

# MARIE PIZANO LAUNCHES ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY IN THE BLUFF CITY



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**—Marie Pizano**

When talking to others about business woman Marie Pizano the words passion and vision get repeated regularly. Pizano, herself, will tell you that she has always dreamed big and more often than not, it has worked in her favor. In January of 2011, she held a press conference inside Memphis' historic Peabody Hotel to announce the launch of her two new ventures, MVP3 Entertainment Group and JND Films. She has no doubt that her ability to make her dreams a reality will continue as she uses these companies to create new and exciting television, film, and music projects right here in the Bluff City. Over the past few months, she has been carefully laying the foundation for her biggest endeavor yet and assembling a team of stellar talent to assist her.

MVP3 Entertainment Group will serve as the umbrella organization for Pizano's many business ventures, including the two companies she has headed since 2006 --UROC Music Management, and Zazu & Valentina talent agency. As president, Pizano is helping guide the careers of musical talent, producers, film directors, writers and actors. Some of her clients include: singer/musicians The Mulch Brothers, singer/songwriter Billy Falcon (He has written for Bon Jovi, Cher, and Stevie Nicks.), and Paulo Benedeti ("Guiding Light," "The Bold and the Beautiful," "Wild Things"). Memphis artists Mack Rodd and Redd Velvet are signed to her as well. MVP3 will also house the film production company JND Films, UROC Music Publishing, a children's production company, a Hispanic television show and an urban radio show.

Pizano began toying with the idea of creating a production company while working as an agent.

"I have traveled the country on behalf of my clients and what I noticed was that there are very few television and film projects originating from Memphis. Memphis has some amazingly talented individuals who would welcome the opportunity to be able to live and work at home. If we are going to retain this talent, we have to have more major projects here that allow them to advance their careers," says Pizano. "We have the resources and the talent to become a major production hub, but we [business leaders] have to be willing to pool our resources to make it happen."

## **THE VISIONARY**

Pizano is a native of Chicago, Illinois. Her father has been working as a mechanical engineer since he was a teenager, and her mother is a home maker and commercial artist. Her mother is also the founder and president of the Illinois chapter of Child Find, Inc., an organization that works to prevent and resolve all cases of missing, abducted, and runaway children. They taught their daughter to work hard, to believe in herself, and to be an

active member of her community. Pizano attended South Suburban Junior College to study business accounting and Columbia College in Illinois. To put herself through college she held part-time jobs at several financial institutions. She worked as a freelance model and actress. She successfully competed in beauty pageants for scholarship money and even did some event planning. Serving as CEO of MVP3 Entertainment Group is allowing Pizano to use the experience she gained wearing all of those hats. "I'm on a mission to make things happen, to bring positive energy and to bring people together to really shake, rattle, and roll Memphis. So, you will have to be all that two bags of chips and a case of Red Bull to keep up with me."

Pizano speaks fondly of the city she has called home for the past twelve years and the legacy she wants to create here. "I spent many years holding positions as a board member for charitable organizations here. My heart is in the right place, and I want to help create economic growth for this city. I love Memphis. I may not have been born and raised here but thanks to my experiences, I definitely grew up here!"

## **JND FILMS**

The second aspect of her new endeavor, JND Films is a joint venture between Pizano and Producer/Writer/Director Nicholas Celozzi II. Celozzi serves as president and Pizano as vice president. He has worked in front of and behind the camera on a plethora of projects that include "The Forgotten Angel," "Bottoms Up," "Tales of the Ancient Empire," "Nightmare Blvd," and "Dark and Deadly." Celozzi resides in Chicago and California and his work has been recognized with Chicago's prestigious David Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Entertainment Industry, the Southern California Motion Picture Council Award and the Silver Scroll Award from the Academy of Science Fiction.

The two formed their partnership after working together on the Celozzi/Demetri Logothetis television documentary/drama

"MOMO: The Sam Giancana Story." The story of the Chicago crime lord's life, will make you wonder if the deaths of individuals like Marilyn Monroe and President John F. Kennedy were ill-fated tragedies or part of a carefully orchestrated plan by a man most of the world had no idea existed. Pizano is the executive producer.

The two currently have three movies and two reality TV shows in development. The pilot for their first reality show, "Nik of Time," is scheduled to begin filming this spring. It will be a competition of sorts between men and women who are pursuing a career in acting. The hopefuls will be taken through a series of classes and exercises to find out who has what it takes to make it to the big time. The project has caught the eye of the Wolper Organization, which is affiliated with Warner Brothers. The completion of the pilot will determine what happens next.

Celozzi is confident that his partnership with Marie will yield good things. "I saw that Marie has passion and tenacity, and I thought that she would be a good match with my 20 years of ideas, talent, and relationships in



the film and television industry,” said Celozzi. “I am a very optimistic person. I love what I do. I love to create. It’s an exciting time, and I see a lot in the horizon. I see a lot of potential in what we can do. It can only get better.”

## THE TEAM

Pizano seems to have a way of winning people over with her bubbly “can do” attitude. One of the women she was able to attract to her mission is Melissa Booth, founder and marketing and communications manager of Executive Leadership International in Memphis. “I chose to become involved with Marie Pizano and MVP3 because of her vision, knowledge of the industry and passion. I believe with leaders and communities, there is no middle ground - either you have that passion and the edge it creates, or you will be squeezed out. Marie is a treasure, and so important to us. She is talented enough to have a dream that can become reality, and brave enough to give us the chance to embrace it,” said Booth.

