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ENTREPRENEURS '09

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Recession? What recession? A plethora of innovative and growing SMEs are having success across the country. Here are Dynamic Business' favourites for 2009.



SIMON CROWE, GRILL'D

Healthy burger franchise Grill'd recently opened its first Sydney restaurant, marking the company's 24th store opening and with plans well underway to operate 40 stores in VIC, QLD and NSW by year end. Unfazed by the economic downturn, founder and MD Simon Crowe instead points recent sales growth as an indicator of the company's recession proof appeal. "Summer 08/09 was a record trading period for us in both Victoria and Queensland, with the majority of restaurants smashing their individual sales records. Grill'd is well placed to benefit from tighter economic conditions in 2009, as consumers trade down from full service to convenient restaurants with a strong value proposition. We are well regarded in this space, particularly amongst young families looking for convenient, quality and nutritious meal solutions. " The franchise model that Crowe adopted within months of opening the first Grill'd restaurant in the Melbourne suburb of Hawthorn has undoubtedly enabled the company to expand. "The decision to franchise the business allowed me to take Grill'd to the next stage of development by entering into new markets at a faster rate. This move has ultimately led to Grill'd being established as Australia's number one premium, healthy burger chain," says Crowe.
www.grilld.com.au

STORY JEN BISHOP

GRACE CHU, FIRSTCLICK CONSULTING

Grace is the founder and MD of FirstClick Consulting, a strategic search marketing agency that provides SEM (search engine marketing) and SEO (search engine optimisation) services to companies including Foxtel and Fairfax Digital. It started with three staff in 2005 and now has 14, and 51 clients. First Click is service-oriented, performance-driven and takes passion and pride in everything it does. It has an extremely high staff retention rate of 92 percent in an industry where talent is rare. Grace says: "We're different. We combine human intellect and innovative technology. We're focussed on return on investment and outcomes. "We have high integrity and put ourselves in clients' shoes. We don't take on a client unless we are sure that we can deliver an improved result through generating a business return on investment. "The main thing for me and my staff is to feel like we're making a contribution to the business, our clients and our own development. We are relatively small so everyone's contribution is immediately evident. We enjoy seeing our business grow." With years of industry experience, Grace was most recently employed by eBay Australia before FirstClick.
www.firstclickconsulting.com



ENEURS THE YEAR

TANYA FARRAR, BRAZILIAN BUTTERFLY

Brazilian Butterfly was recently ranked 12th in the BRW Fast Franchises Awards with a revenue of \$7.18million, 74.06 percent growth and 19 outlets.

Founder and director Tanya, 37, is married to Scott, MD of the company. She's the first to admit she did not envisage running an expanding franchise when she created her very first salon in inner city Richmond in Melbourne.

She began her business with the simple belief that waxing could be done better. Based on 17 years' experience in the beauty industry, Tanya was convinced there was the potential for growth in waxing, particularly Brazilian waxing.

She bought her first beauty salon in 1994, built it up into a thriving business and sold it in 1996. The next six years were spent working in several salons and pharmacies in Melbourne and raising a family along the way.

With Scott's support and encouragement, Tanya took the plunge in 2002 and rented a shop in Richmond, with the idea of setting up a business that would specialise in waxing. Brazilian Butterfly was born. They opened their second salon in St Kilda in 2003.

Then, one of their best clients decided she liked Brazilian Butterfly so much she wanted one of her very own and approached Scott and Tanya with the idea of setting up her own salon. The first franchise store opened in Knox in 2004. The brand has grown to encompass 18 salons in Victoria and one in Queensland and Tanya has also developed a successful range of skincare products to complement the Brazilian Butterfly treatments.

www.brazilianbutterfly.com



TIM AND DAN ALPE, JUCY RENTALS

Jucy Rentals is one of Australasia's fastest growing independent rental companies. Launched in New Zealand in 2002, Jucy has experienced rapid growth with annual revenue increasing by more than \$20 million since the business began. In 2008, the New Zealand campervan sensation made its way across the Tasman and began operations in Australia.

Jucy was launched in New Zealand by brothers Tim and Dan Alpe. Tim and Dan have an extensive background in the tourism industry, previously being employed by leading New Zealand tourism company, Tourism Holding Limited (THL). With their intricate understanding of the industry they recognised that there weren't many car rental companies with affordable, reliable cars for rent. To fill this gap they came up with the concept for Jucy; a unique car hire company providing affordable yet luxurious cars and campervan rentals. The proposal was put forward to THL but was eventually knocked back. They decided to go out on a limb and undertook the business endeavour on their own and they are thankful they did.

