



VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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Inside the Inkwell

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Kensie Hamilton Fauber is a partner at Executive Ink LLC, the publishing company for *West Virginia Executive*, *Discover West Virginia* and *Profiles* magazines, where she also serves as editor-in-chief. She earned bachelor's degrees in corporate communications and journalism from Elon University.

Hamilton Fauber is a 2015 graduate of Leadership West Virginia and the FBI Citizens' Academy, and is the current chair of the West Virginia Chamber of Commerce's Small Business Committee. She is a member of the 2016-2017 class of Leadership Mon.

She is an active volunteer with the Mountaineer ChalleNGe Academy, and also helped organize and promote ResourceU, a series of events and tools for small businesses in West Virginia.

As the editor-in-chief of *West Virginia Executive* (WVE) magazine and a partner of the magazine's publishing company, Executive Ink LLC, I cross paths with many different people from industries all across West Virginia: Young and old, blue collar and white collar, managers and business owners, traditional professionals and entrepreneurs. The conversations with these individuals provide valuable insight that is vital when we sit down to plan editorial and mold the message we want the world to read about our great state. My encounters with these folks have also helped mold my leadership skills and have given me greater insight into what it means to be a successful business owner and a strong team leader.

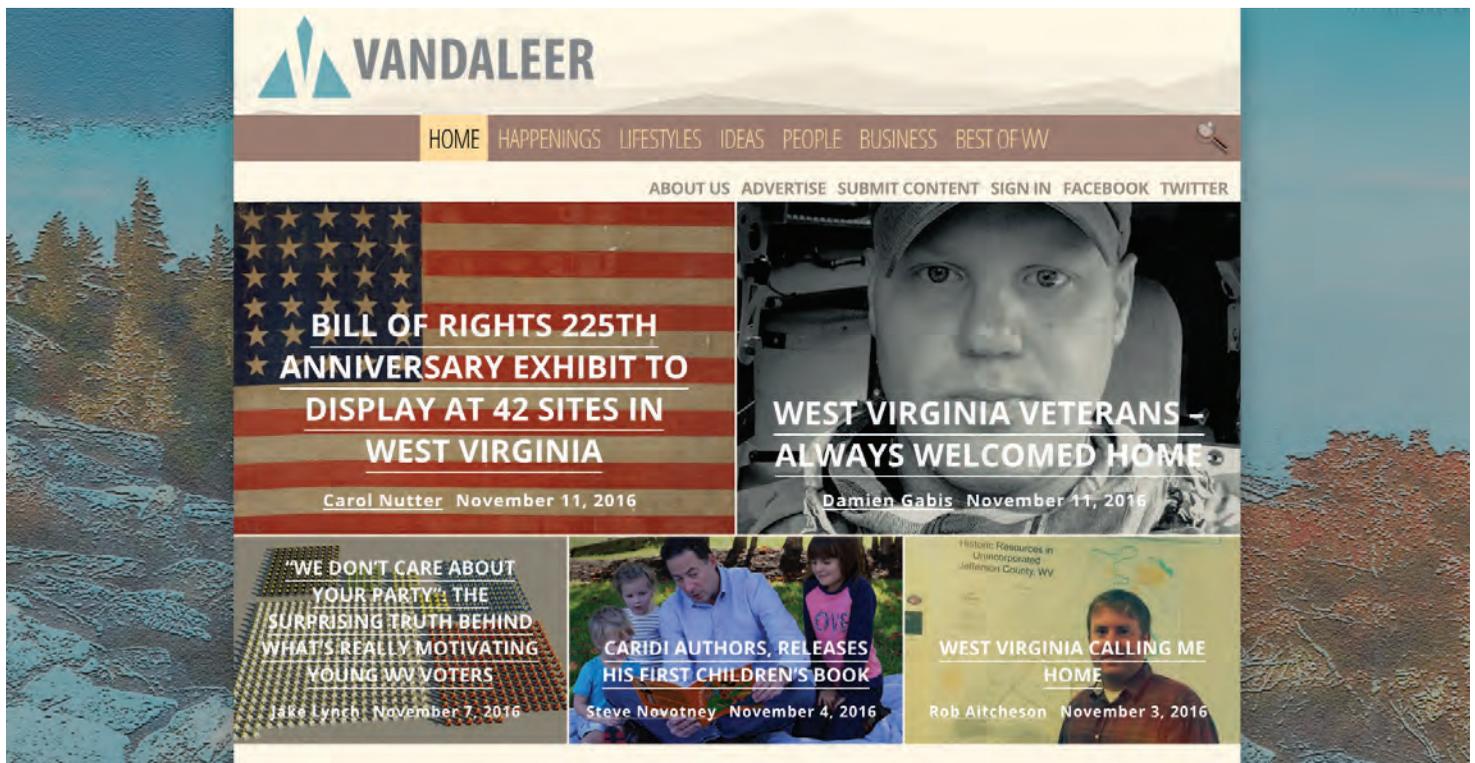
Just after graduating from Elon University in 2005, I joined the staff of WVE, which was under different ownership at the time. In 2006, I was promoted to editor-in-chief, and I was the only person on the editorial team. That experience taught me the value of teamwork and the importance of building the right team around me. Today, WVE is blessed to have people on its staff who love the Mountain State and understand the important mission of the magazine, which is to shine a positive light on West Virginia despite the negative national media coverage and stereotypes.



