

INNOVATORS

of Anderson

For some Anderson alumni, it's not enough to tread a worn path – they're looking to blaze new trails. Meet four alums who truly deserve the title "Innovator".

Adrian Chernoff

The chief architect and principal inventor behind General Motors' "Reinvention of the Automobile," which claims to be the most significant advancement in transportation in the last 50 years, Adrian Chernoff is the author of over 90 patents, with 35 patents awarded and 55 pending. His creative process is finely tuned, and it sometimes works on automatic. "I'd go to bed," he says, "my mind empty, and wake up driven, my mind going 10,000 miles a minute. How to make it, how to use it, how to finance it..."

A former Disney Imagineer, Chernoff has also worked his magic for NASA and Sandia and Los Alamos National Labs. And in 2004, Chernoff's Rubber Bandits, rubber bands with pre-attached labels, scored a finalist spot in the Staples Innovation Quest competition. Look for them at a Staples store near you.

Anderson degree: MBA
1999

Current job: CEO of Ideation Genesis, LLC, and CEO of Rubber Bandits, LLC

How did you get where you are today? I followed my passion—always inventing something, starting with science fair projects when I was young and moving on to new rides for Disney, to new robotics for NASA, and to new cars for GM.

What is the best thing about your job? Being my own boss. It gives me the opportunity to be innovative and creative. I am able to focus my creative energy on only the projects I choose to pursue.

What is the scariest thing about your job? The possibility of failing and losing everything.

What is the biggest professional challenge you've faced? My biggest challenge is not to be so hard on myself. I have worked very hard to get here and I am getting better at trusting my intuition.

What is your business philosophy? Believe in what you are doing and stand behind it. Otherwise your customers and your clients won't believe in it either.

Whom do you consider to be your mentor? Why? My most recent mentors and supporters have been Gianfranco Zaccai, founder and CEO of design

consultancy Design Continuum, and Mark Hogan, president of one of the largest automotive suppliers in the world, Magna International.



Photo courtesy Adrian Chernoff