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The four components of sound marketing

By Adina Genn

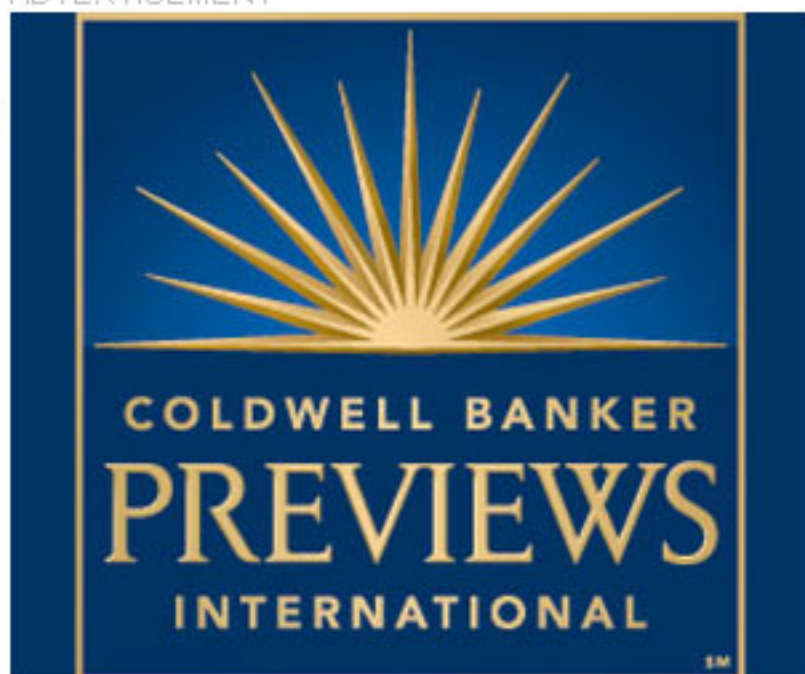
Friday, December 29, 2006

Bridgette Nicolini and Tom Burke got to know each other in 2002, when the two enrolled in a weekly entrepreneurial workshop at the Huntington Chamber of Commerce. At the time, each had their own companies; Nicolini, a Web development and print design firm, and Burke, an Internet marketing firm.

They stayed in touch over the years, referring clients on occasion, and talked about the possibility of one day collaborating on a venture. In June 2005 they finally joined forces to create Farmingdale-based Reach For It Media, a provider of branding, design, Internet and marketing services.

The four elements together enable clients to tell their story cohesively to their

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target audience, the partners say. Though small business owners might retain one firm for Web design, and another for marketing, Nicolini and Burke say that by offering these components under one umbrella they help their clients best communicate their message.

Burke said his partnership with Nicolini gives his marketing campaigns

a boost. Prior to forming the company, "I always felt I was leaving something on the table," Burke said, referring to an e-mail or Web site component required of a marketing campaign that a client might otherwise outsource to another provider.

Starting the company cost "very little," the partners said, though they declined to quantify their investment. They were able to barter computer equipment, and did not need any inventory. They also developed their own marketing components, including their Web site, <http://www.rfimedia.com>.

Combined, the partners currently have 37 clients, and they hope to add more, Nicolini said. The company currently doesn't have any employees, but Nicolini and Burke plan to hire two employees in 2007 to help with marketing and Web work, including conducting research, making phone calls, updating Web sites and running reports. With staffers on board, the partners can focus on business development.

Their mix of services, Nicolini pointed out, are the kinds "all businesses need." Clients can choose a la carte, or the entire menu of offerings. Their first new client, Burke said, expressed interest in all of their services, "affirmation that the four disciplines were of value."

Folding the services into one business is a smart strategy, said Michael J. Roberts, founder of Task Information Systems, an information technology firm in Port Washington. Those designing Web sites have "hit a brick wall," he said. Many small firms already have Web sites though they often amount to little more than online brochures. Those with marketing expertise, however, can make the sites more interactive and engaging, Roberts said. The field "is still evolving," and most small firms are not using the technology to full capacity.

The partners also provide business consulting, helping clients to decide if the timing is right, for example, to showcase all of their inventory on an e-commerce site, or if they should hold off a bit and implement an e-store that they can scale up when ready.

Though both previously liked working on their own, they say they've adjusted well to answering to a partner.

Burke put it this way: At client meetings "I'm so glad to have Bridgette there to answer questions."

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