

Bilingual Graphic Design



Ingrid Hernández - President

InGrid Design is an award-winning graphic design firm that helps companies communicate regionally, nationally and globally to English speaking and Hispanic audiences. With a multicultural sensibility, we integrate traditional and new media marketing strategies.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: Ms. Hernandez, what was the concept when you started InGrid Design?

Ms. Hernandez: I have been a graphic designer since forever. That is what I went to college for at Rhode Island School of Design. I worked with different agencies. Timing was perfect when I started my company. I am from Puerto Rico, so I am able to offer clients bilingual communications. Most of the companies we serve offer their services nationwide, so I am able to give them some of the materials in Spanish as well. That has been a differentiator for us that actually helped us get started, and we got started running with a big client.

CEOCFO: What types of companies are you working with today?

Ms. Hernandez: We have clients such as Yum! Brands, Darden, Little Brownie Bakers — a division of Kellogg, for whom we do their annual Girl Scout Cookie campaign, American Printing House for the Blind, Stored Value Solutions, and Comdata.

CEOCFO: You are dealing with a nice variety of well-known names.

Ms. Hernandez: Yes, those are the big known companies. It is all nationwide and some global work. We also do work for other middle size companies.

CEOCFO: What is your approach to design? How might a project at InGrid be different from another company's approach?

Ms. Hernandez: It is client by client. We do have a process. First of all, we listen to our clients' needs. Most of our clients have been working with us for ten years or more so we are an extension of their team. We really got to a point where we truly understand their company, needs and goals, and we can be proactive in what they need. We can understand their vision and be a part of it from the get go. We listen really hard to our clients and we make our creative solutions based on the goals they are trying to hit. We sometimes help them with the strategies and execution, and sometimes they bring us the strategies and it is just execution work.

CEOCFO: Is there a difference, other than the language, when you are targeting a Hispanic audience?

Ms. Hernandez: When working on bilingual materials, we change some of the pictures to be more targeted to the Hispanic audience, but with the kind of communications that we are doing for these companies, it is pretty straightforward and it is information that needs to be communicated as is. Some of it is benefits and compensation materials, so there is not a cultural angle for the materials, but we make sure the terminology we use is the most known nationwide. If it were for a specific Hispanic market, it would be more targeted for the Hispanic market with pictures of families and things that matter to the Hispanic culture. Mostly, it is just the language translation and making sure that it is said the right way that most different Spanish-speaking countries can understand.

CEOCFO: Are there projects that you prefer personally?

Ms. Hernandez: Because I have so many designers now, I am in a position where I can personally get involved with some pro bono work. I actually am an investor to a dog food company, Rudy Green's, which is the only people food for dogs, it is frozen and it has no preservatives. As an investor, I not only give my time, but I am trying to help the company succeed. I get involved with some pro bono projects for fundraising events like Gilda's Club on cancer support, The Julep

Ball for cancer research and treatments at the James Graham Brown Cancer Center here in Louisville, and others. I like to give my time to doing pro bono work that has a great charity impact.

CEOFCO: *Why is that important for you and for the company?*

Ms. Hernandez: It is giving back. What I enjoy the most is helping a company succeed, and it is a form of giving. With the charities, there are specific ones for cancer that are dear to my heart because my mother died of cancer. I just feel like helping them because with more funds or opportunities for research, they are making a difference. I do want to make a difference with them.

CEOFCO: *What do you look for in your designers?*

Ms. Hernandez: I do interview quite a bit and I claim to have the best talent here in Louisville. It is really hard to find the best designers, but I base the decision on their work, experience and portfolio. I review their portfolio and ask them what the concept was behind the creations they are showing me. If it is just pretty, it is not good enough. There has to be a great concept behind the piece. When I see that they have a great concept that is when I know that is the right designer to hire. I am very lucky to have designers with me for over five years now. It is important for me to reward them so they can stay for a long time. I have recruited some new designers last year and they are doing wonderful.

CEOFCO: *How do you help them along? What is the key to mentoring and developing designers?*

Ms. Hernandez: It is key to get them involved in a bigger project and having them bring their creativity and push their ideas. With teamwork and collaboration, designers see how the more advanced designers think and they are encouraged to share some of their ideas and work. We really push when we have to present the concepts to a client. We create three different concepts, and those are three very different concepts that do show the solution in three different ways. The younger ones can usually see how the more advanced designers are doing those three different concepts. Some of the space is pretty open and they can help each other. We are doing some projects and we are putting some designs and inspirations up on the walls so that everybody can talk about it and share ideas. It is definitely collaboration. I do have a creative director other than myself who supervises them, helps them, inspires them and guides them.

