



Jennifer Cochran

Marketing Business Owner,

She's an idea person, go-getter, and friend to entrepreneurs, just like herself. In 2007, Jennifer Cochran founded Branches Professional Services Provider—a grassroots startup that provides Annapolis-based businesses website, social media, and marketing solutions—after following a rather unusual and challenging path. Growing up an only child and bouncing from locale to locale during childhood (Virginia, Florida, New Jersey), Cochran picked up a number of jobs in the restaurant industry during her teen years. This set her early career path as a restaurant manager, which she followed until 2003, when she did an about-face and decided to pursue a degree in archaeology from the University of Tennessee. There she was "mucking in dirt" when she made her biggest find... boyfriend-turned-husband, Shawn. The two hit it off and she learned of his desire to open a restaurant... but where? "Being head over heels in love and somewhat disenchanted by the overwhelming amount of dirt involved in archaeology, I happily picked up and moved once again ...to Annapolis," says Cochran. The couple hopped right into the local restaurant scene, managing several restaurants. They were in the midst of planning their own café when tragedy struck. "I was injured in a car accident. That was the day my life changed forever," Cochran remembers. "I was no longer able to lift, bend, sit too long, stand too long, lay down too long, or do the activities I loved. I had to look for a way to reinvent myself and change our long-term plans." She recalls driving up Main Street in Annapolis with Steve and pointing out the many "For Lease" signs, when she had her "aha" moment. "I knew I could do something about losing our mom-and-pop businesses. Once the challenge entered my mind, I couldn't ignore it. And, that's how Branches was born," she says. **"Our mission, both professionally and personally, is to strengthen our communities by strengthening the independently-owned businesses that drive our local economy. And, what better, more beautiful place to plant our roots and grow business from the ground up than in Annapolis."**