

**SMALL
NATION**

NEWSLETTER
FROM YOUR FRIENDS
AT SMALL NATION



MAIN STREET

MARKETING NEWS

Q1 2023

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

Last year, Small Nation started our podcast where we share the valuable lessons we've learned about entrepreneurship, real estate, economic development, and more. We're starting to wrap up season one, with an exciting second season in the works.

In the last year, I've been honored to interview guests like Lydia Mihalik, Ohio Director

of Development, Bob Smith, Chairman of JobsOhio, and Chad Hoffman, President of Richwood Bank.

You can listen at SmallNationStrong.com/Podcast or watch on the Small Nation YouTube channel. Let me know your thoughts or if you have suggestions for great guests!

Jason Duff



smallnationstrong.com/podcast



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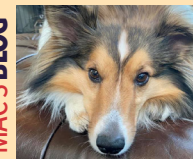
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Stock it to me!

MAC'S BLOG



I'm still
squeamish
about real
theme-park

rollercoasters, but I have signed up
for an economic rollercoaster.

Yes, I am now playing the stock
market.

My friend Rex shamed me into
it. He laughed at me for being
old-fashioned and burying
bones in the back yard. He said I
should invest in something that
pays dividends. He wore down
my resistance, but truth be told,

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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 is 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.

Downtown Art Studio Opens in Rainbow Row Bellefontaine

Dwight Greenbaum's father was a very talented artist, taking Dwight and his siblings to art museums all over the country while growing up. At the time, he thought looking at old paintings and sculptures was boring. But as he grew older, he began to appreciate being exposed to the works of Old Masters at an early age.

Over the years, Dwight's love for creating art grew exponentially and he knew he had to share that love with others. Beginning in his home outside Bellefontaine, Ohio, he started creating his oil and acrylic paint pieces and offering lessons to aspiring artists. Eventually he knew he wanted a space for others to learn, explore, and create their art while providing professional art materials at the most budget-friendly prices without compromising quality or functionality.

"Have you ever been in a large chain store trying to find the right product, and you look around like a deer caught in headlights and cannot find it?" said Dwight. "And to top it

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Mac's Blog

burying bones does pay dividends. I get the dividend of digging up the bones and embarrassing those stupid squirrels who have misplaced their acorns!

Rex insisted I should make my money work for me. I'll admit I had misgivings. If I was going to be the boss of my money, that would make me The Man. And I'd rather be The Good Boy than The Man. What a dilemma!

Seriously, stock trading doesn't come naturally to canines. The concept of "shares" is a bit alien when you're used to "Grrr...that's all mine!"

I'm having to learn a lot in a hurry, but don't assume I was totally ignorant of stock market lingo before. I even had experience with a market crash a couple of years ago. That grocer should have known that stacking jars of olives in a pyramid display is an attractive nuisance!

I also knew about dot-com bubbles. That was when I accidentally knocked my master's laptop into my sudsy bathtub.

I also had experience with a hedge fund. By hedge fund, I mean the money I saved to grow a barrier so the beagle next door couldn't spy on me.

Then there was the "index fund" incident. That was when I had to pay for all the homework notecards I ate.

You wanna talk about liquidity? Well, come to think of it, I don't, either. I outgrew that phase of my puppyhood, thank goodness.

I didn't know much about world currencies before, although I always had a yen for franks at the neighborhood cookouts. I turned the condiments table into ruble -er, rubble.

I plan to specialize in something called "the future market." I think that's when you use jetpacks instead of a cart to gather up the kibble.

And, oh yeah, you should invest in things you're familiar with, so I'll definitely buy shares of that new canine-oriented chain Bed Bath & Be Getting Your Muddy Paws Off My Nice Outfit!

Step aside, bull market and bear market. It's Mac market time!



all off, you cannot find anyone that can truly assist you in finding it or making the right choice in products. This was me when I went into a big box art supply store. I found

that no one really knew the products they sold, or what product was the best choice for your need. This is what I want to change. You shouldn't have to get stressed out trying to find the right products to use for something that should be bringing you pure enjoyment."

