

# MONEY

■ SMALL BUSINESS



Mike Heller, 32, the founder of Talent Resources, left a career as an attorney to work with celebrities, including Lindsay Lohan. (MARIECLAIRE ANDREA)

## Selling celebrity

Agency matches the talent with the brands

BY LANA BORTOLOTT  
Special to amNewYork

Sometimes when Lindsay Lohan is at a club, she's just doing her job.

Celebrities get paid to attend events and, sometimes, the products they carry are planted, too.

Mike Heller, the founder of Talent Resources, based in the city, is often behind such marketing tactics.

A former entertainment lawyer and nightclub marketer, Heller, 32, had a Rolodex full of contacts, and saw the opportunity to marry pop culture, corporate branding and celebrity marketing.

"I was always interested in marketing, and the synergies between that and entertainment and the law," he said. "And I realized the

creativity just wasn't there for me as a lawyer."

Now, his clients include the wholesome, from Lohan to Rachel Hunter.

In some cases, Heller tracks the schedules of celebrities — their tour dates, their premieres — and he books them for appearances in the cities they visit.

He also unites celebs and brands. Lohan has been seen with a smoke-free tobacco product called Ariva. That's no accident; it's a bit of "organic marketing."

"We're very out of the box in the way we think and market the opportunities," Heller said. "A lot of big agencies are antiquated because

they look down on commercial work."

He even matches celebrities with products that focus on their maladies.

He brokered a deal between Raptiva, a psoriasis medication, and CariDee English, a winner of "America's Next Top Model" and a psoriasis sufferer.

In three years, Heller has gone from two to 10 employees, and has offices here and in Los Angeles.

He attributes his success to his unique approach.

"I was creating my own business model as I went along, because there wasn't really another agency doing what I do," he said. "A lot of people thought I was either crazy or a genius, but I knew it was out there."

**PRODUCTS OF THE FAMOUS**

- Rachel Hunter: Slim-Fast
- Lindsay Lohan: Ariva, smoke-free tobacco
- CariDee English: Raptiva, psoriasis medication

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