



Rebecca Stockbridge

## Web doctor

A chat with Rebecca Stockbridge, founder of **MediCreative** in Portland.

**Founded:** May 2006

**Employees:** One, plus one part-time

**Startup costs:** \$6,000-\$7,000

**Projected revenue, year one:** \$50,000

**Projected revenue, year two:** \$75,000

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### What does MediCreative do?

MediCreative is a graphic and Web design company, and we're focused on helping doctors, dentists and anyone in the health care industry get online. We also do some of their branding, like designing logos, their brochures and postcards, to create an image for the doctor's practice.

### How did you get the idea for this?

I started working on MediCreative in September of 2005. I was writing a business plan, and I knew I wanted to do a Web design company [in] a niche market. So I started looking into industries that needed a website and I was surprised when I found out that doctors are really under-represented on the Web. My research showed that only 12% of doctors had a Web presence. I also found that 90% of Internet users would like to get info from their doctors online, so there definitely is a need right there.

### Why did you want to focus on a niche?

The more specialized you are, the more you can cater to your clientele. Some [of my clients] just want to have a one-page website. Larger practices want to have [multiple] pages, like resources for patients, bios of the doctors, forms to fill out. I'd like to research building a Web portal where people could look at X-rays online, or email their doctors with a question, but that's in the future.

### Are there privacy concerns?

You do have to worry about HIPPA, which stands for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Basically it means that when doctors share information about their patients, it has to be really secure. It's just a matter of outsourcing that security to another server.

### How did you launch the business?

Well, I worked on the business plan for a contest at the University of Southern Maine and I was a finalist in

that. Following that, I received a grant from the Libra Future Fund for my start-up costs. I was excited about it and ready to start right after college, so that's what I did. Oh, I should also give credit to the Maine Center for Enterprise Development, because they offered me free space for the first year.

### What is it like to work in an incubator like the MCEd?

It's a nice community — everyone's starting up, everyone's working long hours, so it's good to have that support. If someone's trying to find an accountant, you can just talk to the person next door and see who they use. Or if you're writing a proposal and you need someone to do a once-over, they're right next to you to tell you to change the wording or something. [When the year is up,] I'm definitely going to renew my space. I'll probably be here for another year or two.

### How many clients do you have right now?

Right now, I do a lot of work for small businesses, as well, because I'm in the startup phase. So I have about 24 clients that I do work for and then three medical-specific ones. Because of the incubator, a lot of my business comes from referrals, but I spend all my marketing dollars on MediCreative because I believe that it's important to have a niche.

### What's been most the challenging part of running the business?

One of the things that's been hardest is selling myself. It's really hard when you're calling doctors' offices and they treat you like a telemarketer. I've definitely gotten better at it as time has gone on.

Also, I knew it would be hard to get in touch with the doctors, but I didn't think it would be as hard as it actually is. So one of the things I did was, for New Year's, I sent out a fortune cookie promo. I ordered these [Chinese take-out] boxes, and cookies with customized coupons in them for Web design and Web hosting. It's been a good way to connect with the doctors because it's not just a piece of junk mail — they look at it and they think about it.

*Interview by Kerry Elson*

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