

GableGotwals Welcomes the Glass Law Firm to our Team.

READ MORE



TULSA · OKLAHOMA CITY

Today's Headlines My Subscription E-edition Subscribe

Contact Us Welcome back, jfanch-208 Logout | My Dashboard

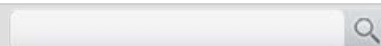
TULSA WORLD

44°



Free Unlimited Access

Jobs Autos Pets Homes Classifieds Contests Deals



Home > Business > Columnist John Stancavage

John Stancavage: Entrepreneurs pursue their 'eureka' moments

Story Comments (1) Image (1)

Print Font

Recommend Tweet 0 0

Size:

0

Posted: Saturday, January 11, 2014 12:00 am | Updated: 7:59 am, Sat Jan 11, 2014.



David Vinjamuri

By JOHN STANCAVAGE World Business Columnist | 1 comment

It's not uncommon for companies to pay millions of dollars to experts for marketing and branding advice, but sometimes the best ideas are those that pop into the heads of ordinary people.

That's what business professor and author David Vinjamuri discovered as he researched highly successful entrepreneurs.

Each business founder had a "eureka" moment when he or she figured out their niche in the market and the perfect way to fill it.

Take Roxanne Quimby. In the early 1980s, the artist and mother of young twins found herself divorced and living in a tent in Maine. While hitchhiking into town, she got a ride from Burt Shavitz, an unkept local

eccentric and beekeeper known for selling honey at a roadside stand.

Quimby told Shavitz she'd like to learn more about bees. The bearded Shavitz, normally known for not being fond of people, bathing or work, saw an opportunity to hire some free labor.

Quimby started making candles from Burt's leftover beeswax and sold them at outdoor

EasyTEL Communications
Going the extra mile for your business!
Fiber Optics • Internet • Data • Telephone • Cable TV

TULSA AREA BUSINESSES ARE SWITCHING THEIR VOICE, DATA, AND VIDEO SERVICE TO EASYTEL. WHY?

Gift Subscriptions

Nuyaka Creek Winery
dailydealtulsa.com
50% OFF winery tours with souvenirs
 [buy now](#)

Follow Us

Facebook

Twitter

Latest Local Offers

Green Country Staffing Warehouse Positions Available!

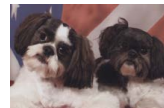
Warehouse Positions Available!



La Hacienda \$2 Off Combo Meal
\$2 Off Lunch or Dinner Combo Meal!



Patty & Terrie's Pet Grooming
15% OFF coupon for NEW paws



Ida Red 50% OFF select Tom's

markets. Later, while reading a 19th-century farmer's journal, she found a recipe for beeswax lip balm. Applying her artistic talent, she developed packaging for the products that was attractive and stressed the bee storyline.

At the time, her concept of a healthy, Earth-friendly line of personal care products was unique in the market. It grew steadily from \$20,000 in sales the first year to a \$500 million annual business that was acquired by Clorox in 2007.

"What was amazing," Vinjamuri said, "was that she did all of this without a credit card or any bank line of credit."

Vinjamuri recounted the story during a speech Friday at the Hardesty Regional Library. The New York-based author's visit was sponsored by the library and the Tulsa Regional Chamber.

Quimby is one of eight business owners detailed in Vinjamuri's best-selling book, "Accidental Branding." The name came from the fact that these entrepreneurs didn't have any formal branding training, yet still developed winning strategies.

Vinjamuri first heard about Quimby from a student while teaching branding at New York University. The professor had his own epiphany and decided to search for more self-taught branding success stories for a book.

In doing so, he discovered there was more to catalog pioneer John Peterman than the caricature depicted on the television show "Seinfeld." The real Peterman was a traveling salesman who liked to take side trips to shop for unusual items.

"In a little store in Jackson Hole, he found a coat that he really liked," Vinjamuri said. "Everywhere he wore that coat, people would comment on it."

So the enterprising Peterman decided to try to sell them himself.

His first effort yielded only three sales. He pressed on, though, with a small ad in the New Yorker magazine that featured a drawing of the coat. Sales picked up.

Peterman then had his "a-ha" experience and decided to start a catalog featuring similar rare finds.

"The accepted rules for catalogs then were that you used color pictures of the items, you made the descriptions short and you placed four or five products on a page." Vinjamuri said. "Peterman broke all those rules. He put one item on a page, he used a drawing, not a photo, and the text was a long story."

The J. Peterman catalog became a roaring success. The irony was that the brand actually suffered somewhat after the "Seinfeld" exposure, because one of the things regular customers liked about the catalog was that it was little-known.

