Brookfield Entrepreneur Mixes Business and Fun

Ken Wick left a good job in corporate America to have some fun. In fact, “Less Stress, More Fun” is the tagline of his business, Monkey Business, the party and gift store he opened in March 2012 in Brookfield. Monkey Business offers an array of party and holiday-themed supplies, a party room to host events on-site, and novelty items that have attracted a number of loyal customers; a number that Wick hopes will grow as more people discover this fun-focused locale.

“My goal was to open up a store where I could have fun, my employees could have fun and my customers could have fun,” said Wick. “That’s where the fun came from in Monkey Business.”

Though fun is at the heart of his business, Wick takes the work of starting and growing a successful enterprise very seriously. In 2010 he completed the Entrepreneur Training Program (ETP) at the UW-Milwaukee Small Business Development Center (SBDC). “The class really helped me narrow down my business idea and put a focus on it. I learned that it is better not to cater to everybody, but instead to have a niche that is still marketable,” said Wick.

SBDC guest speakers are small business owners that offer a realistic picture of business ownership. “We were able to pick their brains on what their biggest challenges were and learn from their advice,” said Wick. The counselors provide marketing, finance and business planning assistance. “The business plan really forced me to dig into my competitors and what my business was all about. It forced me to do the research, so I knew exactly how many sales per square foot I needed. And it allowed me to think about all the start-up expenses required to get a business going. It definitely helped increase my success.”

Wick is off to a great start, but is challenged to find ways to increase foot traffic and let people know the store exists, “Once people find me they are coming back. In ten months I have had 1,300 customers sign up for my loyalty program.”

Wick and his wife Mary both work at the store along with one part-time employee. While committing most of his day to running the business, Wick strives to also find the time needed to improve and grow it. “I strongly believe in working on my business, not in my business.”

“My goal has always been to have three stores throughout the Milwaukee area within five years,” adds Wick. Though it may take him a little longer to achieve that goal, he still sees it as attainable. At least he’ll have fun trying!

For more information on this new Wisconsin small business, check out the Monkey Business website [www.monkeybusinessparty.com](http://www.monkeybusinessparty.com) or stop by 19045 W Capitol Drive in Brookfield.

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