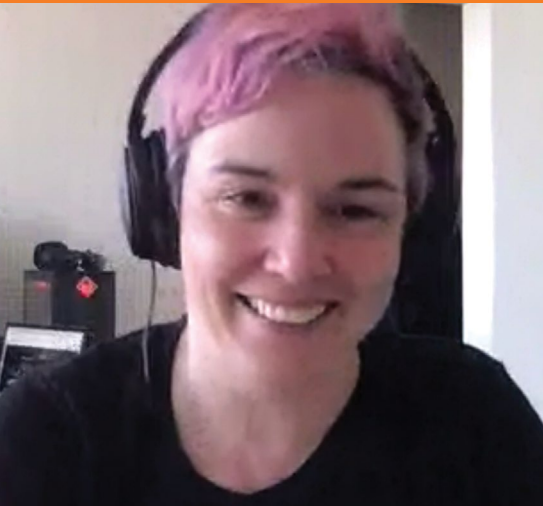


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VISUAL MEDIA ALLIANCE

WINTER 2021



Planning for a Strong 2021



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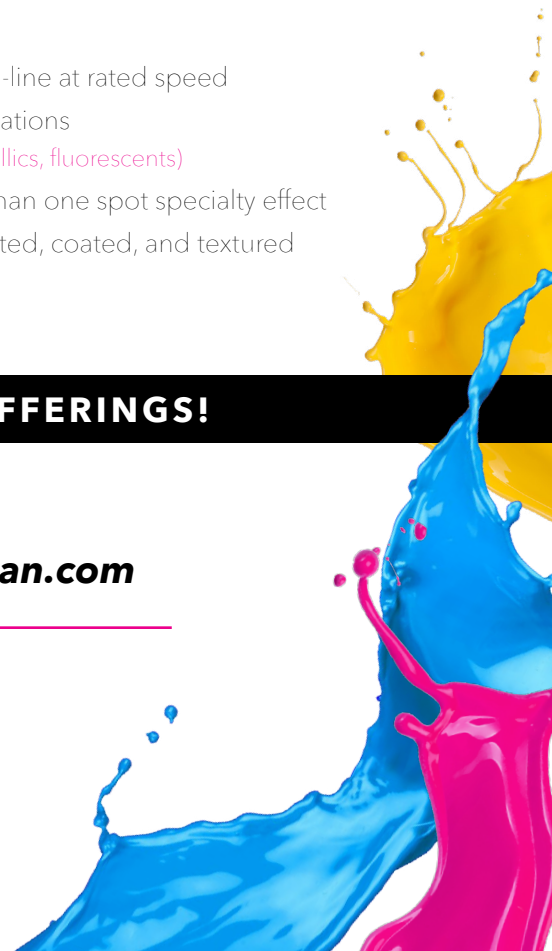
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Visual Media Alliance is the non-profit trade association serving Northern California's graphic arts industry. By providing events, education, discounts, advocacy, industry promotion, and insurance programs, we help our 540 member firms become more successful and profitable.

ON THE COVER

The 300FeetOut team lead by their founder Barbara Stephenson collaborating by Zoom. From left to right, top to bottom: Barbara Stephenson, Greg Ciro Tornincasa, Chantel Gonzales, Rex Vokey, Stephanie Patton, Andrew Levine, Bri Martinez, Walter Gregory, and Joren Mathews.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Valued Members,

After almost 40 years in this industry, I've seen three downturns in 1991, 2000, 2008. None have been as wildly unpredictable and uncertain as this one.

We started in March with ambiguity and horror. We've never experienced a global pandemic in our lifetime. Many of us were worried about the basics, food, and toilet paper. Our members were reporting sales that were a minimum of 40 percent off. But at the time of this writing, seven months later, many of you have recovered somewhat, with many indicators which look like a V-shaped recovery.

Life with COVID-19 has been challenging. Yet, we're once again reminded how resilient our industry is. And perhaps it's too early to tell. But so far, it appears while we've had a number of COVID-induced mergers, there have been fewer than expected complete failures.

Interestingly, this is in sync with past downturns, where our industry also experienced less than normal industry churn. Our industry is made up of small business owners, typically with fewer than ten employees. It allows many of you to do whatever's necessary to cut expenses to the bone and even your compensation to ensure the business stays afloat. In short, our members have staying power.

We'll certainly hope that trend keeps up. And with that in mind, this issue is all about resolutions and planning to help maintain that fortitude for a better, stronger, and positive new year.

Lastly, as we enter this new year, let's be thankful for what we have received, whether it be PPP monies or our family and our work families' health. Or the innate resilience and flexibility of the small business owners' mindset, and the strength of our graphic arts community!

