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Universal Technical Institute Inc. students Christopher Tajalle, left, and Willton Tuni work in an advanced electrical course.

JIM POULIN | PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL



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Phoenix author uses social media to help push 'social good'

BY CATHY LUEBKE
Contributing Writer

Dwight Knowlton lights up when he talks about his latest entrepreneurial project, "The Little Red Racing Car."

He's found success in business, most recently at Bulbstorm, a Phoenix company that created promotions for brands such as Intel Corp. and NBC.

But this project is from the heart, a children's book about a boy, a barn-find 1955 Maserati 300S, and its father-son restoration. He calls it "a gift to my son."

Though it's still a couple of months away from publication, the book has drawn notice in automotive circles for its attention to detail, historical accuracy, striking illustrations and emotional pull.

"The book mixes some of the best things in life," Knowlton said: "family, vintage sports cars, working with one's hands and a dream realized."

Still, building that momentum required his entrepreneurial smarts.

Phoenix author and automotive expert Larry Edsall says he is impressed with Knowlton's use of Facebook and Kickstarter. "Such use of social media and the Internet can make a big difference for budding art-oriented entrepreneurs," Edsall said.

Knowlton took his message to Twitter, Facebook and other sites and amassed 1,800 followers there before he pulled the trigger on Kickstarter, a website that helps people raise money for creative projects.

"I generated momentum for Kickstarter

that pushed it to the top," he said.

"The Little Red Race Car" was not only the main Phoenix feature, but also the top project across all platforms one day, he said.

His email newsletter now reaches subscribers in 23 countries, and he has raised \$27,176.

Other keys to his success, he believes, are using a high-quality video to tell the story and tying in "social good."

Knowlton aligned his fundraising to book donations for Phoenix Children's Hospital. He tallied up 184, which he is rounding to 250 with hopes of doing readings and other activities at the hospital.

His advice to others looking to use Kickstarter: "Go where people are and care



PROVIDED BY DWIGHT KNOWLTON
Dwight Knowlton's book "The Little Red Racing Car" is about a 1955 Maserati 300S discovered in a barn and restored by a father and son.

about your message." In his case, it was the broad base of classic-car and racing fans.

Being able to include racing legend Sir Stirling Moss into the book was a coup.

"I told him the story of the book," Knowlton recalled, radiating his admiration for Moss' athleticism and gentlemanly manner.

As a result, the famed driver gave permission to incorporate him into the book. References include illustrations of Moss' 1960 win in the Maserati at Germany's Nurburgring.

The Phoenix author is a slave to historical accuracy. For example, hours of research went into getting the logo right for Carrosserie Fantuzzi, who built the 300S bodies.

Knowlton's passion and sentimentality also shine through.

"I didn't get to have a father-son project," he said, but he did work on projects with a neighbor who had a street-rod shop. Hence, an illustration featuring Bliss Hot Rods as well as his grandfather's pickup.

The book's launch is scheduled for Oct. 27, tied to an event at the Peterson Automotive Museum in Los Angeles.

Peterson Operations Director Sandy Scott saw an article about the project in *Sports Car Digest* and contacted Knowlton.

"We have a great kids program here," she said. "I thought it would be a fun family day."

The books will be available directly through Knowlton as well as Amazon.com, iBooks and at specific events.

Knowlton, 40, has launched several business ventures. His first out of college was called Design Star. That was followed by freelance graphic design, and later he co-founded Avizia in Michigan to land a huge project for Safeway Inc.

He was one of the first five employees at Bulbstorm, which ePrize acquired in March. Since then, Knowlton has been working full time on his book.

"I've been applying only for dream jobs," he says.

He also operates a branding, design and media company called 73 Ideas, named for his birth year of 1973.

His next book, called "The Small Silver Speedster," will feature a Porsche 550 Spyder. He's also been talking about a short film and responding more specifically to the suggestion that he include a daughter in the story.

Ironically, he says, "The next person I'm going to dedicate a book to is on the way."

For more: www.thelittleredracecar.com, www.73ideas.com.

The City of Scottsdale and TGen Foundation are presenting an event to highlight the efforts that contribute to the success of healthcare and bioscience activities in Scottsdale. From education and research to clinical trials and patient care delivery, it is happening in Scottsdale – **Local research benefits local patients first**



Welcome:
Mayor W. J. "Jim" Lane

Panel moderated by: Don Henninger, Publisher
Phoenix Business Journal

Dr. Ronald Korn, M.D., Ph.D.
Medical Director, Virginia G Piper Cancer Center
at Scottsdale Healthcare

Dr. Jeffrey Trent, Ph.D., FACMG
President and Research Director, TGen

Heather Morel, VP & GM
Health Informatics | Reimbursement, Access &
Safety Services, McKesson Specialty Health

Dr. Michele Y. Halyard, M.D., Ph.D.
Vice Dean Mayo Medical School, Arizona campus



Keynote:
Dr. Daniel D. Von Hoff
M.D., F.A.C.P.
Physician in Chief, Distinguished
Professor, TGen. Chief Scientific
Officer, Virginia G. Piper Cancer
Center Clinical Trials at
Scottsdale Healthcare

For more information and to register:
www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/event

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