So far the Australian market has welcomed Jucy with open arms, with Jucy continuing to expand its fleet of 200 campervans throughout 2009. Tim is not surprised by Jucy's success. "We researched the market and competitors extensively and the time was right to move to Australia. The majority of our customers in New Zealand were Australian, British or German; many of whom were travelling through Australia as well."

Jucy has grown from 35 cars to a fleet of over 2,000 vehicles and currently employs 85 vibrant, youthful staff members in offices throughout New Zealand and Australia.

www.jucy.com.au



DANIEL BANIK AND ZOE WARNE, AUGUST

August is a Melbourne-based digital agency, where creativity and technology are used intelligently to generate business innovation and success. Founded in 2005 by Daniel and Zoe and Matthew Agar, August is first and foremost about ideas and bringing them to life. Whether it's creating a large scale, ecommerce-enabled website or developing a targeted, online product launch to integrate with an existing offline campaign.

Four years ago, they dared to carve out their niche agency from the ashes of an industry still recovering from the dot-com crash. August remains proudly independent, in a landscape that is increasingly populated by mergers and acquisitions. Now their clients include Fosters, Snowgum and Australia Post.

Zoe says: "We have created a vibrant team of young guns and whiz kids, and the right culture for retaining them—no revolving doors or corporate restructures here! Not surprisingly, we are well placed to ensure our growing stable of clients are loved and cared for, so they are here for the long-haul.

"And as for innovation, if it doesn't exist, we build it. Not quite right? We improve it. We have managed to create a whole suite of awesome web-based applications representing best of breed technology."

www.august.com.au



DAVID STEVENS, BRENNAN

David is founder and MD of business technology solutions provider, Brennan. Having started his career as an IT consultant working with a range of clients both locally and internationally on large scale infrastructure projects, he recognised the opportunity for a technology business specialising in the needs of SMEs. This led him to found Brennan in 1997.

Today, Brennan is recognised as one of the fastest growing technology businesses in Australia. The company has expanded from its IT services origins to now offer a complete range of managed and secure IT and telecommunication solutions, virtualisation, consulting and project services, technology sourcing, infrastructure integration, software development and financing packages.

His commercial background includes working with companies such as Novell and Microsoft. He was also a professional cyclist for a number of years and still maintains a strong interest in that, as well as car racing.

www.brennan.com.au



MAUREEN HOUSSEIN-MUSTAFA, AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE BROADWAY

Maureen Houssein-Mustafa grew up in a first generation Cypriot Turkish migrant family when times were hard in the 60s, particularly for an ambitious young woman.

She found her niche in sales when she joined *Joyce Mayne*, proving herself quickly. Maureen was invited to establish and head up the furniture division of the company, which later became the retail giant *Domayne*.

Ready for a new challenge, Maureen opened her first beauty salon in Sydney's Inner West. Within a short period, she grew her business to five locations across the area. After selling the business and with a renewed sense of direction, Maureen became the general manager of *Fuss Salons* in the Eastern Suburbs. Although she tripled the turnover in just a few years, Maureen saw firsthand that high standards were severely lacking in the beauty industry.

This became her motivation behind starting the Australasian College Broadway in 1994, with a paltry \$1,600 and tiny leased premises. With 47 staff today, the College now turns over \$8.8 million per annum and is a major exporter of education. More than 450 international and domestic students study annually in the state of the art premises in Broadway and the recent expansion of the property will increase this number to in excess of 750.

www.australasiancollege.com.au DB



DAVID HANCOCK, GEEKS2U

At just 24, David Hancock is the founder and managing director of Geeks2U, a national provider of onsite computer repairs, advice and support for home and business customers across Australia.

He set up Geeks2U from his bedroom when he was just out of school. He had one technician who was busy darting between customers in Sydney, but it wasn't long before he needed additional 'Geeks' to service a wider area.

Since 2005, Geeks2U has grown to become a highly successful small business. In fact, the revenue growth for April 09 vs April 08 was 94 percent. Geeks2U has just hit 30,000 customers and David expects revenue and customer growth to accelerate even further in the coming months. Geeks2U is in the process of hiring more full-time technicians around Australia to help keep up with demand.

www.geeks2u.com.au