Sincerely,

Dan Nelson
President VMA



**"What the new year brings to you will depend
a great deal on what you bring to the new year."**

-Vern McLellan

Welcome Aboard Ian Flynn



We are delighted to announce Ian Flynn, our former board chairman, has changed roles and is now on staff as our Special Projects Director. He's working on board-directed projects that includes association bylaw revisions, database, and website vendor selection. He's also fulfilling an emissary role last filled by Jim Frey. Flynn is now visiting members on-site, mask-enabled, and safely distanced.

VMAccess Rebuild and Stats

VMAccess (vmaccess.org), our industry search engine, continues to provide leads to our members, and showcases our members' capabilities with powerful search tools.

The latest VMAccess version allows our members to upload videos and photos of their firm and best works.



A New Health Care Option

Our statewide health trust is going through some changes this year. Our Kaiser and Health Net programs remains the same. In its place, we have created the Freedom Plans. These plans are self-funded by our industry's own 40-year-old structure legally permitted by the state. The programs mirror the Blue Shield plans they replace; they're also priced similarly.

That 40-year-old structure is called PIBT (Printing Industries Benefits Trust), and once again it has evolved to meet our members' needs. We are fortunate to have this structure available for this situation where a carrier no longer wants to continue offering a plan.

Our account managers were busy, giving our members the option of switching to the Freedom plans inside the PIBT Trust or staying with Blue

Shield outside of PIBT directly through our member-owned insurance agency. Through VMA, all members can still access all HMO and PPO plans.

If you have questions about the Freedom Plans or are interested in all your association options, contact Shannon at shannon@vma.bz.



Our Membership Drive Success

Our membership director, Shannon Wolford, pulled a rabbit out of the hat in the fall and brought on board 13 new members, a record. While she gets the award for tenacity (and friendliness), our rock-star marketing team led by Sonali Shah supported Shannon's efforts with a 12-touch membership marketing campaign.

As Shannon likes to say, during COVID-19, the association has more relevance than ever.

Whether through our Collective Conversations on Zoom, our VMGuide, or Human Resources program, members receive value. And all members gain from the added connection to more colleagues. Welcome to our new members! (See page 6)



Collective Conversations Positive Value



Associations are all about relationships, and relationships are about member meetings, conferences, and social events. We surely all miss in-person meetings. Yet, our Collective Conversations virtual roundtable series has been incredibly well-attended; we're not stopping them, even after COVID-19 has long gone. We're now at event number 14 in our series.

Every event we have is fresh and on a timely topic. Past subjects have included COVID-19 related issues, human resources, insurance, and sales.

Over 70 member firms have joined at least one of these in the series. If you have a topic or need encouragement to join the next one, contact Shannon, shannon@vma.bz, or visit vma.bz/cc.

PRINTING United Virtual Tradeshow Success



Last year, our national organization, Printing Industries of America, rebranded to PRINTING United Alliance. All the programs you're used to like iLearning, the Technical Hotline, and government affairs, will continue to be available, just under the new name.

There's one new program—the PRINTING United Tradeshow—that has made a splash. While it was envisioned to be an in-person show, because of COVID-19, it was recast as a virtual event that was free to attend. And many of you did.

The remote show was called "PRINTING United Digital Experience." The event included a series of online vendor presentations over three weeks. The presentations were professionally produced and received excellent reviews. It's the next best way of learning about trends from our industry vendors. In fact, many of you told us it might have been better than actually attending in person. Recordings are available for VMA Members.



MEMBER NEWS

Andresen Acquires MegaSolutions



Michael Hicks and Lee Browner

Last summer, Clic, LLC, the parent company of Andresen of Burlingame, acquired MegaSolutions of Belmont. MegaSolutions merged with the trade division of Clic, LLC which operates the following trade names: Graphic Imagery, Direct Response, Rocket Postcards, and now MegaSolutions all under a new brand umbrella called rocketgrafx. Adding MegaSolutions to the mix brings additional in-house capabilities in digital printing, PUR perfect binding, and UV coating. The MegaSolutions acquisition also brings a robust web-2-print operation on the Presswise platform with dozens of print e-commerce storefronts in operation.

GMG ColorCard Revolutionizes the Industry



GMG ColorCard is an exciting new product that provides a simple, quick, precise, and efficient way to achieve accurate color on multiple substrates digitally. It's no surprise that it has won three awards including the Label Industry Global Innovation Award, the Printing Industry of Americas InterTech Technology Award, and the SGIA Product of the Year Award.

www.colorcard.gmgcolor.com



BR Printers Acquires CMC On Demand



BR Printers out of San Jose acquired CMC on Demand located in Fremont. BR and CMC

possess synergistic product offerings in the areas of custom print services, print-on-demand, promotional marketing, kitting and fulfillment services, online ordering portal and digital storefront development, banners, signage, and wide format. The combined resources of both companies afford clients more options to solve their communication challenges.

