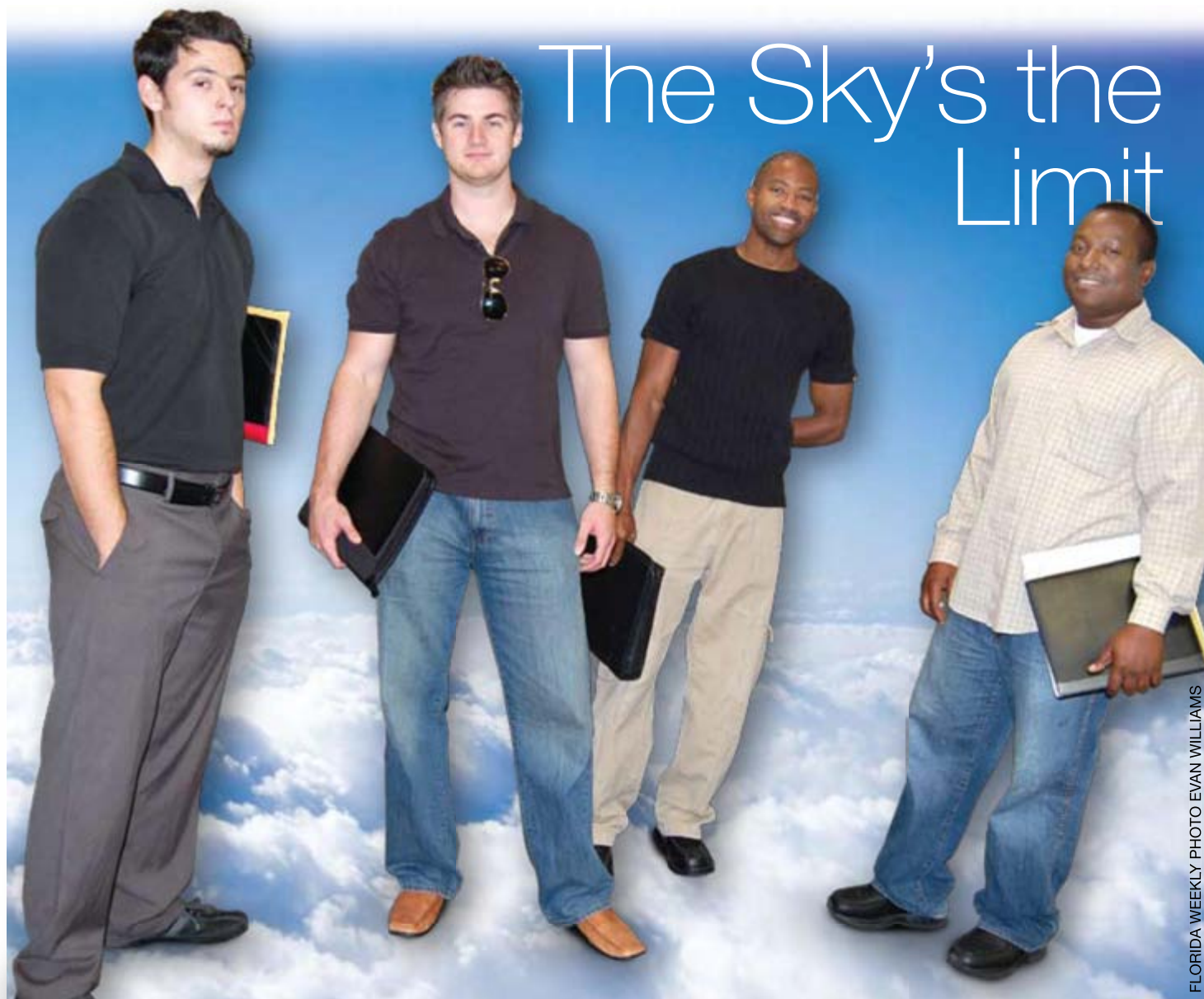


BUSINESS

WEEK OF JANUARY 17-23, 2008

A GUIDE TO THE GREATER FORT MYERS BUSINESS INDUSTRY



FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO EVAN WILLIAMS

Web site designers Zach Katkin, Scott Clark, Jermaine Primus and Harry Casimir.

