

# Shannon Caldwell

Port Saint Lucie, Florida



UBU Brands

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## *Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Shannon Caldwell:*

Prior to launching UBU Brands in April of 2016, co-founder Shannon Caldwell, spent seven years with Florida Power & Light doing marketing and communications. She also worked for a bio-tech startup in Melbourne while pursuing a master's degree at The Florida Institute of Technology. Before that, she worked for five years in broadcast media at a local Fox affiliate, WFLX Fox 29.

For Caldwell, starting her own business has been a lifelong dream. "I learned a lot about effectively applying marketing and communication in corporate America," she said. "I also learned that if I took my skills to the open market, I had the potential to make more money. We identified the Treasure Coast, specifically St. Lucie County, as a great place to open our business." Caldwell's husband and co-founder, Jamie, ran his own

promotional products company for 8 years before going full-time on UBU Brands in September of 2016. After working on UBU Brands on the side for 18 months, Caldwell followed suite and went full-time in December of 2017.

Caldwell shared with us some of her immediate observations when she took the full-time plunge. "I immediately noticed a lot of opportunities for improving the marketing savvy and acumen of the local business owners," she said. "I had to adjust my speak, but there were plenty of opportunities to package and sell our unique approach. The marketing that was available was loud and designed to grab and get you. We base our approach on three cores: strategy, branding and promotional products. We want to be strategic in how small business owners use their marketing. With branding, we want to quiet down the noise and freshen up the brands from the 1990s. We also make sure the brand is cohesive across all products. We ask ourselves, 'will this increase traffic and phone calls?'. We focus on quality and ensuring value for our customers. We dig deep for the value we're providing. We also don't look like your typical marketers. I want to get in the trenches with you and add value wherever possible."

Their current niche is non-profit events. According to Caldwell, non-profit events allow her agency to deploy a three-fold approach consisting of strategic planning, merchandising and branding. They're also strong in the brewery industry, construction and finance. Regardless of the industry, Caldwell really enjoys her work. "I get to take the best of past experiences and apply them to new projects," she said. "I'm able to use my creativity and artistry to provide value for our customers."

Looking ahead, Caldwell is focused on scaling the business in two ways. "We want to have a platform where our strategic products can be shared and purchased online," she said. "We want business owners talking to each other and sharing best practices. Through online resources like Facebook and LinkedIn, owners will be able to grab the tools and work through them together. We're taking an e-commerce influencer approach to helping business owners improve their marketing skills."

Caldwell offers up some great advice for aspiring entrepreneurs and for husband and wife co-owners. "Your willingness to take the leap depends on your fears and where you've come from," she said. "I came from nothing and I've been without money, so I know what it's like to dig myself out. I know I can do it and that it's no big deal. Also, don't underestimate the value of documenting processes and how much project management you will be doing to stand up your business operations. These activities take time and can distract from feeding your sales pipeline and executing on your strategy. In regards to working with your spouse, know your roles and responsibilities. Do your organizational chart and identify who is going to do what and hold each other accountable."

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