



Interview by Lauren Williams

**I**n a picturesque state, Lisa Burwell portrays a timeless, classic elegance that one can only describe as mesmerizing. As the founder and marketing genius behind Cornerstone Marketing & Advertising Inc., she has a remarkable, natural ability for creativity and innovation. Cornerstone, dubbed “The Idea Boutique,” has grown from a one-man show to an agency powerhouse with a clientele base of 103 that penetrates eleven different industries. In a rare time where Lisa isn’t rushing off to a meeting or photo-shoot, she sits down and dishes to us about her life and thriving company.

***Lisa, tell me a little about yourself.***

Lisa Burwell: First of all, thank you so much for your kind and sweet words! I have a

strong faith that guides me on a daily basis and my creativity is really sourced from that “daily” walk with God. I could expound on personality traits that have gifted me to get where I am today, but the core is really following what I believe is my destiny.

***Tell me how Cornerstone Marketing & Advertising Inc. became something you wanted to venture out and start.***

I had wanted to start my own marketing agency since I was in my late twenties and did open a company in my hometown of Boston called Progressive Marketing. I quickly realized that I was not ready and fully equipped, so I went back to my former job for another five years or so. After relocating to Seaside, Florida in my early thirties

as the first marketing director for the Seaside Merchants Association, I opened Cornerstone Marketing & Advertising, Inc. in 1994. I loved working for all of my past employers as it was terrific training, but I always had a strong vision of what I wanted to create and did not like how long the approval process took in larger companies.

***You emphasize that a business brand image is the first impression a customer sees. What are a few tips you would give to an organization to better their “brand?”***

I am of the opinion now, after being in the business of branding for many years, that the best branding is just a great translation of your company and its values and services. So really – great branding is building a great organization first and branding is just the window to the company. There is an art to communicating that message visually for clients, but the company has to be as good as the branding image or it will not succeed.

***What would you say is anyone’s biggest mistake they can make when it comes to marketing?***

That it will solve all of their problems. A company has to be great before great marketing can help it.

***Your staff photo-shoots are so creative and fun! Where do you get your inspirations?***

I am constantly thinking. When I watch television, read a book or magazine, people-watch to see what they’re wearing, and talk to people, I get inspired. I listen to what people are saying as well as what they’re not saying – in real life – in newspapers – everywhere. There is usually a general style, mood or feeling that the majority of people are feeling and I think about that rhetoric as I’m usually feeling the same thing as well. Sometimes, it can be as simple as what a certain theme will look like in a photograph, but there is always a mood and an attitude that accompanies that. For the latest photo shoot we called *The Shoot* we dressed up like cowboys and cowgirls. I felt that like we were still in a pioneering mindset and we needed to be tough and tenacious to continue on. I thought horseback riding on the beach was visually beautiful and conveyed a romance and innocence and wanted to merge that with the hardship that we’ve all been feeling with the depressed economy. Basically, we were saying – you have to be tough to make

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it but you can still have style and class.

***What is it that sets your marketing team apart from any other marketing agency?***

We have a great team of creative, passionate and driven people at Cornerstone. They are all so good at what they do and because they love to create, we are good. They are all very hard workers as well. When someone does not seem interested in what they're doing, they don't usually remain with us very long.

***VIE Magazine has been an extremely successful publication, as well as your many others. Is there any chance we'll be seeing it go national?***

It would be great if the magazine were to go national, and we are working toward making that happen. We still stay true to our roots with each issue, and that is to make it

fresh, appealing and interesting with quality design, photos and stories. We also spend extra money on the quality of the paper, which many tell us they notice time and time again. Basically, we approach the creation of the magazine from a craftsman



heart rather than a financial endeavor. I think that is what people really like about it. It is an honor when people tell us how much they like the magazine.

***What might surprise our readers about you? Any secrets?***

I am sort of an "open-book" and wear my

heart on my sleeves, in my work and in my relationships. I'm sure I have a secret or two but I am so busy that I can't remember them.

***When your not running a major organization, what do you do to relax and unwind?***

I love to travel. It is very therapeutic for me and really is the only time that I can relax. I love reading books but have not had enough time to read all that I want to, and I love going to the beach or pool.

***Cornerstone is always one step ahead of the curve. What are some exciting ventures you might be taking on in 2012?***

We are going to produce an on-line version of VIE that will be very different from just placing the existing magazine for viewing. This will hopefully allow us to sell ads to national clients and continue to grow our distribution virally.



Corner office with a view.

Have Laptop. Will travel.  
Free WiFi. Free Inspiration.

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