

# MONEY & BUSINESS



Diane Corrigan pauses while reviewing the track at Kart 2 Kart, an indoor go-kart track in Sterling Heights. Corrigan runs Unique Critique, a business image consulting firm in Shelby Township.

Macomb Daily staff photo by David Deltoro

# FIRST IMPRESSIONS

## Unique Critique offers businesses constructive criticism

By Dan Heaton  
Macomb Daily Business Editor

That you don't get a second chance to make a good first impression is a generally accepted rule of doing business.

While the "first impression" rule is generally thought of for face-to-face meetings, businesses as a whole make first — and lasting — impressions, too, said Diane Corrigan, owner of Unique Critique, a Shelby Township business she founded four years ago.

"The look of the building, the landscaping, the waiting room, the rest rooms, that all goes to make a first impression, particularly in the restaurant, medical or entertainment fields," she said. "What makes a person choose one restaurant over another?"

Corrigan owned and operated a home and commercial cleaning business, You Have It Made, for 15 years.

Then, a few years ago, Corrigan was injured in an automobile accident that impacted her in several ways.

She spent a lot of time in medical facilities, and noted which ones were pleasant — and which ones weren't. Her injuries from the accident made it difficult to stand for prolonged periods of time, causing the family to eat dinner out more often rather than her cooking.

"I became the voyeur of every business I entered and started noticing the little and not so little details," she said.

Soon, she had the basis for a business idea. She took a few business courses from the Macomb County Small Business & Technology Development Center at Macomb Community College and did some independent research. She said she could find lots of companies that offered critiques and consulting tips on personal image for business executives, but none that focused on the image and look of the business itself.

She started the business in April 2002 and now has a staff of one full-time associate and two part-timers.

"A lot of times, the owner of a business is busy. The manager is busy. They see things every day and just have

other pressing demands," she said. "I can come in and offer a critique and then follow-up with service providers or employees to make sure things get done right."

Tony Eckrich is a recent Unique Critique client. He owns and operates Kart 2 Kart, the indoor go-kart center in Sterling Heights. He met Corrigan through BNI, business networking group, which meets at his facility every Friday morning.

"You know, she's just able to alleviate some of the things that I know need to be done, but I can't get to," he said.

Corrigan said she offers a variety of levels of service to her clients. They all start with a personal inspection of the property. Those results are then shared with the manager or owner. Corrigan can then turn that information over to the client to be handled or be contracted with to provide weekly, monthly or another schedule of follow-up.

"We can be very flexible, based on what a company needs or wants," she said.

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