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HSN and the University of Tampa Collaborate to Launch American Dreams Academy for Entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners

HSN partners with The University of Tampa’s John P. Lowth Entrepreneurship Center, Sykes College of Business, on quarterly academies across the United States as part of HSN’s American Dreams initiative

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla., Oct. 04, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Leading entertainment and lifestyle retailer [HSN](#), an operating segment of HSN, Inc. (NYSE:HSNI), and The University of Tampa’s John P. Lowth Entrepreneurship Center, Sykes College of Business, announced today the introduction of the American Dreams Academy, an interactive, educational and experiential two-day summit for emerging entrepreneurs looking to launch or expand their businesses. Daymond John, Founder/President/CEO of FUBU and an investor on ABC’s “Shark Tank”, will lead an opening conversation at the summit.

“The University of Tampa helping us launch the American Dreams Academy will introduce an integral educational component into HSN’s strategy to support and elevate emerging entrepreneurs as they bring their products to market,” said Bill Brand, President, HSN. “We hope to not only provide small business owners with the tools they need to successfully launch their brands, but also hope these academies serve as a catalyst in encouraging other businesses to partner with higher education institutions.”

Leveraging UT’s extensive network of collaborating institutions across the country, HSN and the University will partner with different universities to host intensive training academies, tapping into the individual resources at each institution to develop a dynamic, informative curriculum. UT’s Lowth Entrepreneurship Center, in partnership with HSN, is creating the content, and will include courses across categories including, but not limited to:

- Thinking Like an Entrepreneur: Mindset, Vision and Strategy
- Money Matters: Accounting and Financing Your Business
- Risk Mitigation: Legal and Tax Issues
- Product Issues: Securing a Patent, connecting with big brands and Licensing Options
- Manufacturing and distribution
- Quality Assurance
- Defining and Acquiring Customers
- Customer Discovery: Branding, Marketing , Research
- Perfecting Your Pitch

Rebecca White, professor of entrepreneurship and director of the Lowth Entrepreneurship Center, said UT's entrepreneurship team is honored to have been selected to serve as the providers of the American Dreams curriculum. "To design this program, we combined our experience as both entrepreneurs and educators to create a skills-based program that will provide participants with the opportunity to enhance their odds of success in the marketplace."

Quirky, an online platform dedicated to helping inventors bring innovative products to market through community collaboration and manufacturing partnerships, will sponsor the American Dreams Academy, bringing its experience and network to more budding entrepreneurs. Rebecca White, professor of entrepreneurship and director of the Lowth Entrepreneurship Center, said UT's entrepreneurship team is honored to have been selected to serve as the providers of the American Dreams curriculum. "To design this program, we combined our experience as both entrepreneurs and educators to create a skills-based program that will provide participants with the opportunity to enhance their odds of success in the marketplace."

"The American Dreams Academy is a perfect fit for Quirky," said Gina Waldhorn, President of Quirky. "By offering our expertise and free online tools to a new cohort of entrepreneurs, we hope to join together with HSN and UT to build an enriching and rewarding experience. We can't wait to see what kind of products we will help them bring to market."

The effort will become a key component of HSN's American Dreams initiative – a program designed to tap into the joy and excitement of discovering new entrepreneurs, while collaborating with strategic partners to find, educate and train inventors as they bring their products to market. The third day of each Academy will be an open invitation for local entrepreneurs to pitch their product to a team of HSN and Quirky experts. Content for this fully-funded scholarship program has been created by UT's Lowth Entrepreneurship Center and applications to attend will be open to the public on Oct. 6.

HSN and The University of Tampa will invite a renowned keynote entrepreneur to participate in the American Dreams Academy to share with attendees his or her experience in growing their businesses and establishing their brands. Each Academy will culminate on the third day with a product pitch panel, where attending entrepreneurs and the general public will be able to pitch their products to a panel of experts from HSN and UT for the opportunity to launch on HSN.

The first American Dreams Academy will take place at American University, in Washington, DC, November 16-18, 2017 during National Entrepreneur Month. All applicants must have a product or business concept in development or established in order to participate.

Enrollment in the American Dreams Academy will begin on Oct 6, 2017 here:

<http://americandreams.hsni.com/academy-landing/>.

For more information about HSN's American Dreams initiative, Quirky or The University of Tampa's Lowth Entrepreneurship Center, please visit <http://americandreams.hsni.com>, www.ut.edu/entrepreneurcenter/, and www.quirky.com and join the conversation @HSN on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

About HSN:

HSN is a leading entertainment and lifestyle retailer, offering a curated assortment of

exclusive products and top brand names to its customers. HSN incorporates entertainment, inspiration, personalities and industry experts to provide an entirely unique shopping experience. At HSN, customers find exceptional selections in Health & Beauty, Jewelry, Home/Lifestyle, Fashion/Accessories, and Electronics. HSN broadcasts live to over 90 million households in the US 24/7 and its website - hsn.com features more than 50,000 product videos. Mobile applications include HSN apps for iPad, iPhone and Android. HSN, founded 40 years ago as the first electronic retailer, is an operating segment of HSN, Inc. (Nasdaq:HSNI). For more information, please visit www.HSN.com, or follow @HSN on Facebook and Twitter.

About American Dreams

For 40 years, HSN – the original TV retailer – has been dedicated to finding and supporting innovators, inventors and entrepreneurs. HSN helps entrepreneurs bring their products to life by giving them the HSN platform to share their product and their story. Today, more than ever, HSN believes in the powerful role small businesses play in building communities and local economies, and is passionate about helping to build the economy one entrepreneur at a time. HSN has developed strategic partnerships with Good Housekeeping, The Stable, SCORE, The United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Comcast Xfinity, ABC's *Shark Tank*, CBS' *HATCHED* and more to further discover and elevate entrepreneurs across the country.

About The University of Tampa:

The University of Tampa is a private, residential university located on 110 acres on the riverfront in downtown Tampa. Known for academic excellence, personal attention and real-world experience in its undergraduate and graduate programs, the University serves about 9,000 students from 50 states and 140 countries. Approximately 65 percent of full-time students live on campus, and more than half of UT students are from Florida.

About the Lowth Entrepreneurship Center:

The University of Tampa John P. Lowth Entrepreneurship Center in the Sykes College of Business teaches skills that are critical for today's entrepreneur. Learning to identify opportunities, prepare executable business plans and hone skills through a combination of classroom study and applied learning, makes our program unique. Entrepreneurship education is the fastest growing field of study in the United States, with entrepreneurs projected to be the group that creates vigorous and sustained economic development worldwide.

About Quirky:

Founded in 2009 with a mission to “make invention accessible,” Quirky brings new products to market by connecting a global community of inventors to established manufacturers. At the nexus of technology-enabled cultural trends like the maker movement, community creativity and the demand for meaningful product backstories, Quirky has challenged the status quo of invention to become a major force in the product development landscape. Quirky has launched more than 150 products across categories including electronics, home and kitchen, and more than 1 million active community members share in the product royalties.

Media Contacts:

Jaclyn Miklos
HSN

Jaclyn.miklos@hsn.net
727-872-5773

Eric Cardenas
UT
ecardenas@ut.edu
(813) 253-6232



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