Rush Creek Art Studio's mission is to provide real hands-on professional assistance to all artists looking for the right training and materials. Rush Creek Art Studio is the second tenant to move into the newly renovated Rainbow Row building, with the Craft Emporium opening at the beginning of the year.

The art studio offers instruction in various art mediums such as oil, acrylic, and water-based colors while providing a wide range of materials like paints, brushes, stretched canvas, artist paper, charcoal, and more. "We have partnered with some of the finest manufacturers in the United States, Italy, Germany, Ireland, and Russia to provide the highest quality materials for artists. We can provide our customers with the finest products at budget friendly prices," Dwight added.

In addition to oil and acrylic paint classes for beginning artists, Rush Creek Art Studio also plans to offer intermediate and advanced art classes. Children's art workshops will be held



throughout the year as a place for children to explore various art techniques and tools in a relaxing environment. Dwight is also very passionate about giving back to American heroes who have served in the US Armed Forces and plans to hold art classes for veterans in need to find a sense of peace, reassurance, and enjoyment.

"Rush Creek Art Studio is filling a major need in Downtown Bellefontaine, and what better place than in the downtown's new arts district?" said Keyne Strickland, Small Nation Leasing and Property Manager. "Dwight's new studio will add to the growing arts scene in Bellefontaine and we could not be more excited"

For more information, visit their Facebook page at Rush Creek Art Studio or give them a call at 419-679-8772.



One-Eyed Cookie Lab Bringing Signature Cookies to Downtown Bellefontaine Storefront



Later this spring, Jennifer Rachek will be bringing her signature cookies to a storefront in the Historic Opera Block in Downtown Bellefontaine. Her business, One-Eyed Cookie Lab, will be opening a brick-and-mortar store after two years of baking at home and selling in local stores and at markets and events.

Owner Jennifer Rachek began baking as a little girl with her grandma with the dream of creating baked goods as good as hers. With COVID came less of a commute and gave her more time to perfect her cookie recipe. With encouragement from friends and coworkers, she started One-Eyed Cookie Lab and made her cookies available to everyone.

"Most of our cookies weigh in around a quarter pound," said Jennifer. "We use premium ingredients that are locally sourced whenever possible. All ingredients are things we're comfortable feeding our own family like local honey, pure vanilla, unbleached flour, and farm fresh eggs. We never use any artificial colors or flavors."

In addition to cookies, One-Eyed Cookie Lab will offer ice cream, ice cream sandwiches, and other fun items. The shop will also have a space welcoming to children to have small birthday parties, baby or bridal showers, craft events, or any other activity.

"We are so glad Jennifer is opening up her shop in Downtown Bellefontaine. Her cookies are the real deal and made with real ingredients," said Keyne Strickland, Small Nation Leasing and Property Manager.

"Having her own storefront is just what the downtown needs to compete with big city companies like Crumbl."

Jennifer will be opening One-Eyed Cookie Lab at 118 E. Court Ave. with her team of her mom, Katie Watkins, formerly of Oliver Grey Bakery, Haley Thornburg, and Addie Huffman. To support One-Eyed Cookie Lab, merchandise can be purchased online here. To follow their progress or to order cookies, follow them on Facebook or visit their website at www.oneeyedcookielab.com.



New Candy Store Opens in Downtown Bellefontaine Rainbow Row



Candy Craze, a new candy store, opened its doors in Rainbow Row Bellefontaine.

Owner Tanisha McCreary has long wanted to create her own candy concept. After years of working as an accountant, she realized that with her kids getting older, she was ready to take the risk in pursuing her dream of opening a candy store.

Candy Craze, located at 122 W. Chillicothe Ave. in Rainbow Row Bellefontaine, is the third storefront to open in the newly renovated building. It follows the openings of the Craft Emporium and Rush Creek Art Studio, both of which opened earlier in 2023.

The shop offers anything and everything that is candy, ranging from chewy and gummy, sour and chocolate, and nostalgic and novelty. "Penny" candies, small candies such as Tootsie Rolls, Laffy Taffy, and bubble gum, can be bought in bulk

as well. Nostalgic candies like Bit-O-Honey, Pez, and pop rocks are also available in the store along with a Pucker Power Candy Station, a do-it-yourself Pixie Stick-like powdered candy.

