

WOMEN IN PRINTING II

More Female Perspectives

BY CHRIS BAUER

Managing Editor

AS A follow-up to a popular feature that appeared in the May 2004 issue of PRINTING IMPRESSIONS, here is a look at several more successful women who hold executive positions in the printing industry. These women are excelling in a field that traditionally was male-dominated, changing the face of the graphic arts boardroom forever.

Also, these executives serve as a positive example for future leaders in the graphic arts industry. Through the leadership shown by these women, the next generation of printers will likely be even more diverse—and well prepared to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Arita Nicholas

Nicholas/Earth Printing

It's been an unlikely path Arita Nicholas has taken on her journey into the commercial printing industry. Nicholas, CEO of Houston-based Nicholas/Earth Printing, is a graduate of the University of Missouri, where she majored in special education. Nicholas worked for 22 years in the travel industry in St. Louis prior to her entry into the graphic arts.

"I got started about six years ago when I decided to invest in the growth of a small family business, which happened to be a printing company," Nicholas states. "It started strictly as an investment."

Nicholas says she researched the industry for its potential for growth. It was then that she realized that there

were only a few women/minority owned printing companies that boasted Fortune 500 customers.



Nicholas

"The biggest reason is money—because you need lots of it," Nicholas assesses. "I prayed to God for a great partner who could appreciate my passion to open new doors of opportunity. My prayer was answered."

Nicholas/Earth Printing has entered into a strategic partnership with New York-based EarthColor, a fast-growing, comprehensive prepress, printing and finishing organization. Customers of Nicholas/Earth Printing also gain access to the resources of EarthColor.

As a relative outsider coming into the industry, Nicholas admits encountering a few instances of hearing remarks such as "what do you know about printing?" But the picture quickly changed when these detractors saw the quality of work her company produces, she says.

"This is a direct result of hiring people who are the best at their craft and having the latest technology," Nicholas lauds.

As for the future of the printing industry, Nicholas readily reaches out to high schools and colleges about the great career opportunities available in the graphic arts industry.

In addition to her role at Nicholas/Earth Printing, she has been actively involved with the Fort Bend County Women's Center and the United Negro College Fund. Most recently, she has worked with Avance, a non-profit community service program that serves the needs of hard-to-reach families.



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