

GROWING CONCERN:

Mounting costs provide incentive to buy long-term care insurance.

Elder Care In Depth | 11

VOL. 26, NO. 42



KANSAS CITY BUSINESS JOURNAL

kansascity.bizjournals.com

SCREEN TESTED:

EJ4 adapts training to play to clients' learning, viewing habits.

Growth Strategies | 19



JUNE 27-JULY 3, 2008 \$3.00

SMALL PRIVATE COMPANY - FIRST PLACE

Stuckwisch makes creativity a bottom line entry

BY JERRY LAMARTINA | STAFF WRITER

The balance sheet for Vicki Stuckwisch blends the rigors of fiscal stewardship with the fun of creativity.

Stuckwisch became CFO of Kansas City-based Barkley when she joined the agency in 1994. She added the title and duties of COO in 2002.

The three accomplishments she's most proud of at Barkley embody her responsibility as the agency's financial steward.

First, she set up the company's employee stock-ownership plan. Barkley became 43 percent employee-owned in 1997 and fully employee-owned in 2000. Second (and third), she spearheaded two agency moves.

The first move, in 1996, was from Shawnee Mission Parkway to what she described as "an empty shell with pigeons in it" at Eighth and Washington streets in Kansas City. The agency leased that downtown space for 10 years before outgrowing it.

Stuckwisch then found and developed the agency's present space in Kansas City's Crossroads Arts District, the former world headquarters of Trans World Airlines. She sought the staff's ideas about what

would make the space most creative and best suit their needs.

The creativity shown in the new office embodies the way the agency functions and what it tries to do for clients.

"We have a great partnership, and I think it's because we all understand that what we're selling is our creativity," Stuckwisch said. "You're not working just for the bottom line, but we understand that what's important for our business is creativity and ideas, and that will flow to the bottom line."

Another big project Stuckwisch worked on was the creation of a single profit-and-loss structure for the agency out of the several that had existed for different focus areas of its business: public relations, sponsorships and events, interactive, design and customer insight management.

"We realized we all needed to be there for the client as a whole package," she said. "We want to compete with other agencies, not with ourselves."

Barkley President Jeff King praised Stuckwisch's "great perspective on financial stewardship" and her tough-but-fair negotiating style.

"She provides financial counsel to the rest of the executive committee, making budgetary decisions beneficial to the long-term health of the company and our clients," King said. "In the ad agency world, there's often a tug of war be-



DAVE KAUF | KCBJ

As CFO for Barkley, Vicki Stuckwisch says she understands that "what we're selling is creativity" and that "what's important for our business is creativity and ideas, and that will flow to the bottom line."

tween the creative needs of clients and the CFO's desire to provide financial returns."

Stuckwisch created a new structure for financial reporting and an incentive plan for senior management as part of the change to one profit-and-loss structure, King said. She also has been heavily involved in the past year in Barkley's purchase of another agency, Ripple Effects Interactive, he said.

"Vicki's style as the CFO ... is that she's

always looking at it through the filter of what's best for our partners and our clients," King said.

Barkley had revenue of \$42 million in 2007 and is on track for "more than that" in 2008, Stuckwisch said.

So the numbers look good, and the creative juices are flowing, but Stuckwisch said it's the people she works with that motivate her most in her work.

"I'm lucky enough to be in a business that's creative and idea-generated," she

said. "I think great accountants are creative," she said, as opposed to those who practice "creative accounting."

"Barkley is a great company to work for, and I'm lucky enough to be surrounded not just by great leadership ... but all of the partners, too," she said. "It's really fun to come to work every day when you get to create."

jenarissa@bizjournals.com | 816-471-5900