

2004 SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

FINALISTS

COMMUNICATIONS

ALEXANDER MARKETING, 1650 Broadway

Linda Alexander began as a one-woman operation in 1997. Now she's expanded to a staff of five, handling a roster of 12 to 15 clients each season and is able to retain at least one non-profit organization on a pro bono basis.

JOYCE MATZ ASSOCIATES, 460 E. 79th St.

Joyce Matz Associates focuses on community relations, not glitzy events. Matz was involved with saving the Beacon Theater in the 1980s and often focuses on preserving historic buildings.

O'REILLY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, 380 Lexington Ave.

Bill O'Reilly's firm is a message consultant for Republican campaigns and corporations. "We're not looking to take on 87 clients," O'Reilly said. "We're looking just to focus on some small, quality races."

ENTREPRENEURS

EJ'S LUNCHEONETTE, 1271 Third Ave. and 447 Amsterdam Ave.

With its lively blue-and-white vinyl decor, friendly atmosphere and sizable comfort food staples, EJ's evokes a bygone era. EJ's also regularly donates gift certificates to local organizations and groups like Ronald McDonald House.

POOKIE & SEBASTIAN, 249 E. 77th St., 1488 Second Ave. and 541 Third Ave.

Husband-and-wife team Kevin Matuszak and Caroline Roberts founded their store on the concept that women should be able to dress stylishly without emptying their pockets. Pookie & Sebastian also collects donations for United Action for Animals (the store's name comes from the owners' dogs).

ELI ZABAR

E.A.T., 1064 Madison Ave.; The Vinegar Factory and Eli's Bread, 431 E. 91st St.; Eli's Manhattan, TASTE and W.L.N.E., 1411 Third Ave.

Eli Zabar models his eateries on small European shops and offers fresh, high-quality food. Zabar donates gift certificates to school auctions and designates trucks to deliver bread to area homeless shelters.

FOOD SERVICES

ELM HEALTH, 1695 First Ave.

Mike Gleit describes his newest business undertaking as a "hybrid of pharmaceuticals and health food." With dietary revelations propagating by the minute, this store has managed to stay in tune with the demands of the health-conscious.

GENNARO, 665 Amsterdam Ave.

Though it won't accept reservations or credit cards, customers wait patiently for 15 minutes to an hour to sample the delicious creations of chef and owner Gennaro Picone. Gennaro has donated to schools and other organizations, and has done several "guest chef" appearances at community events.

SAMAD'S GOURMET DELI, 2867 Broadway

This Upper West Side favorite, which was opened in 1971 by Joseph Samad, makes its own Middle Eastern delicacies and lunch-time fare. When Samad's closed in 1996 due to a fire, neighborhood residents collected signatures and made huge signs begging the owners to reopen.

HOME SERVICES

FRANK'S WINDOW CLEANING CO., 450 E. 81st St.

Richard Kulzer arrives in Manhattan every morning at 7:30 a.m. to assign his 12 employees their targets for the day: dirty windows. Frank's Window Cleaning Co., set up by Kulzer's father, now serves more than 5,000 customers.

HOUSING WORKS THRIFT SHOP, 202 E. 77th St.

Treasures sold at the popular Housing Works Thrift Shop have included a \$7,200 two-carat diamond ring. The 77th Street store is one of four operated by the non-profit Housing Works, New York's largest AIDS service organization.

UNIVERSITY HARDWARE AND UNIVERSITY HOUSEWARES, 2901 Broadway

University Hardware has been in Bob Fendell's family since 1938. Fendell prides himself on top-notch customer service, whether you're buying a 10-cent bolt or a hundred-dollar blender.

LIFESTYLE BUSINESSES

MARIO BADESCU SKIN CARE, 320 E. 52nd St.

Tucked away in the lobby of a postwar apartment building, the Mario Badescu Skin Care spa provides luxury spa treatments and all-natural products. Today, everyone from Gwyneth Paltrow to Oprah Winfrey uses their products.

92ND STREET Y, 1395 Lexington Ave.

The 92nd Street Y's three facilities offer classes in everything from parenting to coping with bereavement. The Y offers a lifestyle service for every age and personality.

PRACTICE YOGA, 140 W. 83rd St.

