

# Jeff Policard

Miami, Florida



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## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Jeff Policard:*

Born and raised in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Jeff Policard, CEO and Founder of Cool Ideas Marketing, grew up in a musical household. His father was a jazz musician and subsequently, Jeff developed an ear for music and a spark for creativity. When deciding on college, he originally wanted to attend music school. However, Jeff's father, who was well aware of the inherent challenges associated with finding success in the music business, encouraged him to do something else.

"I chose marketing," Jeff said. "I felt like it was an area where I could continue to express myself and utilize my creativity. I ended up moving to Smithfield, RI, to attend college at Bryant University. We had a recruiter at the high school I attended who introduced me to the college and offered me a scholarship. My cousin was also at Bryant and

encouraged me to attend.”

After graduating from Bryant University, Jeff’s initial goal was to move to New York City. Unfortunately, at the time, finding a full-time job, while still being under a student visa, was nearly impossible. Instead, Jeff moved to Miami in 2004 to live with his grandfather. He thought about moving home to Haiti to work with his father, but made the decision to call the United States home and continue his education. He applied for and was granted a second student visa and earned a Music Business Degree in 2007.

“I eventually got my green card and found employment working with Haitian companies that wanted to build a bridge between the U.S., Canada and Haiti,” he said. “I helped them communicate and create their messaging. In 2014, one of the companies I worked with shut down their marketing division. Two months after that, my wife told me she was pregnant. After that I thought, ‘Okay, now is the time for me to start my own business.’”

In July 2014, Jeff launched Cool Ideas Marketing. The company specializes in social media marketing, but also builds websites, develops branding campaigns and optimizes their client’s online presence while expanding their reach. Despite steady growth, as Jeff shared, there were some challenging times in the beginning.

“My son was born about five months after I started the business,” he said. “My wife went back to work pretty quickly, so I stayed home with him. Growing the business and having to watch my son was definitely a challenge. There were times where I’d be on the phone with a client and he was crying in the other room. It was tough. I also had to get used to

the fact that I couldn't call in sick. There were times I felt horrible, but I had to suck it up."

Jeff walked the streets and handed out business cards to anyone willing to listen. He picked up mainly small jobs until year two, when he landed a significant contract. This also coincided with Jeff placing an emphasis on his own personal branding.

"I was so focused on sales, but also realized that personal branding, networking and getting out there was equally as important," he said. "Business is about building relationships and, for the most part, people have done business with us because of the relationships we've developed with them. I tell the same thing to our sales people."

For Jeff, the opportunity to express his creativity and drive results for his clients is what he enjoys most. "I love thinking of campaign ideas, slogans and jingles for our clients. When the client is happy with our work and they're generating income from it, I feel so fulfilled. Also, the size of the client doesn't matter. Whether they're an 'A' client or a 'C' client, in terms of the amount of work we do for them, I give everyone the attention they deserve."

Looking ahead, Jeff's future goals include franchising Cool Ideas Marketing. He wants offices in Europe, Asia and his home country of Haiti. He also started a podcast called 'Getting Social' that focuses on our changing world and how business networking and communication will never be the same. He's looking forward to growing his podcast and engaging with more guests and listeners. Lastly, Jeff is developing a direct-to-consumer type product. He wasn't specific, but hinted that it's a product geared towards babies.

What advice does Jeff have for aspiring entrepreneurs? “First of all, don’t be afraid and don’t give up,” he said. “You’ll have a lot of people that don’t get what you’re trying to do. Don’t try to please them. What’s important is that you believe in what you’re doing. Also, don’t be afraid to speak out and tell people what you think. Be honest with yourself. That will reflect positively on your business. I speak my mind. Ultimately, what’s more important to me is that the clients that know me, know I’m true to my own feelings.”

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