“Some of the companies we work for achieve direct results from our campaigns. That is what we claim with our tagline — ‘We think, we design, we deliver.’ When we deliver, we both win. Success for us is meeting the client’s goal and exceeding their expectations with great results.” - Ingrid Hernández

CEOFCO: *How do you reach potential clients?*

Ms. Hernandez: I am involved in every possible organization here — The National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO), The Hispanic Latino Business Council (HLBC), Greater Louisville Inc. and One Southern Indiana which are Chambers of Commerce, Tri-State Minority Supplier Diversity Council (TSMSSDC), and I am also part of the Rotary Club of Louisville. There are many organization events for networking and meeting people. Initially, the clients have come to us. Many times, it is reference and word of mouth where somebody has said we do good work. They come to us, and if it is a good fit, we work the relationship to obtain the business. Right now, I am not proactively seeking for a specific new client because we are pretty busy with our existing clients’ needs. Last year, I had to hire seven people. Growth has been amazing and we are now focused on servicing the clients and the projects that we have. Eventually, I will get to that next big client and we will determine whom we want to work with based on our interest in who they are and what they do.

CEOFCO: *Is there a campaign you can tell us about that surprised you?*

Ms. Hernandez: Some of the companies we work for achieve direct results from our campaigns. That is what we claim with our tagline — “We think, we design, we deliver.” When we deliver, we both win. Success for us is meeting the client’s goal and exceeding their expectations with great results. We have been involved in the Girl Scout Cookie campaign for about eleven years now, but I remember one time they were really wanting to regain the market. We helped them very aggressively, and we did help them regain it in a big way. We also help them year after year with great materials and resources for the girls to sell the cookies and for training the volunteers that impact the success of the cookie sale nationwide.

CEOFCO: *Are you involved with social media and how companies will use the various venues that are available?*

Ms. Hernandez: It depends on the client’s needs. Last year, Darden created their own Marketplace for their benefits, so they were very proactive and ahead of the curve knowing that the government was going to have their own marketplace. They wanted to engage the hourly employees and their families, which is a hard audience to reach. We proposed and implemented a mobile campaign. We put the mobile code in all the materials so that the hourly employees and their families could join the mobile campaign for more information on their benefits. Through the mobile campaign, we sent

links of little videos explaining what to do, and we also had links to websites and reminders on deadlines that were important for their benefit selections. That was a perfect fit, and they had a great enrollment that year. If it meets the client needs, that is when we use social media strategies or other communication venues, not just because.

CEOCFO: *How do you know what to pay attention to as far as social media and new technologies?*

Ms. Hernandez: We do keep up with the trends. I send my designers to a national design conference pretty often. We take turns in going, so that is always a great way to listen to what is coming in terms of trends and new technologies. We developed a mobile app that won a global and a national award a year ago. We are also hearing a great deal on ePubs and eBooks, so we are learning that and developing one for a client. We just need to be on top of it. Our clients actually request usage of new technologies and that is how we grow our capabilities. We partner with technology companies as well to provide the best solutions to our clients.

CEOCFO: *How big a part does technology play for you in designing and how do you know where to make changes or when you should be adopting a new way of doing things?*

Ms. Hernandez: We actually feel the pressure and the needs from the clients' side. Because we are an extension of their team, we bring things together and we discuss what we need to be doing on Facebook, Pinterest or with mobile apps. We make sure that we are relevant to the audience too. We search solutions and make the right accommodations. We have grown with our client needs, and that is sort of the driving force of growing our capabilities. In the last three years, we added motion graphics and video capabilities that we did not have before. That was as a result of our client needs for having more engaging communications in little video clips. We find the talent, and we are able to give the clients what they want.

CEOCFO: *Put it together for our readers; why pay attention to InGrid Design?*

Ms. Hernandez: Our differentiator is that we can really talk to everybody. Our bilingual capabilities allow us to target our client's audiences nationwide. We have done that since day one, and we continue to do so, on top of listening to the client needs and growing according to their needs so that we can give them everything that they need.

CEOCFO: *Final thoughts?*

Ms. Hernandez: We have been in business for 13 years, and I went to design school. I did not go to business school, but we have been successful. I have to say I learned from my father, who led a very successful business when I was little, and I have learned from other successful businesses and being involved in different organizations. We have CEO round tables where we share best practices and learn from others, and that has been critical for our success as well.

BIO: Ingrid's drive and ambition was much inspired by her family who left their native Cuba in the early '60s for San Juan, Puerto Rico, with little more than the clothes on their backs. Ingrid's father Alberto eventually built a very successful real estate company on the island and has known to be a pioneer. Ingrid's grandfather Jaime, who was a shoe designer, ignited her aspiration to design. As an eighth grader, Ingrid won a high school poster competition for "Fiddler On The Roof" and it was distributed all over San Juan. This inspired her to pursue a career in graphic design. She obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Graphic Design from Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and worked in Massachusetts for a couple of years before moving to Louisville in 1992. She worked for a couple of agencies before starting her own in April 2002.

Ingrid is the winner of NAWBO'S 2012 EPIC Award, GLI's 2011 Emerging Minority Business Award, GLI's 2012 Sloan Award for offering work flexibility to her employees, LGDA's 2011 100 Awards for outstanding design, finalist several years for GLI's Inc.Credible Awards, and recognized by Business First as a Fast 50 growing company, one of the top Advertising Agencies, as a Philanthropy Award winner and as finalist for Business Leader of the Year Award in 2012. She is also published in the book "One Hundred Fascinating Louisville Women."



ingriddesign

InGrid Design LLC

1017 Baxter Ave.

Louisville, KY 40204

502-473-7270

www.ingriddesign.com