

THIS WAY FORWARD

SMART VENTURES



Taeschler's Leadership Strengthens GraficaGroup

>>> *Integrated marketing agency hiring for new social media.*

By Monica Odom, Editorial Assistant

GraficaGroup, Chester, started off in the basement of Debra Taeschler's first home in 1986. Today it is one of the few integrated marketing firms that is actually hiring in this economy. Working with clients such as PSE&G, Jackson Hewitt Tax Services and AT&T, GraficaGroup is a major player in the metro region, stressing a policy of cooperation and working together with clients.

Taeschler started Grafica after years of working at both New York and New Jersey agencies. She decided that she "would rather be an employer than be employed by differing points of view."

"I had a really defined vision of what I felt was the philosophy behind marketing communications," she says. "I was very bold-headed on what the quality product should be, as well as the importance of the strategic insight behind it."

According to Taeschler, the strategy can be broken down into several points: "It's a combination of being able to be on top of everything 24/7 and being able to make tough decisions when they need to be made." This gets easier as one attains more experience, Taeschler says, but she emphasizes that "you have to stay on your toes at all times."

Cooperation is also key. "Something I really drive into the agency is the ability to have all the oars in the water, in one direction, because if

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Debra Taeschler, founder of GraficaGroup, has a defined vision of the philosophy behind marketing communications.

we're not all working together in lock step, you know the ship is just going to go around and around and around. So you have to constantly stay on top of that as well," Taeschler says.

She also notes that it is important to see where the industry is going and to adapt quickly, especially in terms of technological advancements. This is actually one of the reasons why Grafica is looking to hire. "The area we're hiring in is the new social media space, Web 2.0," says Taeschler. "The reason that this came about so quickly is that when the Internet came into being, it was a very slow adoption curve, it took years," says Taeschler. "Social media just spreads like wild fire. The penetration has been so swift that people are trying to jump in and figure out what it is. So we're really still in that figuring-out phase."

With its hiring, GraficaGroup is a rare company in this type of economy, but it is also unique on another level: it has a female president. Taeschler views herself as a leader in this respect. "In the company itself, it inspires the women who are working here," she says. However, Taeschler points out that women still have far to go in the business world, adding that women do not yet have the networking capabilities that men have had for quite some time. "I think women have to be able to tap into networks like men do and need more experience at doing it," she says.

The bottom line for her, as a CEO, a wife and a mother, is to ask for help. "I think that what I've learned over the years is to delegate, which is extremely important, and not to hesitate to get help when you need it," she says. **NJB**