
POWER IN PARTNERS



SPONSORED BY THE INC. HONOREES WHOSE BRAND PROFILES APPEAR ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

Entrepreneurship can feel like a lonely journey, but it's safe to say no one gets where they want by going it alone. Whether you're charting unexplored territory, mapping your own path, or following your internal compass, it helps to have a trusted partner (or several) riding by your side.

Relationships with suppliers, manufacturers, logistics services providers, and other third-party partners can have an outsize impact on the trajectory of your business. And there's much to consider: Can your technology partner boost your efficiency enough to merit its cost? Can your 3PL keep your supply chain moving, even through unforeseen challenges? Can your vendor give you the best deal on raw materials, in exchange for your insights into

customer behavior? Can your manufacturer handle your order capacity as your business booms?

Simply put, you want partners that will go the extra mile for you—like Inc.'s Power Partner Award honorees. Our inaugural 2022 list of 252 B2B companies featured standouts such as Pod People, a creative studio that counts Netflix and HBO among its clients, and MarketSmiths, a copywriting agency trusted by LinkedIn, Pfizer, and MetLife. It's partners like these—quoted in the pages that follow—that can help lighten your load and get you to where you want to go, faster. They might even point you toward a few unexpected shortcuts. Just take it from the following entrepreneurs, who have forged top-quality partnerships themselves.

FORGING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

When you're searching for a partner, not just any firm will do. Here are some steps for finding the right one—and starting off on the right foot.



1 | **Angela Benton**

Founder
STREAMLYTICS

“There is power in sharing success. If somebody else has one piece of your business kind of figured out, maybe there’s a way for you to collaborate that’s noncompetitive.”

Benton, who founded her Miami-based data company, Streamlytics, in 2018, landed on Inc.’s Female Founders list in 2020.



APPLY FOR INC.’S 2023
POWER PARTNER AWARDS
AT [INCPOWERPARTNERS.
SECUREPLATFORM.COM](https://incpowerpartners.secureplatform.com)

2 | **Bill Austin**

President and CEO
**BILL AUSTIN &
ASSOCIATES**

“I like to have all of the goals and expectations of the relationship put into writing up front so everything is clear. Verbal communication can often be disputed or misconstrued later on.”

Columbus, Indiana-based information engineering firm Bill Austin & Associates is a four-time Inc. 5000 honoree.

3 | **Heidi Zak** Co-founder and CEO **THIRDLÖVE**

“As you consider potential partnerships, ask: Are we committed to solving the same problems? Do our brand identities fit?”

San Francisco-based intimates brand ThirdLove has secured over \$68 million in funding.

4 | **Katharine Lau** Co-founder and CEO **STUF**

“Spend time building your relationship with a potential partner and vetting the person on the other side. Treat it like dating—you don’t get married after a first date. Spend time getting to know each other and understanding each other’s values.”

Lau, who founded her New York City-based storage company in 2020, made Inc.’s Female Founders list in 2022.

1.

2.



SPREAD: COURTESY SUBJECTS



“Establish the preferred communication channels, the main point of contact for both sides, and, most important, the agreed-upon goals, scope of work, and expectations for the impact of a project.”

—Rachael King, founder and CEO, Pod People

3.



5 | Kristi Piehl
Founder and CEO
MEDIA MINEFIELD

“Stay abreast of what’s happening in your industry so you can quickly identify new partnership opportunities. As soon as you get an idea, follow that gut instinct and reach out. I’ve been doing this for years and it has yielded some of the best partnerships we have.”

Minnetonka, Minnesota-based PR firm Media Minefield has landed on the Inc. 5000 list three times.

4.



5.



94%

**OF TECH EXECUTIVES
SEE INNOVATION
PARTNERSHIPS AS A
NECESSARY STRATEGY
FOR GROWTH.**

Source: Harvard Business Review

6 | Martin Zwilling
Founder and CEO
STARTUP PROFESSIONALS

“The relationship has to work, and there has to be trust at all levels. My advice is to build it first through networking, and then find some common values and passion, before assuming that money and experience will solve all potential partner differences.”

Prescott, Arizona-based Zwilling has more than 30 years of management experience and has authored three books on entrepreneurship.

6.



