

Target Marketing Takes Perfect Aim for Clients

Donna Dumas always knew she wanted to be her own boss. So when, like so many other women in the seventies, she suddenly found herself a single parent, she took the plunge.

Combining her need for a fulltime job and daycare for her infant daughter, she opened a Child Care Center. The year was 1978, and the place, North Olmsted, Ohio. For the next four years, Dumas cared for nearly 300 children in the not-so-easy-to-handle infant to kindergarten category.

Then, when little Jessica was ready for elementary school, Dumas moved on to more lucrative pastures. She started her own video documentation business making taped records of household assets for the affluent suburbanites of Cleveland. She did well, but ultimately, due to the high cost of medical insurance and the general lack of benefits endured by the self-employed, had no choice but to work for someone else.

Again she was very successful, selling commercial air time for Eastman Radio in Chicago.

"It was baptism by fire," Dumas recalled. "I didn't know a thing about advertising, but within three months I was calling on the biggest agencies in town, like Leo Burnett, Ogilvy & Mather and J. Walter Thompson."

After two years, Dumas was hired away by CBS Radio Representatives, where she coordinated educational seminars to the ad agency community for some of the largest radio stations in the country.

In 1991, the newly-married Dumas moved to Birmingham, where the entrepreneurial bug soon bit her again. And there, in the spare bedroom of her bungalow on Townsend Street, Target Marketing was born.

"The early days were a blast," said Dumas. "My sister and I both started our business at the same time, in the same bedroom! She was Target Travel and I was Target Marketing. So, if someone called for Rita, we knew it was for Target Travel. If they asked for Donna,



Donna Dumas of Target Marketing

it was Target Marketing."

Today, Dumas and Rita O'Brien still share offices in their new joint headquarters in Birmingham at 769 Forest, in an old residential neighborhood now zoned commercial. (See opposite page for more about O'Brien and Target Travel.)

Dumas' business is booming. She positions herself as a full service marketing communications firm that specializes in locating and reaching "targeted" markets.

What's a "targeted" market?

"Well, a good example is the baby boomers," Dumas said. "They're getting fairly close to retirement age now. We're helping one of our clients, The Society For Lifetime Planning, reach the boomers. We've put together a two-day retirement workshop and fair that we expect will attract several thousand of them at the end of October. The event is being held at the Shotwell-Gustafson Pavilion at Oakland University, and is featuring Soupy Sales and Dr. Sonya Friedman as special guests."

In addition to putting on Retirement Fairs, Target Marketing also provides their clients with such services as radio and television commercials, newspaper and magazine ads, flyers, brochures, posters, annual reports, marketing plans and anything else that communicates with pictures or words.

When asked what project has been the single most exciting accomplishment to date for Target Marketing, Dumas said: "The ink is still drying on a 52-week contract we just signed with WJR 760 to purchase a block of time on Sunday evenings for a new radio show, 'The Retirement Adventure.' It is very exciting to know that my client will be able to reach listeners in 38 states, because of the power of WJR. This is a major coup for any marketing consultancy. I've been trying to buy a block of time from the powerhouse stations in this market for five years. We've had good results with some of the small stations, but I'm expecting great results with WJR."

Dumas' approach to business is very sensible.

"We don't try to compete with the big firms," she said. "Frankly, though, I like to think that they can't compete with us. At Target, we keep overhead to an absolute minimum. When I get an assignment from a client, I pull together a team with the required expertise from the long list of freelancers I work with. Whether it's copy writing, broadcast production, public relations or computer graphics, I've got access to the perfect person to fill the bill. The formula has worked very well for Target and our clients."

Speaking of clients, Dumas currently lists Sign of the Beecarver, Olga's Kitchen, Bergstrom Heating and Cooling, The Society For Lifetime Planning and Presbyterian Villages of Michigan among hers.

Is there a target audience you need to reach? Give Dumas a call at (810) 647-1660 or leave a message on her e-mail: targetmktg@earthlink.net. Whether you need a small brochure or a full-blown multi-media campaign, there's one way to be sure you're always on Target!

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