

BUSINESS beat

By Lisa Zezima

Your Name: Beverly Mapes

Your Position: Owner and President

Company Name: Top of the List

Website: topofthelist.net

Phone Number: 616-4606778

Business Address: 2513 Lake Dr., East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Industry: Online Marketing

How many people does the company employ? We currently employ 5 people: Beverly Mapes as owner; Nicole Vesota a Project Manager/SEO Specialist; Duke Morehouse our consultant and 2 subcontractors. We also have a very friendly greeter – a Golden Retriever named Cosmo.

How long has it been in business?

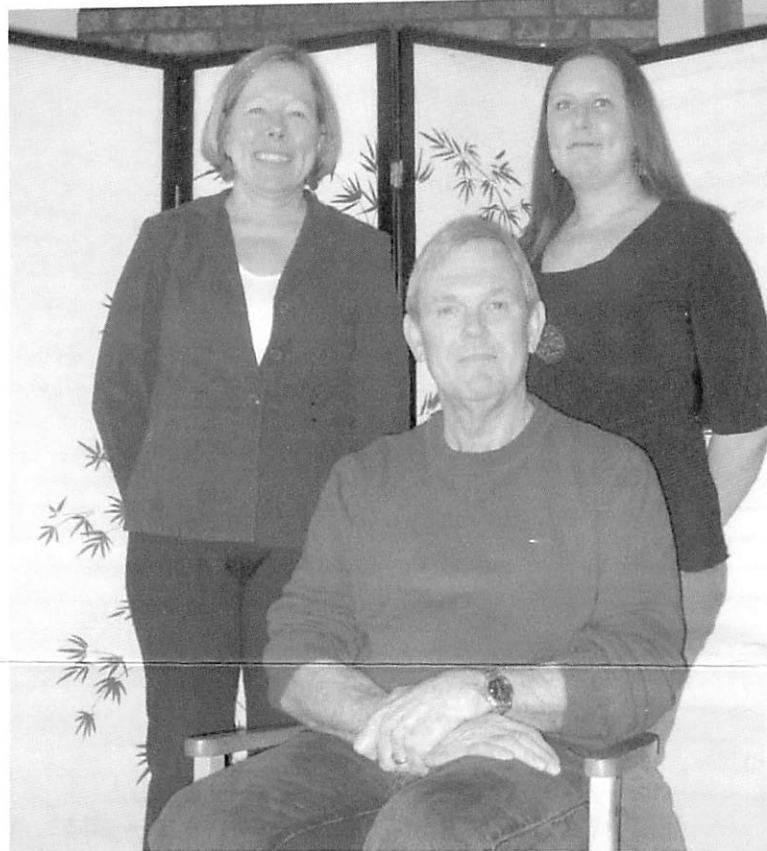
It has been in existence since February 2006. I have a home based office where my staff and I work.

What prompted you to start your own business?

I've always wanted to start a business and this opportunity literally fell into my lap. I enjoy the flexibility of my time. It is a great accomplishment watching our clients businesses grow. My main focus is getting our clients the best ROI (return on investment).

Describe what your company does.

Top Of The List helps businesses become more visible on the Internet, primarily by moving them to the top of the list on Google, Bing and Yahoo when prospective customers query a term that indicates active interest. Our focus is on the small to medium sized business, both locally and globally. We offer organic search engine optimization (SEO) and paid search programs, and consulting on site usability, blogging, social media, video, and image optimization in their promotion of SEO. An organic SEO package optimizes the client's website to increase current search engine visibility for keywords and key phrases, subsequently driving qualified, target-market traffic to the site.



In this approach, we work to provide a solid foundation for the site's optimal indexing by search engines.

Our specialty service is "Organic Search Optimization", optimization techniques that improve a website's placement on search engine result lists without the search engine charging the website for the click. It includes researching and analyzing keywords, optimizing the site, creating quality links, traffic measurement and more. Other services are Pay Per Click Advertising Campaigns, Online Press Release Editing and Optimization, Social Media Consulting, Content Creation/Copywriting, Video Optimization and Stand Alone Link Campaigns.

Anything extraordinary/unique that your company does:

We work with charities on behalf of our clients, giving them online visibility via the charity websites. The charities we're working with so far this year include Little Mary's Hospital-ity House which is an organization that provides a vacation for families with a child who has a serious disease, Sgt D's foundation which helps families who are struggling and Michigan Ski For Light which assists visually impaired or blind individuals 14 years of age and up enjoy cross country skiing and other winter outdoor activities by Higgins Lake. We are always looking for additional charities to support.

Given your business expertise and the nature of what you do, what advice can you offer to the residents of your neighborhood?

As an entrepreneur it is important to determine what it is you enjoy doing and where your skill sets are. Brainstorm to deter-

mine what you want in a business. Perseverance is key – don't give up. I also recommend working with an organization such as GROW (for women) to guide you in putting together a business plan.

How did you decide on this industry?

I have always had a passion for the Internet, search engine technology and underlying software. I have had over 7 years experience as a software test engineer and most recently as a test lead at GE Aviation, heading up their aircraft simulation software area. In addition, I have 15 years experience spanning both traditional and Internet Marketing, and 5 years as an Internet Account Executive and Sales Representative at Merit Network in Ann Arbor.

I returned to college later in life, graduating with honors from Grand Valley State University with an Information Systems Major with minor classes in Marketing. My education combined with my background experience taught me the skills involving every aspect of Search Engine Marketing – research,

writing copy, marketing, software testing and technology, and Internet infrastructure and culture.

Misc. (What section of the neighborhood do you live in? How long have you lived in the neighborhood? What school did you attend? Where did you grow up? Tell us about your family. What are you your hobbies/interests? Volunteer work?)

I was raised in the Plainfield and 4 Mile area before high school, then moved north and graduated from Rockford High School. My degree is from GVSU. I come from a family of nine brothers and sisters. I have lived in East since 1999 where I raised my two daughters, who graduated from East Grand Rapids High School. Because of my daughter's passion for field hockey, we helped start that sport in East after we moved here. I enjoy skiing, traveling and snorkeling, and have traveled to Bonaire, Key Largo, the Virgin Islands and Australia to snorkel. I support as many local businesses as possible and do my banking with Chase Bank on Wealthy in Gaslight. Our family used to be members of the GRYC, enjoy walking around Reeds Lake with friends, and the many events in Collins Park.