A third entrepreneur managed to capitalize on mainstream exposure, however. "Mother" Gert Boyle rescued a clothing firm founded by her parents, Columbia Sportswear, from the brink of bankruptcy.

When her father died of a heart attack in 1970, Gert and her son, Tim Boyle, took over Columbia. At the time, the company's advertising tagline for its durable, weather-resistant line was the staid "We don't just design it. We engineer it."

Select Tom's Shoes 50% OFF



Express Employment Industrial Positions
Many Industrial Positions Available!



PeopleSource Current Openings
Looking for Welders and Machine Operators. Apply at:



[View more local offers](#)

Popular Commented

Stories

- 'August' star Benedict Cumberbatch gives Bartlesville women 2 unique experiences
- 'Girls': Questioning the need for naked Lena Dunham puts show exec in a 'rage spiral'
- Morris teen killed in Okmulgee County crash
- One confirmed dead in early morning Owasso wreck
- Bill would allow chewing Pop-Tarts into gun shapes in Oklahoma schools

More

Photos

Videos

Featured Businesses

Consumer Protection Lawyers
918-747-5300
<http://hwh-law.com>



Frank Petrouskie
918-830-4663
<http://www.frankpetrouskie.com>



CB Select
918-496-3333
<http://www.cbtulsa.com>



Rejoice Church
918-272-5291
<http://www.rejoicechurch.com>

Gert, however, wanted to personalize the brand. The idea was hatched to film a series of commercials portraying her as a tough-as-nails leader who didn't mind putting her son through all sorts of unpleasant experiences testing the company's products.

The ads were a hit and propelled Columbia back to profitability. Today, the company does \$1.7 billion in annual sales. Gert, now 89, reportedly still goes to the office every day and answers her own phone.

Other entrepreneurs highlighted in Vinjamuri's book include Craig Newmark, founder of the online classified site craigslist.org; Gary Erickson, inventor of the Clif Bar; Myriam Zaoui and Eric Malka, founders of The Art of Shaving stores; and Julie Aigner-Clark, founder of Baby Einstein.

Along with coming up with a great idea, each company founder in "Accidental Branding" shared another key attribute: They refused to give up.

"Everyone has these 'eureka' moments," Vinjamuri said. "These entrepreneurs pursued theirs, though, and they followed through. You have to be naturally persistent."

Keys to success for entrepreneurs

- 1. Solve your own problem.** Developing a product or service based on your own frustration will give you passion.
- 2. Pick a fight.** Don't be afraid to challenge a large, established corporation. Apple did that with IBM and, later, Microsoft.
- 3. Build a myth.** The real Burt Shavitz of Burt's Bees may be a more prickly character than what's portrayed by the company, but the myth helps sell products.
- 4. Avoid diluting your brand.** Remember the "New Coke" debacle?
- 5. Be faithful.** Don't forget what attracted customers in the first place.

Source: David Vinjamuri

Recommend Tweet

[Discuss](#) [Print](#)

Similar Stories

- Carbon pollution rises for first time in years, report says
- Planned capital spending rises 26 percent at Unit Corp.
- business article, by By Brandon Rottmayer
- business article, by By Brandon Rottmayer
- On the air

Most Read

- 'August' star Benedict Cumberbatch gives Bartlesville women 2 unique experiences
- 'Girls': Questioning the need for naked Lena Dunham puts show exec in a 'rage spiral'
- Morris teen killed in Okmulgee County crash
- One confirmed dead in early morning Owasso wreck
- Bill would allow chewing Pop-Tarts into gun shapes in Oklahoma schools



Woodland West Pet Resort/Care Centers
918-299-5720



<http://www.woodlandwestpetresort.com>

[Find a local business](#)

DISCOVER

a better approach to

INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

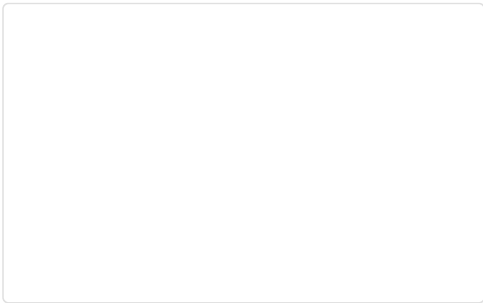
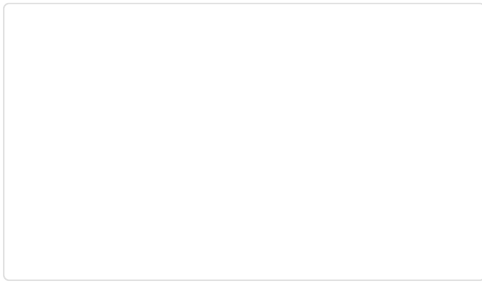
Calendar

January 2014

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

[today's events](#) [browse](#) [submit](#)

Today's E-Edition



Join the conversation.

