

When Mary Ellen Miller walks into a room some people recognize her from her anchor desk days at WJHL-TV or her public relations leadership roles at Nuclear Fuel Services and n-tara, a digital media company, or most recently as a key member of newly elected Washington County (TN) Mayor Dan Eldridge's campaign staff. Some even recognize her from her high visibility on Twitter.



Photo by Tina Wilson

Mary Ellen Miller
MarketingMel

Mary Ellen Miller is perhaps the face of a new marketing force touting a combination of innovative marketing, public relations and social media strategies. Having set out on her own with her new company MarketingMel over a year ago, she presents a completely new approach to professional promotions and marketing.

After being laid off as n-tara marketing director as the economy waned in 2009, Miller, who holds a Cornell University degree in communications as well as an MBA from East Tennessee State University, immediately began writing a blog as a marketing tool and her own firm, MarketingMel, was created shortly thereafter.

"As a result of strategic foresight (in a down economy) it really positioned me to start a company unlike a traditional ad agency realizing a key value was linking clients with innovative marketing, public relations and social media strategies," she said.

So different was Miller's fresh new idea of marketing, that her former employer, News Channel 11, featured her in a three-part series that earned her a lot exposure. "Professional business people are discovering Twitter, Facebook and blogging as additional tools necessary in today's face-paced business world where communication is presented and received instantaneously," she added while pointing out the fact any edge business clients can get in today's business world could be the difference between success and failure.

Miller, who is also a former executive editor of *Marquee Magazine*, said her litany of experience on the many fronts of marketing, strategic planning, and public relations landed her a surprise call from Dan Eldridge inviting her to become a member of his political campaign. She teamed up with her former business partner Tony Treadway, president of Creative Energy, and now Miller can add successful political strategist to her long list of accomplishments.

Miller smiled broadly when she recalls her first conversation with Eldridge. "He wanted me to write a press release for him," she mused. "I told him he was going to need a lot more than that!"

"Creating the public relations, social media, web site and special event planning for the Eldridge campaign was perhaps the most arduous task I have undertaken in my career," she admits. "When we started the campaign there were many naysayers who told us we wouldn't have a snowball's chance in a very hot place of winning!"

As it turned out Eldridge's victory over former Johnson City Mayor and former State Senator Don Arnold wasn't even close.

As a consensus builder, Miller believes her company will continue its strong growth as business professionals realize the vital need to be associated with social networking to compliment traditional marketing strategies.

Her family has also instilled into her the need to give back to one's own community. Her father, who passed away in 2007, was a professional fundraiser who raised money to build hospitals and Salvation Army buildings and her mother was a journalist. Miller is proud of her involvement in spearheading the creation of the local Salvation Army Souper Bowl for the Hungry annual fundraising event. Now in its highly successful 13th year, the fundraiser has brought in some of the NFL's greatest players as keynote speakers including Archie Manning, Ron Jaworski, Bill Curry and Bill Bates, just to name a few.

Miller, a former member of the Johnson City Kiwanis Club, received the 2005 - 2006 Kiwanian of the Year award for her work in helping establish a partnership with Camelot Care Centers, an organization that assists trouble children.

Mary Ellen Miller Factoid

- Met her future husband, Danny, as they rescued puppies from the NFS parking lot in Erwin where they both worked.
- Is an accomplished swimmer. Set an Ivy League record in her final meet.
- Lifelong learner. Always has a business book under her chin.
- Mother to son, Skyler.

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