

Bob Benz

2035 Hidden Cove Lane, Knoxville, TN 37922
Phone: 865.288.0496 E-Mail: bob@ledgesolutions.net

Skills summary

Strong leader and team builder with ability to strategize at 30,000 feet and execute at ground level on interactive initiatives. Extensive local media experience. Excellent negotiator. Early adopter. Technophile. Teacher. Journalist. Recovering copy editor. Money-grubber. Kayaker.

Experience

Partner, LedgeSolutions, LLC

October 2009-present

- Digital consultancy specializing in online advertising, content and social media. Clients include:
- National Association of Realtors: My partner played a key role in the launch of their new initiative, HouseLogic.com, including help with taxonomies, launch and advertising strategies.
- Ackermann PR: Working for Knoxville, TN, based company on projects that focus on digital strategy, including an engagement with Pilot Travel Centers to conduct user experience studies and a digital audit.
- Scripps newspapers: Helping my former company with due diligence on digital products, identifying key opportunities and representation within the Yahoo! Newspaper Consortium.

EVP, Greenspun Media Group

July 2009-October 2009

- Oversaw interactive group of 50+ employees with annual budget of \$7m.
- Worked on sales strategies for tourism magazines targeting Las Vegas Strip hotels and casinos.
- Worked on strategies for television production group (Sun Media Productions), weekly newspapers and alternative newspaper.
- Identified areas where GMG could cut expense to counter challenging economic environment.
- Negotiated contracts for CRM, ad serving and behavioral targeting.

Co-founder/COO, Radiant Markets, LLC

October 2008-July 2009

- Oversaw technology, site creation and initial setup of Radiant Markets' online presence.
- Negotiated agreements with product partners.
- Helped identify and negotiate agreement with offshore call center to call on SMBs to drive Radiant Markets sales strategy.
- Went on sales calls to SMBs to explain Radiant Markets product offerings.
- Pitched venture capitalists and strategic investors on Radiant Markets investment opportunity.
- Worked on proprietary technology that would drive Radiant's Learning CRM and Lead Optimization Engine.

Partner, Maroon Ventures, LLC

January 2008-October 2008

- Worked as consultant who trained and went on calls with newspaper sales teams selling search engine marketing products.

- Served as consultant for major vertical products vendor on how to expand client base and improve customer relations.
- Did much of the groundwork for Radiant Markets, which Maroon Ventures spun out as a separate LLC in October 2008.
- Consulted with major media company to help it put its newspapers on Amazon Kindle.
- Consulted with and advised numerous startups on how to work with local media companies.

VP/GM, Scripps newspapers

2002-January 2008

- One of five newspaper company executives who negotiated groundbreaking deal between newspapers and Yahoo! that resulted in consortium of more than 800 newspapers partnering with Yahoo!
- Managed corporate staff of 50 who provided ad serving, programming, sales, search engine marketing and ad sales support for 14 Scripps newspaper markets.
- Achieved profitability of interactive operations in 2002 and drove 32% compound annual revenue growth rate from 2002-2007.
- Helped produce more than \$40m in interactive revenue for Scripps newspapers in 2007.
- Created \$1.5m investment fund to identify and encourage entrepreneurial business ideas across the enterprise.
- Conducted daylong workshops on disruptive technology and innovation at all Scripps newspapers.
- Worked closely with Scripps publishers to build web products that won numerous interactive awards.

Various interactive roles at Scripps

1996-2002

- Content manager of GoWest, an online collaboration between Scripps and Cox in 1996-97.
- Director of online content for Scripps, overseeing content at Scripps newspapers, broadcast TV stations, HGTV and the Food Network from 1997-2000.
- Director of online operations from 2000-2002.

Various newsroom roles

1984-1995

- Extensive work as reporter, photographer and editor at several weekly and daily newspapers, including the Glades County Democrat, Destin Log, Birmingham Post-Herald, Albuquerque Tribune, Denver Rocky Mountain News.
- Served as copy editor on project that won the 1994 National Reporting Pulitzer for The Albuquerque Tribune.
- Launched the Rocky Mountain News online in 1995.

Education

B.A. in English/journalism, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

1980-1984

Graduated cum laude. Served as editor, managing editor and student adviser of the student newspaper, the Spectator. Served on the board of directors of the Edinboro Food Cooperative.

M.A. in English literature, University of Alabama at Birmingham

1986-1990

Graduated with a 4.0 grade average in my master's level coursework. Earned degree while working nights as a copy editor at the Birmingham Post-Herald. Taught freshman composition courses.

Other achievements

- Co-chair, Newspaper Consortium Committee (focus on ad serving, ad sales, content aspects of the Yahoo! deal) 2006-2008.
- Board member, PowerOne Media, 2004-2006.
- Board member, Newspaper Association of America's New Media Federation, 2002-2006.
- Board member, Scripps Howard Foundation, 2006-2008.
- Board member, Knoxville-Oak Ridge Regional Network, KORRnet, 2004-2006.
- Taught college level courses at Ohio University, the University of Alabama, the University of New Mexico, Metro State College (Denver).
- Played key role in helping the University of Tennessee School of Communications secure a \$500,000 grant from Scripps Howard Foundation to establish the Scripps Convergence Communication and Information Laboratory at UT.
- Numerous lecture/speaking engagements ranging from Southern Newspaper Publisher Association to University of Tennessee to American Press Institute.
- Adviser to startup Publish2.
- Adviser, Scripps School of Journalism, Ohio University.