

WE Magazine *For busy women on the move...*

Meet the Woman behind Brittany Publications

Submitted by Heidi Richards on May 16, 2010 – 12:51 pm

Meet Marion E. Gold, President ~ Brittany Publications, Ltd.

Tell us about yourself.

I launched Brittany as a part-time business in 1981. In 1994, I decided to operate the company as a full-time effort – when I launched my own marketing communications business as a division of Brittany. Brittany Publications Ltd. currently has two divisions: - Marketing & Communications division: Marion Gold Communications (1994-present/16 years) - Creative Arts division: Moonbeams, Lilacs & Roses (2003-present/7 years), which is composed of Moonbeams Products and Moonbeams Designer Jewelry I'll focus here on the Moonbeams division, since that is your primary interest, but include other information where it makes sense.

Tell us about your business.

Using the Artisan name Miriam Bat-Rachel, I create beaded products (pens, letter openers and magnifying glasses) and semiprecious gemstone jewelry. My target audience for the beaded products is men and women of all ages, who may buy the beaded items for themselves or as gifts; the jewelry is targeted to women of all ages and the jewelry. I also have a line of less costly glass beaded necklaces, earrings and bracelets for teens, sold under my "Simply Elegant" beaded jewelry line.

Please tell us what being a business owner means to you and why you became an entrepreneur in the first place?

Prior to launching Marion Gold Communications in 1994, I was executive vice-president and general manager of a health care communications agency in Chicago that was part of the Health and Medical Communications Group of OMNICO. I was credited with taking a part-time editorial position and less than \$100 thousand in billings and rocketing it into a dynamic multi-media organization that billed millions of dollars a year. I resigned to launch my own communications business after 13 years at the helm of the company. At the time, I was one of the few women to break through Corporate America's Glass Ceiling, and Working Woman Magazine profiled me as an entrepreneur with "guts." That's how it all started. Life takes us down many paths, both professionally and personally – and it was the personal experience of losing my parents that thrust me into another entrepreneurial role – that was the genesis of Moonbeams, Lilacs & Roses.

What or who has been your greatest influence in business and why?

Aside from my parents, who were the inspirations for Moonbeams, my soul mate of 31 years (Jerry), who continues to inspire me with his own creativity as a writer, his compassion and integrity, and his unwavering belief in my talent and abilities.

What would you say is your greatest professional accomplishment to date?

On one hand, it would have my book, "Top Cops: Profiles of Women in Command," which shined a much-deserved spotlight on women who have dedicated their lives to law enforcement, and my many published articles and editorials on women and minorities in the workforce – and the barriers many still face. On the other hand, it would have to be recreating my identity as "Miriam Bat Rachel," and starting Moonbeams, Lilacs & Roses. Who would imagine that the corporate executive, turned author and writer would also begin designing jewelry? It certainly wasn't on my original professional agenda!

What's the best advice you have received in business that you wish to pass on to our readers?

Anything is possible if you follow your heart and are open to new opportunities, and take a chance to try something new. Failure is always a possibility, especially in today's tenuous economy and marketplace.

But unless you try, you can't succeed. Someone once said that failure is just a way to learn what you did wrong. It's a starting point. Not the end.

What has been the most effective marketing initiatives or programs you have used to promote your business?

Writing about it, and being open about my feelings and experiences – both positive and negative. When I was in the agency management arena, I had to deal with hard facts, research data, and the profit and loss issues inherent in running a major corporation. Now my writing focuses on people and their lives, sharing my feelings, and (hopefully) inspiring others to deal not only with the hard realities of life and business, but how even the most devastating experiences can make us stronger and smarter. My marketing consulting business follows that same pattern – helping others achieve their goals through effective publicity planning that draws upon their strengths, and recognizes their weaknesses, so they can move forward in a positive manner. On the “beading” side of my life, I use my editorial skills as well as my artistic sense of style to educate shoppers about the products I create and sell – teaching them about the stones I use, and being very detailed about each piece of jewelry I create.

What one thing have you learned as a small business owner that has served you well over the years?

Customer service, honesty and really “hearing” what the client is telling you. In the agency business, it's the only way to succeed. You need to know not only what is the best way to meet your client's marketing challenges, but also what each client wants, needs, expects and deserves. The same is true when you are selling a product – particularly custom-designed jewelry, or even a beaded letter opener. The product has to meet the customer's needs – practically and creatively. You can't sell a client a green necklace if they only want to wear blue!

Are there any resources or tools you'd like to share with other small business owners that have helped you run your business?

The truth is, the most important tool I use is my own “personal publicity plan.” It is unique to my businesses and me. Each person needs to build their own plan – which means being honest with yourself as to who you are, what you are trying to accomplish, and who out there has a need for your service or product.

What do you do for fun/relaxation?

I read a lot of books (fiction and nonfiction), and take long walks. And I'm a real fan of all the versions on television of “Law & Order!”

What is Number One Business Goal you plan to accomplish over the next year?

For Moonbeams, Lilacs & Roses, my plan is to explore the most cost efficient places to advertise my jewelry. So far, I've relied on word-of-mouth and my articles and interviews. Now I need to look at display ads and attracting more consumers and wholesale outlets for my products. On the communications consulting side of my life, I want to work with a few more select authors and entrepreneurs who have talent and ability – but need someone to help them shape their personal publicity plans for their businesses or their books.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

You can't change what life throws at you. What's important is how you react to each and every situation.

In addition to your website, how else can our readers connect with you online?

The best way is through <http://www.mariongold.com>

WEBSITE URLs: <http://www.moonbeamsproducts.com> and <http://moonbeamsdesignerjewelry.com>