

# Serving the Underserved

Paul Weber pays a lot of attention to little businesses

STORY BY KATY RYAN | PHOTO BY ALISTAIR TUTTON



A simple complaint from a small business owner inspired Paul Weber to create Entrepreneur Advertising Group (EAG), an advertising and marketing agency that works specifically with small business owners in Kansas City.

"A small business owner approached me and complained that he couldn't get much help from ad agencies in town," Weber says. "I started doing some research and realized there was a glaring opportunity because there weren't any other firms dedicated to small business."

Just two months later Weber took the plunge and launched Entrepreneur Advertising Group. He soon attracted his first client through word-of-mouth promotion, and "the rest just kind of went from there," he says.

EAG takes a holistic look at marketing in order to help small business owners grow and market their businesses, offering a portfolio of services that includes brand development, strategic planning, identity assistance, interactive strategies help, advertising, and training in direct marketing and customer service/sales.

"What happens a lot of times is someone has a passion for whatever their skill is, and then they start exploring entrepreneurship and spending more time running the business instead of doing what they love," Weber says. "That's typically the point when they call us and want to outsource the marketing effort."

Aside from the initial risk of starting a business, Weber says one of his biggest challenges was finding employees who fit in well and could help him take the business to the next level.

"I have to be surrounded by people with multiple talents," he says. "I have to have a writer, designer, Web technology person, PR [specialist]. Finding and having them available to serve our clients was a huge challenge in the first few years. Probably the most critical part of being successful is finding talent."

Weber also battled initial skepticism about his target client base.

"The [concerns were] that we would only attract really small businesses ... and [that] it wouldn't be a viable market," he explains.

## FAST FACTS ▶

- ▶ Paul Weber
- ▶ CEO of Entrepreneur Advertising Group
- ▶ Company Profile: Entrepreneur Advertising Group is an advertising and marketing agency that works with small business owners on things like brand recognition and customer service training. EAG enables growth-minded companies to break through in a creative and affordable way.

"But the reality is this kind of term, whether it's entrepreneur or small business owner, is really a lot broader than I thought. A lot of our clients are very successful, 25-year-old, second-generation companies that still consider themselves [entrepreneurial ventures] or small businesses at heart."

As a small business owner himself, Weber identifies with a number of the traits that distinguish small business owners from other types of businesspeople. He says a high level of passion is what immediately sets small business owners apart from others.

As EAG has continued to thrive, Weber says he has received numerous suggestions about branching out his target clientele and serving others in addition to small business owners. Yet he remains committed to this group and his company's original mission.

"There seems to be an attraction for most advertising and marketing firms toward the big, recognizable brands—the Sprints, the H&R Blocks—and there really is a large, large underserved population of small business owners that deserve just as much attention," he says. **KCB**

## WEBER'S WORDS OF WISDOM ▶



"[There are] certain things you have to be relentless about, and you have to decide what those are. We're relentless about clients paying us on time and about paying our bills on time. If billing falls on a weekend, that's when we do it. We only have a handful of those kinds of absolutes, but they guide us."

"In a small business environment, you need to be much more attuned to the relationships of your employees."

"Something happens when you open a business, and there's a camaraderie that we [business owners] share."