

## Jenna Gruhala's Story

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Jenna graduated from Southeast Missouri State University, the college her grandmother went to with a Bachelor's in Mass Communications. After graduating she decided to take a position with a local newspaper selling advertising space. Not the best job but one that taught her quite a bit about the business. Her father who owns a Corvette business was talking to one of his contacts about Jenna and learned that the contact's wife worked at a Public Relations (PR) firm. Jenna submitted her resume, obviously did a great job on the interview because she was selected as the new intern in public relations.

During her time there she learned about the business from some fabulous women who were willing to mentor her in the business and her career. She found herself rising quickly through the ranks from intern to associate team member, ending up at senior team member in just two short years. She continued climbing her career ladder and had the privilege of working at both small and large PR firms. Although Jenna learned a great deal about running a business, she soon discovered that her entrepreneurial spirit like her dads, was calling her to start her own business.

Although Jenna's career accomplishments were on the right track, the one person in her life that supported her and believed in her like no other, her mother, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. "She was my rock. Watching her go through her battle, and ultimately passing away, left me feeling empty. After quite a while of mourning, I realized I could do one of two things: Think about what I've lost or focus on what I can do. I chose the latter." She wanted to make her mother proud so she worked even harder. The same year her mother passed away, Jenna decided to take up drag racing as a hobby with her father which ended up being a great bonding experience for both of them. When she later left the sport, she made her and her mother proud by being the only girl on the track that competed and was undefeated. Way to go Jenna!

After the passing of Jenna's mother, she vowed to take on two traits; a positive attitude and optimism. After all it's "Her smile, the words of encouragement she'd give me if she were still here that keeps me going like nothing else." Jenna started her own PR firm,

Snackbox, in November 2006 and was able to leave her full time position in November 2007 to focus 100% on her own business. Since its inception, Snackbox has doubled in size each year and they are projecting a 500% growth in 2009! Jenna's clientele includes Chinet, the disposable tableware. She was very pleased to have landed this account since her competition was a larger ad agency. She will only take clients that she believes in what they are doing and are responsible companies with worthwhile products.

Goal setting has been a key component to Jenna's success. In fact that's what keeps her going everyday. She sets small goals not only personal and professional but also financial for her company. She makes sure that she balances work and family by doing things for others that show thoughtfulness and caring but she knows it's important to take time out for herself and do things that help her relax. Although I cannot relate to this except for my recent obsession with the Wii Fit, Jenna plays Sims on the computer or Halo 3 on Xbox Live for fun and relaxation so if anyone wants to join in with her - her gamer tag is xxxJENNACIDExxx. I'm sure all the gamers will know what that means so join her on a little competition but remember she is an undefeated drag racer.

When asked what she thinks the essentials to career climbing are she states there are four key components:

- (i) Networking; it's all about who you know.
- (ii) Education; continue to educate yourself regardless of whether you have a degree or not. Attend continuing education classes and interview successful people in your career to learn how to get where you want to be.
- (iii) Rolodex; keep one and keep it updated and growing. You never know when someone can help you or you can help them.
- (iv) Be everywhere; join online networking communities like LinkedIn and Facebook. It will increase your social life and improves search optimization for your brand (you).

Although Jenna does not list it as a key component she says, "It's amazing what high heels can do for self-confidence. I put them on and suddenly I'm tall, confident and in charge!"

Today Jenna runs Snackbox with her husband and business partner and plans on increasing her business over the next few years through various avenues and who knows; maybe she'll expand into other businesses - Corvettes maybe?

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You can visit Jenna at [www.snackboxlabs.com](http://www.snackboxlabs.com)