

## New & Notables

The following 17 professionals are daring to try something new — developing a business and taking it to the next level. We honor their efforts as Biz New Orleans' first-ever...



JEFFERY JOHNSTON



**Crystal McDonald**  
Founder and CEO, Acrew

Job seekers need every advantage when looking for work, and employers are looking to find the best candidates as easily and quickly as possible.

Crystal McDonald has created a solution that satisfies both parties via an on-demand video interviewing platform. Her idea won \$100,000 this past March at The Coulter IDEApitch during New Orleans Entrepreneur Week.

McDonald's firm, Acrew, connects employers and job seekers using brief, first-impression videos, each about three to five minutes, to screen candidates and save recruiters time and money. Employers can post an opportunity with the job description, requirements and as many as five customized interview questions. Those looking for work can then record their answers to the questions using the video camera on their smartphone, tablet, or computer and upload it to Acrew's website. There, employers view responses and decide if they want to move forward with an in-person interview.

“We focus on the higher turnover industries that employ the hourly-wage job market — retail, hospitality, food service, health care, construction,” said McDonald. “It gives an employer an additional snapshot of motivation, fit and performance.”

Originally from Houston, McDonald came to Louisiana to study finance at Dillard University. She “met a New Orleans boy” and has been anchored here ever since.

“I love New Orleans. There’s just no place like New Orleans,” she said. “I feel like the city reflects entrepreneurialism and resilience at its core. It’s got 300 years of history, culture and food. And we’ve got a growing and thriving ecosystem of like-minded folks who want to see the city progress and support businesses to a national level. There’s a sense of community and connectedness that folks have. It’s a great place for young talent. I’m excited about the opportunities here.”

**- Chris Price**