MAKING THEM WORK

CONTINUED ON PAGE 96

1 | Barbara Corcoran

Founder

THE CORCORAN GROUP

"In most cases, the partnership involves two completely separate personalities, to go along with the opposite abilities. You would think something like that would be a recipe for disaster, but it's quite the opposite."

Corcoran led her New York City-based real estate company for 28 years before selling it for \$66 million in 2001.

1.

2 | Donie Yamamoto

Founder

VITAL PET LIFE

"I view external partners as an extension of my own business. Our whys must align and lead to mutual satisfaction. This means truly understanding each other's motivations to create an environment in which we both have a clear understanding of the potential value we can gain from the partnership. An imbalanced partnership is a ticking time bomb."

Los Angeles-based pet wellness brand Vital Pet Life has landed on the Inc. 5000 in 2021 and 2022.

3 | Nathan Kondamuri

Co-founder and co-CEO

PAIR EYEWEAR

"When you're open, transparent, respectful, and forthcoming with vendors, you can build good relationships. We go a step further by helping our vendors make their own processes more efficient. That allows them to reduce their costs, which ultimately reduces our costs."

Thanks to strategic partnerships, New York City-based Pair Eyewear has kept the price of its glasses stable since its 2017 launch.

2.

3.



In life, love, and business, all relationships take effort. These are the keys for maintaining healthy partnerships.

GETTY IMAGES (CORCORAN); COURTESY SUBJECTS

Inc.
Regionals
 NORTHEAST

N°155
 2023 Ranking

79%
 2-Year Growth

\$2.5B
 Assets Under
 Management

2X
 Inc. Regional
 Honoree

Merchants
FLEET

The Cutting-Edge of Fleet Management

Strong leadership, business strategy, and a culture of innovation contribute to Merchants Fleet's meteoric rise.

From delivery vans to utility trucks and construction vehicles, corporate vehicle fleets perform many jobs for customers. More than 185,000 of those U.S. fleet vehicles are managed by Merchants Fleet, a New England-based business with nationwide reach across 20 diverse industries. Merchants stands out for its breadth of services, which include short- and long-term fleet leasing, fleet management and optimization, technology, strategic consulting, and remarketing services. These solutions save clients money, drive efficiency, and often minimize their environmental impact.

For the past five years, this Inc. 5000 honoree has grown 30 percent year-over-year. "We have driven growth five times for the business, increased our employee base by 86%, and driven technabled efficiency across the business," notes Amanda Rogers, senior vice president of marketing and PMO. She credits the achievement to transformative leadership, a culture of innovation, operational scale, and a bit of "Merchants magic."

WHEN STRONG PLANS ARE REALIZED

In 2018, Merchants hired Chairman, CEO and President Brendan P. Keegan, a six-time CEO with business transformation experience. Keegan launched a seven-year plan divided into three themes: Elevate, Innovate, and Accelerate. First, Keegan brought in proven leaders, upgraded to a state-of-the-art, 55,000-square-foot facility, and encouraged employees to elevate their performance. In the Innovate phase, Keegan encouraged employees to "think and act differently in a useful way," which led to new services and markets. To "Accelerate," the business sought capital from Bain Capital Credit and entered the electric vehicle (EV) space full throttle. In 2022, Bain Capital, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA), and the Merchants leadership team completed the acquisition of Merchants, marking the completion of Keegan's initial plan, three years ahead of schedule.

BUILT TO ENDURE

The accelerated timeline was possible because of what Rogers calls Merchants magic. "Merchants has created real innovation in the fleet

industry, with unique products and services and a level of flexibility clients can't get anywhere else," she explains. "We see challenges as opportunities, and we are nimble problem-solvers." This employee X-factor remains crucial to Merchants' new strategic theme: Endurance, which speaks to how it will continue to keep clients on the cutting-edge of fleet over the next 5 years by nurturing a culture of innovation. In 2023, every employee will undergo innovation training.

"Innovation goes hand-in-hand with our mission of being the most electric fleet management company on the planet," Rogers notes. The company has a robust ecosystem of EV partners to support clients' electrification goals. The entire Merchants executive team drives EVs, so they are "walking the talk." Merchants clients' EV fleets drove 23 million miles in 2022 alone. Of the five million daily packages delivered in vehicles managed by Merchants during peak season, 90,000 of those were in EVs.

These cultural ingredients, robust offerings, and deep fleet industry know-how are allowing Merchants to continue to grow and serve its client base through the evolving world of fleet management.

