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## Cool Moves

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**ENTREPRENEUR  
OF THE YEAR**  
Where to put our  
big ECD wins?



**Dan Hammond**  
President, CEO and Founder  
American Hometown Media

Starting a business is a trying and stressful experience. Dan Hammond has started his third, and if history is a guide, it is sure to follow the success of his previous enterprises.

Spun off last year from American Hometown Publishing – which Hammond founded in 2003 and which now operates more than a dozen small-town newspapers, American Hometown Media has quickly found success on the Internet.

The chief offering of AHM is the website Just a Pinch Recipe Club, which in its first year exploded with recipes submitted by members and surpassed other websites that required about a decade to hit similar levels. With more than 80,000 recipes, Just a Pinch is the largest user-supplied recipe database on the 'Net.

The depth of engagement is even more impressive than participant numbers. Users average more than 17 minutes a day and visit at least once every day. According to Internet tracking service comScore, Just a Pinch in the second half of 2011 was ranked first in various categories and no worse than fourth among women age 34 and up.

Hammond said the secret to his success is taking a “corporate but entrepreneurial” approach.

“I find a need, then build a plan on paper to identify operational and logistical needs and then compare cost structure to opportunity. If that pans out and shows a profit, then the last thing we do is to build a product designed to fit the need.”

The first time Hammond used that philosophy was with Publishing Group of America. That company turned out to be the largest publishing launch in media history and was sold for more than \$145 million in 2007.

— Ken Whitehouse



**Mark Montgomery**  
Founder  
Flo Thinkery

Mark Montgomery isn't satisfied doing just one thing. Like many successful entrepreneurs, his attention is divided among a variety of projects, and that's the way he likes it.

Montgomery, the founder and former head of entrepreneurial success story Echo Music, recently started a new venture to help businesses both large and small come up with creative solutions to problems. The trick: Bring together a bunch of smart people who think differently from one another and have at it.

Flo Thinkery, which was incorporated in April 2011 but which really got up and running in earnest in November, is a loosely defined business services firm that helps clients “create and recreate businesses.”

That broad definition, according to Montgomery, allows for increased flexibility in serving clients and coming up with no traditional solutions to problems.

Montgomery's team of advisers (the smart people) includes the likes of intellectual property guru Jack Waddey, singer/songwriter David Mead, Entrepreneur Center honcho Michael Burcham, music industry veteran Joe Galante and investment adviser Frank Bumstead, along with many others. These thinkers help clients ranging from start-ups to major manufacturers grow and improve their businesses.

And, despite its youthfulness, the business has gotten off to a strong start.

Montgomery told *NashvillePost* that the calendar year has begun with a bang, with major revenue booking and strong interest from potential clients. “We're saying ‘No’ more than we're saying ‘Yes.’” But that choosiness is a luxury of those with as many options as Flo has.

For his part, Montgomery is hoping Flo can bolster the burgeoning entrepreneurial rush that has hit Nashville in the last few years. As the community strengthens, everyone benefits. Helping to foster that community, Montgomery wants to give back as a way of acknowledging his success.

“Any successful entrepreneur owes the community a debt,” he said. “It's their responsibility to help that community grow.”

— Walker Duncan



ERIC ENGLAND

**Amy Tanksley**  
Founder  
Uncle Classic's Barbershop

Many have tried but few have succeeded.

Filling the void left by the disappearance of the classic men's barbershop, a place where men gathered with other men – often bringing their sons for a Saturday morning rite of passage – has not been easy.

Some even contend those days are gone.

Just don't tell Uncle Classic Barbershop founder and owner Amy Tanksley.

In October 2008, and with the help of husband Kirk, Tanksley opened the first Uncle Classic on Franklin Road in Brentwood. And with the opening soon after of a second store on Harding Pike in Belle Meade, Tanksley and company turned the world of men's hair cutting in Middle Tennessee on its proverbial head.

“We were fortunate to find those two spots,” Tanksley said.

Step into either Uncle Classic shop and it's obvious Tanksley has created a unique blend of tradition and innovation. Classy and comfortable, both spaces offer an inclusive environment for customers with plush leather chairs, the latest men's magazines and, of course, sports and CNN on flat-screen televisions.

Other amenities include foamed straight-razor shaves, shoeshines and even hand and foot grooming.

Who could resist that? Apparently, not many.

Tanksley won't tout her balance sheet acumen. But between the two shops, Uncle Classic serves an average of 3,000 customers every month. An average haircut cost of, let's say, \$25, would take Uncle Classic's annual revenues close to \$1 million.

And to address the most-asked question of all. Just who exactly is Uncle Classic? The answer is ... Nobody. There is no Uncle.

Surprisingly, that definitional void wasn't intentional. But Tanksley said that opacity has morphed into a core company principle and is critical to the soul of the entire enterprise.

“We've discovered that the greatest thing about Uncle Classic is that there is no Uncle,” Tanksley said.

“It's about all of us, our team, our people. Together, we've made this a success.”

— Philip Nannie