



## MARKETING STAR



## Andy Abramson: Founder and CEO of Comunicano, Inc.

[By Anique Gonzalez]

“Be honest. Be transparent. Be open and approachable. Take advice and use it as necessary. Be respectful of people who’ve been around for a long time; they really do know what they’re talking about,” Andy Abramson proclaims. Abramson not only believes that this guidance will help others succeed in the field of marketing; but this is the advice that he himself has used to thrive in the industry for the past 30 years.

Abramson originally entered the field when a junior high school newspaper article inadvertently earned him a spot with the Philadelphia Flyers organization at the age of 14. What fascinated him about the field at the time, a factor that motivated him to stick with that particular career path even at such a young age, was the novelty of it all. “I think that what intrigued me then was the idea to be doing something different. Sports marketing was not yet a known field, even sports PR was not really known,” he explains.

Shadowing elders who were higher up in the organization allowed Abramson to be exposed to many different situations, circumstances, and problems and how they could and should be solved, gaining invaluable insight into the inner-workings of the industry. He soaked up everything these individuals had to offer, and that was how he advanced.

In fact, when the individual who had trained him took a position with a casino in Atlantic City, Abramson, at the age of 18, was made the head of the PR program. He held the position for the next ten years. Throughout that time Abramson was instrumental in creating programs that helped to build a future fan base. They were such a success that 25 programs that he helped develop in the late 70s are still in effect today.

After finishing his tenure with the Philadelphia Flyers, he transitioned to account management with Foote, Cone & Belding’s IMPACT group, and then back

to public relations and sports marketing with The Upper Deck Company. Eventually, Abramson choose to leave and start his own firm, now called Comunicano, Inc. At the time, he saw that there was a need for someone who could serve as a vice president of marketing on an outsource basis for small, early stage companies; a need that he believed he, and his company, could fill.

Initially though, this endeavor was not an easy one. Abramson quickly learned the tricks necessary to keep his business afloat, including growing a business based on credit cards, learning how to effectively pay bills, and how to secure good credit. “Then the

other one is how to work with clients that you didn’t know versus clients that you always knew,” Abramson states. “Once you begin that process of knowing how to manage your business, manage your affairs, and work with clients that are not your friends, your business starts to take off,” he adds.

In 1996, Abramson shifted his focus toward the Internet. He modified his organization so that it was partially in the online world, yet it still maintained the principles of a traditional marketing practice. He elaborates, “First there was spoken word, then there was printed word, then there was electronic word [radio and television], then interactive communication through the idea of online communication services, and eventually the Internet. It’s another way of reaching an audience.” However, he was careful to use the Internet as he believes it should be utilized, more along the lines of direct marketing, and not a mass communication medium. This may be why he chose to retain traditional agency practices in addition to incorporating aspects of the online world.

Today, as CEO, while leading a company that specializes in early stage businesses and companies in transition, Abramson recognizes that his success is ultimately dependent upon associations. “Growing up in the PR realm and the sports marketing realm, it was really a relationship business, and I believe that your best marketing is done through your relationship marketing,” he says. “As well as building those relationships through a solid reputation of proven results.”

**Q: What was the last piece of music that you listened to?**

**A:** It would have been *Shangri-La* by Mark Knopfler. He used to be in Dire Straits.

**Q: Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?**

**A:** *Slap Shot*, with my good friend Jerry Houser. It was a 1976 hockey movie.

**Q: What was the last book that you read?**

**A:** *The Bourne Ultimatum* by Robert Ludlum; or whoever ghost wrote for Robert Ludlum.

**Q: What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?**

**A:** Coffee.

**Q: If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?**

**A:** Being with my wife.



## MARKETING STAR

It is this belief that has led Comunicano to drastically break from traditional marketing agency traditions of the past in one surprising way: the company does not actively seek out new clients. Instead, they wait for referrals. "Our marketing philosophy is rather asymmetrical. We don't aggressively pursue clients; clients aggressively pursue us.

"You go to my webpage for the company, and it's a static page. You try to contact us, it goes nowhere," says Abramson. This is a risky strategy because it ultimately means that if Comunicano does not succeed with clients, the company's client base will dry

up. A client's success then is truly the only option; and they are succeeding. "Our clients and their successes are our best marketing vehicles."

In the end, everything that Abramson has encountered thus far throughout his career has provided him with the tools necessary to flourish. "I think everything I've ever done has prepared me to lead my own agency," he says. Having started out with the Philadelphia Wings and the Philadelphia Flyers in their marketing departments, transitioning to IMPACT, and then Upper Deck all provided the opportunity to learn and grow — from an agency and client perspective.

"I believe that in this long journey of educational opportunity, you need to take those opportunities as they come along, and then file them away and apply what you've learned." And this is a task that Abramson has been undertaking since the age of 14.

### ON THE NET

Comunicano, Inc.  
[comunicano.com](http://comunicano.com)

Philadelphia Flyers  
[flyers.nhl.com](http://flyers.nhl.com)

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.