

Scher is Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Taryn Scher, president of TK PR in Greer, is South Carolina's 2011 Small Business Association's Young Entrepreneur of the Year. The SBA's Young Entrepreneur award honors a small-business owner under 30 years old whose firm demonstrates consistent growth and the potential for long-term success.

Scher, 28, started TK PR, a public relations and event planning firm, in Jan. 2008 after relocating to the Greenville area. Previously a public relations director in New York City's fashion industry, she had no prior business experience or education. She got help on her business formation, including the business plan and legal structure, from the Clemson Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Greenville, an SBA resource partner that provides free business counseling.

TK PR works mainly with small companies in the lifestyle and beauty industries, getting their products and services exposure in major print and broadcast media, such as the O, The Oprah Magazine and NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams. "Small business, that's my niche," Scher says. "The excitement when they get a national placement -- It's unbelievable."

And the businesses Scher has helped propel into the national spotlight include a number of small Greenville firms, like fellow SBDC client Bejia-Flor Jeans. Scher has gotten Bejia-Flor's designs featured in hundreds of publications, including Redbook and People magazines.

"It's so much fun to just go to Barnes & Noble and pick up a magazine and see one of my clients," Scher says.

In late 2009, TK PR expanded into event planning. In October 2010, the firm produced the first ever Fashion Week Greenville for G Magazine.

Scher also regularly donates her services to help make the Greenville area a nationally known destination. Unlike a city such as Charleston, S.C., she explains, Greenville doesn't have a major advertising



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WINNING WAYS: Taryn Scher of Greer was named South Carolina's 2011 Small Business Association Young Entrepreneur of the Year. Scher is president of TK PR in Greer.

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Taryn Scher
President TK PR

budget. "Gaining notoriety requires persistence and passion, without a lot of funding."

In 2008, Scher started working to promote Euphoria, Greenville's annual food, wine and music festival dedicated to raising money for local charities while raising Greenville's national profile. "When I first pitched it, I got blank stares," she says. "But now, people are saying 'Oh yeah, Greenville, I've been hearing about that. Tell me more.'"

In May 2009, Scher secured a major feature on Greenville's downtown in U.S. Airways' in-flight magazine. She pitched the idea to Steve Mitchem of Pace Communications in Greensboro, N.C., who oversees all destinations articles that appear in U.S. Airways and Southwest Spirit magazines. Scher then organized a meeting

between Mitchem, the mayor of Greenville and the president of the Greenville Chamber of Commerce. Impressed, Mitchem approved the project.

"The feature was the most successful we had ever done," Mitchem wrote in his recommendation letter for the Young Entrepreneur award. "We've only featured five cities on two occasions; because of Taryn, we'll be returning to Greenville for a third time in 2011."

"Greenville has been put on the map in the last four years or so, and I'd like to think that I had something to do with it," Scher says.

Scher was nominated by Scott Whelchel, SBDC area manager. She will be honored May 4 in Columbia at the SBA's award luncheon, part of the annual Salute to Small Business.