

All About

U

A Magazine for Burlington County women



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Reflecting on Long Beach Island vacationing. See Page 10.



Hot dogs, ball games and messages from above. See Page 6.



Dynamic Duo

Women-owned business makes positive impact in our area

All About

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Thomas/Boyd Communications is helmed by a pair of talented, committed women

Dynamic Duo: Two women pack powerful punch in the world of marketing

By Lori Smith
Special to ALL ABOUT U



Pam Boyd, Co-Owner and President

A visit to the "Our Team" page at the Thomas/Boyd Communications Web site reveals an interesting fact. The seven smiling faces are all women. "That is not by design," explains CEO and co-owner Liz Thomas, "it is something that happened over time, even though we have had male employees in the past."

The company, founded by Thomas and co-owner/President Pam Boyd, was created in 1998 to offer clients a fresh approach to the world of traditional public relations and marketing communications services.

"We handle a broad spectrum of clients, from the world of not-for-profit to some of the biggest names in the industry," explained Thomas. Both she and Boyd believe that the different backgrounds and workplace experiences of the women on the staff bring a diverse outlook and varied methods to tackle the needs of their clients.

According to Thomas, the basic strength of the firm is in its "knowledge of New Jersey, the region and the media markets. We have an interest in regulatory, public affairs and legislative matters, which make us a good fit for our clients. We can relate to whatever the subject matter is."

Of course, according to research, women do make the bulk of buying decisions. Boyd believes that the staff is a good barometer of whether "different ad campaigns resonate with women."

"We have several health care clients," adds Thomas, and "women have great sway and buying power in care decision options." Again, the perspective of the women on staff is a plus in developing programs that will relate to those buyers.

The seeds of the Thomas/Boyd pairing were sown several years ago, when Winning Strategies, a firm founded by Thomas, merged with an existing communications company, Paolin and Sweeney, where Boyd was employed. A short time later, the two opened the doors of Thomas/Boyd Communications in the Burr House on Moorestown's Main Street, where Nellie Bly's Ice Cream and Starbucks are housed today.

After relocating to Mount Laurel for a few years, the company returned to its roots when the owners purchased the building at 117 North Church Street in Moorestown. "From the time when I started my first public relations firm in 1989," explained Thomas, "I had rented space. Many people told me how important it is to own the building where a business is located, and we are very proud to say that we own this building. Ownership gives really good visibility locally and is a good growth strategy for the company." Additionally, both the women believe that it shows commitment to the community and that they have a stake in its progress.

Boyd adds that the location is perfect for their clients and employees as well. "They have easy access to Main Street for shopping and lunching. Also, we continue to make improvements to be sure that it meets our standards." The charming, bright, well-appointed two-story building is the perfect reflection of the owners' good taste and positive personalities.

The company, which has earned numerous recognitions and awards over the years, opened a satellite office in Princeton two years ago to provide better access to their clients from Trenton and North Jersey.

The two take their roles as good corporate citizens to heart. "From day one, we have believed that being involved with the community and giving back is very important," said Boyd. "We stay involved by providing pro bono services to non profits, signing on as event sponsors, serving on boards and committees and being in touch with the communities we serve." Boyd acted as co-chair of the Burlington County YMCA's Strong Kids campaign this year, which she calls a "great experience. I am pleased to help the Y and spread awareness about what they do." She also serves on the organization's board of directors and is the chair of its marketing committee.

Thomas is a new board member of the Samaritan Hospice and is "thrilled to be a part of that board." The hospice now serves five counties and Thomas is intensely proud of the outstanding services they offer.

Each is strongly committed to the Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey, which recognized Thomas/Boyd as the Small Business of the Year in 2005. The believe that the organization, as well as the Burlington County Chamber of Commerce, does outstanding work to assist in business development and growth opportunities through networking, and the number and type of events they present. They serve on boards and committees of each group.



photos/DORANN WEBER

Moorestown's 117 North Church Street has been home to Thomas/Boyd Communications since March, 2006.