Affinity Creative Group Awakens the Spirit of Alaska



Affinity, a creative agency for wine, spirits, and other luxury products based on Mare Island, California, recently led the brand

transformation for Anchorage Distillery's new offering. Affinity began with re-establishing the spirit's brand essence. The goal was to create packaging with a hand-made, customized, and specialty-crafted look and feel that conveys Alaska's authentic and adventurous spirit.

Affinity's design solution is a mix of various elements—artisan, organic in feel, and distinctive. The creative agency also recommended new translucent glass bottles inspired by the aurora borealis and Alaska's dramatic, undulating-blue waters, underscoring the brand's origin.

Spicers Exciting New Offering



Great news! Spicer Paper is now offering Futura, Blazer Digital, and Sterling Premium Digital by Verso Corporation out of their Southern California, Northern California, and Arizona distribution centers. All products are sustainably sourced, HP Indigo and Dry Toner equipment guaranteed, and come in a range of sizes to reduce waste and cut production costs.

<https://lnkd.in/gXCCY9m>

Lahlouh's Youngest Client Supports Otters



For almost 40 years, Lahlouh has been an innovator of marketing communications in the Bay Area. With three generations

of printers, they have developed a level of expertise and love of the craft unmatched in the industry. This love of crafts was paired with a love for otters. That's right, the cute furry sea creatures. Lahlouh's youngest client, Ava MacDonald, designed an activity calendar for fellow kids. And if that wasn't cool enough, all the proceeds go to the Monterey Bay Aquarium to support otters (Ava's favorite animals!).

www.otterlyrainbows.com

NEW MEMBERS



Kelly Connelley

Smart graphic design, branding, digital marketing, social media, web design, direct marketing, and print media that focuses on the customer. They act as the creative services department for mid-size companies, as well as start-up to enterprise-level tech companies. Kelly Connelley's strength in project management and creative direction relieves their clients' workload. They have a small team of super design and production talent, ready to create and develop great marketing for their clients' marketing materials and digital media. The team includes graphic designers, web developers, a SEO/SEM expert, writers, photographers, and think-ahead marketing communications managers.

Kelly Connelly
415-398-6699
kelly@kcpd.com
kcpd.com



Wye Print

Wye Print delivers one core business application for their client's print, packaging, or label company with a focus on one thing: people. By taking the attention off features and functions and concentrating on the user learning experience instead, Wye changes the face of how a print business can utilize technology to build and sustain exponential growth. By leveraging repeatable, print industry-driven cloud solutions on proven Microsoft platforms and offering approachable online services and deployments, Wye simplifies technology projects to break down traditional barriers and friction so clients can focus on people instead.

Linda Grade
702-745-6930
lindagrade@wye.world
wye.world/print



Emerald Packaging

Emerald Packaging is a printer/converter of single and multi-layer plastic films. They utilize the latest technologies in the flexible packaging industry and offer collaborative package design. Emerald offers standard and highly customized structures and is proud to be leading a path to sustainable packaging. Their capabilities include 200-line screen printing, duplex and triplex laminations and coatings and multiple stand-up pouch lines. Their converting department is the largest on the West Coast, offering standard and various zipper closures. Emerald Packaging has been specializing in food packaging since 1963.

Mary Anne Lothrop
510-429-5700
mlothrop@empack.com
empack.com



David Design

Marketing, brand development, advertising, print and web design agency serving select businesses and non-profits since 1990. David Design focuses on identifying client marketing and communication objectives to create effective brand-driven online and print solutions.

Joe David
209-984-3952
jd@daviddesign.com
daviddesign.com



Corefact Corporation

Corefact is a digital print and direct mail marketing company with state-of-the-art equipment. Products and services include variable data printing, direct mail marketing, bindery and fulfillment services, full mailhouse services, database management, and creative services.

Robert Newsome
650-407-7312
cherri@corefact.com
Corefact.com



Premier Graphics

Premier Graphics is a one stop source for everything from typography and design to quality printing. Everything from cards and stationery, to banners, and stickers. In addition, Premier Graphics offers thousands of advertising promotional products.

John Stashik
510-235-2195
jcs@4premiergraphics.com
4premiergraphics.com

Know a colleague who would benefit from a valuable VMA membership?

Please have them contact Shannon Wolford at shannon@vma.bz or 415-710-0568.

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- Count on 24/7/365 claim reporting

This special VMA member benefit starts February 1, 2021.

For more information, contact shannon@vma.bz.

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8 Important Resolutions for Small Businesses

BY REVA HARRIS

As we enter the new year, you're probably thinking about your personal new year's resolutions. Setting goals and planning for the year is equally important for your business. They guide your actions for the months ahead and set standards for accountability.

