

Simple business card defines approach

Entrepreneur funnels energy

By Bill Harless

bharless@nashvillecitypaper.com

His business card reads "WILLIAM E. KANTZ JR.," and that is about all.

The title "Entrepreneur/Investor" is printed in smaller type under the name, and the address of Kantz's Web site, "williamkantz.com" is printed tightly in the lower right-hand corner of the white card. No telephone number is provided.

The simple card helps Kantz weed out people who are not terribly serious about dealing with him. If you need to speak to him, Kantz says, you will take the time to visit his Web site, where further contact information and pages regarding his motley assortment of business ventures are provided.

You wonder, at first, if Kantz is for real. When you connect to his voice mail, the recording announces in a powerful voice that you have reached William Kantz of the HyperTek Company. But when Kantz returns your call, it is a mild, soft-spoken voice that says hello, and he is patient and polite.

Kantz, 38, deals primarily in real estate, at present selling a lot of land in West Nashville. He began buying and selling land in 1995 after working a few years at a car dealership, and he is animated when talking about his work in the River Road area near the Cumberland River.

However, he catches your attention when he tells you that he operates a business that makes hyperbolic funnels — the giant funnels shopping malls set out for people to drop coins into.

And Kantz has an ambitious plan to market the images from about 11,000 color printer proofs he bought and that had been stored in the old Werthan building in Germantown.

Werthan Packaging, Inc., used the images to decorate the cloth bags it produced until the 1970s in which seed, sugar, flour and grain companies sold their staples at gro-



Kantz

cery stores

In one image, an elegant lady wearing high heels and an ancient, classical dress holds out a tray of pastries, promoting "Hearts Delight Self-Rising Flour" made by Nashville Roller Mills. In another, the serious face of a Native American wearing a giant headdress promotes a 25-pound bag of bleached "Bannock Chief Enriched Flour" made by the Pocatello Flour Mills of Idaho.

Kantz hired a woman who has spent two years cataloging the images in a computer database so that the collection is now searchable. The images were displayed at an exhibit at the Nashville International Airport, and Kantz plans to submit them to the U.S.

Postal Service for use as a commemorative stamp issue. He has licensed the images to a Japanese T-shirt wholesaler, plans to market them to U.S. clothing manufacturers and intends to sell posters.

As for his hyperbolic funnels, Kantz says he sells about 60 a year, in three sizes, most for between \$3,000 and \$5,000 each. He has sold them to organizations in Israel, Sweden and Japan. In Nashville, funnels that Kantz has made sit in the Hickory Hollow and Rivergate malls. He also sells them to non-profit organizations, which use them to raise money.

When he was young, Kantz's parents divorced. He tells how his mother was in a car accident, clinically died, was revived but was not able to function normally (though she is back on her feet now). Kantz had to provide for his mother and three sisters, and did so through auctioning.

"When I was younger, I always had these in-

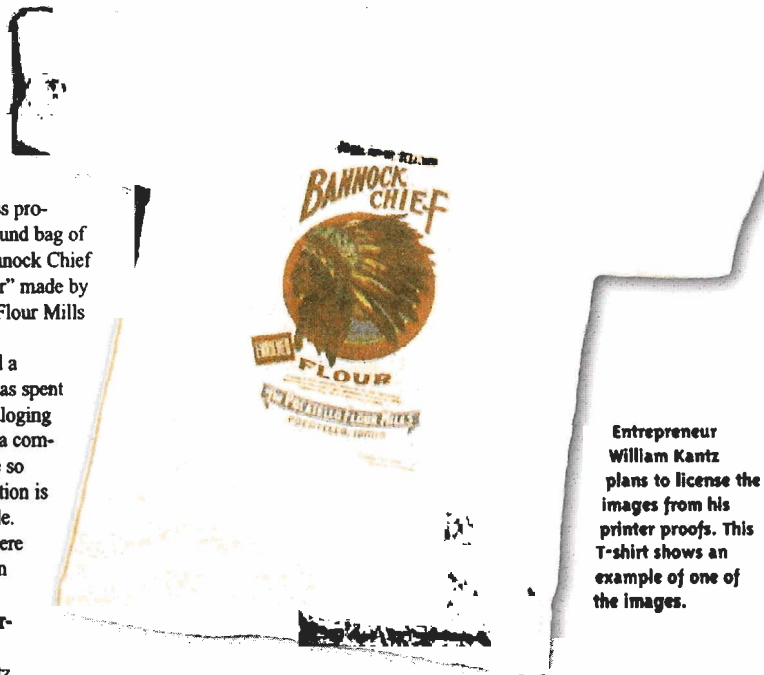
BIZ OUTSIDE THE BOX

ventions, several hundred of them," Kantz said.

As a teenager, he would try to arrange with wealthy Dallas citizens in order to raise money to fund his concepts — such as a self-lighting cigarette (this idea never got off the ground). He visited Washington, D.C., to do patent research.

As for real estate, Kantz does not develop the land he purchases, but he likes to plan the land before development. He says he is able perceives ways to conserve the natural features of a land in ways others may miss.

With a flicker in his eye, Kantz hints at some of his upcoming ventures. He is writing a book about the history and future of human procreation and says he is partnering with an inventor in California (Kantz declined to name the person) who is making "a self-generating power plant" so that homes will not have to rely on a utility for electricity.



Entrepreneur William Kantz plans to license the images from his printer proofs. This T-shirt shows an example of one of the images.