



THANKS TO OUR CINCINNATI ENTREPRENEURS who gave their time on Sunday to share their great stories.

Elizabeth Edwards - Metro Innovation

Elizabeth Edwards is the founder of Metro Innovation and author of the award winning book, *Startup: The Complete Handbook for Launching a Company for Less*.

Edwards launched Metro Innovation, a catalyst for innovation and entrepreneurship, in 2009 after seven years in venture capital, private equity, and strategy and innovation consulting.

As a venture capital investor at Neyer Holdings, Edwards built winning strategies for start-up and growth companies in a variety of sectors, including clean tech, life sciences, consumer products, and technology. She has evaluated hundreds of business plans, and actively participated in the funding, launch, and management of five early stage portfolio companies.



Edwards started her career at Deloitte Consulting, where she was a strategy consultant to Fortune 500 companies, deployed over a broad range of industries. At Deloitte, Edwards' work focused on strategic marketing, disruptive innovation, and growth strategies. She is a resident of Cincinnati, Ohio, where she serves on the board of the Greater Cincinnati Venture Association and teaches entrepreneurial finance at Xavier University. She has been featured in more than 50 local and national media outlets, including the *Wall Street Journal* and *BoingBoing*, and has been a popular guest lecturer at universities and conferences since 2007, where she presents entrepreneurship as an imperative for economic stability.

Blake Shipley - CoupSmart LLC

"Blake Shipley grew up in an entrepreneurial family and is currently the Founder and CEO of a Cincinnati-based startup, CoupSmart LLC. Focused on social media marketing technology, CoupSmart helps businesses of all sizes grow their social media presence faster, drive more customers into their stores, and capture a wide array of unique data for analysis and follow-up campaigns. The company has raised several angel investment rounds and is currently expanding across the country.

Prior to founding CoupSmart, he was the CFO and co-founder of another local start-up, DotLoop, an innovator in the field of online real estate contract negotiations, and a Corporate Internal Auditor at Kroger. Blake graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in Finance."



Eric M. Ellis, President & CEO Integrity Development & Positive Message Music



Entrepreneurship is in my blood! My father was an entrepreneur (A pioneer Diversity Consultant in the 70's and 80's).

I began Integrity Development twenty years ago and have grown from one person in their house with no staff to a successful consulting practice with seven staff and fifteen senior consultants. Our business regularly grosses more than 1 million dollars a year. We serve some of the most admired organizations in the world as our clients (i.e. Toyota, Honda, Lexmark, Plante & Moran, Wright State University, G.E., Cintas, etc.)

I started a second company a couple of years ago, after the death of a teenage girl who was a friend of my children. She was stabbed to death while trying to break up a fight between two rival gangs. I was asked to speak to the entire high school student body about making better choices and decided to do something different. I zeroed in on the music young people listen to, believing that it was one of the culprits in the decline of social and moral values. What began as a vision in my head has become a new record label with 11 signed artists, an amazing website focused on encouraging youth to write and upload original positive Hip Hop/ R&B music and listen to others. We also have a very cool and fun phone app that people can download for free to their smart phones (to listen to our music, watch concert videos, get directions to our concerts, etc).

Some might ask how these two companies are run by the same person. For me the answer is easy. I am working to make the world a better place, whether in the workplace or society at large. Not everyone can say that they know what they were born to do, but I can say that emphatically!!

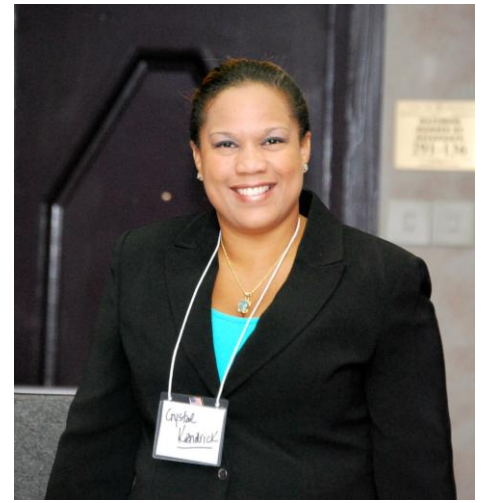




The Voice of Your Customer

Crystal L Kendrick President -

The Voice of Your Customer is a minority owned marketing firm that assists clients to penetrate niche markets using survey research, focus groups, secret shopping, business training, and media campaigns. Located in a federally qualified HUB Zone in Cincinnati, Ohio, The Voice of Your Customer holds the following certifications: 8(A), MBE, WBE, SBE and DBE. Selecting the right marketing firm to engage hard to reach markets and underserved populations can transition your results from good to great! The Voice of Your Customer designs **customized marketing programs** that offer instant information regarding the experiences, preferences and behaviors of niche markets, allowing business leaders to immediately implement desired objectives.



The Voice of Your Customer operates with full and part time employees, subcontractors and strategic partners in the US, the Caribbean, Latin America and Africa. Our **client list** includes government agencies; non-profit organizations; family owned businesses; corporations; and educational institutions. Our research and training facilities, call center, and community partnerships enable us to assist our clients to create raving fans and to increase profitability by improving employee retention, establishing industry recognition, and building a competitive advantage.

Edgar Smith Chairman & CEO World Pac Paper, LLC,



Edgar L. Smith, Jr. is the Founder, Chairman and CEO of World Pac Paper, LLC, a fast growing, *Inc.* 500 and *BE100* company and award winning national distributor of high quality printing & packaging papers and packaging solutions. World Pac Paper was named the *2010 Small Business of the Year* by the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber. The company recently received the *2011 Blue Ribbon Small Business Award* from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce this year, as well as being included on *Black Enterprise Magazine's BE100 -The Nation's Largest Black Businesses*.

He has over 25 years of solid sales and marketing experience with Fortune 500 companies, lastly as Vice President, National Sales with Coca-Cola North America. More specifically, thirteen years of increasing industry experience with commercial printing, packaging and paper companies including R.R. Donnelley & Sons Co., James River Corporation, Georgia-Pacific Corporation and Smurfit-Stone. He has traveled extensively, both domestically and internationally. He has developed significant business in Asia, South America and Mexico.



Edgar is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, GA. He is also a graduate of Leadership Cincinnati – Class XXI (1997-1998), and a past Fellow for The Regional Leadership Forum – Class II (2003-2004). He has also completed the Advanced Management / Minority Business Executive Education Programs at, both, Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth and the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. As a successful entrepreneur, in May 2010 he was named the *Small Business Person of the Year* for the State of Ohio and Region V of the United States, which covers Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). In August 2008, he was selected as Cincinnati Minority Contractors Business Assistance Program's (MCBAP) *Male Entrepreneur of the Year*. In January 2008 he received the *Innovative Creative Entrepreneur Award (ICE) – Outstanding Alumnus* from the Morehouse College Entrepreneurship Center.

THANKS TO OUR LOCAL PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR ALL THE GREAT SPEAKERS