It's a good time to reflect on the last 12 months and decide what you want to do differently this year. Here are eight actions that small businesses in the graphic arts industry can take to set yourself up for a successful and resilient 2021.

1. Analyze the events of the last year and update your plans.

Tough times can lead to innovative problem-solving. What did you learn in 2020 that you can continue to do, even after the pandemic is over? Take stock of the lessons you've learned and make them an intentional part of your path forward. Ironically, ideas borne in chaos can become key elements of your plan to reach your strategic, financial, and operational goals.

2. Check in with your customers.

Staying engaged with customers keeps you top of mind when they need your services. It also helps you keep up with their needs and concerns. Whether you pick up the phone, send an email, or interact on social media, keep in touch with your customers. Look for common themes or trends in their industry and their feedback and incorporate that in your business strategy. Your business will only get stronger and more successful by putting the customer experience first.

3 Ways to Check in with Customers

1. Send a customer survey.
2. Ask for reviews.
3. Host customers-only virtual events.

3. Review your staffing needs.

Your employees are your greatest asset—and your largest business expense. Having the right balance is key to keeping your customers happy and your business profitable. Start by assessing whether any of your employees are overwhelmed or underworked. Does it make sense to shift any duties to equal out the uneven distribution of work? If an employee is underworked, see if it makes sense to keep them on in a part-time capacity temporarily while work is slow. And remember, as a VMA member, you have access to the VMA Job Site (jobs.vma.bz), where you can find qualified local candidates in this industry.

4. Fine-tune your marketing plan.

Marketing trends and technology change rapidly, and 2020 has shifted the way customers shop and buy, perhaps permanently. Now's the time to hone in on the strategies that yield the best results. Spruce up your website, tweak your social media strategy, or launch a new tactic you've never tried before. The new year is the perfect time to think about trying something new!

5. Increase your cyber security.

Businesses of all sizes are falling victim to security breaches that affect their ability to work and damage their reputations. Cyber criminals are enterprising—they can steal your customer data or hold your information processing systems for ransom. Take precautions to protect your systems and data to give customers, employees, and yourself peace of mind. (See page 14 for more cyber security tips).

6. Make sure your business is well insured.

Some unplanned events, like the COVID-19 pandemic, are nearly impossible to prepare for. But you can protect yourself from many potential risks with comprehensive commercial insurance. Start the year by meeting with your broker and outlining the risks facing your business. VMA is happy to help with that. With over 35 years of experience insuring local graphic arts businesses, we offer perks other brokers just can't provide. Contact Shannon Wolford at shannon@vma.bz for more info.

7. Join a business networking group.

If one thing was evident in 2020, it's the power of connections. Sharing tips and insights with peers and getting information from industry experts can help you realize the vision for your business. Events like VMA's Collective Conversations (vma.bz/cc) help you connect with fellow business owners and stay one step ahead. Find a group (or two) to join and set a goal to regularly attend events and participate. You never know, you may find your next business partner or client!

8. Implement or revise your online advertising.

Online marketing is ever-changing. From blogging to display advertising, there are so many channels to choose from, and small businesses probably don't have the resources to invest in all of them. With the big shift to digital marketing caused by the pandemic, make a resolution this year to refine your digital marketing strategy. Are you taking advantage of the most cost-effective options available? (Hint: VMA members can reach millions of buyers through VMAccess, the graphic arts industry online search site. See www.vmaccess.org). Stepping up your online advertising can help you reach new customers and have a dramatic impact on your business.

"The grass is greener where you water it." — Neil Barringham

Let this Neil Barringham quote be your guide as you prepare for 2021. Setting intentions and resolutions for the year ahead helps you turn your vision for the new year into a tangible plan of action. Your employees will be more engaged and aligned with established goals. Your customers will appreciate the improved experience. And you'll feel capable of tackling the challenges ahead of you—those you can predict and those you can't.



impact Printing

For Impact Printing, Good Planning Is All About Positioning

BY REVA HARRIS

Paul Garcia tries to do everything he can to prevent surprises. As the president of Impact Printing, he strives to plan as much as possible. Of course, no one could truly prepare for what 2020 had in store. But Paul's forward-thinking, meticulous approach has allowed Impact Printing to grow, even in the midst of the pandemic.

“You could look at it two ways. These are terrible times...but they’re also opportune times too.” —Paul Garcia, Impact Printing

Know Your Role in the Market

Garcia started Impact Printing with his wife, Lori, 35 years ago, and there's a trend that stood out to him across many industries: “There's a certain consolidation going on. It happened several years ago in the banking industry. These little banks would pop up and it seemed like their sole purpose was to be acquired by a larger bank.” He sees the same thing in the print business, and Impact is positioned to acquire other small shops.

