

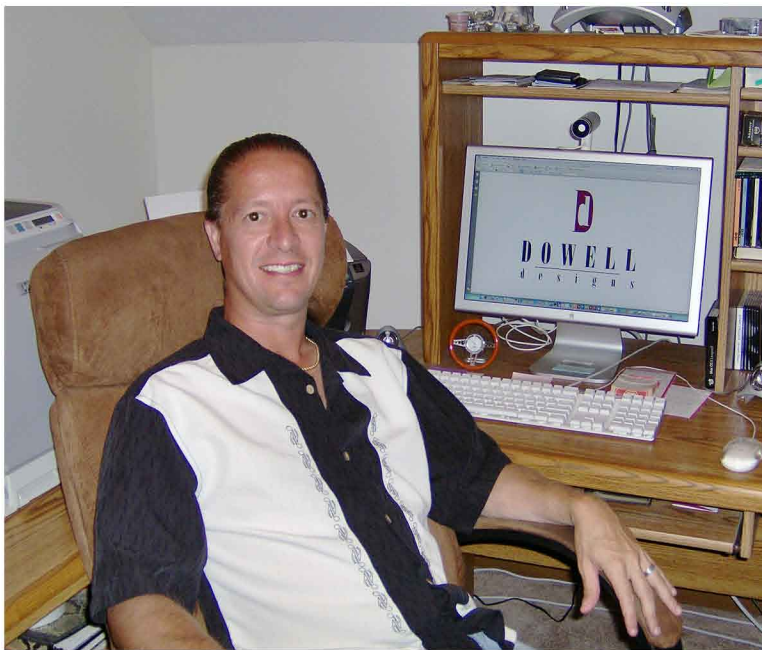
## Brian Dowell, Dowell Designs

By Jessica Luther

**B**rian Dowell has spent years in the creative design and marketing industry, honing his talent and working with big-name corporate clients. Because he worked with prominent ad agencies, his business, Dowell Designs, is able to offer the same expertise at a more local and, for small business owners, affordable level.

***"I'm every bit as good, if not better, than high-priced ad agencies," he offered. "My biggest strength, besides creativity, is my low overhead, which allows me to undercut almost any other design agency."***

Indeed, Brian's list of past clients, including working with Dirt Devil, Sherwin-Williams and even the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, speak for him. His fascination with design started back in high school, where he originally thought he would get a degree in technical drafting. He was accepted at Ohio State University to study architectural design, but soon found his interest piqued by graphic design. OSU didn't offer that as a major, so after talking to a friend, Brian applied at Bowling Green State University. Their program was one of the top in the country and the acceptance process was stringent. Brian created a portfolio his freshman year to be presented when he was a sophomore and was accepted into the graphic design school.



Brian Dowell of Dowell Designs

During his senior seminar, he ran into family friend, Jerry Hill, a well-known watercolor artist who had his own ad agency.

"When I told him I was getting a degree in design, his eyes got big," Brian laughed. "He said he could really use my help with some new computer equipment he had purchased."

Brian went to work with Jerry and before he had graduated college, he was working with clients like Libbey & Anheuser-Busch, La-Z-Boy and Modern Builders Supply. Brian then moved to Cleveland to work at the Griswold-Eschleman ad agency, where he spent a year and half in mostly business-to-business design with large corporate clients, even helping with design aspects for the grand opening of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Eventually, though, Brian moved back to the Toledo area and got a job with pet food business Sun Seed Company.

After getting that job in 1997, he basically became their in-house ad agency; by 2000, they became the number one exotic bird and small animal pet food manufacturer in the U.S., which continued for the next five consecutive years. He also worked with a European company, Quiko, that distributed their products through Sun Seed; after helping them re-package their products with a new look, they were awarded the best new bird product in the U.S. by Pet Age Magazine.

"At Sun Seed, we all got along like brothers and sisters, that's just the kind of atmosphere that it was," Brian described.

However, despite the success and pleasant working environment, Brian felt the tremors of a faltering economy.

"Marketing is usually the first thing to go and the last thing to come back when the economy suffers," he pointed out. "I had begun sending resumes out around 2005 or 2006."

Not getting any bites, Brian decided to start his own business, Dowell Designs. He has since focused on helping businesses formulate package designs, logos, branding, corporate identity, advertising and print literature. He has created packaging and branding for local companies like Antone's Hummos run by entrepreneur Anthony Anton

and created a marketing booklet for the world-renowned Kerr House spa in Grand Rapids. He also attends meetings at the Center for Innovative Food Technology to meet possible clients who need labeling, packaging and advertising help with their products. Overall, Brian is able to take skills learned in dealing with Fortune 500 companies and apply them to help business owners and companies at every level.

"To help a company come up with a finished product that does well for them or to walk into a store and see a product I was a part of on the shelf," he described, "that makes what I do really rewarding."

*If you found this story interesting, informative or inspiring please let Brian know! Dowell Designs, p: 419-832-6063 or c: 419-787-4924, [www.dowelldesigns.com](http://www.dowelldesigns.com), [brian@dowelldesigns.com](mailto:brian@dowelldesigns.com) - Set up a time to view his portfolio of work or discuss an upcoming project today!*