

»» Our continuing coverage of Eagle Award Winners. This month's space is for the Creative Person of the Year.

2004 Creative Person of the Year Comes at DM From All Sides!

BY SHANNON WALKER-LEMBKE



The Eagle Award winner for Creative Person of the Year, **Debbie Williams**, understands direct marketing from multiple perspectives. Debbie has first-hand knowledge of both copywriting and graphic design but is no stranger to the numbers side of marketing either.

Debbie's first experience in direct marketing started right after graduation from Ohio

State University with a 12 week internship with Publishers Clearing House on Long Island. This opportunity turned into more than two years as a sweepstakes copywriter. While at PCH, Debbie worked with the marketing staff to develop campaign strategies and instructed the art staff in the development of project components from design through completion. This experience allowed Debbie to move up into an account management position with R.L. Polk.

At Polk, Debbie acted as liaison between their clients' direct marketing management and Polk's creative, production, lettershop, and senior management. This further broadened her exposure to all sides of direct marketing including paying attention to the numbers and the importance of understanding mailing requirements. After living in New York for more than four years, Debbie looked west and moved to Denver to be closer to her family and enjoy a more laid back lifestyle.

Following this move to Denver, Debbie received Graphic Design and Computer Graphics diplomas from Platt College. With both sides of creative covered and a solid grasp of the financial side of direct marketing, Debbie joined G.A. Wright Marketing in Denver. There she designed and wrote copy for direct mail packages, self-mailers, newsletters, brochures, and a variety of other channels. She worked for G.A. Wright as Senior Art Director for four years, leaving in 1997.

Also in 1997, Debbie was getting enough outside requests for design services that she started her own freelance design company, Cavalry Creative. Through Cavalry Creative she designed, and occasionally wrote, direct mail packages for a


variety of clients including the Denver Art Museum, Denver Botanic Gardens, Emergency Family Assistance Association and many others. In her spare time, Debbie still takes on some freelance design projects for non-profit organizations – and of course, the RMDMA.

Debbie entered the energy market in 1998 as a Senior Graphic Artist with en?able, a division of KN Energy. At en?able, Debbie continued to be involved in all the aspects of direct marketing including strategy planning, list selection, and working with printers and lettershops. Working on business-to-business brochures and direct mailings, consumer product bill inserts, print ads, and even retail signage for utility companies, Debbie faced the creative challenge of generating response for energy products that most people consider mundane.

Seeing direct marketing from all sides prepared Debbie to fill her current position as Manager for Advertising & Marketing at Kinder Morgan, which took over KN Energy in 1999. At Kinder Morgan, Debbie is the only person covering all the direct marketing bases on a full-time basis. She's responsible for creative projects from conception to completion. She plans, designs and manages advertising and marketing strategies including consumer direct mailings, bill inserts, newspaper and radio ads, corporate collateral, and annual reports for both Kinder Morgan Inc. and Kinder Morgan Energy Partners.

Based on her experience, it's not surprising that Debbie targets keeping up with mailing requirements and monitoring the numbers as key skills for a person to be successful on the creative side of direct marketing. Using the resources of the US Postal Service and your lettershops can help prevent costly mistakes, such as printing a reply card on paper that is too light weight to mail or putting a bar code in the wrong location.

As a graphic artist or copywriter even if you "break out in hives when a spreadsheet hits your desk," Debbie cautions you to pay attention to the numbers. If you design a beautiful four-color dimensional package that draws well but exceeds your budget, your overall return may come in below your stated goal.

Debbie's secret for successful creative, "Keep an eye on the bottom line, and everybody wins." 

for the January 4th Breakfast Summit!