At first, industry consolidation calls up images of small mom-and-pop shops being bullied by big mega-corporations. But for Impact and the companies it acquires, it's a win-win. “They want to continue to serve their customers. They want to get as much value as they can for the work they've done,” Garcia says.

Along with his wife, Garcia's daughter and son-in-law, Sarah and Eric Elder, are part of Impact's management team and represent Impact's next generation. Garcia also makes sure that everyone knows everyone else's responsibilities and understands that everyone is replaceable. Impact is set up to operate

for the long-term, which is attractive to the printers it acquires. “As people get older and look for an exit plan, they look at us because we have a younger management team in place and they feel we'd be a good fit,” Garcia says.



Card for The Permanente Medical Group



Booklet for Cox Petroleum Transport



Paul Garcia (left) and his family standing in front of the Impact Printing facility in Hayward, California, which has been around since 1985.

In return, Impact gets additional customers and capabilities from the company they acquire. This growth strategy has proven fruitful, even in times of crisis. Garcia says, “There are two ways to grow a business. You can go knock on doors, which you can’t do right now. Or you can look to expand your products and services to your existing customers, and that’s the approach we’ve taken.”

How That Planning Pays Off

Impact’s most recent acquisition is Suburban Press, a nearly 60-year-old print shop in the Bay Area. Its owner, Bob Preston, “wanted to work less and have less responsibilities,” says Garcia. After two and a half years of conversations, the Suburban Press acquisition was complete, and allowed Impact to expand their offerings at an opportune time in the midst of the pandemic.

Impact specializes in trade printing; they sell to other printers, print brokers, and office supply companies, and specialize in digital, small offset, wide format, and bindery. As soon as the Suburban acquisition was complete, Garcia immediately told his customers that he could now offer 40-inch commercial printing and union printing. Candidates for political office prefer to use union labor as much as possible. In an intense election year, with plenty of dollars being devoted to advertisement, the Suburban acquisition was a savvy choice.



Eric and Sarah Elder with bindery supervisor, Satya Pillay inspecting a freshly trimmed project from the polar cutter.

The Suburban acquisition isn’t just a one-off. Garcia says he’s been approached several times by fellow printers who’d like to explore an acquisition. The relationship between the two business owners acts as the foundation for the initial negotiations, and he works with his CPA and attorneys to validate financial records and finalize contracts. Once the agreement is finalized, Garcia’s penchant for meticulousness ensures a smooth transition.

Behind the scenes, employees are brought into the Impact family and transitioned to new backend systems, but the day-to-day customer experience is the same.

That approach has led to a seamless experience for Suburban’s customers. “Bob’s still there,” Garcia says. “The name’s there. People don’t like change and I didn’t want to give anybody a reason to switch. They still call and get to talk to Bob. Nothing’s really changed.”



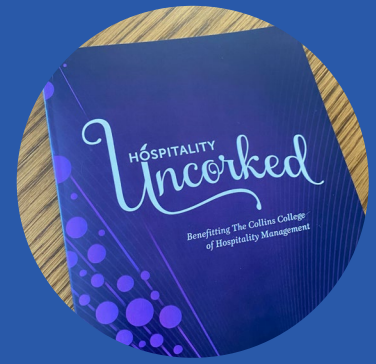
Inspecting a project with Eric Elder, Bob Preston, and press operators, Larry and Andrew.

Every Year Starts With Goals

In addition to the overall vision that he has for Impact, Garcia and the management team set yearly goals to ensure that they’re on track. “I’m a big believer in goals and making people accountable, including myself,” he says. At the end of every year, he and the management team set goals for financial outcomes, marketing, sales, and equipment reviews. Everyone provides their input, and the team reviews it every three months. “It’s a good guide for business to have goals that you’re trying to achieve. Otherwise, it’s too much by the seat of your pants and then you can get hit with surprises that no one wants,” he says. “Everybody that knows me, knows I don’t like surprises. I don’t like the words ‘usually’ or ‘normally’ or ‘most of the time’ or ‘sometimes.’ We strive to be perfect.”

Of course, COVID-19 turned that on its head. The pandemic has tested everyone’s ability to adapt, and Garcia’s approach has been to roll with the punches. “Planning is good. Goals are great. But be willing to adapt to market conditions as need be.”

Press check on Impact’s Indigo. From left to right: Eric Elder, Scott Stuhlmacher, and Danny Minor, who has been with Impact since 1985.



A brochure for The Collins College of Hospitality Management.



Advertorial for Wag! before it is sent for trimming.



Advertisement for a company.

