities – even if we are small."

"PRSA ICON is the premier international conference for our industry of public relations," Agozzino shared. "I was excited to connect practitioners who are constantly challenged with small budgets, yet big dreams, with those who have built Small Nation into the nationally recognized success story that it is."

Being a professional storyteller herself, Donnelly Hamilton notes, "In organizational storytelling, a great story should take your audience on a journey where their feelings, ideas and attitudes start to shift. Small Nation's backyard is where many of us grew up. It's our tiny towns and villages that make our nation thrive and professionals need to see what can be done in small-town America and perhaps take these techniques back to their own hometowns for revival."

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) is an international nonprofit trade association for public relations professionals. Founded in 1947, focuses on professional development, networking and leadership opportunities for its members.



Cameron Saylor Joins Small Nation as New Staff Accountant

Small Nation recently welcomed Cameron Saylor as the new Staff Accountant for the team beginning December 12th, 2022.

Cameron joins Small Nation coming from a background in accounting and bookkeeping. With a degree in accounting from Bluffton University, he previously held positions as Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Supervisor at Marker, Inc. Most recently, Cameron was a Staff Accountant and Bookkeeper at All Around Accounting LLC in Lakeview, Ohio.

"Cam will make a great addition to our growing team," said Small Nation Founder and CEO Jason Duff. "His knowledge and experience in the accounting field brings a level of expertise that will help our team and work expand even further."

Cameron takes over maintaining day-to-day financial operations for Small Nation and its subsidiary businesses COMSTOR Outdoor, Community Storage & Properties, and more.

"I couldn't be more excited about the opportunity to join the Small Nation team," said Cameron. "The passion of the team members as well as the vision of the business really excites me and I look forward to playing my role each day to continue the success of Small Nation."



Cameron lives outside Belle Center, Ohio, with his wife Tawney, two daughters, Kaydence and Kerrigan, and three dogs. In the community, he has 12 years of sports coaching and is in his sixth year as the Head Boys Basketball Coach at Benjamin Logan High School. He also coaches Belle Center t-ball.



Bellefontaine #14 Best Small City out of 500 Nationwide



Recently, SmartAsset.com conducted a study of almost 500 small cities, or micropolitans, across the country to analyze 13 metrics across the three categories of jobs, affordability, and livability. Big cities like the 3 Cs in Ohio are great, but not for everyone. Cost of living is

higher, it's more fast-paced, and the community feel can sometimes not be there.

As we've seen all over the country but specifically in Bellefontaine and especially in Columbus suburb communities like Marysville and Delaware - in the two fastest growing counties in the state - people are moving out of big cities for greener pastures. Suburbs and other small cities 15-60 minutes from large cities, as are the ones in this study, offer less expensive housing, lower crime, and a better quality of life.

Which is why we're happy and proud that Bellefontaine is not just ranked 4th in Ohio, but 14th out of 494 in the entire country - the top 3%. Ohio has 4 of the top 25 and the Midwest 31 of the top 50, so our region is doing great right now. A big shoutout to the Mayor and our City and the Logan County Chamber for their work as well to get Bellefontaine to this point.

Shannon Reese awarded Young Professional of the Year!

We are so proud of Small Nation team member Shannon Reese, who was just awarded Young Professional of the Year by the Logan County Chamber of Commerce. Shannon currently is Chair of the Logan County Visitors Bureau Board, serves on the Chamber board, and is a member of the Indian Lake School Board of Education.

Many people were nominated for this award and we're so excited that she was honored with the award on November 2nd at the annual Chamber Stars in Business Night of Recognition at the Holland Theater. Please join me in wishing her a warm congratulations!



Small Nation Speaks to Miami Valley Zoning & Planning

On December 2nd, Small Nation went down to Sinclair Community College in Dayton to present to the Miami Valley Zoning & Planning workshop. This workshop, presented by the American Planning Association Ohio's Miami Valley Section, focused on planning practice and development trends for community development, professionals, and citizen planners.

Jason Duff's keynote presentation focused on Small Town Ohio's Comeback - the Bellefontaine, Ohio story and how Small Nation took a dying town and turned it into a best-in-state destination. The presentation to over 300 zoning and planning

professionals kicked off the day that discussed other topics such as land use law, unlocking your potential, and public engagement efforts.

Jason also led a breakout session about small town ideas and owning your weird-isms. Too many times towns bury their ace. But innovation and creative new ideas are how Small Nation revitalized Bellefontaine. Owning being the highest, shortest, and first - highest point in Ohio, shortest street in America, and first concrete street. Thanks to the APA Ohio for having us - we had a great time with you!



Small Nation Visits Dresden, Ohio

Small Nation was in Dresden, Ohio, in early December learning about its deep basketmaking heritage and vision of the Longaberger company. We met with area business owners, leaders and investors, toured stores and will be providing a downtown business assessment in a few weeks.



Dresden has an amazing basketmaking heritage as the original home to Longaberger Baskets. In 2018 when Longaberger filed for bankruptcy, community members stepped up to form Dresden & Company to preserve the history and heritage of Dresden basketmaking. Dresden & Co. now manufactures their own baskets and still makes them for Longaberger.

While in town, we also did plenty of Holiday shopping today too! Thanks to all of Team Dresden for their amazing hospitality. It truly is a magical little town. If you ever get a chance, we definitely recommend stopping in Smore Baskets and Smore Christmas, eating at the Warehouse, and getting some Longaberger history at the Patio Shops. We're so excited about the new friends, ideas and partnerships today.



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MAIN STREET MARKETING NEWS

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