[MERCHANTSFLEET.COM](https://merchantsfleet.com)



→ The Merchants Fleet leadership team at an annual company meeting at the Hooksett, New Hampshire headquarters.



"YM focused on culture before it was cool. Our culture, values, and results (CVR) deliver a fully client-centric approach to wellness."
Larry Siegel,
founder and CEO

Imagine having a personal team dedicated to optimizing your health on a daily basis. That's exactly what Yunique Medical (YM) does for its clients. Founded in 2016, YM's unique "YM METHOD" uses a bottom-up approach to cellular medicine in order to address underlying clients' symptoms. Proprietary technology, such as a custom customer relationship management (CRM) system, training technology through YM University, and a franchise-like model for medical providers helps YM deliver results.

yunique
 MEDICAL



"Our approach is simple: we do exactly what we say we will, and we treat every roof like our own." Maxine Reyes, chief operations officer

My Florida Roofing Contractor has been proudly serving property owners near Vero Beach with unmatched craftsmanship and superior customer service since 2003. With decades of combined experience in residential and commercial roofing, we're the contractor of choice for property owners throughout the area. We help you understand your options and select a solution that will exceed your expectations. Experts in metal, tile, asphalt, and roof seal coating, we are your favorite Vero Beach roofers.



Diversified Capital Management is one part asset manager, one part construction company, and one part property management firm. We leverage diverse knowledge and skills to bring forgotten, abandoned, and neglected properties back to life. Then we turn them into some of the finest real estate in our community, while at the same time producing the best risk adjusted returns for our investors.

"We help clients achieve their goals while revitalizing the communities in which we work and live. So every detail matters!"
Duane Cronin,
founder and CEO





"Nothing motivates our team more than knowing that, through every client we serve, we're making positive changes in our communities."
Lorena Rivas, founder and CEO

The Rivas and Associates team passionately represents those in the United States who strive to make the American dream a reality. By helping our clients through the immigration process, we truly connect and provide peace of mind to those in need of such service. And because the American dream goes beyond just gaining lawful immigration status, we have expanded the firm to include business formation and client advocacy departments in order to serve our clients more holistically.



"We transform disparate event data into powerful insights to ultimately drive lead conversion and boost your company's sales pipeline."
Nick Fugaro, CEO

Vivastream is an event data analytics platform that helps global organizations distill vast quantities of data about attendees' interests and behaviors into valuable, actionable insights. We make it easy for event, marketing, and sales teams to gain an accurate view of customer engagement to make decisions based on that data. We boost data potential to help organizations maximize the value of their events. By harnessing event data's untapped power, we turn your event into a success.



"Our custom online PEO InstaQuote gives small companies pre-approval in two minutes, eliminating the guesswork for their workers' comp insurance needs."
Oscar Montenegro, CEO

Peopaygo.com is a licensed professional employer organization (PEO) software firm. Our mission is to help small businesses, regardless of size or industry, easily acquire workers' compensation coverage, payroll services, and human resource management. Bundled together, customers get greater savings and access to our easy-to-use web and mobile-based products. Our proprietary online comp-calculator ends all the guesswork of figuring out your workers' comp rates before you buy.



Intensify provides B2B organizations with the most accurate, comprehensive buyer-intent intelligence in the market today and solutions to act on that intelligence. By delivering and activating proprietary, next-generation precision intent data, Intensify's Intelligence Activation platform identifies companies exhibiting research behaviors directly related to your business solutions, pinpoints where they are in the buying process, surfaces the issues they care about most, and enables you to engage identified companies with full-funnel buying experiences that drive revenue.

"We've steadfastly pursued aggressive revenue and customer acquisition goals. This win is a testament to our hard-working team and partners."
Marc Laplante, CEO



MAKING THEM WORK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 92

**From Inc.'s
Power
Partners**



"We have dedicated Slack channels for all our clients. That's how we can provide constant feedback to them, and how they can tell us what's going on on their side."
—Jose Herrera, co-founder and CEO, Horatio

1 | **Chip Massey** *Co-founder* **CONVINCING COMPANY**

"Connecting emotion to a situation is a shortcut to establishing a rapport and a bond. If I can understand you, and empathize with you without judgment, then I am much better at being able to relate to and help you."

New York City-based Massey is a former FBI negotiator turned communications training professional.

