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# Local women grow their media business as industry changes

BY AGUSTINA GUERRERO  
STAFF WRITER

Public relations is changing, moving away from media-driven activities into a two-way communication system in which e-mailing and blogging allows people to decide which content is published and which one gets the ax.

Jan A. Luongo, president of Alliance Communications, said she now has to respond to people posting blogs about her clients on the Internet. That requires a more technical staff, aware of the latest IT trends, she said.

Luongo's Agency seems to be adapting well. It has won Gold and Silver ADDYs for creative design and has been on the Tampa Bay Business Journal's Top 25 List of public relations agencies.

The hardest part is explaining to clients that PR is not like paid advertising, said Luongo. "We can't always guarantee it," she said.

Luongo enjoys working with the Florida Suncoast Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, an organization she approached following an employee's suggestion. Now she is on the board of directors as its PR/marketing chair. She is working to prepare the affiliate's annual fundraiser, Race for the Cure, set for Oct. 7, at Vinoy Park.



Jan Luongo, president of Alliance Communications, is the 2006 Media BusinessWoman of the Year.

## TRAINING FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP

Sylvia Sethares-Heyl, Bay News 9's director of sales, knows what it's like to work for markets of all sizes. The key is to coach people for a championship team, Sethares-Heyl said.

That philosophy led her small production team in New Haven, Conn., to win an Emmy for Star Tire, an award that made her realize that most anything is possible in life "if we really try and not let things and excuses get in the way," she said.

When she transitioned from the 150th market in the United States to the No. 12, she was up against a big challenge. But she kept reminding herself that, "the principles of selling and the principles of management are the same, no matter where you work."

"The agencies are larger, the spending levels greater but the concern for the client stays the same," she said.

Cherie Wenstrom knows that all too well. She started Wenstrom Communications in 1991. The one-person media consulting company is now a \$12 million, seven-person media placing firm that works in more than 30 markets.

"While there are no awards for media place-



Sethares-Heyl

ment, the majority of our clients have been with us for over 10 years, and when some of our contacts changed employment, we've been hired to work with those organizations as well," Wenstrom said.

She has done pro bono work for Trinity College, Anafit, BACS, North Lake Family Church and Phillipson's Jewelers. She gives 10 percent of her company's income to a local church.

## YOU ARE HIRED!

Another finalist in this year's BusinessWoman of the Year is a quite familiar face for most reality-TV fans. Dawna Stone, won "The Apprentice Martha Stuart," which gave her a one-year \$250,000 contract to work with the domestic diva.

But Stone is more than her 15 minutes of fame. Before she joined Martha Stuart, she was the founder of

HerSports + Fitness, a publication that received a Charlie Award for Best New Magazine of the Year in 2004.

"I've been an athlete my whole life and was disappointed at the women health and fitness magazines out there. They all offered easy-steps type stories, but I felt that women wanted more than that," said Stone.



Stone

Experts didn't agree with her, but she did her own research after getting a positive feedback from advertisers she decided to go forward. The magazine has been growing strong since then.

Before entering the publishing industry, Stone was chief marketing officer for recreational boat retailer MarineMax. She was the only female senior executive in the 1,200-person company at the time. But her gender didn't hinder her career.

"The key is making sure that you understand whatever industry you're in. The whole goal is to make that company successful," she said.

Stone is now busy pitching a segment to The Today Show, presenting a health-and-fitness radio show on Sirius Satellite Radio, writing a blog on MarthaSteward.com, and speaking at conferences and trade shows around the country. Starting in September, she will also be doing a new series on the Martha TV show, "You Can Do It with Dawna Stone."

Time Warner has picked up her manuscript for a new book, "Winning Nice," about how to succeed in business by doing things the right way.

Having two jobs, keeps her very busy these days. She now has to stay up until midnight looking at her magazine's layouts and design.

"I've never worked as hard in my entire life," she said. But loving what she does makes it all worthwhile, she said.

**2005 salary survey by the National Association of Female Executives shows**  
**'THE GAP GOES ON'**

Advertising*		
Title	Women	Men
CEO	\$156,000	\$176,000
Creative director	\$119,000	\$123,000
CFO	\$77,000	\$99,000
Associate creative director	\$94,000	\$90,000
Media director	\$79,000	\$106,000
Copywriter	\$57,000	\$60,000
Art director	\$53,000	\$57,000
Account executive	\$45,000	\$50,000

SOURCE: Advertising Age Salary Survey, 2004 \*Average base salary

Title	Women	Men
Marketing and sales managers	\$46,696	\$74,932
Advertising sales	\$33,436	\$48,984

SOURCE: BLS-based estimates, 2004

Public Relations		
Title	Women	Men
All PR professionals	\$75,498	\$107,960
Ages 26-30	\$54,587	\$54,558
Ages 31-35	\$72,035	\$86,295
Ages 36-40	\$90,533	\$108,780
Ages 41-50	\$122,387	\$135,578
Ages 51-55	\$93,827	\$129,299
Ages 56-60	\$112,356	\$142,767
Ages 61-65	\$81,250	\$117,630

SOURCE: PR Week Salary Survey, 2005

Title	Women	Men
Public relations specialists	\$38,428	\$49,244

SOURCE: BLS-based estimate, 2004

NOTE: All salaries are median unless otherwise indicated.