

10-WORD RÉSUMÉS

Brief introductions from fabulous Michiganders looking for work. Hire them.

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Strategic Manager. Compliance, Financial, Crisis Management. Administrative Specialist. Highly Mobile. igduncan@ameritech.net

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10+ Years. Event-planning Sports Promotions Expert plays by rules. jamaymay@hotmail.com

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COMING NEXT MONDAY: Two entrepreneurs unroll an offbeat business

Working

Get ahead.
Get hired.
Get inspired.

Good Company: Rock City Pies

Entrepreneur dishes on launching, running Detroit-based small business

During his childhood in Russia, Nikita Sanches enjoyed food most American kids wouldn't consider touching, delicacies such as pâté, tongue and liver. But in the end, it was pie that won his heart.

Sanches, who moved from Moscow to Michigan when he was 12, learned to cook at the age of 15 while working his first job as a server and dishwasher, and rose to executive chef by the time he was 19. It was after starting his own catering company that Sanches learned to bake pies. That led to the birth of Detroit-based Rock City Pies, where Sanches bakes artisan wares he labels as "Not your grandmother's pie."

"I'm not a big fan of traditional pie, so I decided to make my version of what I thought this baked good should be like," he says. "I use different filling combinations, such as cranberry with white chocolate and pistachio, peanut butter and berry, salted caramel apple or smoked apple whiskey. My crusts are different as well. They're like a combination of a butter crust and crumble topping."

Sanches' business currently is a one-man show. He locally sources seasonal ingredients for his pies, which he sells every Saturday and Sunday at Rust Belt Market in Ferndale. Pies are available by the slice, and flavors are posted every week on Rock City Pies' Facebook page. Customers also can special order whole pies.

"I was struggling with no work around the time that Rust Belt Market opened," Sanches says. "In the beginning, they only allowed baked goods to be sold there, and I had to think of a way to incorporate myself into the equation. Rock City Pies was born, and it continues to be an amazing experience."

The Inside Scoop

Here, Sanches answers five questions about his business and its future:

What's the toughest and best part of owning your own business? The toughest part is that you are the business. If anything goes wrong, you are directly affected, and you get out of it exactly what you put in. It is a lot of hard work, but I love it. The

best part is that I do what I love, and not a lot of people can say that.

You said you would like to open a Rock City Pies food establishment. What's the concept? It will be a restaurant/bakeshop or just a unique eatery for people to enjoy. I will have several set dishes, and the rest of the menu will change daily, depending on what's in season and what I feel inspired by. There will always be something new and unique ... and of course, there will always be pie.

Will it just be a restaurant? The restaurant will also serve as a production space to supply pie to several local grocery stores and restaurants that have been interested in carrying Rock City Pies. I'm still hunting for a space and funding, so if there are any developers or investors out there, please feel free to contact me.

What advice would you give to other aspiring entrepreneurs? I would tell them to do their research, and know exactly what they are getting into. Be prepared to be disappointed a lot, and be prepared to do a lot of work. It is definitely not all fun and games.

What's your favorite kind of pie? My favorite is strawberry+rhubarb+basil because of the flavor combination. It is also my favorite because I get to harvest the ingredients myself. I go to picking farms and pick my own strawberries and cut my own rhubarb. I also go to my mom's garden to pick my own basil. It does not get any better than that! One hundred percent local, 100 percent by hand.

Good to Know

■ Rock City Pies makes locally sourced artisan pies. Pies are available by special order and the slice on Saturday and Sunday at Ferndale's Rust Belt Market on Nine Mile and Woodward.

■ The business was one of four finalists in the 2012 Comerica Hatch Detroit contest, a competition for independent businesses that garnered more than 250 business plan submissions.

■ To find out more, call 248-633-3072, visit www.rockcitypies.com, email pieguy@rockcitypies.com, or find the company on Facebook and Twitter.



Nikita Sanches is founder of Rock City Pies, an artisan pie company with unique flavors, such as salted caramel apple and cranberry with white chocolate and pistachio. He sells pies every weekend at Ferndale's Rust Belt Market.

Career Calendar

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THE BIG EVENT:

Nov. 16 (FRIDAY)

LiveWorkDetroit! 2012 Michigan Collegiate Job Fair

Burton Manor Banquet and Conference Center

27777 Schoolcraft Rd., Livonia

12:30-8:30 p.m.; \$15

<http://content.govdelivery.com/bulletins/gd/MIEDC-57caa8> or

888-522-0103

Network with employers for internships and job positions, hear from keynote speaker Jacob Cohen of Detroit Venture Partners about Detroit's entrepreneurship and education opportunities, tour Detroit with D:hive, dine at The Westin Book Cadillac, and participate in the downtown Detroit holiday tree lighting. Registration includes bus transportation from different check-in sites around the state, including Mt. Pleasant, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Ann Arbor and Detroit.

