

One Brand of Entrepreneur

Lorrie Dixson Griggs '86



Owner of Eskimo Advertising, a boutique marketing firm in Atlanta and Charleston with clients all over the country, Lorrie Dixson Griggs '86 is a master of branding. Her client list includes Moe's Original Bar B Que, Amalfi Pizza, Orange Beach Concierge, Red Phone Booth, Adam & Eve of North and South Carolina, and more. As Eskimo Advertising celebrates its 15th anniversary this year, the company has grown from a side business launched on a whim into a full-service advertising, public relations, and social media firm specializing in effective branding and innovative marketing strategies.

"It was at Summit School that I first learned to think outside of the box," says Lorrie, who attended from kindergarten through 9th grade, before finishing her high school years at Salem Academy. After graduating with a BA in Communications from the University of Alabama, Lorrie worked in Atlanta for CNN in news production for fifteen years. "While there, I was always looking for new challenges, and I had the opportunity to freelance for an advertising company. During that time, I discovered that I loved the

marketing field but didn't like the way the particular company I was working for was run. It was at that point that I decided I had made enough contacts in the industry to start my own company. So, while still working at CNN, I launched Eskimo Advertising in 2002. Once my clientele grew, I left CNN to run my company full-time." Then in 2009 she made a move. "I wanted to be near the water, so I moved the company to Charleston, where I plan to stay permanently."

When Lorrie originally launched Eskimo, she mainly bought advertising space in print, radio, TV, and billboards, as well as handling all aspects of design and execution for clients. As she became more seasoned, however, she began to realize that there were often opportunities for free press. Recognizing an opportunity when she saw one, Lorrie began establishing PR and media relations contacts in order to gain additional publicity for her clients. Eventually, she was able to bring PR entirely in-house. By streamlining her organization, she was able to control all aspects of a client's brand while increasing awareness through targeted public and media relations.

As time passed, social media exploded onto the scene, offering yet greater ways for marketers to zero-in on their target audiences. "It is very important to leverage companies among the fastest growing social platforms," says Lorrie. "It is key to define fans and show clients how and when to engage on social media, as well as offer value and news to drive immediate consumer action." Eskimo helps leverage its clients with social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and more. By creating, growing, and monitoring accounts, the company guides clients into making smart moves. In addition to establishing a social media presence for clients, Eskimo also works with cutting-edge web designers to build web sites, lay out content, and write copy.

Fast forward to 2016, and Lorrie and her husband, Bert, always looking for new opportunities, entered into yet another venture. The two started Drifter Merch, a promotional marketing company that supplies custom apparel, art, and other branded offerings for businesses, musicians, and fundraisers. Lifelong music fans and concert-goers, the two launched a website selling vintage-style music-inspired t-shirts, hats, and more, in addition to art on reclaimed wood. "My husband was always designing really cool music-inspired tees on high-quality materials. I urged him to start up an apparel business on the side, where he could handle the art and I could handle the marketing and business side of things," Lorrie comments. "We enjoy selling our original designs online and at events, but we figured out quickly that the real money was in custom orders, which has been pretty easy with all of my business contacts."

Says Lorrie of her future, "While every day is a new adventure in business as an entrepreneur, I look forward to what the future holds."