

ON THE FAST TRACK

BEAUTYLINK INTERVIEWED THREE RECENT GRADUATES WHO HAVE DEFIED THE ODDS BY BECOMING BUSINESS OWNERS AND/OR TRUE EXPERTS IN THEIR FIELDS. READ ON TO SEE WHAT THEY HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR SUCCESS.

KENDRA AARHUS

WRITER AND LICENSED COSMETOLOGIST, IOWA

Kendra Aarhus is a writer and licensed cosmetologist who has spent the better part of her life obsessed with all things hair. Since an early age, Kendra has been very passionate about hair and writing. In 2007 she decided to combine these two loves by quitting her full-time corporate writing job to attend Capri School of Cosmetology in Cedar Rapids. She graduated from Capri in April 2008 and currently works as a writer for About.com and as a professional cosmetologist.

(BL) Your bio says you used to have a full-time corporate writing job. Did you have a previous college degree?

(KA) No, no previous college degree. I worked my way through the ranks to be a paid writer. My previous jobs included working in civil engineering as an executive assistant, and then in process systems engineering as an operations manager/marketing director, and finally as a proposal writer for a higher education marketing firm.

(BL) Was it hard to make the change of careers? What about it was hard, and which parts were easier; did you have support of friends/family or were they skeptical?

(KA) I can't say that the transition was terribly hard. I've always had an interest in doing hair, and when someone in my family wanted their hair fixed for a special occasion I was always the first to volunteer. So no one was surprised when I decided to quit my job and pursue a career in hair. Of course, people were skeptical, especially when I told them I was going to be a beauty writer. A lot of people had a lot to say about how little money a cosmetologist supposedly makes. I guess I figured I'd prove them wrong.

(BL) Tell me about your jobs now.

(KA) I always tell everyone that I have such a "cheeseball life." I'm not even really sure what that means, other than the fact that my schedule is really flexible and I always have time to do the things I love, like going to the gym, spending time with my nieces and riding my motorcycle. I spend my mornings writing for About.com (women-shair.about.com) and serving as a dictator for www.mopshots.com. I either work from my bed, my couch or a local coffee shop. It's so nice to be able to keep up with housework and personal appointments between articles. My afternoons are typically spent in the salon. I never work on Mondays, and usually I try to work no

more than two Saturdays per month in the salon. I do work until 7–8 p.m. a few days a week. My time is pretty flexible. Between appointments I am able to run errands or visit with friends, which is really nice.

(BL) How did you find out about/get the jobs you have now?

(KA) I found out about the available chair at Village Hair Design by the owner's daughter while we were attending Capri together. I checked out the salon and loved the area and the people and decided it would be a great place for me to begin my career.

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“WHEN I DECIDED TO RENT A CHAIR DIRECTLY OUT OF COSMETOLOGY SCHOOL, PEOPLE REPEATEDLY TOLD ME THAT I WOULD REGRET THAT DECISION. IT COULDN'T BE DONE. I GUESS I THOUGHT, 'WHAT'S THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN?'”

– KENDRA AARHUS



BRENDA SCHULTZ & JENIFFER WEBBER BUSINESS PARTNERS, INDIANA

Brenda and Jeniffer both completed the esthetics program at Honors Beauty College. Brenda graduated Feb. 8, 2006, and Jeniffer graduated May 1, 2006. Upon graduation Brenda worked for a short time at a spa in Bloomington, but all the time the two were making their own plans. On Oct. 23, 2006, they opened The Naked Monkey, a spa with an emphasis on waxing services. On June 18, 2009, they opened their second Naked Monkey location.

**(BL) Tell me about your job now as a spa owner.
Was it always your dream to be an owner?**

(BS) I knew that I always wanted to own my own business and I had been researching franchises for women, but nothing appealed to me. The first time I visited a day spa and had my first facial I knew I had found the business.

(JW) I've known for a long time I wanted to own a spa. I went to work for a girlfriend several years ago, who opened her own day spa. I was a part of front desk staff and later inventory. She closed within a year and a half. I knew, from watching what went on at the spa, that if I were to open a place of my own I needed an esthetic license first. I felt that if employees didn't come to work for whatever reason, I would be able to perform their client's services.

(BL) What's the most favorite and least favorite part of your job as a spa owner?

(BS) My favorite part of my job as an owner is my staff. We should be a reality show. The laughter rarely stops. It is never a dull day. The least favorite part of my job as an owner is the same thing – staffing issues. When you only have 10 employees, you can't help but become close, and when an issue

arises it can be a challenge. You love your staff, but the business comes first and you hope they understand that.

(BL) What would you do differently now that you've gone from conception of an idea to success?

(BS) I wouldn't change a thing. Jen and I have been called naive more times than I can count, but we have learned so much during the process. We learn something every single day.

(JW) Every single day with how naive we were. But I feel we did it right. We found each other which is KEY. Listening and communicating your feelings and ideas all need to be discussed before entering into any partnership. We got the idea. Got a lawyer. Got an accountant. Got a graphic artist. Got a logo. Trademarked it. Started branding right away. Entrepreneurship 101.

(BL) Who had the idea of the spa name The Naked Monkey?

(BS) I did. I was a biology major in college and it only made sense to me – humans are the naked monkey and if you wax off your hair, you are The Naked Monkey. We also knew that men were a growing population for spas and we wanted a name that would appeal to them. We always say that

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“OUR SUCCESS COMES FROM COMMUNICATION. COMMUNICATION WITH EACH OTHER, OUR STAFF AND OUR CLIENTS. EDUCATION IS ALSO KEY – CONSTANTLY EDUCATING YOURSELF, YOUR STAFF AND YOUR CLIENTS.”

– JENIFFER WEBBER