

## Owning and Operating a Variety of Successful Online Companies

### Business Services

**ArkNet Media**  
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**Ryan Aloviz**  
CEO

**BIO:** Ryan Aloviz is the CEO and founder of ArkNet Media and a graduate of Indiana University Bloomington. In 2006, fresh out of college, Aloviz started this interactive agency that owns a portfolio of online companies and also acquires new customers on behalf of brands in a diversity of vertical markets. Headquartered in Garden City, New York, ArkNet has transformed from a company with almost no capital into a rapidly growing ecommerce company, earning placement in the 2013 Inc. 500 | 5000, The New York Enterprise Report, and the *Long Island Business News*' 40 under 40. Aloviz himself has since been featured in top-tier media outlets including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fox Business Network*, *The New York Observer* and *Newsday*.

Companies under the ArkNet umbrella include Magazine Discount Center (MDC), Lens Direct, Newspaper Discounts, Birthday Party Booker and Your Secure Home. The first brand, Magazine Discount Center.com, has grown into one of the largest fulfillment centers in the country for consumer magazine subscriptions. It is the cornerstone of the ArkNet brand portfolio. From the success of MDC, Ryan Aloviz acquired LensDirect.com, a small, struggling but very well-known contact lens e-retailer with a 20 year history. After adding designer sunglasses to the portfolio in 2012, LensDirect.com will soon complete its offerings by launching into the prescription eyewear space.

Off the heels of the LensDirect.com acquisition, Ryan Aloviz launched Birthday Party Booker.com, a recession-friendly event planning company. It was the first of its kind – a completely free event planning service that utilized the power of collective bargaining. The company has grown into the largest birthday planning and event company in New York City, planning over 2,000 birthdays annually, and expansion into new cities coming in the second quarter of 2013.

Aloviz' success with ArkNet has allowed him to bring the same entrepreneurial energy to his fundraising committee, The Silver Lining Society Children's Cancer. This New York based fundraising committee, which Aloviz co-founded in 2006, raises money for Hope & Heroes Pediatric Cancer Fund based out of Columbia University Medical Center and to date has raised nearly half a million dollars since inception.

Aloviz is incredibly fulfilled by the positive footprint his company has left dur-

ing these difficult recession years. At a time when unemployment numbers are soaring, Aloviz' number one goal has always been to bring in eager and talented new employees and grow and nurture them from the ground up. On a larger scale, ArkNet Media provides employment opportunities for hundreds of telemarketers at a time through its sister company, Ark Teleservices.

### About ArkNet Media:

ArkNet Media is an interactive agency headquartered in Garden City, NY, that owns and operates a series of successful online companies. Since its inception in 2006, ArkNet has garnered respect for its fast-growing businesses such as MagazineDiscountCenter.com, LensDirect.com, BirthdayPartyBooker.com and YourSecureHome.com. ArkNet's diverse holdings and closely-knit team of ecommerce experts engage consumers from all walks of life with premier sales and support services. ArkNet Media through its sister company, Ark Teleservices, has 3 offices/call centers with over 700 agents and employees in the U.S., and Caribbean. ArkNet Media is also dedicated to charitable giving. Through its founder, Ryan Aloviz, ArkNet has developed a strategic partnership with the Silver Lining Society, which has close to a half a million dollars for the Hope & Heroes Pediatric Cancer Fund based out of Columbia University Medical Center.

**Interview conducted by:**  
**Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor**  
**CEOCFO Magazine**

**CEOCFO:** Mr. Aloviz, your site indicates that you are passionate about acquiring customers. What do you do?

**Mr. Alovis:** ArkNet Media owns and operates a portfolio of Internet companies. We own companies where we acquire the customer for our own businesses and we own businesses that acquire customers for other brand companies. For example, we own LensDirect.com, which sells contact lenses for an e-retailer. It has been around for 20 years now and we work with all the major distributors. Then again on one company, Your Secure Home, we actually acquire customers for ADT Home Security. We are able to leverage our talents on paid search, internet marketing, marketing, all aspects of SEM and SEO. We focus on growing our own internal businesses and creating really cool partnerships with other companies and using our own gifts.

**CEOCFO:** Other than needing your services, is there a common thread among the companies you work with?

**Mr. Alovis:** We like businesses that offer recurring revenue. Magazines, that is a business that we really love because there is a recurring revenue fee with auto-renewal. Contact lenses are a business that puts people in a position where they need to re-order. Home security is also recurring because of a monthly fee. That is the common thread and probably the foundation of each business and industry that we dive into.

**CEOCFO:** What do you understand about the process of acquiring customers that perhaps others do not realize?

**Mr. Alovis:** We are really great at simplifying the online experience. A lot of people are very nervous or overwhelmed at how to create a website. We have a remarkable team of graphic designers, internet marketing specialists, and customer service representatives. That is what we bring to the table. We simplify the process, sort of building this amazing website or building this amazing brand. I think that is what we do that is simply better than everyone else.

**CEOCFO:** How do you reach potential clients?

**Mr. Alovis:** SEM, paid search, organic traffic, email marketing. We do not waste any of our traffic. We do not waste any of our customers, we definitely utilize that sort of customer base to push other companies that we own.

