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Full Service Video Production and Digital Marketing Agency for Small, Medium and Large Companies, also providing Media and Public Speaking Training



Sharon Delaney McCloud
Managing Partner

Greenroom Communications
www.visitthegreenroom.com

Contact:
Sharon Delaney McCloud
877-820-6518
Sharon@visitthegreenroom.com

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

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- Sharon Delaney McCloud

CEOCFO: Ms. McCloud, what is Greenroom Communications?

Ms. McCord: We are a video production and digital marketing agency.

CEOCFO: Who are your typical clients?

Ms. McCloud: We have quite a wide variety, everything from very small, local clients all the way up to national and international companies. For example, we work with Lenovo. We have worked with Target and Samsung. When we started Greenroom in 2008, we were former television journalists who left that career to start our own agency. So initially our first service offerings were media training and presentation skills training. Our company grew its services out of that. Media training and public speaking training is still at the heart of what we do, so for those clients, we have Duke University, UNC and large corporations whose CEO or C-suite executives need media training or improved presentation skills training. It is a wide variety of clients and we do have a couple of startups, which are very exciting to be a part of where we’re helping bring to life someone’s vision or invention or new product or service. We feel it is such a privilege, so much fun to be able to be a part of bringing someone’s story to life.

CEOCFO: Your site indicates your goal is to make brands less corporate and more human. How does that translate day to day and how do you achieve that? Do most companies know they should want this approach?

Ms. McCloud: Here is the crux of it. Many times, a company is so caught up in the minutia of the details of their product or service. If it’s a high tech company, all of the stuff that is a very impressive, the kind of technology that they offer to solve solutions for people or companies. But at the heart of it, if companies or brands are unable to tell a story that engages and resonates with people about who and what they are, their message will be lost. We try to find a more simplistic and engaging way to tell a company’s story and to get past all of the jargon. Many times, companies and high tech or academia are so wrapped up in their jargon that kind of marketing message just does not get through. We try to humanize those stories.

CEOCFO: Are companies turning to you because they want that or is it more that they just know something is wrong and they are looking for direction?

Ms. McCloud: I think it is a bit of both. I think some have done a lot of trial and error with more traditional kinds of marketing and they are finding it is not working, so they are looking for a new solution. The very large marketing companies in larger cities have fantastic client lists and may have worked with those agencies and find that they are not really getting what they need. The growth of companies like Greenroom are more boutique agencies that are much more agile and can turn on a dime and be able to change your marketing strategy over night, rather than moving a giant ship

and changing course. A smaller, more agile agency like ours is really best suited as we move forward in the digital age of marketing because people are spending much more money in digital spaces, which results in the ability to change that message immediately in real time. I think once companies discover that marketing has changed so drastically, even from five or ten years ago, they realize they can open up themselves to working with agencies like ours rather than a traditional larger agency. It is definitely an education process getting these companies to understand that.

CEOCFO: *Would you walk us through a couple of engagements that show different sides of your services?*

Ms. McCloud: An example that would be something we are very proud of and we have won numerous awards for is a hospital here in Raleigh. Marketing in the healthcare space can be sometimes difficult because you have HIPAA regulations, guidelines and expectation of expertise and quality that a hospital wants to show. Here in our market in North Carolina it is very competitive because we have Duke University, which is a worldwide, respected university with research, all sorts of accolades and then UNC as well. UNC owns a number of facilities locally and they were trying to show the difference. This campaign is a local story but it is also a national story, the amount of money that is wasted when people go to the ER for something that could be treated at an urgent care. You could write a white paper or blog posts about that and write all sorts of content on a website about it, but how are you going to get people to read it and get the message to the broad based consumer or patient population? This hospital owns urgent care facilities in our market. The goal was to educate consumers that they can save time and money by going to an urgent care rather than the ER and part of the goal was to show the different kinds of ailments that you might be able to go for. Urgent cares can now treat broken limbs. Maybe in yesteryear, that wasn't eh fact, but these urgent cares have x-ray equipment and physicians who can set bones. How are we going to sell that message? We wrote a rap song and had five urgent care doctors rapping and dancing. We created a musical version of it and these doctors had to have total buy in because it was their faces getting up there and singing and dancing around. Some of them felt a little foolish at first, but they committed to it. It also was a commitment from the top marketing officer and she believed that doing the different things and showing people a different side of healthcare marketing would be able to grab people's attention. We created the video and had a full social media launch and public relations plan that went along with it. The campaign was considered a huge success, we surpassed all the goals as far as the number of YouTube views and Facebook views that it got. The client was thrilled, it was covered by the local media, they have since been recognized nationally at healthcare marketing conferences for really thinking outside the box.

CEOCFO: *What is an example of some of the work you do other than video?*

Ms. McCloud: Right now we are in the middle of helping a client with bring a new product to market. We have been working with them for about a year and a half. It has included everything from telling their digital story on their website, social media and trade show, helping them get their product out that way. We also do video support for that. The biggest piece that has been really fun is helping prepare them to get onto Shark Tank, the television show. We are waiting to hear back right now but it looks like they are a finalist to get on to Shark Tank this fall. That will immediately get their product in front of millions of people, so we are very excited for that.

CEOCFO: *How have you attracted such well known clients?*

Ms. McCloud: My business partners are Kim Dean Holderness and Penn Holderness. Kim and I started Greenroom in 2008. We are former television journalists. She and I started the business and all the media training, presentation training and video production work. Her husband left television in 2013 and Kim and Penn did this funny little video called Christmas Jammies. There were ten million views in seven days. Our website crashed, our servers crashed, and within two weeks, we had seventeen thousand email inquiries. The viral video is what put us on the map. All of sudden, people who have never heard of Greenroom now knew who we were. It continues to bring us business because the Holderness' are more like silent partners in the business now and do not come to the office each day, they actual manage their own brand, the Holderness family brand. Greenroom shoots a lot of their videos for them. Target and Samsung came to Greenroom via the Holderness family.

CEOCFO: *What has surprised you as you have grown and developed the business?*

Ms. McCloud: What surprises me the most is the amount of education small business owners need to have. We are learning on the job, I did not major in business; I majored in communications and journalism. For us, the learning curve has been the most surprising piece of it, to run a business and have ten people leave their careers and come and work for us is a huge responsibility. What I do as I run the company in the day to day operations is a huge responsibility but it is also a huge privilege. I fall on my face and make rookie mistakes all the time, but we still flourish and we are still successful despite that. I think that is what has surprised me the most in a strange way. There is a tremendous amount to learn when you are running a business and if you are willing to put in the time and the effort to do that, you can succeed.

CEOCFO: *What is next for Greenroom Communications?*

Ms. McCloud: We grew so quickly from 2013 to 2016 and we have plateaued at this point on purpose. I think what is next is we are getting all grown up. We worked out of basements, coffee shops and dining rooms from 2008 to 2015. For seven years, we were very much a mom and pop shop. Now we are in a beautiful office in the middle of a thriving downtown. What I see for us next is steady, smart growth. That is my goal as the managing partner who is in there every day, running the business, having a smart steady growth. I want to have some real sustainable clients that are going to stay with us for a long time.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts, what is the takeaway for our readers?*

Mr. McCloud: We spend so much time at our job and I was in a career for twenty years and thought that was what I was going to do for the rest of my life. It is realizing that you do not have to be stuck in something that you do not want to do anymore. You can take that step. You can find the grit within you and you can put that idea or dream into action. If you are willing to put the work into it, you can do it.

