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Puzzle Pieces Marketing Puts It All Together

MARKETING: Black-owned Firm specializes in nonprofits, mission-driven businesses

BY KAREN PEARLMAN
FEBRUARY 23, 2024



Angel and Kristine Mason Broadus. Photo courtesy Puzzle Pieces Marketing

SAN DIEGO –A U.S. Navy veteran with a B.S. Degree in Pharmaceutical Sciences and a Master of Health Administration, Angel Mason Broadus's journey toward a career in marketing wasn't a straight one.

After spending a good chunk of time working in the medtech/healthcare space, Broadus has carved out a successful career as the founder, president and CEO of San Diego's Puzzle Pieces Marketing.

Puzzle Pieces Marketing (PPM) is a Black-owned, women-owned, LGBTQ+-owned and veteran-owned marketing agency that specializes in nonprofits and mission-driven businesses.

Owned and operated by Angel Mason Broadus, and her wife, Kristine Mason Broadus, PPM offers creative and colorful branding, website design and development, graphic design, copywriting and messaging, SEO and social media services.

Since the company's founding in 2009, the agency has been dedicated to amplifying the voice and reach of mission-driven, cause-based and nonprofit organizations that contribute tangible positive change to their community.

PPM began and remains completely self-funded, and has seen 20% to 25% year over year growth since 2020.

Path to Own Consulting Business

During her career before PPM, Angel Mason Broadus led the diagnostics market expansion efforts at ResMed Inc., which made its mark as one of the world's leading sleep apnea therapy and diagnostics medical device manufacturers. She was also global marketing and senior product manager at Smiths Medical and Cardinal Health, both top manufacturers of medical devices.

It was only after being laid off from her last corporate marketing role in 2009 that Broadus went into business for herself.

While searching for another job, she said the thought of returning to a corporate environment where she could face the same vulnerability prompted her to really think about her next steps.

She debated whether jumping right back into another corporate marketing role was the right decision.

"I slowed down a bit, spent some time over the next couple of weeks speaking with mentors, colleagues and friends, and finally came to the conclusion that the path I wanted to take was to start my own consulting business," she said.

Despite initial doubts, Broadus committed to giving it a chance for six months. Surpassing initial expectations, PPM has thrived, defying the odds and remaining a resilient player in the industry, with a "small but mighty" team of six employees, Broadus said.

Broadus is in charge of managing team members responsible for marketing strategies, graphic design and branding, and messaging and copywriting projects.

Building a Business Together

She was joined at PPM in 2015 by Kristine Mason Broadus, who took on the role of vice president and head of business development at the company. Kristine Mason Broadus oversees the PPM team responsible for digital marketing, social media, Search Engine Optimization and website development projects.

Previous to PPM, after years of serving as a tutor, returning to school and eventually becoming a respiratory therapist specializing in pediatric and neonatal intensive care, Kristine Mason Broadus met her future wife while working at a children's hospital in Kansas City, Missouri.

Following their marriage, they decided that building their business together would be the optimal path for their shared future. Kristine Mason Broadus, who has a BA in Psychology and had aspired to become a social worker, left RT behind.

Broadus said that as a Black/LGBTQ+/women-owned business, PPM has faced distinctive challenges.

"We have encountered stereotypes and prejudices that influence how potential clients, partners and the community perceive our capabilities and support our work," she said. "Achieving visibility and representation requires additional efforts, as diverse voices and perspectives aren't always adequately represented."

The two acknowledge that their company's ownership by a married couple introduces an additional layer of complexity.

"Balancing the demands of running a business and managing a relationship poses unique challenges to maintaining a healthy work-life balance, a struggle not exclusive to minority-owned businesses," Angel Mason Broadus said.

"Finding the right balance is key for our personal well-being and crucial for our business's success."

Embracing Uniqueness

Despite these challenges, they have successfully navigated and overcome them by leveraging their strengths, fostering a supportive work culture, delivering exceptional results and seeking out and participating in networks or organizations that support diversity and inclusion.

By embracing their uniqueness, PPM has not only defied stereotypes but has also forged meaningful connections, proving that diversity and inclusion are integral to their success.

In the spirit of giving back, Angel Mason Broadus also serves the past board president, current board member, and DEI and marketing committees chair for North County Philanthropy Council.

She is also a member of United Way of San Diego County's Women United Steering Committee and Marketing Committee and is a Moonlight Cultural Foundation DEI committee member.

"My parents taught me that you don't live on this earth for free," she said. "The price you pay is to give back and to contribute to your community. They instilled the importance of volunteerism in me at an early age."

PPM also offers four annual scholarships to financially assist minority and LGBTQ+ graduating high school seniors.

Puzzle Pieces Marketing
FOUNDED: 2009
FOUNDER, PRESIDENT & CEO: Angel Mason Broadus
VP, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT: Kristine Mason Broadus
HEADQUARTERS: Downtown San Diego
BUSINESS: Marketing agency
EMPLOYEES: 6
WEBSITE: puzzlepiecesmarketing.com
CONTACT: 858-848-6584 x101
SOCIAL IMPACT: Company offers annual scholarships to financially assist minority and LGBTQ+ graduating high school seniors
NOTABLE: The PPM website lists company dogs (complete with bios) Zoey as "Barketing Director," Milk Shake as "Chief Vibez Officer" and Teenie as "Retired MisChief Coordinator."



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