

Mertz helps clients stay in public eye

RYAN CASTLE

rcastle@journalscene.com

The commute on Dorchester Road doesn't affect Susan Mertz. After 20 years of commuting to work outside of New York City, Washington, DC, and San Diego, CA, Mertz, owner of IMPACT, a public relations and marketing firm in Summerville, now heads to work down the hall armed with a cup of coffee and suffers no traffic tie-ups.

"Working from home, I don't have the extraneous distractions [of] working in an office," Mertz said—none of the interoffice banter or interruptions that come with office work, "I'm more focused and get more productive work accomplished."

With her goals firmly focused, Mertz has assembled an impressive list of local clients, including local business leaders Giant Cement, Trident One-Stop Career System, Trident Workforce Investment Board and Century 21 Properties Plus.

She attributes these directly to her diverse background. "I've brought to Summerville all the skills that I've honed in other states and markets," Mertz said.

Mertz was born on the New Jersey shore and spent her young adulthood participating and enjoying the culture and vibrancy of New York City and Washington, D.C.

Mertz, a voracious reader, found a role model in Eleanor of Aquitaine, who ruled France and England and was the mother of kings. On a trip to England, Mertz discovered her sarcophagus in Westminster Abbey.

"Eleanor of Aquitaine showed me that armed with determination and knowledge, I could achieve what I wanted," she said. Closer to home, her father "instilled in me the knowledge that I would do anything I set my mind to accomplish."

Mertz earned a degree in chemistry and biology from Hood College in Maryland. After graduating, Mertz entered the medical field working in abnormal hematology, recognizing blood diseases for oncologists.

While living in Virginia Beach, VA, she taught art history at the Chrysler Museum of Art. "This experience opened up a new world of museum education to me."

"I grew up going to the Met (Metropolitan Museum of Art) where there were no labels, no interpretation. There was a "if you didn't understand the art, then you didn't belong here" mentality, but Ann (the Education Curator at the Chrysler Museum) brought a new way of thinking to museum objects, using them to teach history, language, politics, the social morals of the times. It



was fascinating and I wanted to be a part of this new movement in education," Mertz recalled.

Ann encouraged me to apply to George Washington University in Washington, DC, the only university offering a master's degree in museum education. This was all cutting-edge stuff. We were pioneers!" she said.

Mertz and colleagues studied with experts at the Smithsonian Institution museums, and used their collections and curators, scholars and personnel as classrooms and teachers. "It was more wonderful than words!" she said. She worked in the museum field for 10 years as an exhibit designer, educator, and director.

"I go about PR a little differently than most marketing consultants because of my background. I am very analytical and objective and uncover a client's goals and objectives before developing a plan. Because of my education/art/museum background, I am very creative -- I use both my right and left brain," she added.

Moving to San Diego, CA, she became a fund raiser, working at the San Diego Space and Science Foundation and the San Diego Zoo. She was fortunate to be mentored by "a great many powerful and interesting women in the San Diego Junior League, who believed in providing first class business training to its members," Mertz said.

When first established in 1991, IMPACT! was a consulting firm

to museums, but in 2001 Mertz progressed away from museums and focused more on public relations and marketing for businesses.

"People want to feel like they make a contribution to their jobs and well as to their communities. My job is to create these links," Mertz said.

As far as getting clients to sign on to the idea of hiring a public relations and marketing consultant, Mertz says it's becoming easier as South Carolina's business community grows. "There's a great influx of business and it's easy to target and introduce them to the community," Mertz said.

Enjoying her job has kept her business growing, "she said. Her philosophy is about connecting clients to causes and interests that help their business grow.

"What I enjoy most is educating my clients on the value of good, proactive public relations....., and maximizing what they are already doing for their employees and neighbors," Mertz said.

"What small businesses often lack is the knowledge of how to grow their business. I provide clients with cost effective strategies that get them the visibility and credibility that will build their business," Mertz said.

Growing a business is certainly something Mertz has done, and she doesn't even get tied up in the morning traffic doing it.



IMPACT! Inc.
"Linking Clients to their Communities"

Generate more credibility than you could ever buy with traditional advertising and marketing methods.
Receive low-cost and free secrets to build your business.
Encourage employee morale, enhance productivity, create team spirit, and grow your financial sheets.

Ask for our Free Media Tips Sheets

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Customized Communications ! Strategic Public Relations Plans ! Industry & competitive Research ! Business Marketing/Public Relations Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Strategic Planning ! Corporate & Special Events ! Crisis Management Programs ! Business - Education Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Messages that Matter ! Press Releases & Articles ! Newsletters & Special Reports ! Marketing & Presentation Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ! Surveys & Evaluations ! Focus Group Studies ! Campaign Strategy Evaluations ! Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Call us TODAY! Start making an IMPACT! tomorrow.
843.821.3283 Susan.Mertz@ImpactPR.net www.ImpactPR.net