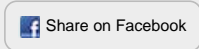
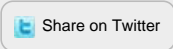
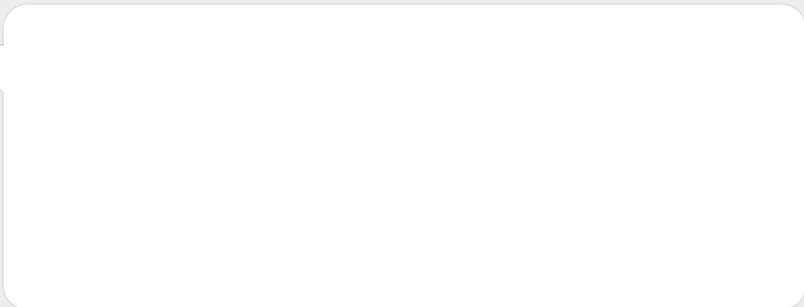
Anyone can post a comment on Tulsa World stories. You can either sign in to your Tulsa World account or use Facebook.

[Sign in to your online account](#) . If you don't have an account, [create one](#) for free . To comment through Facebook, please [sign in to your account](#) before you comment.

Read our [commenting policy](#).

1 comment:

ifanch-208



Your real name will display with your post.

mark omella posted at 9:44 am on Sat, Jan 11, 2014.



Posts: 370

Entrepreneurs pursue their 'eureka' moments
This is the heart of entrepreneurship. What they think about the first thing in the morning.

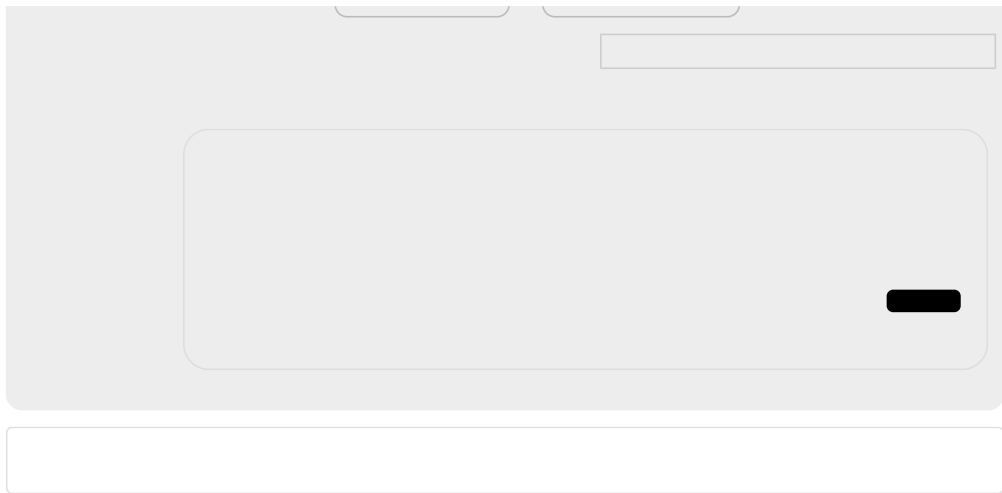


Link

Reply

Print comments





Come and watch the
BOWL
GAMES
 while enjoying your
FAVORITE
CIGAR!

The Cigar Box

Sign up for email newsletters

Email:

- Breaking News
- Daily Headlines
- Latest Headlines at 4 p.m.
- DailyDealTulsa.com Offers
- OU Sports
- OSU Sports
- TU Sports
- High School Sports
- Food & Restaurants
- Weekend: Things to Do
- Home & Garden
- Downtown Tulsa
- Real Estate
- Advertising Offers
- Contest Alerts



Customer Service: 918-582-0921, 800-444-6552, circulation@tulsaworld.com

Newsroom: 918-581-8400, news@tulsaworld.com

Website: web@tulsaworld.com

Place a display ad: 918-581-8510

Place a classified ad: 918-583-2121

Address: 315 S. Boulder Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74103

- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| News | Weather | Contact Us |
| Sports | Photo | Corrections |
| Business | Video | Subscription Services |
| Scene | Investigations | Submission Forms |
| Communities | Obits | Site Index |
| Blogs | Contests | Add Search Toolbar |
| Opinion | Classifieds | Privacy Policy |
| | | Advertise |
| | | Store |

Search in:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| All | Opinion |
| News | Weekend |
| Sports | Photovideo |
| Business | Investigations |
| Scene | Obituaries |
| Communities | Photos |
| Blogs | Video |