

‘Growing smart’ during difficult economic times

Today's guest is Jenny Poff, president and owner of Presque Isle Designs, LLC.

What is the name of the company you work for?

Presque Isle Designs, LLC

What does this company do?

As a visual brand expert, marketing strategist, and graphic designer, I have a deep passion for helping businesses to organize, shape and deliver creative and cohesive marketing and advertising campaigns. I am my client's trusted marketing advisor when needing support to increase brand awareness to grow, strengthen, nurture, and maximize the clients' experience resulting in increased opportunities and sales. It's delivering the right message to the right buyers. It's aligning their budget with the right tools. It's creating a memorable experience that builds lifelong business relationships and increased referrals. It's growing smart.

What is your job title?

Technically, I'm "president/owner", but I like to call myself a marketing and brand strategist.

Describe your day-to-day job/work related tasks and activities.

When a client signs on with me, they let the marketing reins go and get back to being a business owner. I tackle everything from website edits, create and launch marketing campaigns, work with vendors and media outlets, manage and control marketing budgets and art direct to bring the visions to life. It's meticulous

and creative at the same time —right brain and left brain thinking in one sphere.

What are the best things about your career?

I have been operating Presque Isle Designs since 2007, and it's allowed me to grow my career, experiences, skills, in a way that I can be proud of; all while balancing being a mom. To have my clients trust me on a such an intimate level with their business, they know that the work will be stellar and drive results.

What are the challenges faced in your career?

Presque Isle Designs was on a fast-growth track between 2016 and 2018, but I call it a "growth obstacle". I needed to control the growth, but I wasn't sure how. I sought advice from my advisory board, but I would get scared and neglected crafting a vision for my future. This turned into what I call my "midlife career crisis" where I really started to question "what's next"?

One day I said to my husband, "If I were to close my doors today, what would be next? I don't think I could work for another ad agency, I don't think I could work for one brand (that would get boring), but the Scott Enterprise model is interesting. I wonder how they operate their marketing efforts?"

Serendipitously, a few weeks later I'm having coffee with Nick Scott, Jr. This casual coffee date turned

into an intense interview of him asking if I would be the director of marketing of Scott Enterprises and manage brands such as Splash Lagoon, Peek'n Peak and the Ambassador.

Everything seemed to fit together. I closed my business and entered the corporate work environment again. It was a hard adjustment, more fast-paced then I could have been prepared for, but I adjusted. Almost two years later, the Scotts seemed happy with my performance and I felt like I was on the right track. And then the coronavirus hit.

I was laid off indefinitely, schools were closed and summer camps cancelled. It really shook me up. I had worked so hard to get through the "growth curve obstacle" and "mid-life career crisis"—but now what? It felt like another serendipitous moment. It's the perfect time for a resurrection — it was time to restart Presque Isle Designs. Businesses, especially small businesses in Erie, will need marketing now more than ever to regenerate what they have lost during this quarantine and I want to help them.

A few clicks later, the website is live and I'm back. I'm beyond thrilled and scared too. Who really knows what will happen to our economy, we can only take it one day at a time. But I'm optimistic and blessed that my past clients have been patiently awaiting my return and immediately

filled my project work load to align and build advertising tools to relaunch their business.

What's your educational background?

I went to Ohio University and received a bachelor's degree of fine arts in graphic design. With a secondary focus in printmaking and ceramics. I also had an art apprenticeship with a renowned ceramic artist during high school that focused on drawing, art history, archeology, and ceramics.

What qualities are important for you to hold the position you have?

My favorite part of Presque Isle Designs is working with amazing businesses that are dedicating their skills, services, and experiences to provide solutions that improve the lives of their clients in our Erie community. The most rewarding type of work is to help them tell their stories. So often they are too humble about the work they do, that they need help to share their awesomeness with everyone.

What size company do you work for?

I have worked with as small as \$250,000 revenue to multi-million dollar businesses.

Does the size of your employer make a difference to you, if so how?

No, if they value the power marketing has to nurture long term relationships for business growth, then we can definitely work together.



(CONTRIBUTED)

Jenny Poff, president and owner of Presque Isle Designs, LLC



When businesses practice reactionary marketing behaviors for quick sales fixes, it takes a lot more work to shift their teams to build a solid brand foundation, create marketing strategies, and generate results.

What would people be surprised to know about your career?

Growing up on Chapel Hill Golf Course in Ashtabula,

Ohio with parents who were the entrepreneurial authorities, has wired me for my own entrepreneurial adventure. From starting my business, to national speaking gigs, creating a national accountability group for independent creatives, fundraising for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society - every moment has prepared me for my solopreneur career path.

Find your career color

THE COLOR-CODED PATHWAYS ARE:

Red – Arts and Communication

Purple – Business, Finance and Information Technology

Blue – Engineering and Industrial Technology

Orange – Human Services

Green – Science and Health

Black – Career Tips

A SPECIAL NOTE FROM CAREER STREET: WE ARE VERY AWARE THAT OUR STAKEHOLDERS (SCHOOLS, BUSINESSES, AND ORGANIZATIONS) ARE DEALING WITH EXTREME CHALLENGES AS THE WORLD, OUR COUNTRY AND OUR COMMUNITY FACE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. WE ARE SENSITIVE TO THE FACT SOME OF YOU ARE MAKING VERY DIFFICULT DECISIONS. IF WE CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE, PLEASE LET US KNOW.



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