

RedRover Small is big enough

By Rob Robertson

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Julie Lunn (left) and Lori Frazier make up RedRover, a new marketing and communications firm based in Bartlett.

Duo's firm connects sales, marketing efforts

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Achieving a "breakthrough," almost by definition, means starting from the inside.

That concept became the working philosophy behind both the name and the business model used at RedRover, Memphis' newest -- and quite possibly smallest -- marketing and communications firm.

"We want to connect advertising and marketing strategies to the people within the sales force and the whole sales process," said Red- Rover principal Julie Lunn, who started the Bartlett-based firm with fellow principal Lori Frazier after both women had grown tired of the corporate grind. "The salespeople are really where the rubber meets the road."

Said Frazier: "In big companies the advertising department is often times removed from the sales force. We help close that gap because we look at the whole cycle."

Ironically, Lunn and Frazier were both enjoying successful careers at a big company when the two decided to have lunch together one day last fall.

Both women worked in marketing at First Horizon National Corp. at the time -- Lunn headed up sales development while Frazier handled employee communication.

By the time the check arrived, the two women had all but decided to start their own business.

"I'm just wired to be an entrepreneur," Frazier said. "When I mentioned I was thinking about going on my own at lunch, Julie was all over it. We had one whiteboard meeting and a game of pool and we were off."

"Ordinarily we're not like that," Lunn said. "We don't just jump into things; but with this it just worked out really well."

The name RedRover was chosen for the firm in part because Lunn and Frazier are both dog-lovers, and because of the symbolic link to the childhood game where the objective is to "break through" the arms of the opposing players, eventually forming one unified team.

As a two-person shop operating from a modest office in the suburbs, RedRover's principals say they can be more flexible and adaptive to each client's individual goals without worrying about their own operating costs.

"Keeping our overhead low equates to greater value for our clients," Frazier said. "Location isn't really an issue, because it's our intention to primarily spend time on-site with our clients, just as an internal marketing director would."

The RedRover model employs a multi-tier approach that incorporates a creative, tailored external marketing effort while engaging the workforce and setting standards.

"They've been business advisers as much as they've been an advertising or marketing agency for us," said Steele Ford, director of the Harbor of Health Clinic and Wellness Center, one of RedRover's first clients. "They've been able to help us simplify our message and put in a system of accountability with our marketing effort and our marketing dollars."

The small size of the firm has meant its client list is necessarily limited -- which is fine with the owners.

"We're looking for a few good companies," Lunn said. "We don't want to be everything to everyone; we expect to stay about the same size that we are now."

Frazier says feedback from clients overwhelmingly indicates that the small to mid-size business market is underserved when it comes to marketing support.

"These smaller companies have marketing needs, but the approach must be different," she said.

"It's about grass roots marketing -- highly targeted, measurable marketing efforts that drive a definable return on investment.

"It's about doing more with less -- that's the market we serve; that's our niche."

-- Rob Robertson: 529-5888

RedRover

Memphis area's newest marketing and communications firm

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