



home subscriptions about us advertiser biz directory contact us links

Greater Charlotte Biz Update is a monthly email newsletter featuring links to exclusive material and select business resources for the benefit of Greater Charlotte Biz subscribers.

Publisher
John Paul Galles
(ex.102)

**Associate
Publisher/Editor**
Maryl A. Lane
(ex.104)

Creative Director
Rebecca G. Fairchild
(ex. 103)

Business Development
Sandy Rosenfeld
(ex. 107)

Account Executives
Janet Kropinak
(ex. 109)
Mimi Zelman
(ex. 105)

inJanuary2007issue

Success Ignited

Ask Bob Morgan about the highlight of the short time he has served as president of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and a broad smile covers his face. Morgan's enthusiasm is matched only by his dogged determination to help guide Charlotte to continued growth through a carefully planned mission based on healthy economic development, good public policy and providing chamber members with increased value.



features



Finding Solutions in a High-Tech World

CC Communications is an online marketing firm, and more than just a mere Web design outfit. Its founders are proud of their top ranking among area Web designers, but avoid being categorized. They emphasize using the Internet and adapting its capabilities to fit the needs of clients that are interested in alternative, cutting edge solutions to marketing and operational issues.

Galles Communications
Group, Inc.
5601 77 Center Dr.
Suite 250
Charlotte, NC 28217-0736

Ph. 704-676-5850
Fax: 704-676-5853

contact us

About the newsletter, biz profiles, and suggested story ideas - publisher@greatercharlottebiz.com
About advertising - jgalles@greatercharlottebiz.com
About subscriptions - info@greatercharlottebiz.com
About announcements or news releases - editor@greatercharlottebiz.com

Previous Issues:



December 2006



November 2006



October 2006



September 2006



August 2006



July 2006



Finding Solutions in a High-Tech World

By Lisa Hoffmann

CC Communications is an online marketing firm, offering customized Internet marketing and systems implementation plans specifically designed to meet the individual needs of the customer.

While known primarily for its Web design capabilities, the company offers a much broader array of services. As co-founder William H. ("Kip") Cozart explains, "Primarily what companies hire us to do is find creative and innovative methods to solve communication and operational problems. We adapt technology to find business solutions for our customers."

Typically, that technology involves the Internet. And that is where Kip Cozart, wife and co-founder Loretta Cozart, and her twin brother Russ Husky see themselves as pioneers.

The Cozarts built upon their backgrounds in media, advertising and public relations work when they started CC Communications in 1994. From the beginning, they had clients that wanted to dabble in early business versions of the Internet. But, typically, such systems were self-contained, not universal.

After Husky joined the Cozarts—he signed on at the 45th day, bringing along his uncanny technological savvy—the company found itself repeatedly attracting clients seeking new ways to market and communicate.

Loretta Cozart recalls how the trio consulted with a business counselor to identify a niche for their nascent firm. The advice was to find one thing and do it well.

Loretta smiles and muses: "That's when Russ said, 'Now don't get excited, but there's this new thing called the Internet.'"

So they emphasized using the Internet and adapting its capabilities to fit the needs of clients that were interested in alternative, cutting edge solutions to marketing and operational issues.

"We didn't see, and still don't see, the Internet as anything different than traditional media," says Kip Cozart. "It's just another set of tools to accomplish communication goals. That's why our company name is CC Communications. We're not CC Web Site Design."



pictured (l to r): Kip Cozart, President and CEO;
Loretta Cozart, Vice President and CFO;
Russ Husky, Vice President, Systems Engineer and CIO

More Than Award-Winning Web Sites

CC Communications was recently ranked #1 in the list of Top 25 Website Design Companies by The Charlotte Business Journal. The team has also won notable Web site design honors from The Web Marketing Association and The MarCom Creative Awards. But there's much more to their story.

Yes, CC Communications can point to hundreds of Web site designs it has created, with myriad emphases such as corporate branding, business-to-business, broadcast e-mail, e-commerce services and flash animation to name several. And it is true that notable clients include more than a few heavy hitters such as Snider Tire, The Cato Corporation and the Bissell Companies.

But CC Communications does much more for these clients and others. Husky explains the company's viewpoint. "The majority of Web companies are really brochure designers," he says. "If you look at pretty pictures on a page and some words and it's linked all together, that's what 95 percent of Web design companies do."

"These companies definitely are not application designers," Husky continues. "If you say, 'I need you to connect to the legacy system that I have in the back that's reading data and passing data back and forth and connecting information from the Web, most companies that are Web designers wouldn't be able to handle that,'" he says. "I feel like we're more of a software company."

But CC Communications is more, still, Kip Cozart says. Like an ad agency, his company features creative services, graphics and other staples of the advertising trade. "We're also a software integrator and a software application and development company," he adds. "We're a technical strategy company and a consulting company. We are a programming company, an application developer, and we'll write software or adapt existing software. We are a Web site hosting company. We are an information technology company."

While CC Communications won't build a technology network for a client, it will design applications and processes to custom fit that company's environment. And what CC Communications adds, Kip Cozart says, will help a client operate better, smarter, quicker and faster.

With that explanation, he hits on his company's mantra: "Work better, smarter, quicker and faster." The phrase recurs frequently as the Cozarts and Husky outline their business model.

CC Communications serves as an extension of a client's advertising, marketing and information technology departments, Kip Cozart says. The company does this through on-going consultation, creative services and technical advice, and it provides these services for as long as the client wants them.

CC Communications offers more than just off-the-shelf solutions. "People would rather us design a system around them than for them to use a system that already exists," Husky says, and adds that it makes sense. Often a client operates as it does because it has found a competitive advantage.

That's why CC Communications takes time to study a client's situation, sizing up resources and goals, and assessing the technology that's already in place, Kip Cozart says. The object is to identify how to add the most efficient enhancements, without replacing everything the client has put together.