After finding that practicing yoga in a gym was less than ideal, Jennifer Walker opened her own studio. Practice Yoga recently organized a "spa night" to raise funds for Adopt-a-Classroom.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ABSOLUTE BEST CARE, INC., 10 E. 39th St.

Absolute Best Care, Inc. is a referral service for baby nurses, professional nannies, housekeepers and elderly companions. The company donates a portion of its proceeds to breast cancer research and it's worked with a New Jersey hospital to create classes for parents-to-be.

OZ MOVING, 314 E. 78th St., 318 E. 70th St., 1734 Second Ave. and 2237 Broadway

Starting with just one truck, Oz Moving now has 20 trucks, three warehouses and four retail locations, not to mention masses of satisfied customers. Oz also donates toys to street fairs and food to the homeless around Christmastime.

RANAWAT ORTHOPEDIC CENTER, LENOX HILL HOSPITAL, 130 E. 77th St.

Ranawat Orthopedic Center, founded by Chitranjan Ranawat, specializes primarily in total hip and knee replacement. Ranawat revolutionized the procedure, which was once an operation for the severely crippled and disabled.

RETAIL

LOUIS' SHOE REPAIR, 353 E. 77th St.

Lonedas Giannoulas came to New York from Greece almost 30 years ago knowing no English, but a lot about shoes. Today, he repairs between 70 and 100 pairs a day, and sometimes works seven days a week.

SUBA PHARMACY, 2721 Broadway

Suba's customers are so dedicated that more than 4,500 of them signed a petition when the pharmacy's landlord said it would have to vacate the premises. Owner Bashir Suba fills prescriptions for up to \$30 less than major drugstore chains.

WE DELIVER VIDEOS, 1716 First Ave.

They deliver videos, and sometimes soda, candies and dinner, too. This customer-oriented outfit, run by a husband-and-wife team along with a friend, offers service on the East Side all the way from 66th to 96th streets.

Taking the Guesswork Out of Nannies and Nurses

By Edward-Isaac Dovere

When Saul Moskowitz, his wife Monique and Douglass Kozinn joined together three years ago to form Absolute Best Care, Inc., they fused skills not often found in the homecare industry. Saul Moskowitz had a background in placing executive consultants, Monique Moskowitz had an undergraduate degree in psychology and experience in corporate customer service in the telecommunications industry, and Kozinn worked

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on Wall Street.

"We took a completely different approach to it. We treated this like a real company and a real growing business," Saul Moskowitz said.

Customer service is a top priority for Absolute Best Care, which currently has one location in Manhattan and one in Manalapan, N.J., and is planning to open branches in Greenwich, Conn., and Larchmont, N.Y. Applicants for any of the four placement categories – baby nurses,

professional nannies, housekeepers and elderly companions – are carefully screened and interviewed before being matched with clients

"We get very close to each situation and explain whatever it is we can to the prospective candidate before going on an in-person interview with these families, which we set up and provide," Moskowitz said.

Though it's managed by only six people, including the owners and Kozinn's wife, Lisa, who handles marketing, Absolute Best Care deals with hundreds of families and

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Absolute Best Care Co-Owners Lisa Kozinn, Douglas Kozinn, Saul Moskowitz and Monique Moskowitz.

Best Care

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what Moskowitz called "a consistently expanding" database of prospective workers.

This young and rapidly growing company has already taken an active role in the community. In addition to donating a portion of their proceeds during October, Breast Cancer Awareness month, to the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, they have worked with Center State Hospital in New Jersey on a newborn education training class for prospective baby nurses and nannies.

Recently, they sponsored a forum, "I'm Having a Baby, What Do I Do Now?", at the Bellini baby store in Short Hills, N.J. More than 75 expectant mothers watched presen-

tations from a pediatrician, an OB/GYN, a lactation consultant, a fashionable maternity wear store and a representative from Absolute Best Care. The event also included various raffles, with thousands of dollars in prizes awarded to attendees.

The owners were extremely pleased with the forum and plan on participating in several more throughout the year in New Jersey, and eventually, in New York.

In the meantime, the company continues to build relationships with local OB/GYNs and a group called Executive Moms. Absolute Best Care is the exclusive speaker at Executive Moms' new mother luncheons on the Upper East and West sides, and Monique Moskowitz writes the "Ask the Nanny Expert" column on Executive Moms' Web site.

"In our industry we find it is the simple things," Saul Moskowitz said, explaining the company's success. ■