Creativity and Compassion Drive 2021 Planning

BY TAMMY TROUT

Each new year offers the possibility to assess your business, set priorities, and establish new goals. This year, following the upheaval and uncertainty of everything that came with 2020, the chance to step back and start fresh is both a challenge and an opportunity.

Barbara Stephenson, Owner and Chief Experience Officer of 300FeetOut, a creative and development agency based in San Francisco, takes time to address planning at the start of each year. Every January, she goes over the financials from the previous year, then her team sits down together to look at how they did as a group and within each department.

That strategy has served the company well in the past to help determine where they want the business to go. And the process might have inadvertently helped save them

“
We constantly remind each other of our values. It's like saying, 'Hey, good job.'”

from the severity of the pandemic—in a lucky coincidence a few years ago, they realized they were heavily invested in hospitality clients and decided to expand to more clients in the tech field.

Culture is Significant

At 300FeetOut, planning for 2021 includes taking a holistic approach for the well-being of both clients and team members. The two go hand-in-hand to create positive, successful endeavors for everyone. Stephenson says she is genuinely interested in her clients and team members as people. “I’m interested in their families, I’m interested in how they’re doing, and this planning for next year has really made that a good safe space for us to be in,” she says.

For her, maintaining a personal connection is really important, and they use a team tool called the Happy Gold Star Board to do that. “We give awards to each other when one of us exemplifies one of our company values; values that we determined together,” says Stephenson. “We constantly remind each other of our values. It’s like saying, ‘Hey, good job.’”

They also do a “Happy Half Hour” online each week where an employee comes up with an idea of interest to the team to get them all talking and sharing. Ideas have ranged from a discussion of the origin of the postmodern

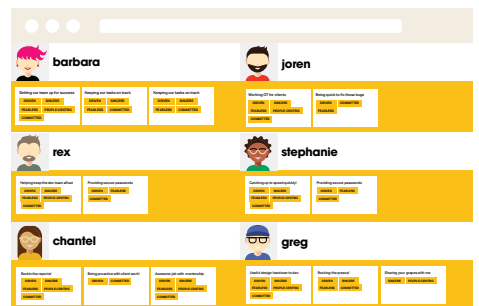


Barbara Stephenson, Chief Experience Officer of 300FeetOut

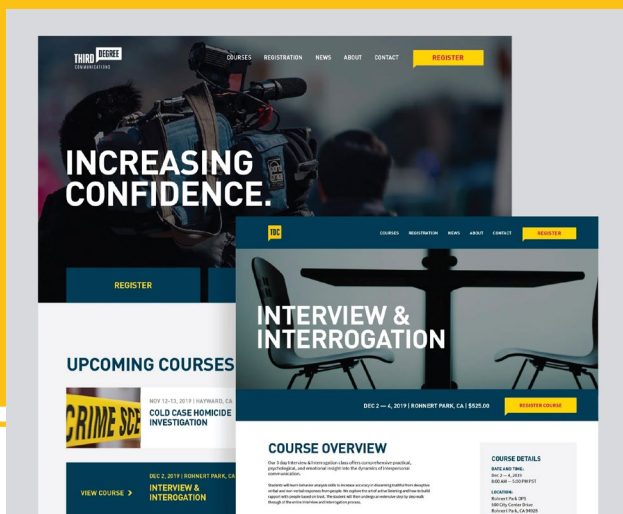
furniture in their studio to watching a documentary digital accessibility awareness. It’s all about creating an open, inspiring environment and ensuring relationships continue while working in separate spaces.

Planning is Ongoing

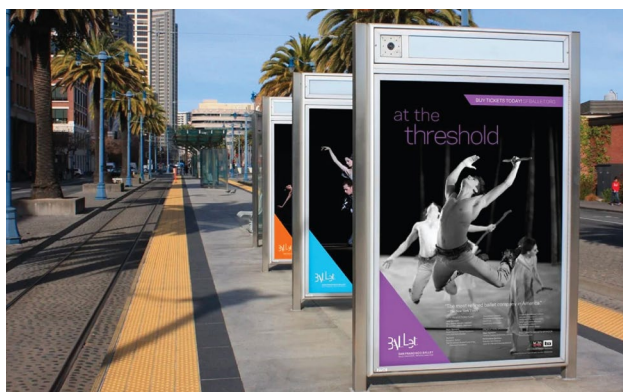
Caring for the well-being of clients and employees brings multiple levels of responsibility. Stephenson realizes that the team recognizes her fierce loyalty to them. They know that she will always consider their needs. “But obviously, there’s a line, and I’ve never been as close to that line as I was in April,” says Stephenson, “because COVID-19



The 300FeetOut Happy Gold Star Board awarding gold stars to the 300FeetOut team.