I have spent my entire career at WVE. While in the past it was common for employees to stay at their jobs for 30 years or more, many of today's professionals are focused on climbing the corporate ladder to success and switch jobs frequently to accomplish their goals. As a millennial in her 30s, I know I am the exception, but I believe there is something to be said for finding something you love and sticking to it. For me, there is no greater mission than to promote West Virginia, and I'm not alone. Two of our staff members have been with the magazine for 10 years. We have worked together so long, we function like a finely tuned piano.

Being a leader among long-time friends requires balance, and the leadership style I employ in the office is to never ask anyone to do anything I would not do myself. From where I sit, today's leadership style requires a commitment to teamwork. At WVE, we are a small staff, and it is imperative to our success that we work well together.





The newly launched online magazine, Vandaleer.com

As a small business owner, I am a leader on many fronts and must always be aware of that. I must lead our organization both in the office and in the public eye, and the latter is done by being mindful of our brand and following through when I make a commitment. Being reliable garners trust, and in a small state like West Virginia where everyone knows everyone, trust is vital to building new relationships and growing existing relationships.

Regardless of one's position, it's important to have a mentor, someone who willingly gives sound advice. For me, that person has been my father, Linwood Hamilton, the managing member at Executive Ink. He has allowed me to make mistakes, even when he could see them coming, so I could learn some lessons the hard way. Getting involved with organizations like Leadership West Virginia, Leadership Mon and the FBI Citizens' Academy have also played a major role in teaching me how to be a better leader, while helping me make important connections to grow the business. At the end of the day, how I perform as a leader has a direct impact on the company's success.

As with any industry, we face ups and downs. Many people would tell you print is dead. That's obviously not the case since you're reading this magazine and we are still successfully printing our magazine every quarter. With the long-term struggles of the economy and the rising costs of printing and shipping magazines, we must be more creative in our approaches and more strategic in how we execute our plans. We are constantly looking forward, considering trends in both publishing and the economy that will have a direct impact on our business.

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Since taking over ownership of WVE in 2008, we have grown our distribution while continuing to produce a high-quality magazine with in-depth editorial, making WVE West Virginia's premier business

publication. We recently launched a new online magazine, Vandaleer.com, that will help further our mission of creating a more positive narrative for West Virginia. To date, Vandaleer and its sister sites — Weelunk, Elkinite, MiBurg, Huntiful, Zackquill, SyNRGetic and KanaWHAT — have been viewed by people in all 50 states and more than 160 countries. At WVE and Executive Ink, our success comes when West Virginia succeeds, and with our strong print and online readership and editorial focusing on all the great things about the Mountain State, success is sure to follow. 