

For Immediate Release

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Amperage Marketing + Fundraising celebrates 30th anniversary with lookback at industry changes

Google, social media, influencers, streaming – none of those existed when Amperage Marketing + Fundraising opened its doors on October 1, 1996. As the agency marks its 30th anniversary, Ampers are looking back at how their work has changed over time.

“It’s incredible to look back on the past 30 years of serving clients and working alongside them as partners. When you think back to 1996 and us opening this agency, you certainly notice the differences. To be sure, what our work consists of has changed drastically but at its core, it’s very similar: connecting our clients to their key audiences in order to move the needle,” said Bryan Earnest, President and CEO, Amperage.

Physically, work has changed. For each job, physical plastic sleeves called job jackets held all the project information. This job jacket would be passed around the office as work progressed from one department to another such as copywriting to design. Now, these job jackets exist online in a workflow management program.

Similarly, the team used fax machines, tear sheets, floppy discs, rolodexes and more physical items that now all exist online. Shelves of video tapes held clients’ content whereas now servers and the cloud hold that. Red pens meant proofing marks whereas now proofers add markups in the online file.

“Without those physical limitations, projects move much faster,” said Annette Schulte, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Amperage. “That efficiency opens the toolbox for us as creative storytellers to utilize a multitude of methods to help our clients achieve their goals. It also enables us to serve clients across the country while many of us also work remotely.”

For Amperage’s video team, A/B editing of videos using video tapes and tape decks meant laying out the voice track with on-camera interviews and voiceover on one tape: the A-roll. Then, the team would put all shots of action happening on a second tape: the B-roll. Next, they had to sync the two up and play them together through a switcher to a third tape deck to add transitions and record the final product. This meant any changes were a huge undertaking. Now all editing is done on the computer from files copied off camera cards, so the team can easily create different options and make tweaks.

For the media buying team, advertising meant television, radio, out of home (billboards, transit advertising and more), newspapers and even phone books and direct mail. Social

media didn't even exist, and when it first began, Facebook was a platform for students only. Now, the team creates multichannel campaigns that include everything from Google Search to Meta.

"Media has changed so much," said Erin Earnest, Chief Operating Officer, Amperage. "We weren't talking about digital when I started, it was all traditional. Then we layered in digital, but it was more limited in scope. Now there are infinite possibilities. We tailor campaigns for our clients that include a mix of both traditional and digital marketing."

The transformation from physical media to online media has also affected the public relations and communications team. As media outlets have reduced their print publications or stopped them altogether, the pace of pitching earned media has quickened. Whereas the team used to pitch long-lead stories six months in advance, most stories are pitched for immediate online pickup. Likewise, since the pandemic, more virtual interviews are the norm versus strictly in studio, which has expanded opportunities for spokespeople to share their subject matter expertise.

For the fundraising team, emails are often the go-to method for reaching potential donors, but the team still emphasizes the value of personal connections that are best made in person and through conversations. Now the team has to encourage some reluctant volunteers to pick up the phone for a call, which would have been the main option back then.

Work has also changed for the design team. Whereas printed designs used to consist of reviewing layouts on press sheets checking for ink coverage and registration using a small magnifying glass called a loupe and using Pantone chips to match colors, now most of the process is done digitally through PDF proofs and digital printing. The team's design work now also mostly lives in the digital space including websites, social media and digital ads. As partners to clients, the team equips clients with files and asset libraries so clients are empowered to build work on their own while the design team helps support them strategically.

"It's fun to think of all the ways our world has changed, but it's also bittersweet. It's a cluttered landscape, so we work with our clients to cut through the noise to help them make a meaningful impact in the world. I'm impressed with how our team constantly adapts and stays ahead of these changes to best serve our clients. That's what makes me excited for the next 30 years," said Bryan Earnest.

To utilize Amperage's 30 years of expertise amid an ever-evolving marketing and fundraising landscape, visit AmperageMarketing.com/Contact.

About Amperage Marketing + Fundraising

Amperage Marketing + Fundraising is a leading marketing agency and fundraising consulting firm that serves clients across the Midwest, nation and globe from its office in Iowa. With a focus on healthcare, education, nonprofits, finance & insurance and manufacturing/B2B, Amperage believes in doing work that moves the needle and positively impacts people's lives in significant ways. Find out more at AmperageMarketing.com.

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