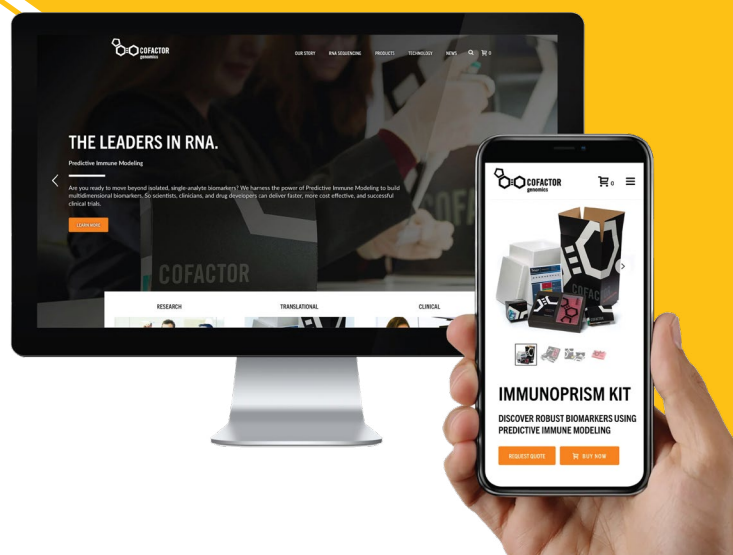


Third Degree Communications (tdcorg.com) updated their branding with a new logo, custom responsive website, and content strategy to serve the next generation of leaders. Winner of the Vega Award.



San Francisco Ballet is America's oldest professional ballet company and 300FeetOut design their advertising campaign.

“If you’re running a business without planning, then you’re just relying on luck, and that will run out.”



Cofactor Genomics (cofactorgenomics.com) brand uplift, website, e-commerce setup to pivot biotech from service to product.

was devastating for the business. “My clients didn’t get paid, and so I didn’t get paid and I had to alter my financial planning.”

“If you’re running a business without planning, then you’re just relying on luck, and that will run out. You might be able to get away with not looking at your balance sheet for a month, but if you don’t know where the money is coming and going, and who’s paying on time, and what you can and can’t afford, you definitely have issues.”

Inspiration is Everywhere

Planning ahead sounds great, but what tools do you need? How do you learn what to do, especially regarding crisis planning when that’s not your area of expertise? For Stephenson, she turned to her colleagues, networking groups, and even to clients with related experience for advice and guidance. Stephenson encourages her staff to attend

conferences and take classes to stay ahead and constantly look for opportunities.

The Chess Game of Business

While it may sound cliché, business is like a chess game; you need to play out possible scenarios and always think three steps ahead. “When you’re looking at planning, you have to look at the all risks,” Stephenson says. “Now, I have to look at COVID risk, and when you’re small, you have to plan. It’s just taking that little step, and then making it bigger.

Given what we have experienced, Stephenson says a smart business will implement a crisis plan for 2021 that includes COVID-19. Many larger companies likely already have this, but for companies that are 10 people, the size of Stephenson’s, it’s even more important. “Everybody has a backup, so making sure that we continue that training is really important for us,” she says. “I’ve had to come

up with contingency plans for what they would do if I got COVID-19, or the head of my technology department got COVID-19 and was gone for three months.”

Because Stephenson is an operations person at heart, she says it’s easy for her to “obsess” over what could possibly go wrong. To harness that energy, she kept track for a month and wrote down different budgets based on what could happen. “There was a catharsis in planning these things out, because it helped me feel like I was more in control, and so, the more I planned, the more in control I was of the future,” she says. “I think that’s one of the hardest things that happened during COVID-19, nobody was in control. For me, making sure that I planned for HR, making sure that I planned to make my team happy, making sure that I have those connections with my clients, all helped better position our team for the coming year.”



SALES STRATEGIES FOR THE NEW YEAR

LESLIE GROENE, BUSINESS CONSULTANT, GROENE CONSULTING

As we start 2021, it's a good time to consider how to be more strategic and productive with business development. Here are some sales strategies to consider.

Focus on the best, possibly new, prospects.

Looking at new verticals that are busy and growing will enable us to sell at the level we desire by pivoting into these new business engagements. Think about which industries you do business with that are struggling and ascertain which verticals look promising and migrate your efforts to those new, emerging tracks.

Reconnect with all active sales prospects.

This category includes pending prospects who've asked you to follow up in the future—for instance, "Check back in a month" or "Check back in two quarters." They may not buy—now or ever—but they've at least stated they want to hear from you in the future.

Create a re-engagement campaign, to reach past prospects. This category includes prospects who said "no" and prospects that disappeared into the

abyss. They aren't likely to convert now, but it's worth a try. Why? Some of the "lost" prospects won't be happy with their current providers—and some of the prospects that ghosted you before will suddenly have urgent needs today.