38%

OF MANAGERS SAY A LACK OF COMMUNICATION AND TRUST IS THE BIGGEST REASON FOR A PARTNERSHIP TO FAIL.

Source: McKinsey

2 | **Pinky Cole** *Founder* **SLUTTY VEGAN**

"The people I do business with have to have the same ethos and the same ideals. They don't have to be vegan, but they do need to believe in the mission."

Atlanta-based vegan chef and restaurateur Cole was a 2022 Inc. Female Founder.

3 | **Maria Haggerty** *Founder* **DOTCOM DISTRIBUTION**

"The foundation for all successful exchanges is good communication. Make sure your vendors understand your

situation and how you are trying to address it. Throughout your exchanges, you may not have the answer to a question at your fingertips, but being attentive and responsive in the meantime can greatly strengthen your rapport and nurture your working relationships as you work toward closing those loops."

Fulfillment and logistics services provider Dotcom Distribution operates a 400,000-square-foot fulfillment facility in Edison, New Jersey.



COURTESY SUBJECTS

Inc.
Regionals
 NORTHEAST

N°58
 2023 Ranking

282
 Deals
 in 2022

\$80M
 2022 Revenue

246
 Megawatts
 Sold in 2022

MEGAWATT
 GROUP

A Winning Model in Solar Module Procurement

The Megawatt Group sees exponential growth in an underserved market.

Within four short years, Todd Ahern and Tu Tran went from two guys, a whiteboard, and an idea to leading The Megawatt Group, an \$80 million outsourced sales team for solar module manufacturers. How? By leveraging a universal concept—the Pareto Principle. In sales, this means 80 percent of a company’s sales come from the top 20 percent of its sales team.

Realizing the inefficiencies this created for solar manufacturers and their customers, Ahern, Megawatt Group’s CEO, and Tran, its president, seized upon an idea: build a company that supplements the top 20 percent of a supplier’s sales force, reduces bottlenecks in legal and logistics, and lets U.S. buyers purchase from multiple overseas solar manufacturers with one contract, while opening the market to smaller solar installers.

This approach creates a “win-win-win” scenario, as the founders like to say. Suppliers enjoy better margins by outsourcing a portion of sales, legal, and logistics. Customers are thrilled with lower prices and better service. The environment benefits from a vast increase in solar installations, and The Megawatt Group realizes exponential growth by reducing barriers affecting procurement within the solar industry.

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

The Megawatt Group’s unique operating model and resulting volume gives smaller solar buyers access to the same prices and support as the largest players in the market. This has had a powerful amplifying effect, helping solar installers nationwide close more projects and install more solar.

“In the past, solar installers had to spend time and resources navigating multiple suppliers, sales reps, and contracts” Ahern says. “We give them one evergreen contract and one point of contact for the entire process.” This single-contract model provides installers with a streamlined procurement process with wholesale prices and full project management, logistics, warehousing, and legal support.

“We try to make it as easy as possible for them,” Tran says. “When you’re more of a consultant than just a low price, you become more of a partner than a supplier.” That’s why the team works with



→ Tu Tran (left), president, and Todd Ahern (right), CEO, The Megawatt Group

manufacturers overseas in several time zones, often into the night, to stay a step ahead on module availability and price.

GROWTH FUELED BY INNOVATION

Ahern and Tran also created the industry’s first “Module Marketplace,” an online database that gives customers a real-time view of every module available from multiple suppliers, including those owned by customers with excess inventory.

“During that crazy time of supply constraints, we still grew exponentially,” Tran says. The company’s growth was in no small part because the team was able to efficiently match sellers with buyers when new modules were in short supply.

All of this has led to exponential revenue growth, increasing nearly 700 percent from the company’s formation in 2018 to more than \$80 million in 2022.

“I think you’re doing something right when everybody expresses how happy they are with you,” Ahern says.

MEGAWATTGROUP.COM

Inc.
Regionals
 SOUTHEAST

Nº40
 2023 Ranking

600%
 2-Year Growth

\$70M
 Assets Under
 Management

45
 States,
 Lending In


Turning the Lending Business into the Relationship Business

Perfecto Capital's marketing secret is word of mouth.

Though Perfecto Capital has experienced 600 percent growth since 2019, the Boca Raton, Florida-based private "hard money" lending company does little advertising and marketing. Co-founders and co-CEOs Lukas and Patty Samuels don't have to.