**CEOCFO:** What kinds of businesses are yours? How do you work the two sides together?

**Mr. Alovis:** We treat every business we have as on ArkNet as our own business, whether we acquire the customer for ourselves or ADT or another company. When we look into getting into an industry, we look at the size of the industry, whether it is a shrinking industry. We look at ease of entry, if a brand is a recognizable brand, and if we can piggy back off of it and do what they do better than what they do for themselves.

**CEOCFO:** Have you ever found a company where you do that?

**“There is never a day when we come in and put are feet up on the desk and say ‘okay, we are done.’”**

**– Ryan Alovis**

**Mr. Alovis:** We have. It is not that we could not do better because of lack of talent. It is because they had a tremendous amount of red tape and restrictions. When you deal with these large companies, these huge Fortune 500 companies, they have an in-house council that is the size of most small companies alone. The red tape there alone could sink a partnership very quickly. We have had opportunities go awry because of their lack of interest in moving quickly or allowing us to do what we do best. That is upsetting because we only learn that when we are way down the road and already developed, designed, and trademarked.

**CEOCFO:** When you talk about magazines, are you talking online magazines or old hard copy?

**Mr. Alovis:** Print subscriptions.

**CEOCFO:** Why is that still so viable?

**Mr. Alovis:** There is a whole world out there that does not have WIFI in every corner of their house. There is

an entire country out there that still prefers print over digital. We are growing every year which is a testament to the industry. While everyone is screaming “Lets get off the ship” we are screaming “Lets get back on”. We are definitely interested in moving in to a digital world, but it is hard for us to move and sell when the magazines do not know how to sell themselves yet. We are happily selling print subscriptions and selling thousands and thousands every single month. It still makes a great gift.

**CEOCFO:** What are you doing day-day to expand and look for new partners and exposure? Essentially, how do you do business?

**Mr. Alovis:** We just keep going back to the drawing board. We look at what is going on around us in the entire industry, not just magazines. We know what is going on in the internet sector and our job is to keep fixing, tweaking, and making what we own better. That is what we do every day. We do split testing, compare current designs with new designs. We are constantly innovating and doing new things, there is always work to do. There is never a day when we come in and put are feet up on the desk and say “okay, we are done”.

**CEOCFO:** We know you have shipped to 30 countries. What is your geographic reach?

**Mr. Alovis:** We ship all over the world but we prefer to ship only in the United States to be honest. We have a very difficult time sending contact lenses overseas; there is a lot of fraudulent activity. Our reach is global, we have shipped as far as Africa before. When you sort of open up your arms and try to go as far as you can, it lends itself to a ton of fraud.

**CEOCFO:** Tell us about Ark Teleservices?

**Mr. Alovis:** Ark Teleservices is our sister company. They are a full service contact center. There are 3 locations worldwide. They work with Fortune 500 companies doing their inbound/outbound customer service, order entry, live chat, everything.

**CEO CFO:** What is the key to making the end customer happy and not just the company you are providing services for?

**Mr. Alovic:** It is fulfilling the order as soon as possible and being accessible when they reach out. We do not hide from our customers and that is what matters the most. We are a very transparent company and that is what makes people happy. They want to have an emotional connection to any business that they work with. We do that really well, we are not robots. I am not a robot.

**CEO CFO:** Tell us about your partnership with the Silver Lining Society. Why is it important for you and for the company?

**Mr. Alovic:** I started SLS 6 years ago. SLS raises funds for pediatric cancer and we have a direct partnership with Hope and Heroes, a much larger charity. It is important to me because I had the luxury of going to the hospital one day and getting the tour and I saw one child as a shell of who they should really be and it broke my heart.

I knew that I had a network and the opportunity to help. I wanted to do something really great besides just work. It is important to me not because I had a direct relationship with the child that had cancer but because I wanted to do it. We raise a lot of money and have a huge team. I believe every successful business should have a charity component.

**CEO CFO:** You encourage your employees to go against the grain but in an informed way. Could you provide a concrete example of how that works in reality?

**Mr. Alovic:** No one gets micromanaged here. When I say to go against the grain, I mean we could do anything from customer service: Knowing someone had a bad day and giving them a Jolly Rancher. We have an event planning company that sends out party packages every Thursday and Friday that has gum, chapstick, and all sorts of fun stuff. We do very cool things on any given day. The best part of my job is that I get to walk in some days and I'm completely shocked at what is going

down. I will come in and we will look at a new design for a product page that I did not even know we were doing. That is the best part of building an infrastructure, amazing things happen all around you.

**CEO CFO:** Why is it still so exciting for you?

**Mr. Alovic:** I love the hunt. I love growing and building. I love starting things and putting pieces together. I am very bad at sitting still and I guess I would say my ADD is my Achilles heel.

**CEO CFO:** Why should the business community pay attention to ArkNet Media?

**Mr. Alovic:** We are proving that we can do really big things with a small group of people. I think people should take note that it does not take a monster company to do incredible things. Building a business is not just about making money. It is about creating a family.



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