Also on the Calendar:

Nov. 13 (TUESDAY)

Art Institute of Michigan Job Fair

28175 Cabot Drive, Novi

11 a.m.-1 p.m.; free

RSVPto@mtrevino@aui.edu or

248-675-3849

Employers are looking for students to fill internship, part-time and full-time positions in the graphic design, Web design, fashion marketing and management, animation, photography, interior design, baking and pastry, and culinary and audio fields.

Nov. 15 (THURSDAY)

Henry Ford Community College Career Expo

Henry Ford Community College ASCC

Building

5101 Evergreen Rd., Dearborn

1-6 p.m.; free

<http://careers.hfcc.edu/>

Both students and the public are welcome to attend this expo, which will include raffle prizes and free gifts. Professional attire is required.

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Email date, time, place, description, cost and contact info (MUST include phone number for verification) to micareercalendar@gmail.com.

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Work Smarts

4 ways to mix work and life for success

I am often asked whether you should mix business and pleasure. Some experts say absolutely not while others argue that you should.

Well, I tend to go against the grain. Like it or not, if you're looking to advance your career, you better understand that the 9-to-5 routine is a thing of the past, at least for many of us. You can come in at 9 a.m. and leave at 5 p.m., but given the social media boom, as well as today's economic times, this

approach probably isn't going to land you the corner office.

There's no room for punch cards on the corporate ladder, and time sheets went the way of carbon paper.

Whether we like it or not, times change, and that means that we need to evolve as well. Try these tips:

1. Keep up with your colleagues. Remember, your peers are on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and every other social outlet promoting themselves and you should be, too. Yes, they even carry their business cards in their suit pocket at weddings.

2. Be available. Used to be that you couldn't wait to get out of the office to get away from the phone, now try being effective in today's business world without your cell.

For many, the concept of mixing business with pleasure is not very appealing. I get it. However, if you want to succeed in business you have to be passionate about what you do since it's such a large part of your life.

3. Keep the two balanced. Carve out a weekly schedule allocating your time and stick to it. There shouldn't be any missed soccer games or dance recitals. Work-life balance is a lot like a successful marriage. There's your time, me time and our time.

4. What you do is not who you are. You're not Karen the accountant or Steve the lawyer. That's what you do. You're Karen and Steve who happen to work as an accountant or lawyer.

Bruce Rosenblat is president and COO of PAAR and Company, a nationally recognized executive coaching firm. Contact him at 248-330-1363 or brosenblat@paarco.com.



Bruce Rosenblat

Paycheck

Simple steps to improve your credit

Low interest rates provide an

opportunity for some people to become homeowners. I've conducted financial-wellness programs in the workplace and discovered that many individuals were unable to participate in home ownership benefits due to credit issues.

If you want to qualify for employer-provided assistance with closing costs or a down payment, use these steps to improve your credit score:

Get a copy of your credit report. You're entitled to receive a free

copy of your credit report from each of three credit bureaus from Annualcreditreport.com. You can receive all three at once, but I suggest that you request a report once every four months to monitor credit. Review each report for accuracy.

Pay on time. Delinquent payments affect credit scores, and when a payment is 30 to 120 days late, credit is damaged. Payment history accounts for 35 percent of a credit score, so at least pay the minimum amount on each statement on time. If you miss a payment, contact the creditor to negotiate affordable payments.

Decrease credit card balances. Credit scores are determined in two ways: by debt-to-credit ratio and utilization. A comparison is made between the revolving account balance and its



Robin Thompson

credit limit. If an account balance is \$2,000 and the credit limit is \$6,000, then the ratio is 33 percent. Formulas also calculate debt totals on all revolving accounts against credit limits on all accounts. Use no more than 20 percent of your available credit limit.

Keep accounts open. You might be inclined to close an account once the balance is zero, but this hurts your credit score in two ways. First, 15 percent of your score is based on the length of credit history. If a lender threatens to close an inactive account, use the account periodically and pay off balances. Also, a score drops when accounts are closed, which reduces the amount of available credit.

Robin Thompson is president of Budget Wise Consulting, a Troy-based financial education and consulting firm that specializes in cash-flow management concerns. To learn more, visit www.budgetwise.net or email robin@budgetwise.net.

To feature your business on the Working pages, or for information about this supplement, call 586-977-7577.



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