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Alumni Focus: Jonathan Freeman

March 5, 2013



After starting out in one career field and ending up in another, Jonathan Freeman (**pictured left**) always shared an interest in art and graphic design. After he graduated from college with a management art degree, the Internet inspired him to start his own businesses. Today, Freeman is the owner of [Widget Press Inc.](#), a company that develops Mac based software that allows non programmers to create iPad and iPhone form apps for companies, schools and organizations.

Originally from Savannah, Ga., Freeman graduated from Georgia Southern University with a Bachelor's of Science in printing management in 1994. He had previously attended the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) and majored in graphic design and illustration. After realizing he was looking more for a management type of degree, he transferred to Georgia Southern. *"SCAD offered a pure creative art degree, but I felt that my artistic skills were strong and that the degree in management at Georgia Southern offered more of a business approach to art," Freeman said.*

Within a month after graduation, Freeman had landed the graphics coordinator position for Cobb County in Atlanta, Ga. *"At the time, I produced graphics for the TV station along with other small tasks," Freeman said. "I was using the skill sets I had learned in college."*

After two years, Freeman decided to start Creation Station, a website design company that developed websites for corporations. *"I've always had the entrepreneurial kind of makeup," Freeman said. "I just always knew I wanted to do my own thing. Probably being an artist had the biggest influence on me being an entrepreneur."*

After developing commercial websites with Creation Station, Freeman sparked the idea to start a web business known as [WebTShirt.com](#). *"While building websites for other people, I got the idea to build our own site that actually sold retail," Freeman explained.* The basic concept of the website was to upload an image, and then have the ability to put it on different merchandise that a company could eventually sell, whether it be a mug, t-shirt, etc.

It wasn't until 2001, that Freeman started Widget Press Inc., his current business for the past 12 years. The original idea for Widget Press was to create downloadable software for companies to purchase and use as their website. *"Essentially, we would create an entire software package. A company would make a transaction on our website and then download an entire web application that they could put on their site," Freeman said. "They would download the app and then populate it with all their own personalized information. Then it would serve as their website."* There were originally 18 different applications available for customers to purchase from 2001-2008.

After realizing that the internal Mac based tool they created to develop their own web site packages, Widget Press made a shift in their product line in 2008 *"What we wanted to do was introduce a tool that would allow a company to build their own website- similar to the idea of a WordPress site," Freeman said. "We decided to just sell our Mac based toolkit as a product."* What became known as Widget Press's ModelBaker was released at the 2009 Macworld Expo in San Francisco and according to Freeman, "took off like a rocket."

All of the success of ModelBaker was due in large part that the idea came from key requests from customers. In 2010, Widget Press would answer its customer requests again with a new product known as FormEntry Touch. According to Freeman, customers were requesting an application with the ability to fill out information and save it without internet connection. *"Essentially, the Mac toolkit we created now helps companies build a native iOS app without being a programmer and deliver it to any other iPad, iPhone or iPod touch user," Freeman said. "The iPad user can then collect information remotely and send it back once they have an Internet connection."*

Currently, FormEntry is Widget Press's biggest money maker driving in 100 percent more revenue than ModelBaker. Even though Widget Press is based out of Atlanta, 60 percent of their revenue actually comes from outside of the United States. Because their software is available in nine different languages, Freeman has been able to expand their potential clients selling mainly to companies in China and Europe.

In the future, Freeman plans to yet again release an entirely new kind of code base for Widget Press Inc. *"This new version will allow for a much larger audience," Freeman said. "We will be introducing a bar code scanner inside of our app."* To find out more about this upcoming software, be sure to check out Widget Press' website at <http://www.widgetpress.com>.