

Six Questions with...Dan Biederman, Entrepreneur

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By Jeanette Mulvey, BusinessNewsDaily Managing Editor

Dan Biederman's firm, Biederman Redevelopment Ventures, improves parks and downtown areas by matching public needs with private funding. His greatest revival project to date is [New York's](#) Bryant Park, which he helped transform in 1992 from a crime-ridden, drug-filled, neglected park into a seven-acre, grass-filled oasis in mid-town Manhattan.

Biederman's latest projects include the landmark Rittenhouse Square in Philadelphia and a national historic treasure, the Boston Common. He has served as a consultant to downtown redevelopment projects in Los Angeles, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, Atlanta, Miami, Pittsburgh, [Baltimore](#) and Newark, among other cities.

He tells BusinessNewsDaily how small businesses can secure their own funding and describes the best fashion show he's seen in Bryant Park.



BusinessNewsDaily: *Raising funding for a small business isn't that different from raising funds for a park restoration. What's the most important thing for a small business owner to remember when trying to finance a business?*

Dan Biederman: Treat investors' money as if it was your own – and the same goes for “investors” (abutting property-owners) in public space improvement projects. I love to tell my board members that they should come to our office and go through our expense [accounts](#) with our CFO — they'll be impressed how little money we spend on things.

BND: *How do you use [social media](#) to promote what you do?*

D.B.: We're blogging, using [Twitter](#), on Facebook and the rest. I started my work in New York, where it's hard to get noticed, even if you're in Midtown, where most of my New York projects are. There's a lot of competition there for attention in print and electronic media.

BND: *What's the secret to getting so many different parties to work together toward a common goal?*

D.B.: Good ideas. A friend of mine, a land-use lawyer, likes to say that bad ideas backed by powerful people, and good ideas backed by powerless people, are only occasionally accepted. But good ideas backed by powerful people always end up [succeeding](#).

BND: *What non-work activities (books, movies, art, sports or travel) have inspired you when you've run out of creative ideas?*

D.B.: In traveling, my family spends a lot of time in northern and central Europe, where there are countless models of success in public space and neighborhood improvement. The further south you go, as the temperature rises, good models get more scarce. Otherwise, I read widely (60 books a year and five newspapers a day), and, to the annoyance of my staff, use a lot of analogies from the sports I watch (mainly baseball).

BND: *What's the next big trend in public/private partnerships?*

D.B.: Outright privatization, not public/private partnerships. Government processes and the rigidity of government lawyers have become so much worse over the last 30 years that Bryant Park could never be rescued today. The next “product” in my field will be full-fledged town/city takeovers.

BND: *Have you ever been to a fashion show in Bryant Park? If so, what was the best one you've seen?*

D.B.: I've gone to two fashion shows a year for the last 14 years. I guess Oscar de la Renta was my favorite. My wife and former (Council of Fashion Designers of America) chairman Stan Herman tell me after the show whether the clothes were good or bad.