

Special Report
24 New Tech Tools to pump up sales
& boost your profits

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Inc.

The Handbook of the American Entrepreneur

He came from nothing.
He's now worth \$2.6 billion.

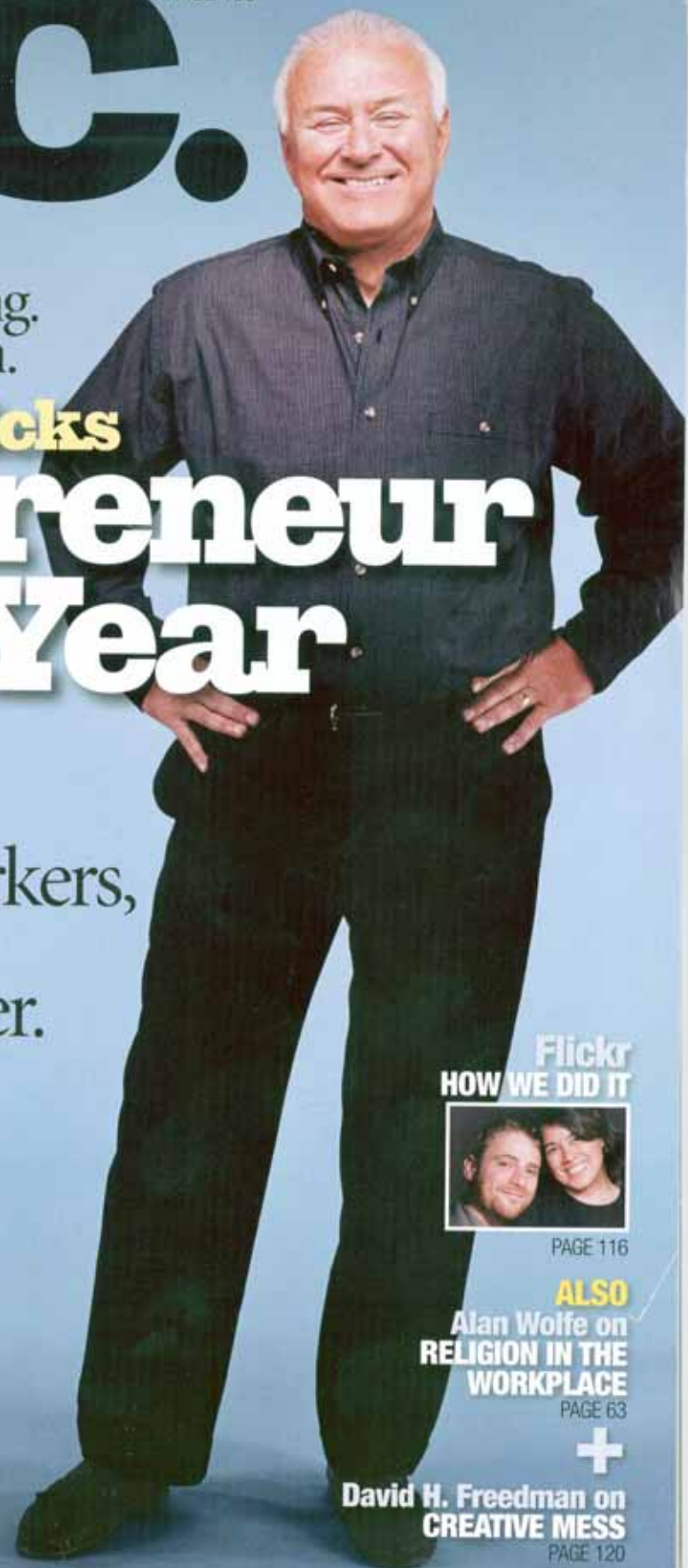
Ken Hendricks

Entrepreneur of the Year

His advice:
Trust your gut,
learn from your workers,
and don't throw
anything away. Ever.

By Leigh Buchanan

December 2006
\$4.99 US \$5.99 Canada



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HOW WE DID IT



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Alan Wolfe on
RELIGION IN THE
WORKPLACE

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David H. Freedman on
CREATIVE MESS

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Ask Inc.



Q **ADVERTISING** I'm a media consultant for companies in the pet industry and some of my clients have expressed interest in e-zine advertisements. Are e-zines just a fad, or should I try them out?

E-zines, for the uninitiated, are magazines published regularly via e-mail. "This is not a fad," declares Marty Anderson, a senior lecturer at Babson College who helps businesses market to online communities. Unlike banner ads and other broad-brush vehicles, e-zines shoot straight to the hearts of folks who are passionate about subjects ranging from building model ships to bak-

ing bread to spotting haunted houses. Like-minded advertisers, consequently, can reach the narrowest of self-selecting audiences. "These are truly interested people," Anderson says. "These communities police themselves."

As a result, e-zine ads may be the most cost-effective way to target key demographic groups. But the landscape is confusing: There are hundreds of e-zines out there, and rates vary wildly depending on subscription base and cachet. Many charge a flat rate based on the number of people who receive the e-mails, which makes life pleasingly predictable for companies on fixed budgets. Fashion-centric DailyCandy (See How I Did It, February 2004), a six-year-old e-zine that produces 11 city-specific editions and four national editions for 2.2 million subscribers, is the *In Style* of the bunch. The business wants roughly \$100,000 for a one-time ad in a dedicated weekly e-mail to 340,000 New York City subscribers. By contrast, \$1,000 crowns you sole advertiser of the day on Bowzer.biz, a daily e-zine with more than 10,000 canine-canoodling subscribers. Bowzer also sells smaller ads for as little as \$250.

But be careful—e-zines vary in quality as much as in size. Those with more advertisements than editorial content are often little better than thinly disguised spam. Publications that won't let you sample the goods without subscribing or that lack distinct Web addresses also deserve the hairy eyeball. The better e-zines go out only to subscribers, whether or not the subscriptions are free. In addition, because they place a high premium on original content, they usually employ dedicated teams of writers and editors. "We're much more like a magazine than a website because of the execution, the delivery, and our editorial content," says Pete

Resources To learn more about how online communities can benefit your business, read *Linked: The New Science of Networks* by Albert-László Barabási. For news and discussion boards related to running retail stores, go to RetailWire online.