They share a deep sense of pride over the work their company did on behalf of the recent Extreme Home Makeover build in Pennsauken. "All of our staff was involved on a pro bono basis to handle all media relations work relative to the building of that home," said Boyd.

Ranking in the top five projects the company has completed is the return of the Battleship of New Jersey through the Panama Canal. Thomas said, "I believe this was some of the most rewarding work we have done. It required two trips to Panama, extensive planning for the VIP reception for 300, which included the governor, a U.S. senator, and many interested people. It was just amazing that a small firm got involved with one of the biggest and most significant events in the region."

Boyd added, "The grand opening of the battleship itself was also exciting. It required the development of a communications strategy and pulling it all together so everything would go off perfectly. And it did."

On the personal side, Thomas grew up in Nutley, NJ, and has lived in Moorestown for 20 years. She holds a bachelor of arts degree in English and Sociology from Moravian College in Bethlehem, PA. She began her career in the press office of Governor Tom Kean, serving as assistant press secretary and later as deputy director of the NJ Division of Travel and Tourism. An exercise and general fitness advocate, she loves to play golf and finds that over time, she and Boyd have seen an increase in business dealings on the golf course. Her number one focus away from the business is her 15-year-old daughter, Kristen vanilderstine, who is a sophomore at Moorestown High School. "She is a good student, active in sports and has a good crowd of friends. I love being a part of all of it."

In addition to her work with Samaritan Hospice, she is a member of the Family Service board of trustees, serves on the board of the Chamber of Commerce of Southern New Jersey and is the state public affairs coordinator for the New Jersey Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

Boyd grew up in Cherry Hill and has lived in Medford for the past 10 years. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Delaware and earned her master's degree in corporate public relations from Rowan University. She serves as a board member of the Southern New Jersey Development Council and is a board of education member for the Burlington County Institute of Technology. She and husband, Mike, have sons Alec, age 4, and Aaron, age 2. In addition to enjoying family activities, she is diligent about making time for friends despite how busy she is. She enjoys exercising, being at the gym and improving her golf game, but her big passion is an annual ski trip to Utah. Additionally, she plays piano, which she notes is a "great stress reliever."

Thomas/Boyd provides services typical of a good marketing firm, including media and public relations, public affairs counseling, corporate positioning, crisis communications, community relations, media training and special event planning. What sets them apart from other companies is the fact that they rely totally on referral-based business. "We are recognized for doing top notch work, providing favorable outcomes at a reasonable price," said Thomas. "We work hard to establish that on behalf of our clients." Their successful efforts make their clients realize that "they don't have to go to a major market to find talent because it is right here in our back yard."

Boyd added, "All we have at the end of the day is our reputation. It has remained strong and positive, helping us to retain our clients for many years."

"Lots of our clients have a five to 10 year relationship with us," said Thomas. "There is always a fair amount of turnover in our business, but we don't experience that here. Our goals are to continue reasonable growth. We are very fortunate that in an economy where many are struggling we are able to continue to see growth. We are conservative in our growth and always keep our eye on the bottom line. My companies have been profitable every year since I began in 1989. We maintain reasonable staff levels to make sure that we don't have to release people if a piece of business is coming to an end."

While it is obvious that Liz Thomas and Pam Boyd are focused and driven, they are careful to enjoy life. "We love what we do, but we love having fun, too. We make time to get together with our staff away from the job a few times every year to have a good time and not discuss what we do at work." The two stress that every member of their staff makes a valuable contribution to the success of their company.

Marketing companies do their work behind the scenes, making sure the spotlight shines in a positive way on their clients. "It is nice to come out from the shadows and have the spotlight shine on us for a change with this article," said Thomas. Considering the positive contributions Thomas/Boyd Communications has made to the success of companies and the communities they serve, they have earned their place in the sun.



Liz Thomas, Co-owner and CEO