"I plan to carry anything and everything candy," said Tanisha. "From the things remembered decades ago to the newest trends, I want to be all inclusive and show that candy can be for everyone."

Tanisha is striving to carry many sugar-free options and cater to other dietary restrictions and cultures as well. She also will embrace many Ohio-based

candy companies and offer local products for customers.

"Fun, funky, and vintage candies are some of my favorite things," Jason Duff, Small Nation Founder and CEO said. "We are so excited to welcome Candy Craze to Downtown Bellefontaine because it adds to the fun, family atmosphere and will be a big draw for the downtown from people all over."

Candy Craze celebrated their grand opening on Wednesday, March 22nd. For more information, follow them on Facebook at Candy Craze.



Marketplace Welcomes New Home of Honestly Clean Premier Cleaning Service

The new year brings a new business to the Main Street Marketplace in Downtown Bellefontaine. On Tuesday, January 3rd, Honestly Clean moved into their first office space, bringing their premier cleaning services to the downtown community.

In 2018, Owner Misti Smith began the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace program as a way to earn some extra money by doing something she loved and was good at – cleaning. Slowly, she started to pick up clients through word of mouth. After quick success, Misti decided to quit her corporate America job to start her own company, beginning Honestly Clean as her new, fulltime job. Her team, along with her business partner Tiffany Furer, now employ over 20 full- and part-time members and help over 100 clients.

“As I trusted God on this journey and continued to grow, I wanted to spread this opportunity to others,” said Misti. “I wanted to help clients get their homes clean and I wanted to help those looking for work.”

Located in Suite 114 of the Marketplace, Honestly Clean’s new office will provide onsite booking requests and scheduling for new and current clients. Their services can be tailored to fit any budget and any specific needs.

“Our business is unique because we stand by our work and welcome



all feedback so we can continue to work to improve our services and provide the best for our community,” Misti added.

Honestly Clean is most excited to work with local organizations for volunteer opportunities to give back to the community. They are also looking forward to participating in Chamber of Commerce events, Downtown Bellefontaine Partnership First Fridays events, and working with local schools to employ school-to-work program students and those looking to go into the hospitality field.

We at Small Nation use Honestly Clean for many different properties including the Marketplace and they always do top notch work,” said Keyne Strickland, Small Nation

Leasing and Property Manager. “Having them in the downtown now has been great for both working with them and for them growing their business to the next level.”

To learn more about Honestly Clean or inquire about their cleaning services, visit their website at www.honestlycleanohio.com, their Facebook at Honestly Clean, or call them at 937-442-8881.



The Opera Block Documentary Series

The Historic Opera Block in Downtown Bellefontaine is the largest and most transformational project yet by Small Nation. Many small towns across the country face similar challenges as presented with this project. This docuseries is meant to reveal what it takes to truly revitalize historically significant real estate in a downtown district and the people and resources necessary to accomplish it.

Each month, new episodes will be released to track the progress, the challenges, and the victories with a

full-length documentary to follow the completion of the project.

Episode 1 is out now and features Small Nation Founder and CEO Jason Duff to share the history of this building, how Small Nation got started on this project, and how we are bringing this downtown icon back to life.

Watch new episodes at youtube.com/@smallnationstrong.

Keep up with the progress of this project at operablock.com.



Ohio Restaurant Association Visit Bellefontaine



Recently, the Small Nation team welcomed folks from the Ohio Restaurant Association to town. The ORA is Ohio's hospitality advocacy group, having been around since 1920 to serve the state's restaurant, food service, and hospitality industry. The ORA provides its members with business solutions, support and opportunities, professional education, and more. Small Nation's own,

and Brewfontaine Co-Owner, Adam Rammel is a proud member of the ORA Board of Directors.

We've been working with the ORA for years as we've used restaurants to drive Downtown Bellefontaine's revitalization. Almost 12 years ago now is when we opened Six Hundred Downtown which was the catalyst for the downtown's redevelopment. Since, we've been able to open Brewfontaine, Ohio's best craft beer bar, the Syndicate, a premium dining and brunch experience, and more, with help and guidance from people such as the Restaurant Association.

