

Close-Up With

GAYLĒ DUNCAN

Personal:

Born in Medford, OR. Lived in Washington since 1989. Married to Jim Duncan since August of 2007.

Education:

Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications and Journalism, City University. Selected for Dean's List. Studied performance piano.

Experience:

Over 16 years experience in public affairs/community relations, bio/technology, and wireless sectors. Helped to launch both GTE Wireless and Cingular in the Pacific NW region. Founded Executive Options MarCom in 2004.

Clients & Affiliations:

Baldwin Resource Group; Communiqué PR; Door To Door Storage; MEND Medical; Northwest Energy Technology Collaborative; Qpass (Amdocs); SafeHarbor Technology Corp.; Siemens IT Solutions & Services, Inc.; TransACT, TranSenda; Washington Clean Tech Alliance.

Hobbies:

Playing the piano, chess, skiing, calligraphy and foreign language studies.

Marketing and communication strategies are powerful tools that build value for companies, customers and shareholders. For more than 16 years, GaylĒ Duncan, a founding partner of Executive Options MarCom, has learned how effective these tools can be.

As a member of the team that launched the GTE Wireless market and the Cingular Wireless market in the Pacific Northwest, Duncan knows that it's not enough to get attention for a promotion, event, or outreach. Clients must have tangible outcomes to achieve business goals.

With a broad range of responsibilities that included advertising, external affairs, community relations, external/internal communications, events and sponsorships and market development for vendor relationships, Duncan learned to ask the question, "What is the outcome that I want to see? And what is the definition of success?"

"Whether it's placement of an article in a noteworthy publication or increased sales, value must be identified in order to decide whether an effort is successful," said Duncan.

Putting this strategy to work, for GTE Wireless, Duncan kicked off the first "Donate-A-Phone" program in the state and worked with legislators and King County Solid Waste to collect used cellphones to be refurbished and provided to victims of domestic abuse. The cellphones, classified as hazardous waste, were kept out of landfills and this resonated well with customers.

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"Not only did we help the community, but we achieved key business metrics, such as achieving more retail store traffic that were drop off points for the used phones," recounts Duncan.

Articulating clear and simple key messages ensures that project goals are successfully achieved. The political landscape can be filled with hazards and while serving as the PAC President for all GTE business units in Washington, Oregon and Idaho, Duncan was mindful of how important a clear and simple message is. "Political issues tend to be emotionally charged," Duncan said, "by remaining focused and clearly communicating to employees that candidates were only being evaluated on the issues that affected us as a business, clear understanding and trust was developed."

Duncan's focused approach helps clients identify the benefits that they bring to the marketplace. "Companies often use a laundry list to describe the features of



their products that they view as important. But that may not be what the marketplace needs or wants." She adds, "As a result, messages often become cluttered and fail to create a unique appeal and differentiation in the marketplace. Ask yourself, 'What makes this product, service or story interesting to my target audience?'"

"We lose the opportunity to develop customer loyalty when we fail to show how our product or service can truly help them to live, function or perform better. When that message is communicated, you know that your marketing communications strategy is effective."

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