"A lot of our growth comes from repeat business and clients telling other clients about us," says Lukas, who co-founded the company in 2014 with his wife, Patty, to provide investment loans to local real estate investors. He says that while most private lending companies are filled with analysts focused on profits first, Perfecto Capital starts by understanding their clients' needs.

Like many of their borrowers, the Samuels started their careers "flipping" houses, remodeling and selling them at a profit, as well as buying multifamily homes for long-term cash flow.

"We understood what it takes to flip a house: the speed, the budgeting, the stress," says Patty. "That helps us to create that close relationship with our clients."

As a result, the Samuels have a unique perspective on their company's purpose when it comes to offering a wide range of individually tailored private loans.



→ Lukas and Patty Samuels, co-founders of Perfecto Capital

"We're not in the lending business," Lukas says. "We're in the relationship business."

SETTING PERFECTO CAPITAL APART BY GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

One Perfecto Capital client had driven ninety minutes to a closing on an investment house with a cashier's check for the exact price in hand, only to discover that the title company had sent paperwork with additional, unexpected charges. It was 4:30 in the afternoon, the seller was pressuring her to close, and she was too far from her bank to get a new check issued. So Perfecto Capital reworked the package, saving the deal—and the day.

"People remember how they felt, not exactly what happened in a transaction," Lukas says. Unlike most private lenders, Perfecto Capital is open seven days a week, and their team will work until as late as 10 p.m. to close deals for their clients. Funds can be received as quickly as five days.

Perfecto Capital partners not only with borrowers but with investors seeking safe and vetted high-yield interest deals.

"We have a robust risk management process to make sure that we're vetting the right properties and borrowers and that their money is going to be secure with that piece of real estate," Patty says.

Their goal is to provide the best investment options and exceptional service.

PARTNERS AT HOME AND WORK

Lukas says their perspective as a married couple is a benefit, working and living as partners at home and at work. They play to each other's strengths, with Lukas focusing on business development and Patty on operations. What's more, they're living the American Dream. Lukas came to the United States from Poland and Patty from Colombia.

"If you work hard and master your craft, anything is possible," Lukas says.

PERFECTOCAPITAL.COM



1.

When your paths diverge, knowing how to find the middle ground with partners is essential.



1 | Stacey Abrams Founder INSOMNIA CONSULTING, NOURISH, NOW

“When you work closely with others—when your livelihood depends on someone else—there is going to be tension. There is going to be worry. But what there can’t be is doubt about integrity. You get beyond that by setting it down on paper.”

Georgia-based entrepreneur and voting-rights activist Abrams recently joined the nonprofit Rewiring America as senior counsel.

2 | Telsha Anderson Owner and buyer T.A.

“Be transparent about what you can and cannot do. I wish I had known to do that when I was first starting out; I agreed to everything. But now I focus on what works for me.”

New York City-based fashion boutique T.A. carries inventory from more than 50 independent designers.

3 | Frank Yu Founder and CEO COTERIE

“Being able to say no sometimes is crucial to having a successful partnership.”

New York City-based diaper brand Coterie is a 2022 Inc. Best in Business honoree.

2.



3.



Inc.
Regionals
 MIDWEST

Nº143
 2023 Ranking

103%
 2-Year Growth

85
 Awards

5M
 Community
 Members


The Marketing Agency That's Upending Government Affairs

A strong sense of purpose and a neuroscience-based approach to storytelling drives growth for marketing agency Iron Light.

If you ask Austin Berg, co-founder and president of the marketing agency Iron Light, government is broken—and consultants are to blame. Lobbyists are too powerful. Gatekeepers abound. And agencies are more concerned with election cycles than meaningful change. “Government affairs is a broken industry. A small handful of people are well-served,” Berg says. “We’re disrupting that.”

Berg co-founded Iron Light in 2018 with CEO Ryan Green to support purpose-driven brands and nonprofit organizations breaking barriers—often those imposed by government. Using a neuroscience-based approach to content, the agency builds engaged communities that advocate for change. Iron Light’s work has contributed to the passing of more than 50 laws, including medical marijuana legalization in Mississippi and universal school choice in West Virginia, as well as defeating the most expensive ballot initiative in Midwest history. “We’re a social impact agency,” Berg says. “So, we work with people who share our vision of a world without limits on human potential.”