Thanks to the whole ORA team for taking the time to visit Downtown Bellefontaine and see our restaurants and other projects.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives NEXT Conference



Small Nation was in Florida in February speaking at the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives NEXT Conference about how cooperatives power economic development. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives represents over 900 local energy cooperatives in 47 states and provide resources, funding and capital to support many of the most needed economic development projects in their communities.

Small Nation Founder and CEO Jason Duff, and Leasing and Property Manager Keyne Strickland traveled down to meet with amazing small-town leaders from around the country at the conference. Happy 25th anniversary to this wonderful organization.

Thanks to Touchstone for having us and to Dennis Mingyar of Ohio's Electric Cooperatives for joining us for a great conversation.



SBE Council Launches Metaverse Business Alliance

A few weeks ago the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council announced the launch of a new collaborative initiative, the Metaverse Business Alliance, with fellow business organizations and associations, including Small Nation, whose efforts will focus on sharing knowledge, important trends, and information about the use, potential, and convergence of Web3 technologies. Web3 is technology many are saying is the future of the internet, with decentralization, blockchain technologies, and token-based economies.



The metaverse presents a whole new world of virtual markets and opportunities causing us to think about assets like real estate, storefronts, and the workforce differently. Small companies are excited to leverage new technology and tools that allow them to better connect, communicate, grow, and scale.

Metaverse Business Alliance will be a resource and conduit to other small businesses and entrepreneurs who are looking to gain new customers, new capabilities, and talent living anywhere. The Metaverse is allowing some of the smallest businesses to excel in the competitive leagues of the largest markets and opportunities on the planet. Thanks to SBE Council President & CEO, and dear friend of Small Nation, Karen Kerrigan for leading this effort and including Small Nation in this exciting alliance.



Essential Tips

Top 4 Marketing Tips for 2023

1 Put Your Customers First

One of the quickest ways to grow revenue in 2023 is to focus on your existing customers with retention marketing. Offer loyalty programs. Engage top customers in product feedback. Offer incentives for referrals and sharing on social media. Send text appointment reminders, product tip emails, and personalized thank-yous.

2 Stop "Getting By" with an Outdated Website

Online experiences and expectations have changed. Consumers demand ease online or they'll leave. Websites nowadays include features like online event scheduling, built-in video conferencing, interactive calculators, and more. Update your website to add features that allow customers to interact online.

3 Take Data Privacy Seriously

Unfortunately, cyber-attacks and security breaches on websites are common these days, and no business wants to deal with a hacked website. Protect your website with the latest security features.

4 Stop Recruiting the Same Old Way

Competition for talent is fierce. Therefore, shift the way you think about recruitment and invest in a digital recruitment marketing strategy. Post employee events and successes on social media. Share video testimonials. Use digital tools to communicate efficiently with top candidates.

By Tyler Louth, Chief Executive Officer at Marketing Essentials. Submit your marketing and sales questions to Tyler at connect@mktgessentials.com.



Liberty National Bank is Now Part of Middlefield Bank!

Liberty National Bank is now part of Middlefield Bank headquartered in Middlefield, Ohio serving Northeast, Central, and Western Ohio. The two banks have been rooted in Ohio communities for over a century and will now proudly serve 19 Ohio communities.

Ron Zimmerly, former CEO and President of Liberty National Bank stated, "Middlefield Bank is a bank much like Liberty National. We share a common belief in providing personalized service for banking and lending, convenient digital banking services, and dedication to our customers' financial success. Our staff that you've come to appreciate and rely on will continue to provide you the same attention and customer service that we pride ourselves on, and my role will be President at Middlefield Bank."

While you will start to see the signage change, the business approach and commitment to their customers and the community will remain unchanged. Customers will continue to enjoy benefits like relationship-based banking experience, superior customers service, and reinvesting in their communities. Community banking means fast, local decisions, seeing the same knowledgeable, friendly employees year after year and being greeted by name, and an unwavering focus on the needs of local families and businesses. Plus they offer free popcorn on Fridays!