Youthful promise put to work on the Web

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
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“Today’s Internet is still roughly where the automobile was during the era of Henry Ford’s Model T,” wrote Microsoft Corporation Chairman Bill Gates in 2000. “We’ve seen a lot of amazing things so far, but there is much more to come. We are only at the dawn of

the Internet Age.”

And much more has come, said Zach Katkin, Director of Operations for Unique ID Web Design, an Estero based company which provides businesses in Southwest Florida and beyond with internet marketing and consulting, Web site development and hosting.

Katkin, a 2007 Florida Gulf Coast University Graduate, is aiming to help businesses realize the net’s potential, and best utilize the vast array of options it offers.

“How do we educate the client that the sky’s the limit?” he asked. “This can be the biggest way they get leads and make sales.”

Katkin started the business with a fellow student, now Director of Business Development Harry Casimir, while still in college, working at home and in the FGCU library, where it took on a life of its own. They slowly built a reputation and decided to quit their day jobs and work for Unique ID Web Design full time in Sep. 2005.

Casimir said Katkin agreed to lend him cash if business got too slow, but it never happened.

“It’s been very profitable so far,” Katkin said.

Later Jermaine Primus, a 2005 FGCU

graduate, joined the team as a client representative and Director of Sales Scott Clark, who moved to Fort Myers from Detroit in 2007, came aboard. (There are eight members of the company, all in their early to mid 20s).

“There’s still a lot of fear about the internet,” Clark said. “Everyone has a brother that got screwed on E-bay...We want people to know that it’s very safe and secure to transact business online, that our clients are safe.”

Together, their four personalities interlock like in a movie: one quietly intense, one semi-brash yet charming, one intellectual and serious, one just happy to be along. But for each of them, that veneer is only the beginning, a role to play in the fledgling company they discussed with Florida Weekly last Friday.

About 50 percent of Unique ID’s clients are scattered across the United States, in New York, California and Pennsylvania, the other half are in Southwest Florida.

Those customers are mostly small- to medium-sized businesses which hired them to create everything from a small “brochure” Web site, to more advanced

SEE INTERNET, B8 ►

WEEK at-a-glance



Arts media day

And other networking social events in Greater Fort Myers. **B11** ►



Impresario

Will Prather has his hands full managing dinner theaters in three states and a national touring company. **B2** ►



Women & Money

Financial advisor, and TV personality Suze Orman says get your financial priorities straight for 2008. **B9** ►

Vapiano opening first Florida location in Fort Myers

European restaurant expanding in U.S.

SPECIAL TO FLORIDA WEEKLY

Vapiano, named the “Future of Fresh Casual” by *Foodservice Europe* recently signed its first lease in Fort Myers. Franchisee Konrad Woest and his family will open their first of multiple restaurants in the 1.6 million square foot Gulf Coast Town Center. Other restaurants in the Center include: P.F. Changs China Bistro, Outback Steakhouse, Blue Sushi and Bar Louie.

“The Gulf Coast Center is the perfect place for our first location and we have the best spot in the entire center,” says



Woest. “Vapiano is a very unique and exciting concept and I know will be well received here in Fort Myers.”

The Fort Myers store is expected to

open in June. Woest plans additional locations throughout Southwest Florida, including Tampa, Naples and Sarasota.

Vapiano has grown from a single unit to 30 locations open in only three years. Many of their restaurants can be found throughout Germany, in key European markets such as Zurich, Vienna, Istanbul, Budapest and now the United States. Vapiano has already opened three corporately owned restaurants in the greater Washington, D.C. area and plans to open three additional restaurants in the same

area over the next few years to serve as the launching pad for an aggressive U.S. expansion.

Vapiano, the European restaurant specializing in fresh casual Italian food, was established in Germany five years ago. It became such a success due to its innovative self-service technology and upscale décor that the company quickly began to expand throughout the world. Restaurants are 5,000-8,000 square feet, seat 150 or so guests and have a blended check average of about \$13.50 per guest. ■