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MacUpdate founder next speaker in Entrepreneurship Forum

KALAMAZOO—The founder of the second most popular Mac-only software community on the Internet will be the next presenter in a speaker series at Western Michigan University focusing on entrepreneurship.

Joel Mueller, founder of MacUpdate, will speak at 8 a.m. Friday, Nov. 8, in 2150 Schneider Hall, as part of the Haworth College of Business Entrepreneurship Forum. The event is free and open to the public and begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be made by calling (269) 387-5050 or at wmich.edu/business/e-rsvp. Free parking is available in the nearby Fetzer Center parking lot.

Joel Mueller

Mueller’s entrepreneurial story started in high school when he developed companies as a teenager and grew them into some of the most popular and well-respected companies in their niches. At the age of 16, Mueller began MacUpdate, a centralized location where users can find software, reviews, demos and more. Reaching more than seven million visits each month, the company sells hundreds of thousands of copies of third party applications directly from its nearly hidden online storefront. While earning his B.B.A. at WMU, Mueller was both a full-time student and a full-time CEO.

The company has since been recognized by Inc. Magazine as a Top 500 fastest growing company in the U.S. in 2008, 2009 and 2010 and was recognized as one of the 2011 Michigan 50 Companies to Watch.

Due to Mueller’s entrepreneurial success, he was named an Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist in 2011. Interested in helping people in situations of poverty, Mueller spends much of his time traveling the world and living in different cultures while growing MacUpdate remotely.
2013-14 Entrepreneurship Forum dates and speakers

- **Dec. 6**: Matthew Moersch, winemaker/distiller at Entente Spirits
- **Jan. 10**: Dale Anderson, owner of Confections with Convictions
- **Feb. 14**: Steve Hartmeier, president and CEO of Vestaron
- **March 14**: Amy Proos, owner and CEO of Proos Manufacturing
Students turned entrepreneurs create website app with help from WMU business accelerator

Hunting for that perfect restaurant bargain can feel like a chore at times but thanks to Xcheapskate, a custom food and drink price tracker, it just got a little bit easier.

Western Michigan University students Daniel J. May and David Selden-Treiman were tired of scouring the Internet for daily food and drink specials every time they wanted to go out with friends. “As college students, we’re often broke. Xcheapskate makes bargain hunting for restaurant and bar prices easy, and by saving people money, we allow them to go out more,” says co-founder May, senior, double majoring in management and finance and commercial law.

Executing the idea for the web application was made easier through a new student business accelerator, Starting Gate, a program that gives students rich and valuable resources to develop their startup companies. The mentor-based accelerator provides a fast-track to business launch and offers an array of resources to student entrepreneurs ready to accomplish their business goals.

“When we heard about Starting Gate, we thought it was a great opportunity for students and would provide great resources for Xcheapskate such as media exposure, guidance from a mentor and interaction with potential investors,” says May. Open 24 hours per day, members of Starting Gate participate in regular update nights, interact with faculty members and local entrepreneurs, and develop a robust network of contacts and connections.

With the motto “spend less, live more,” Xcheapskate aims to save users time and money. Using geo-location, the app allows diners to enter the food they want and the price they are willing to pay. Then, with a click of a button, it will show the number of food items available in the area meeting their criteria. As the website notes, “Whether you’re trying to find the best place for a cold beer or a cheap date for two, Xcheapskate is on your side.”

With long hours, meetings and demanding schedules, it is a challenge starting a business while being full-time students; but for May and Treiman, it is all worthwhile in the end. “Even though running a business while in school is hard, we understand that the skills the Haworth College of Business provides us will inevitably help us succeed.”
Director named to MBA program in Grand Rapids

Western Michigan University has named Renuka Phillips as the director of its Grand Rapids MBA program. Phillips is responsible for developing outreach initiatives and recruiting strategies to bring additional prominence and attention to the MBA program.

"While the quality of the program, the knowledge and talent of the professors, the collaborative learning environments and the cutting-edge concepts taught to students may be evident at the local level, I hope to aggressively promote the high quality of WMU’s MBA program more widely," she says.

One of the main priorities for Phillips is to increase enrollment in the program. "Finding high-quality candidates will be a priority to incubate a talent base within the student population," she says. Phillips also has plans to partner with the region’s top businesses to help facilitate an onset of talent into the program and to ensure delivery of business knowledge to their employees through the program.

For Phillips, the position is a great opportunity. As a WMU alumna, she was inspired by professors and staff while a student at Western and hopes to do the same for current MBA students. "Positively impacting the lives of others by helping them achieve their higher education dreams is the best part of my day," says Phillips.

"We are thrilled to have Renuka Phillips on our team," says Dr. Satish Deshpande, associate dean for graduate programs and operations at the Haworth College of Business. "She brings a wealth of experience to the position and will be an asset to students, faculty and companies in the Grand Rapids area."

About Renuka Phillips

Phillips is a WMU alumna who earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science and also studied communication. Phillips transferred to WMU from Malaysia in 1995 as a student in Sunway College’s twinning program. Prior to her undergraduate studies, she gained a global perspective by working as a flight attendant for Singapore Airlines. Phillips traveled around the world, experiencing many different cultures.

She then moved to the hospitality and construction industries and spent 10 years leading teams in public relations, brand marketing and operations and then chose to pursue an MBA at WMU’s Haworth College of Business, graduating in 2012.
Solar energy duo next up in Keystone Series

KALAMAZOO—Father and son founders of a Kalamazoo-based solar energy development company will share their insights on renewable energy and what it takes to provide energy solutions that make true economic sense as Western Michigan University continues its Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series.

