



ADVICE FOR A BARTENDER

Small business owner Keith Winter relates his experience collaborating with Ben Fischman, President and CEO of Rue La La, on *Bloomberg The Mentor*



Tuesdays at 9 p.m.
on Bloomberg TV

Bloomberg The Mentor is sponsored by Ink from Chase. Join the discussion and "Like" Ink at facebook.com/inkfromchase.

Tell us about your company, Home Wet Bar (homewetbar.com).
When I was in college [2004], I built a bar. People liked it and asked where I bought the plans. I'd say, "I drew the plans and built it." So I started selling the plans and other products online, and eventually needed a warehouse. We now have eight employees.

Why did you participate in the Ink from Chase casting call for *Bloomberg The Mentor*?

We're at the point where we want to go from \$2 million to \$10 million. As you get larger, growth is harder to duplicate. I thought the show would be a neat opportunity to get some expert advice—and get a little exposure for our small, self-funded business.

Your mentor was Ben Fischman, whose portfolio of e-commerce companies includes Rue La La. How did the process work with him?

I went to Boston to see Ben at his offices. He brought in his executive team to look at our stuff. They laid out some advice, we took it back home and we returned to see him a few weeks later.

What was the advice?

Mainly that I needed to become the curator of the brand and the person in front of the brand. Ben said our website looked very professional, like that of a big company, but that people are craving originality and the chance to identify with the brand. I needed to bring my personality to the brand, whether it was my top choices or videos. I do, in fact, pick all the products, and unlike mass merchants we test them all. His team was shocked to learn that we stock 80 percent of our products in the warehouse next to our offices—we can walk out there and check out the product. Ben felt that kind of hands-on expertise didn't come across on the site.



Ink from Chase is designed to meet the changing needs of businesses. With exclusive offerings like Jot, the expense management app that saves time, business owners can get out of the back office and spend more time doing what they love.

What happened next?

To better represent our originality and bring our brand to life, we decided to create videos to showcase our products. We only had two weeks between visits, and we had no video equipment. We reorganized my office and made half of it into an area where we can shoot videos. We had video, lighting and sound equipment shipped in via next-day air, and we created six different backgrounds of tables and chairs and whatnot. Shooting videos is a time-consuming process, and we learned it on the fly. We were able to get some videos shot and edited in that limited time frame. Our next stage is to shoot more videos and to put links on the main page and the product pages, and to create a section of expert picks where people can watch us, and that also establish us as experts. We're programming the site now to enable us to do all of that. ●

SHANE BEVEL/BLOOMBERG



Scan to download



HAMMER THE HIDEOUS EXPENSE FIEND.

Ink™, the small business card from Chase, introduces Jot™. It's the free mobile expense app that lets you instantly custom categorize and organize time-devouring expenses. Save time and get back to what you love. The latest small business innovation designed exclusively for Ink customers. Make your mark with Ink.

Exclusively for Ink customers. Visit Chase.com/Ink



CHASE