



Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Deb Adams

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

Deb Adams launched JustCause Marketing Inc. in 1996. The result was a new model for a marketing agency that harnessed the then fledgling internet and had a “green” mission long before the concept of environmental consciousness and socially responsible business practices became en vogue.

Today Deb is CEO of Domo Domo International Marketing Group, Inc., a Cincinnati and Connecticut based branding and design agency. Domo Domo builds upon the core values of JustCause, and renews the company’s focus on generating big ideas that add new value and life to brands via an interweaving of high level strategic and creative talent.

In addition to her award winning work with fortune 100 and 500 companies, Deb founded LegaSeaS International, a nonprofit marine conservation organization, and serves on the boards of international organizations involved in ocean conservation and the preservation of whales and dolphins.

Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?

A: Two areas of the greatest benefit are a blend of the intangible and tangible:

The intangible aspect included a re-positioning of our business and leadership thinking to focus energy on innovation and taking calculated risks. In these uncertain times, when the natural tendency is to be more cautious, we proactively seized this as an opportunity to transform our business practices and adapt to today’s challenges. We call this *diving in ~ and ~ doing more™*.

The second key factor is early adoption of tangible new technologies (like Skype, WebEx®, FTP and others) that enable us to service our client base, as well as work together as a virtual team, quickly and easily. This has reduced our overhead, increased our efficiencies and enabled us to enhance our client services, locally and globally.

Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?

A: The economic climate has created a very competitive environment characterized by a risk adverse mode of operation, which ironically makes some companies unable to take advantage of real opportunities. From an agency perspective, we have shifted our deliverables to focus energy on assisting brands and businesses in reviewing their current equities to reveal untapped potential that may expand their business without traditional capital investment approach used in the past.

Q: How will globalization affect your professional area in the near term?

A: We now approach all of our projects framed within a global context to ensure we present options not only for US markets but also include potential global implications and applications. In the past clients would focus on each region separately and we are encouraging them to bundle, where appropriate, concepts for expansion into other regions.

Secondly, out of necessity we have adapted to working with manufacturing operations in the third world with a key focus on how creative (consumer packaging, print, etc.) are produced at overseas operations where traditional hands-on quality assurance is not feasible. There are inherent risks associated with sending highly secure materials overseas, and beyond that the mechanics of artwork file preparation require significantly more time and care to ensure that intentions are resulting in desirable outcomes and brand assets are properly secured so that a new brand, or work in progress, is *not* being exposed to competitors pre-maturely.

Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?

A: The economic recovery is going to be slow and take time. To be successful, we believe, our clients need to adopt a more proactive stance and view these challenging times as real opportunities to invest in their businesses and get ahead of curve. While this may appear counterintuitive to the natural response to challenging times of taking a risk-averse, conservative approach, the reality is many highly successful products and initiatives were launched in times of economic strife.

Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?

A: It is increasingly difficult to be effective in business without a global perspective. In addition, our expectations of young professionals require this emerging group to invest the time and energy necessary to complement their educational background with experiential knowledge. We look for professionals that are willing to start at the bottom, garner varied experiences from all aspects of our business, including global perspective, and come armed with a positive attitude characterized by a natural curiosity and flexibility. On a strong positive note, young women have even more opportunities in the global economy and are poised to take on leadership roles in business categories that were traditionally male dominated industries in the past.