THE WIN THAT STARTED IT ALL

Berg was 21 years old when Green hired him in 2014 to join a state-based public policy think tank, which was among the first to invest in marketing. One of the team’s first big wins involved Lisa Creason, a single mother who served prison time for stealing money from a cash register to buy food to feed her daughter more than 20 years ago. Lisa turned her life around and studied to become a registered nurse.

The state had other ideas, and she was barred from getting a nursing license because of her criminal record. Berg and Green used marketing and storytelling to galvanize audiences to support Lisa. Their work contributed to a state law ending a categorical ban on certain ex-offenders becoming licensed in the health care field. “I remember calling Ryan, and we were both crying. We felt the weight of the community fighting for this. And from that point on, we were like, ‘We can do this forever,’” Berg says.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Five years later, Iron Light is one of the fastest-growing companies in the Midwest. Berg credits their success to a committed, talented team that includes an editorial cartoonist and a virtual reality expert. “We’re constantly on the cutting-edge of what gets an audience’s attention,” Berg explains. In 2020, it launched Iron Light Labs, a nonprofit that runs impact campaigns to empower “purpose-driven people” and organizes a yearly summit in Nashville to inspire partners across disciplines. Moving forward, the team will continue to use storytelling and marketing to enact change—for the benefit of purpose-driven clients and the shared causes they care about.



→ Iron Light co-founders (left to right) President Austin Berg and CEO Ryan Green at an annual meeting in Nashville.

IRONLIGHT.COM

**Inc.
Regionals**
SOUTHWEST

N°114
2023 Ranking

\$427M
Client Energy
Cost Savings

20,000
Energy Portfolios
Managed

96.7%
3-Year Client
Growth


Lone Star Firm Wins With Long View

Patience and customer education pay dividends for Sector 7 Energy.

After the devastating Texas winter storm of 2021, commercial customers of Sector 7 Energy were able to avoid the extreme fuel cost hikes many others faced. Company Founder and CEO Daniel Shen credits this to the long-term procurement plans his team members, with their deep market and risk-assessment knowledge, created for those clients.

Teaching customers how to save money has helped Sector 7 Energy grow its client base from 700 portfolios at the end of its first year to more than 20,000 today. The energy consulting firm started in December 2015 from a small office in Dallas, at first focusing solely on commercial energy procurement. Now with four offices in Texas, including its current headquarters in Plano, the company has expanded its services.

"We came across many commercial and industrial clients that needed more than just procurement—they needed retrofitting of their operations to become more efficient," Shen says.

Through partnerships with third-party vendors, Sector 7 Energy

now offers energy efficiency consulting and solar energy systems for commercial and residential customers, along with its commercial procurement planning.

MICRO SPEED, MACRO PATIENCE

Shen says taking the long view in plotting the company's growth, while responding quickly to customer needs, has paid off. "One lesson that I learned early on was that large-scale growth required an extreme urgency in executing the day to day, mixed with unwavering patience on a long-term vision," he says. "I've heard this concept coined as 'micro speed, macro patience.'"

At Sector 7 Energy, training team members about the energy market and the company's culture is as high a priority as educating customers. "It's an ongoing training process that doesn't just end in the first couple of weeks," Shen says. "People who have been with us for three or four years are still being trained and learning new things."



→ Members of the Sector 7 leadership team and employees at the company's Plano, Texas, headquarters.

BUSINESS AS AN ECOSYSTEM

Besides rejecting the fast-growth approach many other startups have adopted, Shen embraces an atypical philosophy about business ownership.

"Some people start businesses to create wealth and freedom, to build a legacy with their name on it, or to be their own boss," he says. "I think those reasons ultimately hold companies back from their potential."

Shen instead sees his role as the steward of Sector 7 Energy, ensuring the company's sustainability by enabling its team members and consulting partners to meet customers' high standards.

"Our philosophy is to view Sector 7 Energy as an ecosystem and myself as a principal caretaker," Shen says. "That business philosophy is what helps build trust with our clients."

SECTOR7ENERGY.COM

Inc.
Regionals
 SOUTHEAST

Nº19
 2023 Ranking

1411%
 2-Year Growth

9000+
 Brands Onboarded
 Since 2020

30
 Employees


A Turnkey Solution for Building a Supplement Brand

Revenue is skyrocketing for Rocktomic, a platform that helps companies build supplement brands by providing comprehensive services and unheard-of value.

