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“Genius” Move: IT Newbie Fast Forwards Company Growth

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- Lorin Barnes wasn't exactly a computer expert when she landed her first job with Opti-Vise IT, an information technology company based in Dayton, Ohio.

“I knew nothing about IT,” said Barnes, a 2021 communications graduate of Cedarville University. “After my interview, I remember feeling overwhelmed by everything I needed to learn. But I also saw it as a challenge I wanted to take on.”

Barnes' can-do spirit and relentless desire to learn resulted in \$1 million in increased revenue for her new employer in her first year. And she was named Genius of the Month for February by Technology Marketing Toolkit, landing her on the front page of this marketing giant's magazine.

Starting her career was not easy for Barnes. Her job search began during the COVID-19 pandemic. After being turned down for a dream job, Barnes stepped back to consider her options.

“Even though my dream job did not work out, I had faith that since God closed that door for me, he would open another one,” Barnes said. A few months later, a family friend reached out to the recent grad asking her to interview for a marketing position at Opti-Vise.

Opti-Vise was impressed with Barnes and hired her shortly after the interview. Still hesitant about working in the IT world, Barnes asked if she could come on as an intern and make a decision about full-time work after a trial period. Opti-Vise agreed.

Barnes began developing a marketing strategy for Opti-Vise. The company did not have a distinct marketing department or a strong direction for advertising.

“One skill that really helped me get started was something I learned during my time at Cedarville University — the ability to think critically,” she explained. “If something we were doing was not working, I would challenge it and work with my team to come up with a better solution.”

Barnes' first step was to redesign the company website and start engaging prospective clients through social media. Clients took notice and began buzzing about the company's professional and exciting new image. Opti-Vise asked Barnes to stay on as a full-time marketing manager and continue the great work she had already started. Now more confident in her abilities, Barnes accepted the position.

Opti-Vise IT partners with Technology Marketing Toolkit, a marketing consulting firm located in Franklin, Tennessee. Each year the firm holds a rapid implementation workshop where marketing departments

compete by tracking revenue growth over a short period. Barnes was sure that she could take her team to the top.

By highlighting a new cybersecurity service that Opti-Vise added to their service stack just in time for the post-pandemic online world, Barnes hoped to increase their monthly recurring revenue. She launched an email campaign and organized an educational seminar, which resulted in 14 registered attendees in just 24 hours.

Most competitors in the workshop focused on booking sales appointments, but Barnes wanted to take a more education-based approach that would reach a larger audience. The seminar led to booked appointments, Opti-Vise's revenue increased tremendously, and Barnes was named Marketing Toolkit's Genius of the Month.

"My advice to current students who are unsure of what the future might hold for them would be to develop diverse skills," she explained. "I would recommend taking classes outside of your major and increasing your skill set. It can be really fun and rewarding."

For example, Barnes (Lewisburg, Ohio/Tri-County North High School) took a journalism class during college that taught her simple videography skills. She has been able to develop video content for Opti-Vise as a result, a skill they would otherwise have had to outsource. **Barnes' success has even surprised the former resident of Lewisburg, Ohio, which is just 30 minutes from Dayton and within 90 minutes of Cincinnati and Indianapolis.**

By viewing obstacles in her life as challenges, Barnes has been able to optimistically look toward the future and make the most of every opportunity. She hopes to continue improving Opti-Vise IT's marketing department and increasing their revenue.

Sounds like a genius plan.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 4,715 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 150 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, including the [B.A in Communication](#), strong graduation, and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and high student engagement ranking. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written by Elizabeth Kanzeg

Photo Cutlines

Caption (A): Lorin Barnes of Opti-Vise IT.

Caption (B): Barnes with the Technology Marketing Toolkit magazine.