Stay accountable, including your follow up process.

If you aren't doing weekly "sales management" meetings, now is the time to start. They help you (or the salespeople, if you have a broader team) stay on track. If you are doing sales as the owner and don't have someone to hold you accountable, recruit a colleague. The ideal match as "sales manager" may not be a sales expert, but they're comfortable asking you hard questions.

Build and strengthen referral partnerships.

If you don't have partnerships (formal or informal), it's time to start. I regularly refer not-a-perfect-fit businesses that might still be good connections to other colleagues, and vice versa. If you have partnerships but haven't been in touch in a while...that's not ideal, but now's the time to reconnect. If you're top-of-mind when a partner hears about an opportunity, that's one less sales

opportunity you need to find via cold outreach. And to a point, more referral partners means more opportunities.

Seek biz dev advice from a range of sources.

Cast a wide net to find the sales and biz dev advice that works for you and your sales team/company. With an eye toward other advisors who specialize in your industry or colleagues in your industry. We can learn great ideas and strategies from others' efforts and then build our own specific initiatives.

Recognize that you will survive this.

If you get through this, you can handle almost anything. You—personally—will likely survive. And if your company doesn't make it, you will likely manage the setback. It will be sad and difficult and expensive. But you can emerge again, to pursue new opportunities with more knowledge and experience to guide you.

Leslie Groene is a business consultant, sales coach, and author with a background in the paper and print industry in the positions of sales rep and sales manager. She has been featured in many PIA and PrUA affiliate markets as a speaker and business development trainer focus on revenue generation and profit growth while coaching thousands of sales people. www.groeneconsulting.com.



NEW YEAR TECH PREP

MICK WOLCOTT, PARTNER, GOLDMAN LOCKEY SOLUTIONS, INC.

IT Resolutions for 2021

With 2021 already here, we thought it best to provide a checklist of

tech-focused to do's to start the new year off properly. 2020 is finally over, and your computer probably didn't get the attention it needed while you were focused on the pandemic. Take a look below and see what you can do to ensure that your technological resolutions are successful!

Password Management – You've been reading about personal information being hacked, leaked, or saved in plain text. This applies to businesses as well. It's a good practice to update/change your passwords every 45 days at a minimum. A great password manager, such as 1Password, can help make it simple. VMA members get a free trial of 1Password. It's best to have

different passwords for every login, so if one does get compromised, you don't risk access to others as well.

Updates – Time to get your computers prepped for the year. Installing needed OS and security updates can put a machine back in shape, and even make it feel like a new machine! Have your employees take a little time now, to avoid needing an update at an inopportune time. To update, go to Windows → Windows Update. If you are on a Mac, open up the App Store to check for applications, and System Preferences → Software Update to ensure you are on the latest OS.

Archiving – You and your staff have been downloading and sharing documents and files all year long, filling up your hard drive. With the holidays over, it's a great time to

archive your old email, applications, and files, and store them on an external drive, or in the cloud.

Antivirus – Running a non-invasive antivirus software like Malwarebytes (www.malwarebytes.com), can make sure you don't have any viruses, malware, or funky extensions running rampant. This is important for Apple users too.

Taking a little time to run through the above checklist can ensure that your business is set technologically to a great start to the new year. And you can feel relaxed that your business's tech health is in order!

Mick Wolcott is Partner at Goldman Lockey Solutions, Inc., a creative-focused technical team. They provide support for information technology needs. Everyone on their team has a background in creative (gaming, video, sound, and film) and excels at bridging the language gap that can exist between creative and tech. www.goldmanlockey.com.

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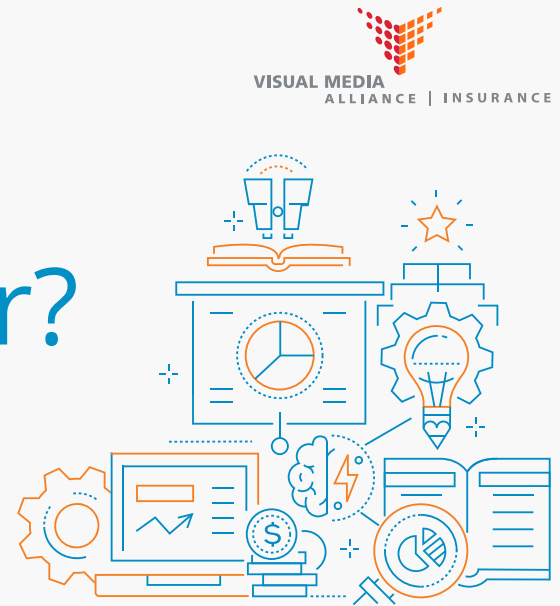


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