Over the past few months the two of them have participated in meetings with several members of the business and creative communities in an effort to strengthen the MVP3 team. Investment professional John Santi of the Santi Company and John Delaplaine, CEO of Delaplaine Interactive, both believe Memphis is ready for a company of this magnitude and have agreed to come on board.



**John D. Santi and Marie Pizano reviewing a strategic mind map**

John D. Santi has over 20 years of experience in the wealth management, private equity, and venture capital areas of the financial services industry. Not only is he advising Pizano on the financial direction of her companies, he is serving as the chief ethos officer of MVP3. John D. Santi is constructing a blueprint for the company utilizing a fairly new business model known as Strategic Ethos. Strategic Ethos incorporates leadership values and principals with a decision-making process that is linked to essential leadership behaviors. It was created by investment leader Donald Trone

and is recommended for decision-makers who view their role as a form of public service with their self-interests deeply rooted in the goals and objectives of the people they serve. This is perfect for a new business and assists in establishing a standard of integrity within its operations.

According to John D. Santi, Strategic Ethos is a visual way of articulating and communicating a company’s vision and goals and perfect for Pizano. “Marie has an incredible talent for meeting quality people. We’ve coupled it with her grand vision and this ethos model to help make sure the people she brings into her organization are here for the right reasons. She is exciting and has a lot of energy. Her business has several dynamic moving parts that will need to be monitored.

We’ve taken her vision, mapped it out on paper and sat it on top of her business plan the way a blue print sits on top of engineering study. When used properly, it will allow her to stay in complete control of everything.”

Pizano is very likely the only female business owner in the region who has embraced the Strategic Ethos business model. She is enjoying the process and appreciates John D. Santi's willingness to help her lay the right financial and moral foundation for her company.

"I heard about John Santi of the Santi Company from Executive Leadership International. I was very impressed with his company's ability to assist me personally with my financial and strategic business planning. My clients depend on me to manage their success and I depend on Santi's ability to help me build and protect my vision," said Pizano.

John Delaplaine and his company Delaplaine Interactive has established themselves as an award-winning entity that specializes in 3D animation, web development, interactive media, video production, and visual presentations. They have assisted such well known products and companies as Xbox for Microsoft, Samsung, Johnson & Johnson, Paul Mitchell Systems, WebMD, and Proctor & Gamble in developing their brand. After being introduced to Pizano via Melissa Booth, Delaplaine agreed to help her brand MVP3 Entertainment Group.

"From the very beginning I thought her project sounded interesting. Marie is very high energy and dedicated to succeeding. She is really on a solid path," shares Delaplaine.

Pizano is hoping that her excitement and vision continues to be contagious and has no doubt that others will join her as she seeks to make Memphis a major entertainment origination destination. This is a major undertaking and she needs substantial financial backing to bring every facet to fruition. She is in the process of securing funds to support all of her endeavors, which includes a massive outdoor concert benefitting several children's charities called Let's Come Together.

Pizano credits her mentor, multi-entrepreneur Richard Sandor, as one of the people who has helped motivate her to take on such a feat. He was chairman and CEO of Chicago Climate Exchange Inc., a self regulatory exchange that administers a voluntary greenhouse gas reduction and trading program for North America and recently sold it for over \$600 million. The two met while Pizano was in college and working as a compliance assistant at Sandor's company, Centre Financial.

"He always had something inspirational to say, something that motivated me. At that time, being a woman in the financial industry was rare. I encountered a lot of sexism but Richard treated me like everyone else. He was just a genuinely nice man. Richard once told me that I was a woman with a purpose. That always stuck with me," said Pizano.

Sandor sold the company and Pizano married and moved to Memphis, becoming a stay at home mother and an avid community volunteer. The two kept in touch and Sandor continued to provide Pizano with encouragement, praise, and advice. When the now single mother of two decided she wanted to conquer the business world, Sandor was and still is one of the people cheering her on.

Pizano once asked him how he was able to build multi-million dollar companies that were committed to innovation and greatness. He simply told her to invest in herself and others would do the same. She has taken that message to heart.

"I have put my money where my mouth is. I've organized a great investment plan for MVP3 and JND Films that truly shows a great return," explains Pizano. "I want to utilize the people here in Memphis as well as abroad for my projects. I want to put synergy back in the game. I'm taking everything I've learned over the years and I'm merging it. I'm putting everything I got into it and I'm taking it international. Big dreams? Yeah, but if you're going to dream...do it big. They said Fred Smith was crazy and look what he did with FedEx. I want to be the Fred Smith of the Memphis entertainment industry."

Sandor is tentatively scheduled to visit Memphis in March to show his support for his mentee and speak before a group of local business leaders. The details of his visit are forthcoming.

Whatever Pizano is lacking in experience she more than makes up for in dedication and excitement. If she and her team have their way, one day the world will be looking to MVP3 Entertainment Group and JND Films to fulfill its entertainment needs.

“I can and I will break all boundaries while simultaneously building bridges all over the country and globally. I have the knowledge and the relationships to make it happen. My companies will stand side-by-side with the entertainment companies in other cities. I can stand just as tall in my stilettos right here in Memphis!” said Pizano. When listening to her you can’t help but believe she’s going to do it.

For more information, visit [www.urocmusic.com](http://www.urocmusic.com) or [www.jndfilms.com](http://www.jndfilms.com).