



# Meet the CEO: Mark Wright

**The president and CEO of marketing agency Targetbase on his strategies for success.**

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| PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILLY SURFACE

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Mark Wright, a native Canadian and hockey player turned Texas executive, is a pioneer in the direct marketing game. After graduating from business school, Wright began his marketing career at Harlequin—yes, the Canadian romance publishing company. Eventually he was recruited to become president and CEO of Targetbase, a Dallas-based marketing agency that integrates technology, analytics, creativity, and strategy. Wright, who recently turned 50, says he's found a home in Dallas and at Targetbase, where he uses his marketing savvy and his "passion for leadership" to motivate his own integrated team.

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## FIRST JOB

I worked in a grocery store. I was the shelf stocker at night.

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## WORST JOB

I haven't really had a bad job, but if I had to pick, I would probably pick Foot Locker. ... There are some really nice feet—and then some really ugly ones.

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## IN THE BEGINNING

Targetbase started in 1979 as a research company and quickly grew into analytics. Then, if you really wanted to become a great analytics company, you needed to become a technology company, because data is all over the place.

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## COMPANY CULTURE

If you come into Targetbase "just" as a creative you won't be very successful, because I need you to be curious about what the technology and analytic guys are doing. Likewise, I need the tech guys to be curious about what the creatives are doing. And that curiosity creates an appetite for learning.

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## WHAT'S NEW

We've created a brand new technology platform. It's very digitally friendly, with lots of real-time connections. Today, it's all about conversation.

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## SUCCESS STRATEGIES

I got some great advice when I was young: You should never be afraid to hire people that are smarter than yourself.

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## LESSONS LEARNED

Mistakes happen. If you go around life trying to prevent mistakes all day, you'll never make decisions and you'll never move forward.

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## OTHER CAREERS CONSIDERED

When I was a youngster I thought I was going to be a professional hockey player, and I played some serious hockey.

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## STRENGTHS

I think I'm a great motivator. I think that I am not afraid to make decisions.

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## WEAKNESS

Impatience. When I was young my dad taught me that if you really want something and you know you're going to get it later, then you may as well get it now, because you never know how long you're going to live. And he's right!

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## MOTIVATION

My wife and kids. I am the breadwinner, and my job is to support the family financially. My wife is my household CEO.

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## STRESS RELIEF

It's washing my car, working outside in the gardens. It's work that takes my focus off the job.