

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Leon McMillan: A-Ware Marketing, LLC

CUSTOM MARKETING MATERIALS FIRM STAKES ITS CLAIM IN SUCCESS WITH E200

Seven years spent building his business on building *others'* businesses with his full-service graphic design and marketing materials firm taught A-Ware Marketing's Leon McMillan two things. First, it takes an objective, analytical understanding of a business and its unique value proposition to effectively win customers. In fact, that very insight had become McMillan's stock-and-trade, as he assessed each client firm to design the graphics and messaging for custom marketing materials projects. Second, it was time for McMillan to turn that same trained eye on his own business. To substantially grow A-Ware, McMillan needed to objectively assess the firm and design an operational infrastructure to allow him to move from project designer to business manager.

To achieve next-level success, McMillan needed e200.

McMillan launched A-Ware in 2003, his business model was simple. A-Ware would initially target start-up and small "Mom-and-Pop" firms with cut-rate pricing on the design, print, and delivery of standard marketing materials like business cards and fliers. Then, as A-Ware's reputation grew, its pricing would become more competitive and its product offerings more expansive, ultimately positioning A-Ware as a "one-stop-shop" for an entire universe of still-affordable marketing materials. The first stage of A-Ware's growth plan initially won it a strong foothold in the Chester, Pennsylvania region where it is headquartered. In 2008, as A-Ware's internet presence

began to win it clients across the tri-state area and nationwide, McMillan had succeeded in generating sufficient work volume to devote himself full-time to the business. By 2010, A-Ware named 60% of Chester's small businesses among its clients, and had produced promotional materials for local political campaigns and community focused non-profit organizations alike.

A-Ware was building momentum, thanks to McMillan's strong customer relations and design skills. But, without the right strategic growth plan in place, the firm could not effectively move to McMillan's second growth stage target. McMillan had effectively generated sufficient work volume to make it on his own. But keeping up with those incoming orders took valuable focus from building the kind of corporate infrastructure or financing resources that A-Ware needed to "make it in the big leagues."

Now, as a member of e200's latest Philadelphia class, McMillan has the tools at his disposal to break free from the demands of those day-to-day operational duties and take his shot at next-level success. For the first time, McMillan is engaged in the formal business training to craft a detailed, *viable* roadmap for his firm's long-term success. For the first time, McMillan is connecting with the kind of resources and mentors that can help him bring that plan to life. For the



Leon McMillan, Owner/Operator

first time, thanks to e200, tomorrow is finally coming into focus, and its possibilities are endless.

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