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# All signs point to success

The seeds of Stefanie Goodrick's growing enterprise were sown during a childhood spent in her father's sign shop

By Andrew Petrozzi

**Company name:** Sign Me Up! Designs  
**Owner and creative director:** Stefanie Goodrick  
**Business venture:** Signs, designs and artistic installations

**History:** A childhood spent in her father's sign shop would give Stefanie Goodrick, owner of Sign Me Up! Designs, the entrepreneurial drive later in life to establish her own Vancouver sign shop in January 2008.

"It just looked like so much fun to me," said Goodrick. "It was very creative with lots of tools and neat things around the shop. I was impressed as a kid, so when I graduated from high school I just never lost that interest."

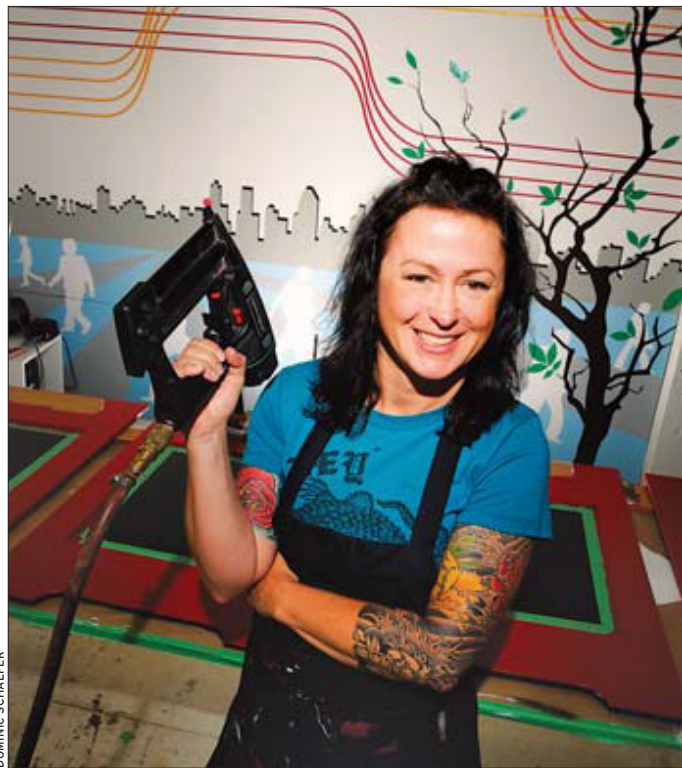
She would go on to graduate with honours from the graphic sign arts program at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. Her first company, Pintura Design and Sign, was in the Cayman Islands, where she honed her craft for five years. When she subsequently moved to Vancouver, she found work in the film and television production industry as a scenery painter, but her passion for signage would manifest itself in a growing side business selling signs to local film and television productions.

"I'm an artist first and a sign-maker second," she told BIV. "I have always been interested in working in the artistic end of signage and commercial art. I have managed to find a niche market that fuses the two worlds together."

She started purchasing her own sign-making equipment while working in film and television, but a writers' strike ultimately pushed her back out onto an entrepreneurial limb.

That was about two-and-a-half years ago and she has yet to look back.

What started out as a home-based business – "I was cutting banners in the hallway of my apartment building" – has slowly but steadily expanded, she said. Goodrick opened her shop about 15 months ago and has hired one full-time employee as well as some part-time workers to help her keep up with the pace and rhythm of



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Stefanie Goodrick, owner and creative director, Sign Me Up! Designs: "I would probably say I am an artist first and a sign-maker second"

her business. "The quality and quantity of jobs has been just continuously going up," she said. While not providing specifics, Goodrick said the business is profitable enough to support her and

**"We don't just take care of the design needs, but we can also produce the signs"**

– Stefanie Goodrick, owner, Sign Me Up! Designs

the shop, one full-time employee and three part-time workers.

"It's inconsistent right now but that's part of the growth process."

A consummate networker through her affiliation with the local chapter of **Business Networking International**, Goodrick has found that much of her work to date has come from word of mouth, her website and through friends and colleagues.

While she still does some projects for TV ad productions, much of her work is

commercial. Her understanding of tight deadlines and budgets, thanks to years working in film and television, has made her the choice for clients such as the **Hyatt Regency, Vancouver Children's Hospital, Four Seasons Hotel, Billabong, the Charlatan, the Five Point, the Crime Lab restaurant, Whistler Brewing Co., Big Rock Brewing Co., Red Truck Beer, Union Gospel Mission and the Onni Group of Companies.**

**Challenges:** As a one-stop shop for signage and commercial art, a primary challenge for Sign Me Up! Designs and Goodrick has been explaining to potential customers what it is her business does.

"We don't just take care of the design needs, but we can also produce the signs," she said. "Whatever their imagination can come up with, we can facilitate it."

She does exterior, illuminated and awning signage as well as painted signs, sandwich boards and vinyl and vehicle graphics. She also does interior signage such as vinyl and digital print cut graphics and feature walls and murals.

While she has had a business coach since she start-

ed, upon reflection, Goodrick believes she should have taken some courses on how to run a business and had more of a business plan in place instead of "going to the school of hard knocks." **Aspirations:** Goodrick would like to grow her business to the point where she does not have to be in the office all the time and where she can focus more on her role as the company's creative director. She also has aspirations to open a second location in the Lower Mainland.

"I see opportunity everywhere. I see project possibilities. I just need manpower," she said. "I'm slowly getting [that] in and training people. I am going to make it happen. I don't even think about it not happening. You have to be that way if you're an entrepreneur."

Working for herself, Goodrick finds she enjoys the project management side of the business.

"Working in film got me really familiar with working with different trades and bringing them all together to get a job done on time and on budget. I learned a lot from that and I've taken it with me to my world." ■ [apetrozzi@biv.com](mailto:apetrozzi@biv.com)