

# EXECUTIVE PROFILE



## JON MEDVED *Chef's Catalog*

*Jon Medved, 57, has been chief executive officer of Pikes Peak Direct Marketing Inc. (Colorado Springs, CO), since November, when he joined with private equity firm JH Partners (San Francisco) to form the wholly owned Pikes Peak for the purpose of acquiring Chef's Catalog. Previously, Medved was pres./ceo of Walter Drake & Sons, a subsidiary of Foster & Gallagher, from 1997. Prior to then, he was with Current Inc., as pres./ceo from 1988 and vp merchandising & marketing from 1982. Before then, Medved was with Brookstone Inc. from 1978 and Current Inc. from 1974. Chef's Catalog has approximately \$75 million in annual sales.*

*In the following interview, Medved discusses the Chef's Catalog acquisition and outlook for business.*

**HE: What were the circumstances that led to the agreement to buy Chef's Catalog?**

**JM:** In May, Neiman Marcus announced that it had put Chef's Catalog up for sale. JH Partners had recently raised a new fund and was in the market for a deal. I had previously worked with JH partners on a mutually beneficial catalog & Internet deal. We researched the Chef's opportunity together. The more research we did, the more we liked the opportunity.

**HE: What attracted you and JH Partners to the opportunity?**

**JM:** First and foremost, Chef's Catalog has an extremely strong brand name. It has a good customer file and strong relationships with key vendors. These are assets we will maintain and build on.

**HE: What were the criteria for the acquisition?**

**JM:** I'd rather not say at this time.

**HE: What will your background bring to the business?**

**JM:** I and a team of executives have extensive experience in catalog and Internet businesses. While we didn't have direct experience in the housewares business, we ran The Home Marketplace catalog, which included cookware, tabletop, kitchen gadgets, storage, furniture, and cleansers. This team will join me at Chef's Catalog.

**HE: Who will be part of the executive team?**

**JM:** At this point, we've named Mary McLean vp of merchandising, Tim Littleton vp of marketing, and Jim Gaston vp of operations.

**HE: What does JH Partners bring?**

**JM:** JH Partners, which is providing the bulk of the cash, is an excellent strategic partner and thinker. In our prior relationship, it had representation on the board, helping the company acquire the assets of the previous deal, and ultimately sell it. Between those events, it was helpful from a strategic and advisory standpoint. They do a particularly good job of networking, as they have excellent contacts, and were able to put us in touch with the right people to aid in executing various aspects of the business.

**HE: How will you and JH Partners interact?**

**JM:** We will interact similarly to how we have in the past. We expect to have one or two executives from the company on our board, and we will be in regular phone contact with them when issues arise. We are partners in this deal. We both put our money into it, and now we will both be putting our collective experience and creative thinking into the business.

**HE: What are the plans for the business?**

**JM:** We will continue to operate as Chef's Catalog, although we will be moving the business from Dallas to Colorado Springs. In terms of specific strategic objectives for the business, we feel that it is too soon to comment.

**HE: What insights gained at Walter Drake will you apply at Chef's Catalog?**

**JM:** Our experience in catalog circulation will be valuable at Chef's. Our experience in developing our Internet site and other Internet programs will also be significant assets.

**HE: What will be the most immediate impact on the Chef's business?**

**JM:** Without going into specifics about the direction of our business, one of Chef's strengths certainly is its relationship with key vendors. We'll work to maintain and build upon those relationships.

**HE: Will Chef's Catalog continue to hold warehouse sales?**

**JM:** We plan to join Neiman Marcus in a warehouse sale in the spring. Beyond that, we will reconsider where and how often the sales will be held.

The warehouse sales appear to have been extremely successful, so we'll definitely look at the best way to continue or replicate them.

**HE: Will additional retail stores be opened?**

**JM:** We will continue to operate the two existing stores, and we'll explore the feasibility of additional stores at some point in the future.

**HE: What are the goals for 2005?**

**JM:** Our most significant and immediate goals are to successfully move the business to its new headquarters and provide our customers with a transparent change of ownership.

In addition, we will be testing various aspects of the business, including circulation, new products, and promotional efforts.

**HE: Complete this sentence: In three years, Chef's Catalog will be ...**

**JM:** ... a profitable and growing catalog, Internet, and retail business.