



McKee Wallwork Cleveland's Traffic Director: Elizabeth Reed

[By Robin Salisian]

As a traffic director at ad agency McKee Wallwork Cleveland, Elizabeth Reed finds that her EMT training comes in handy. Why? Because having learned how to triage her work in the medical field, she's now able to triage her work at the agency. And what a workload she has.

"My responsibilities are to develop and maintain job schedules, cheerleading, pulling together information that enables people to accomplish their assignments correctly, maintaining accurate records, providing leadership, keeping an eye on details as well as the 30,000-foot view, anticipating and developing solutions for challenges in scheduling and manpower, training, maintaining even workloads throughout the creative department, providing support and assistance in all aspects of a project including estimating, scheduling, negotiating, purchasing, proofing, and delivery."

But before becoming a traffic director, Reed, who has a B.A. in Education, worked for a nonprofit organization. She pitched an idea to Steve McKee, and after he agreed to take it on pro bono, Reed realized something: she liked advertising.

"I enjoyed working on the campaign so much that I decided I'd like to try working in advertising," she says. "When I found out that Steve and Pat were starting their own agency, I called and asked if I could work for them. Luckily for me they took me on even though I had no real industry experience. I've been with them ever since."

For nine years Reed has called McKee Wallwork Cleveland home, an agency where "it may take time to figure out what the

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. I enjoy the outdoors, and we often take our dogs with us. I like gardening, when I don't have to. And I love spending time with my animals — human and otherwise.

Q. What CD is in your CD player right now?

A. I'm a total soundtrack junkie. I even like soundtracks that are from my sons' video games. I listen to classical and rock 'n' roll too. Right now I'm listening to Gerard Butler sing "The Music of the Night" from the *Phantom of the Opera* movie soundtrack.

Q. What is the last magazine you read?

A. *Science News*. I'm not joking. It sucks you in with the latest research. Did you know that chemists have created particles that act like tractor beams, selectively binding to targeted bacteria and dragging them toward a magnet? This could lead to advancements in water-supply decontamination. Fascinating.

Q. What is your favorite TV show?

A. Generally I don't watch TV shows. I do like to watch specials on public television occasionally.

Q. Who is your role model?

A. I don't know that I have a "role model." My heroes are environmentalists.

problem is and how to fix it, but we've got the time if you do." Located in New Mexico, MWC not only works hard to produce award-worthy campaigns, but the agency also plays hard to, well, have *fun*. Potlucks, costume parties, and haiku contests are only a few of the activities in which the workers participate. And their clientele is equally fun.

"Thank goodness we have interesting clients — entertainment, travel, tourism, healthcare of all kinds, BtoB, and a range of local and national clients — which provides variety in the work," says Reed. "One of my favorite campaigns is the lifestyle campaign we've produced for Mariposa, which is a real estate development that actively embraces the preservation of the environment in which they build."

"Also, I enjoy our healthcare clients Presbyterian and the New Mexico State Department of Health Tobacco Use Prevention and Control (TUPAC)," she adds. "We've done innovative work for both clients. It's been very satisfying."

The guerrilla work done for TUPAC was in fact one of the best advertising tactics she's seen used.

Reed says, "Though people are becoming more jaded by the constant barrage of input in their lives, smart, sophisticated work that



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strikes an emotional chord is still the way to reach people. It's just the medium that's shifting."

And one development that has brought change is the advent of TiVo. Dubbed by her kids as a slow "text messenger," Reed refuses to shy away from the changing medium of television; instead, she boldly embraces it:

"The emerging generation is geared toward immediate gratification, immediate results, the capability to be immediate. That's where advertising has to go."

She also enjoys good artwork paired with advertising. Particularly, Reed enjoys the 3D sidewalk chalk drawings by Julian Beaver.

"Good art and design," says Reed after encouraging others to view Beaver's artwork,

"draws you in whether it's an ad or not, so you end up absorbing the message anyway."

Reed's openness to new media also shows in her choice to obtain her master's degree in library science.

"I know it sounds boring, but it's actually pretty cool with the research tools available these days."

And boredom isn't something Reed knows—especially with the type of "typical" day she experiences each week.

"A typical day can range from being that of a busy soccer mom to being an ER tech. You have days where you are processing jobs and maintaining schedules. And then sometimes you have the day where no amount of planning can help and find yourself triaging

work coming through, negotiating schedule changes to accommodate hot jobs, and hunting down people or information to solve problems."

So it's no wonder this experienced ad star has practical advice to offer eager advertisers everywhere:

"Proceed with cautious enthusiasm. This industry can chew you up and spit you out. If you are single, you may think that your career is the be all and end all of your life right now. But eight, 10, maybe 15 years from now it won't be, and you will have missed opportunities to have a more balanced and fulfilled life. Ad awards make cold bedfellows. Pick your shop carefully and have a life outside the business."

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