For aspiring supplement brand founders, Rocktomic has erased nearly all the excuses for not starting a business. For a small, one-time fee, entrepreneurs can access, brand, and sell Rocktomic stock formulas, which are contract manufactured and designed to rival top supplement products. When a consumer makes an online purchase, Rocktomic prints the brand label, affixes it to the product, and ships it to the end user. Entrepreneurs don't need to worry about fulfillment or buying inventory up front.

Since Co-Founder and CEO Ben Morgan took over the business in 2019 with his partners, Chief Marketing Officer Aaron Peden and Chief Operations Officer Marco Garcia, Jr., the company has grown from five to 9,000 clients, with a three-year growth rate of 1,411 percent. Those clients include gym owners, doctors, veterinarians, influencers, and, increasingly, large brands. Morgan, a serial entrepreneur, says the key to growth has been solving issues others overlook and providing a turnkey solution that "allows companies to focus on what they should be focusing on, which is sales."

A NOVEL VALUE PROPOSITION

Morgan's entrepreneurial adventure began at age 15, when he started a Christmas light hanging business with his friends. "I never really looked back," he says. Currently, he has six businesses, two of which earned 2022 Inc. 5000 Regionals honors: Anthem Pest Control and, of course, Rocktomic.

To succeed as an entrepreneur, "you have to be a little crazy" and "do the things other people aren't willing to do." For Rocktomic, that meant allowing clients to pay as they go. "There's no other manufacturer on the planet that will allow you to use their products for free and just pay them as you move them," he says. Additionally, Rocktomic offers free temperature-controlled warehousing for its SKUs and for other products clients are shipping with their supplement orders. So, if a gym owner sells weight belts as well as protein powder, Rocktomic will store all items for free and ship everything together, so the customer receives one package.



→ Co-Founder and CEO Ben Morgan and founder and CMO Aaron Peden at Rocktomic's distribution facility in Lawrenceville, Georgia

PARTNERS IN GROWTH

As Rocktomic charges minimal fees up front, success hinges on clients' sales. Morgan says the company could grow 200 percent a year by focusing only on helping existing clients move more inventory. In 2023, it launched RocktomicMarketing.com, featuring free and paid templates clients can use to create websites, digital ads, and other marketing assets.

Morgan's businesses are data-driven, streamlining and automating processes and unlocking business intelligence. Rocktomic is in the process of integrating its customer relationship management (CRM) platform with its inventory management system and marketing and design tools, so employees and customers have everything they need in one place. Rocktomic is also expanding its warehouse and building a manufacturing space to produce formulas onsite as well as with contract manufacturers. "It is the CRM and marketing tools that will take us into the next phase of growth: automating for scale," he says.

ROCKTOMIC.COM



"When negotiating, listen intuitively—both for what's said and what's not said." —Jean Tang, founder and chief growth officer, MarketSmiths

EMBRACING COMPROMISE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 99

1 | Mallu Huralikoppi Founder and CEO PRINTFORM

"The purpose of giving negative feedback is not to inform someone they are doing an unsatisfactory job, but to devise a plan to help them achieve their goals. You are their friend, not their foe. You want them to succeed, not fail."

Atlanta-based manufacturing firm PrintForm has made the Inc. 5000 in 2021 and 2022.

2 | Stephanie Summerson Hall Founder and CEO ESTELLE COLORED GLASS

"Part of the chess game is stating what is ideal for you, but knowing that you'll meet somewhere in the middle, as you'll likely get a counteroffer."

Holly Hill, South Carolina-based glassware brand Estelle Colored Glass has retail partnerships with West Elm, Saks Fifth Avenue, and others.

3 | Trinity Mouzon Wofford Co-founder and CEO GOLDE

"When you're just starting to work with a vendor or supplier, you don't have a lot of wiggle room to negotiate. But after your first few orders, you can push for more. That's when you can say, 'I'm

buying a few hundred-thousand dollars' worth of this material from you each year. We want a better deal on the price per pound.'"

New York City-based wellness brand Golde recently started a retail partnership with beauty retailer Ulta.

49%

OF ORGANIZATIONS
ATTRIBUTE MORE
THAN A QUARTER
OF THEIR REVENUE
TO PARTNERS.

Source: HubSpot

3.

1.

2.