



Pathways to a **Multi-Million** Dollar Business



Evrod Cassimy

News Anchor/Reporter
NBC Chicago

Evrod Cassimy joined NBC 5 News in November of 2022. While he is originally from Rockford, Illinois, Evrod is a Chicagoan and moved to the city for college where he graduated from Columbia College Chicago with a bachelor's degree in Television Broadcast Journalism. Evrod started his career in journalism as an intern for NBC 5 while living in the city and was mentored by WMAQ alum Art Norman and Anna Davlantes. His career has taken him to cities in Colorado, Wisconsin, Florida, Virginia and most recently Detroit, Michigan. Now he's excited to back home in Chicago as an anchor and reporter for NBC 5. Cassimy is an award-winning journalist and loves to write. When he's not covering stories in Chicago, he loves singing, writing music, giving back to the community and spending time with his family. His music has raised over \$100,000 for inner city high school students. Evrod and his wife live in Chicago and have three children, two boys and a girl.



Pathways to a Multi-Million Dollar Business



Kim Lewis

CEO and Co-Founder
CurlMix

Kim's journey into entrepreneurship began after her husband Tim's amazing "Who Wants to be a Millionaire" win, where he put his knowledge of random facts to good use by winning \$100,000.00. After her first failed startup of a niche social network, Kim **launched CurlMix in 2015, which started as a Do-It-Yourself box for curly hair.**

After two years of stagnation, **Kim sought advisors and pivoted CurlMix in January 2018.** She turned their best-selling boxes into a complete hair-care line. During an appearance on *Shark Tank* in 2019, Kim & Tim declined a \$400,000 deal. The following year, CurlMix's sales catapulted to \$6 million in annual revenue, and they have earned over \$22 million in lifetime sales - all online.

In 2020, the Lewises landed on the *Forbes'* "30 under 30" list, and Kim was included in *Crain's Chicago Business'* "20 in Their 20s" list. After landing on Oprah's Favorite Things, CurlMix was listed at #93 on the Inc. 5000 list of fastest-growing, privately-owned companies in America.

CurlMix continued to make headlines by offering its customers an opportunity to invest via equity crowdfunding. After kicking off their crowdfunding campaign in April 2021, CurlMix raised a total of \$4.5 million from nearly 7,000 investors. CurlMix is only one of the several brands in the Listener Brands portfolio, and Kim plans to continue to make stellar brands that listen.



Pathways to a Multi-Million Dollar Business



Marc B. Brooks

Founder | CEO | Leader
Hyde Park Hospitality

Marc B. Brooks is the CEO of Hyde Park Hospitality (HPH), a privately-held, management company that specializes in food & facilities operations, airport concessions, management staffing, and customer excellence advisory services. Marc has the unique ability to recognize talent, as well as attract and develop diverse team members at all levels of the organization — from management to front line employees. ***Under Marc's leadership, HPH has grown over 750% since 2017, with more than 500 employees across 15 states HPH was recently named by Crain's as one of the 50 fastest growing companies in Chicago.***

Marc is a skilled leader with a successful track-record at developing strategic partnerships and negotiating complex, multi-party contracts, often bringing together public and private alliances, targeted at providing opportunities in under-served markets and employment to people of color. Most notably, Marc has successfully help secure complex, highly coveted contracts alongside Aramark, helping win and retain key client accounts including a 9-figure, 5-year agreement with the Chicago Public Schools. In 2018 Marc & HPH partnered with Hilton Hotels to retain a 10-year management contract of the highly sought after O'Hare Hilton Hotel. This city-owned hotel asset is where Marc and his team oversee the hotel's entire food and beverage operations, employing more than 100 people. Moreover, Marc has led HPH to form multiple joint ventures leading to airport concession wins at Denver, Dallas and Los Angeles International Airports.

Marc is well respected for his ability to help guide organizations to grow organically and through acquisitions. As a 2nd generation entrepreneur, and former owner of 50 restaurants and retail concepts, Marc's expertise, which spans across market cycles, illustrates his ability to build businesses, and advise and fund organizations at various cycles of their evolution (early stage, growth, development/expansion and transition or sale). Marc has conceptualized, founded, managed and sold 3 of his privately-held companies to Fortune 500 organizations; personally invested in 4 private equity funds; and, advised, invested and/or raised capital for 3 early stage companies that have had successful IPOs.

Marc, a lifelong resident of Chicago, is an avid golfer, contemporary art collector, who enjoys traveling the world with his wife and 3 daughters.