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Lynley Sides and The Glue Network

Changing the Game of Social Media Campaigns

By Sophie Braccini



Lynley and David Sides at the award ceremony Photo provided

Sometimes stars align for the right people and the right project. This is what happened to Lafayette resident Lynley Sides when she was honored April 4 with an Enterprising Women of the Year Award presented by *Enterprising Women Magazine*. Her new venture, The Glue Network, is taking off and is changing the way corporations create the buzz on social media.

The idea is simple: The Glue Network marketing platform allows a company's customers to give a percentage of their purchase to a charity of their choice, and to share this giving transaction with friends on social media.

"The Glue Network is now a social giving platform that allows companies to do good for the world in a way that is good for business," explains Sides. She is a business person first, and whatever she proposes has to be a way to expand business for companies. Her demonstration about the efficiency of the Glue platform is all based on metrics.

"After people give using The Glue Network card, they are prompted to share what they've just done on social media," explains Sides. "Thirty four percent of them do, which is twice the rate companies get when they ask their customers directly to share a buying experience on social media. The text going to Facebook that we generate includes the name of the sponsoring company with a clickable link. We measured the percentage of clicks obtained when people post these messages, and it is 20

times the number an online banner would get. For the company, it is a very efficient marketing investment."

Sides' career bloomed in the marketing field working for large technology companies, then for start-ups. An electrical engineer with an MBA, she has a long history of giving back. "I was raised in a protected environment and I didn't have a lot of exposure to philanthropy," says Sides, "but I still remember that day, I must have been about 14 or 15, when I saw an article about this man who was making a big difference for a local housing project through his capacity of mobilizing and motivating people." Inspired by him, Sides started a group right then to support local, less privileged, children.

"I continued all through my life to give back, but then came a time when I wanted to incorporate the social justice aspect into my everyday work," she says.

Her first venture was Sides and Associates, a consulting firm that incorporated Sides' desire to improve the world. Then one day she met Scott Hancock, founder of Los Angeles-based The Glue Network. "He was a visionary and an artist," she says. "His idea was to create events for young people that would raise money for certain causes." Sides remembers a surfing competition and concert where money was raised by selling tickets and tee-shirts. Sides saw an opportunity to do even more and became a co-founder of the new Glue.

MADiL CEO Helmut Elze has been working with The Glue Network for a year now. "Our business model incorporates a commitment to giving 10 percent of our sales back to society." Elze explains that after checking out, his customers are re-directed to a page where 10 percent of what they just bought is now available to them to give to the charity of their choosing. "Clients have told us they love our products, and are very excited by the charitable aspect they get to participate in," adds Elze.

"Everybody wins." says Sides. "The charity that gets money, the companies that get a lot of good online buzz, and the clients who get exposed to worthy causes and who get to make a difference."

There are two different types of programs: one for small businesses, one for larger ones. For larger businesses, The Glue Network creates a 'white label' site that's personalized to the company; they feature causes that are selected by Glue, and they can add their own, but they must meet Glue's ethics criteria. "We research the causes we work with; we know that they are efficient, well run and that all the money goes directly to the cause." For example, Lafayette-based Budd McKenzie and Trust in Education is linked.

When she went to Florida to receive her award last week, Sides felt honored. "I was chosen in the startup category and I was excited to meet so many amazing women from around the world who have grown their businesses to the next level and are changing the world for the better along the way," she said.

For more information about The Glue Network, visit www.thegluenetwork.com.

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