"We are still a community bank and that means we understand the concerns of our community. We can communicate and relate to our customers. And their money stays local," Kelly Hoffman, Branch Operations Manager. "We will also continue to support our community with both our time and our money."

The bank has supported many local events and organizations over the years. To name a few: United Way Community Care Day and Stuff the Bus; The



Logan County Chamber golf outing and events; Local schools' sports programs and EVERFI financial literacy program; Bellefontaine Police Awards Dinner; Logan County Fair; Local Concerts; and many more. If a homegrown project is benefiting residents, it's likely the bank will be involved!

"Thank you to our Liberty Bank customers and the Logan County Community! We truly appreciate your business and loyalty and look forward to continuing to serve you," Ron Zimmerly said. "I am excited for the future and what these two banks can accomplish together. With 22 full-service banking centers across



12 compelling Ohio counties, we have created a stronger organization with expanded capabilities.”

Middlefield Bank has total assets of \$1.8 billion* and is the 11th largest community bank in Ohio**. MB offers convenient services and technology made simple across the following:

- Personal Checking Accounts
- Personal Savings Accounts, CDs, and IRAs
- Mortgage Services
- Home Equity Lines of Credit
- Credit Cards
- Online/Mobile Banking
- Digital Banking Services
- Commercial Banking
- Commercial Lending

Liberty Bank customers will find that there are no changes to their accounts, account numbers, etc. The combining of bank operating systems is scheduled for April 2023. There will be further communication at that time.

Middlefield Bank serves Bellefontaine from its two branches at 1120 North Main Street and 1454 South Main Street. To learn more about Middlefield Bank, visit www.middlefieldbank.bank/Welcome-Liberty.

**Approximate combined assets, as of June 30, 2022*

***Deposit market share ranking based on Ohio headquartered banks with less than \$10 billion in assets. Member FDIC, Equal Housing Lender*



Nick Bozman Joins COMSTOR Outdoor Regional Sales Team

Nick Bozman recently joined the COMSTOR Outdoor sales team as a new regional sales representative, joining Small Nation's outdoor advertising team on January 3rd, 2023.

As an experienced sales professional, Nick comes to COMSTOR Outdoor with retail experience at RV Wholesalers in Lakeview, Ohio, and TC Auto Sales in Huntsville. He has also spent seven seasons as Manager of Operations at Vertical Drop Ski and Board in Zanesfield. Nick is a graduate of Urbana University where he received his degree in business management.

On the COMSTOR sales team, Nick will be responsible for sales, client marketing strategies, and customer service for COMSTOR's 400+ billboard locations across Ohio and Indiana. He will also help with prospecting for new clients and identifying new billboard locations for Small Nation's growing outdoor advertising business.

"I am excited to be joining the growing Small Nation team and I look forward to being more involved with small communities as I help to bring more awareness to locally owned businesses throughout Ohio," said Nick. "I'm especially looking forward to meeting new business owners and helping to tailor the best plan for each of their advertising needs."

COMSTOR Outdoor Sales Manager Mike Hibner believes Nick is a perfect addition to the rapidly growing team. "Nick's experience and work ethic are exactly what we need to



continue towards success. We're glad that he's joining us to help bring us to the next level."

Nick is an avid baseball player, having played professionally as a pitcher for seven teams during his six-year career. He's passionate about the game and giving back to young players.

Nick currently resides in Bellefontaine with his girlfriend and one-year-old son. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family, watching sports and cooking.



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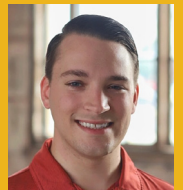
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COMMUNITY BRANDING
TRAINING & COACHING
SPEAKING & EVENTS**

Small Nation was back in New Concord, Ohio to speak at the New Concord Board of Trade Annual Dinner. We have been working with the folks from New Concord for almost the last year on implementing the Small Town Success Formula in their town with the Mayors' Partnership for Progress, and we were more than happy to be back with these amazing people.

The folks in New Concord are so positive, enthusiastic, and energized to take the town to the next level. We are thankful to be invited to work, create, and connect with this special village and community. Special thanks to Mayor Jennifer Lyle, who is a complete rock star, for her amazing hospitality.



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