Then CC Communications develops a blueprint for solutions to the prospective client's needs.

Clients Want a Trusted Advisor

The vast majority of CC Communications clients sign on because they want a trusted advisor, Kip Cozart says. "They want to know how to adapt to new technology and make it work continuously better for them," he adds. "We end up with customers for a very long time, and hopefully we're helping them grow and continue to prosper."

CC Communications uses three concentrations of skill sets to be what Loretta Cozart calls "advocates for our clients." Kip Cozart charts those skills this way: creative services, which includes graphic designers, artists and copywriters; programmers, who use technology or invent technology; and strategists, for customers who want to know how to use the Internet in creative, marketing and technical senses.

Kip Cozart calls it a holistic approach, and it's working. Since 1994, the company has grown to 17 full-timers.

Growth is coming faster these days. Kip Cozart expects a 20 percent to 22 percent increase in revenue for fiscal 2006. The firm's clients number in the hundreds and, while most are situated in the Carolinas, some are international such as Chicago Pneumatic Tool Company. CC Communications started with that firm's U.S. headquarters in Rock Hill, but now does most of its work with the corporate office in France.

CC Communications brought in a host of new clients in 2004 when it agreed with Concord-based CT Communications (CTC), primarily a phone company, to take over Web hosting and technical support for its customers.

"Fortunately for us," Kip Cozart says, "CTC was very concerned about taking care of their customers, even if they were going to divorce themselves from that part of the business. We have a reputation of very strong service and proactive customer relationships. They invited us to work with them and that's how the process began."

The Cozarts and Husky preside over 3,500 square feet in Regency Executive Park near Nations Ford Road, but expect to expand in early 2007. They haven't determined whether that will be at their south Charlotte site or somewhere else.

Farther down the road, there might be multiple locations. Looking at the rapid changes in the Internet and in technology, Husky feels the company has to double in size in five years.

As the company grows, its founders hope to keep long-term clients, those that have been in the fold for six or seven years. That kind of longevity means a client trusts CC Communications to keep it up to speed, Kip Cozart says.

Welcoming Technology Change

"When we see a change in technology, we welcome it, because it helps us continue to refine ways we can add value to what we're doing for our customers," affirms Cozart.

One satisfied client is the Wachovia Championship, which brings PGA Tour golfers to Charlotte for annual competition at Quail Hollow Club. In 2002, the first year of the tournament, CC Communications played a relatively small role, but saw enough to suggest a significant change in ticket sales, greatly reducing the need for telemarketing.

"We said we really think the public is ready for online ticket buying and we think you can do it faster, cheaper and better, and tie it in more directly to support services like e-mail notification," Kip Cozart explains. With help from CC Communications, the tourney's support staff made the switch and realized cost-cutting efficiencies.

CC Communications has become more of a database partner for the tournament rather than a vendor, says Jan Ivey, Wachovia Championship director of marketing and sponsor services.

"They come to us with creative ideas of how we can accomplish things with technology," Ivey says. "CC Communications built a volunteer database management tool for us that is one of the best in the volunteer environment. Within the PGA Tour, we probably are the most technologically savvy event."

Seeing results such as those with the Wachovia Championship is a big gratification, Kip Cozart says.

"Everything we do is an educational process," he says. "We have to educate ourselves because technology is never the same two days in a row."

Husky underscores that point. "One of the founders of Intel says that roughly every 24 months, the capacity of technology will double," he says. "Now, technology is coming at us like a fire hose. We're taking the Internet off the desktop and putting it into the telephone. When you get a true broadband on the phone, you'll have the handheld power of a desktop. Then, the sky is the limit, and that probably will happen in five years. "We're going to have to use ingenuity to help clients," he adds.

That leads Kip Cozart to muse about simplicity. "Right now, we've got so many things, so many combinations of technology and tools," he says. "The next big breakthrough is taking these technologies and tools and ingraining them into the more natural ways people build and run organizations. We need a one-stop shop where you're getting things done without having to look at all the components. The simplicity factor will help us take advantage of all these technologies."

With that, Kip and Loretta return to simple business precepts. "Our company is involved in the community," Loretta Cozart says, "and that plays to our success." She cites her work with the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and her husband's service on the board of the Better Business Bureau. "You have to contribute to the community in ways that don't necessarily impact your bottom line," she adds.

And Kip Cozart offers an uncomplicated take on what his company does: "The fundamental rules of marketing and business haven't changed," he says. "It's all about setting goals, setting objectives, using creative strategy and using the best tools you have. That's why we have always seen ourselves as a communications provider and a solutions provider. We will continue to help clients find ways to do things better."



CC Communications, Inc. 

205 Regency
Executive Park Dr., Ste. 100
Charlotte, N.C. 28217
Phone: 704-543-1171; 800-556-1561

Principals: William H. ("Kip") Cozart III,
President and CEO; Loretta H. Cozart, Vice
President and CFO; Russ Husky, Vice
President, Systems Engineer and CIO

Employees: 17

Founded: 1994

Awards: MarCom Creative Awards, Gold
Award & Honorable Mention, 2006; Web
Marketing Association, Standard of
Excellence WebAward, 2006; Top National
Web Site Design, Successful Meetings maga-
zine, 1999; National Award of Distinction,
The Communicator Awards, 2000; Best of
Class Award – American Economic
Development Council, 1997; Golden Web
Award, The NC High Country Host,
2001/2002

Business: Leading Internet production and
marketing companies serving the Carolinas
and the Southeast offering advanced and
cost-efficient Web-based resources. The
company delivers a customized Internet
marketing and systems implementation
plan specifically designed to meet the indi-
vidual needs of the customer.

www.cccommunications.com