Sam and Connor Field will talk about "The Economics of Solar Power" at 8 a.m. Friday, Oct. 25, in the Dean's Conference Room of Schneider Hall. The event is free and open to the public and begins with breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Reservations are required and can be made by calling (269) 387-5050 or at www.wmich.edu/business/keystone-rsvp. Free parking is available.

Helios Solar

Dedicated to environment engineering and economics, Helios Solar specializes in the planning, design, installation and operation of commercial- and utility-scale solar photovoltaic electricity generation facilities.

Recognized for reliability and efficiency, Helios Solar is the single largest supplier of solar energy to Consumers Energy with its creation of the Kalamazoo Solar Facility. Connected to the Consumers Energy grid, the Kalamazoo Solar Facility was the largest solar energy facility in the state of Michigan when built. The facility produces five times more electricity per dollar invested than the previous establishment, the Lansing Board of Water and Light, and is more efficient than other large arrays due to its unique multi-position panel mounting system. By engineering its own proprietary mounting system, the company developed a low-cost method of improving array output by 20 percent without sacrificing system reliability.

For more information or to register, contact the Haworth College of Business at (269) 387-5050 or at www.wmich.edu/business/keystone-rsvp.

About the series

The Keystone Community Bank Breakfast Speaker Series provides an opportunity for the local community to hear top business leaders and WMU faculty, alumni and friends of the Haworth College of Business discuss current topics of interest.

Upcoming Keystone speakers:

- Nov. 22: Heather Ratliff, wellness coach and nurse, The Wellness RN
- Jan. 31: Tara East, executive director, Cheff Therapeutic Riding Center
Global director for corporate citizenship at Dow Chemical Co. to speak

by Ashlie Harper Perry
October 14, 2013 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO—A top-ranking executive of a major chemical company will present his view of global citizenship when he speaks this month at Western Michigan University.

**Bo Miller**, global director for corporate citizenship at The Dow Chemical Company and president and executive director of The Dow Chemical Company Foundation, will speak on global citizenship and promoting sustainability and globally responsible citizenry at **3:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 24**, in 2150 Schneider Hall. The event is free and open to the public.

**Bo Miller**

Joining Dow in 1978, Miller held a variety of sales, marketing and business management roles before assuming responsibility for biotechnology public issues in 2001. He moved to his current role in July 2004. Miller's responsibilities include identifying and proactively addressing corporate citizenship issues and trends, and developing and implementing global corporate citizenship strategies.

Miller serves on a variety of boards and advisory committees, including the Contributions Council of the Conference Board, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce advisory board for the Business Civic Leadership Center and the Center for Responsible Business at the University of California at Berkeley. He is also the director of corporate and community affairs for the Great Lakes Bay Region and State of Michigan. Miller holds his bachelor's degree in industrial marketing from WMU and is a 2013 WMU Department of Marketing Hall of Fame award recipient.
Georgienne Kirsten

By Jessica Sliver, communications Intern

Traveling to Hawaii to support the Jimmy Kimmel Ford integration shoot held at the Ford Ironman World Championships is just one of the most memorable professional experiences for Georgienne Kirsten, B.B.A.’06. “The product integration was strong, and the bit that aired will always make me smile with pride for my role in its development.” Working hard is how Kirsten got to where she is today, and working hard in college was no exception.

Interning first for Biggs | Gilmore, a digital agency providing offline and online marketing strategies, and then for J. Walter Thompson, a global advertising and marketing agency, all while completing her degree in advertising and promotion, gave Kirsten the upper hand when landing her first professional job, working in account services at J. Walter Thompson.

After a few years focusing on a diversified client-base including White Castle restaurants and Great Lakes Crossing Outlets, Kirsten decided to make a change. “I got the itch to move exclusively into the automotive realm,” says Kirsten, who joined the brand content and alliances group at J. Walter Thompson to specialize in branded entertainment and experiential event programs for the Ford brand. In 2010, Kirsten transitioned to Jack Morton Worldwide to service GM’s experiential events, specifically the Cadillac V-series racing program. From there she decided to explore the client side of marketing and is now the senior marketing analyst for Panasonic Automotive Systems Company of America, an integrated supplier to the automotive industry in North America and globally. Kirsten is responsible for marketing and brand strategy for PASA’s Fender Premium Audio brand. On top of that, she manages PASA’s supported events and trade show activities as well as assists with corporate marketing, communications and public relations efforts.

Kirsten’s academic experience in the college of business helped shape her outlook on success. “I learned that getting 110% engaged in the programs that ignite your passion is essential for success,” she says. Becoming highly involved in school, through the advertising program, AdClub, a national case study competition and two ad internships taught her to dive into her career the same way. For Kirsten, Dr. JoAnn Atkin, associate professor of marketing, was a big source of inspiration. “Dr. Atkin challenged me and truly energized my pursuit for academic and professional success.”

Kirsten sees a lack of creativity in the workplace as a big challenge in today’s business world. “Too often we are stuck in cubicles, without natural light, plugging away at a computer,” she says. “The infusion of creativity in the form of better designed work stations, meeting rooms and brainstorming areas would help lessen stress or boredom and may contribute to better problem-solving solutions and a more positive outlook on business overall,” says Kirsten.

Kirsten supports the college of business by donating annually and participating in various alumni programs such as the Alumni Ambassadors program, where alumni handwrite postcards to new students and explain what being a Bronco is all about.
Even with Kirsten’s career on the rise, she will never forget where it all started. "I have a lot of Bronco pride in me, and I’ll tell anyone who asks.”

Professors for a Day

Among the special guests in the college recently was a group of six alumni who took time from their busy careers to share their expertise with business students as guest speakers. This semester's groups of 'professors' included a clinical neuropsychologist, an independent consultant, a senior vice president of sales, a venture capitalist, an IT manager and a corporate controller.