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LAI D OFF? START YOUR OWN BUSINESS

Palatine, Ill. (April 23, 2009) – This February 27 conversation ended by attorney Nick Richardson’s former boss asking, “So, do you have something else lined up?” Blind-sided by his lay-off, Richardson responded, “No, as of 5 minutes ago, I had a job—working here.”

Richardson quickly realized there weren’t many firms looking to increase their payroll, and by the end of March, he decided to open The Law Office of Nicholas W. Richardson. On April 3, he launched www.nickrichardsonlaw.com, designed by graphic designer Jen Brinson.

“I’ve been practicing law in Chicago and the surrounding suburbs for 5 years, and now as my own boss, I plan to give my clients calm, matter-of-fact advice. Everyone wants to hear the impossible is possible, but you have to know the reality of the law and what’s possible and perhaps, more importantly—what’s not,” says Nick Richardson, attorney at law, The Law Office of Nicholas W. Richardson, Palatine, Ill. “My practice will be 60 percent family law, 30 percent criminal and 10 percent miscellaneous.”

With start-up funds limited to a personal loan from family, Richardson knows the key to turning a profit his first year rests with keeping overhead extremely low. Enter a fellow Palatine attorney’s offer to share office space, furniture, equipment and support staff use—eliminating a majority of Richardson’s start-up expenses.

Now besides malpractice insurance and incidentals, Richardson’s expenses only include a computer, stationery and Web site-related fees. Ashley, Nick’s wife, used a stash of Best Buy gift cards, originally intended for a new TV, to purchase a printer, ink cartridges and cables for \$10—after the gift cards.

Nick and Ashley are busy reaching out to all their contacts about their new venture through word-of-mouth marketing and social networking sites until the office sharing starts May 1. Fellow attorneys, like Chris Cosley, Anna Bush, Meg Jackson and others, have stepped up to help Richardson jump start his practice.

“Nick’s plan has always involved his own practice, but we both thought that was a long-term plan, not one for 2009 or this economy. Deep down, we’re still in disbelief this happened,” says Ashley Richardson, industry communications manager, American Egg Board, Park Ridge, Ill. “But we have our age, our health and our strong marriage working in our favor. It’s super scary, but if we can make it work now, we’re set for when things turn around.”

The grim reality of today is inescapable. However, readers need a feel good story, and this is it. Here is a young couple faced with adversity, opting to rally together and make the best of a difficult situation—together.

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