

Couple starts business selling tabletop ads to restaurants

By **Simon Shifrin**
IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW

Drew Strojny spent three years on National Football League practice fields, slamming his 6-foot-7, 315-pound frame into other linemen and ingesting 6,000 calories per day to fuel his mammoth body.



Drew Strojny

Strojny fought hard every day to keep his job but never played in an official game. He hopped from the New York Giants to the Philadelphia Eagles to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers to the St. Louis Rams, before being cut for the last time in August.



Jennifer Boydston

Meanwhile, his partner, Jennifer Boydston, followed him around the country and found her way at small businesses, jumping from catering to wedding planning to business development.

Last fall, the two started looking for a place to live. After stumbling on a magazine article and a Web site that described Boise as a “hidden gem,” they visited and moved here in November.

Within a month they had an idea for a start-up business, Jestro LLC, a full-service marketing company driven by the concept of advertising on restaurant tables.

The pair described the idea as a “no-brainer.”

The reasons are many, they said. For one thing, restaurant patrons are proven discretionary spenders. For another, advertisements can be matched to targeted demographics, like fami-



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Drew Strojny and Jennifer Boydston formed a company called Jestro to advertise products while people are dining. Above are table ads at 8th Street Wine Co.

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lies with young children. They also said that research has found people to be especially susceptible to advertisements during meals.

Perhaps most importantly, restaurant customers provide a captive audience for up to 45 minutes. Compare that to a televi-

sion spot that lasts for 30 seconds; 7,000 people from a targeted demographic might see and comment on a tabletop display every month. Strojny and Boydston said that makes their ad rate about 6 cents per hour.

“The cost per time is where we really shine,” Strojny said. “With traditional media, there’s no kind of quality ranking on those views.”

Of course, any good business idea depends on execution and pricing. That’s where Strojny and Boydston draw on their far-flung experiences over the past three years.

They can do more than just design, print and create table placards. They also help with brand development, graphic design, event planning and product naming.

Strojny, a philosophy major at Duke University and captain of the football team for two years, spent his NFL off-seasons working as a Web site designer and consultant. If necessary, they can rely on his Web skills to boost revenue.

The couple’s only major challenge so far has been pricing. They have made the cost to advertise in a restaurant for three months comparable to a daily print ad.

“That’s the thing that’s either going to make it or break it,” Boydston said.

In just a few months, the couple already had table displays at Lulu’s Pizza (featuring Huntington Learning Center), 8th Street Wine Co. (featuring Shoez and Mr. Peabody’s Optical Shoppe), and TableRock BrewPub & Grill (featuring Boise Contemporary Theater). Mazzah has also signed up to sell ad spots.

Strojny and Boydston said they’re confident they can make their idea bloom with the skills they have and their work ethic.

“In the NFL, you’re really in a competitive situation on a daily basis,” said Strojny, who has dropped to 260 pounds since he stopped playing. “You have to have a really good work ethic to be successful. You get used to that. It kind of carries over into other things.”

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***– Drew Strojny,
Jestro LLC***

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