



THE POST-CRESCENT
www.postcrescent.com

INGROUND POOLS FINANCING AS LOW AS 6%!!

16x32 INSTALLED \$18,999

All American Pool & Spa

2138 W. Wisconsin Ave., • Appleton • (920) 749-3748 • 800-297-7727



NEWS | VIEWS | SPORTS | PACKERS | ENTERTAINMENT | SHOPPING | CARS | JOBS | HOMES | COMMUNITY | INFO

Appleton Weather



64°F
Sunny
Forecast »

Miss a day. Miss a lot

Subscribe Now
Order 7 Day Delivery

Get a Free Gift

Search our Site

Subscribe

- Manage My Subscription
- Subscribe Now
- EZ Rewards

News

- Local News
- Business
- Neenah-Menasha
- Heart of the Valley
- Wrightstown Post-Gazette
- Greenville -
- Hortonville - New
- London
- Obituaries
- Records
- Real Life, Real News
- Corrections

Sports

- PackersNews.com
- Timber Rattlers
- Racing Report
- Outdoors

Views

- Editorials
- Local Columnists
- Community Columnists
- Editorial Board
- Principles of Ethical Conduct
- Submit a letter
- Submission rules

Life & Style

- Valley Jams
- Good Neighbors

BUSINESS

PRINT THIS STORY

Posted Sept. 24, 2005

Promotions get a personal touch

Vista helps firms express themselves

By Kristin Stankewicz
For The Post-Crescent

Swag, tchotchkes, trinket — whatever your favorite nickname for promotional products, the business of producing and distributing them is red-hot.

Vista Marketing in Freedom has emerged as a force in this growing industry.

Logo-imprinted pens, mugs and apparel are traditional elements of promotional marketing, but "it's so much wider than that," said Connie Dee, the company president and founder. "In our industry, you can basically buy a mug from anybody, so it has to be about a lot more than just 'here's your mug.'

"A lot of companies in our industry are focused on selling an item. We're coming in from a different approach. We look at their objectives first. It's not about a product; it's about understanding their motivation."

Vista doesn't want to paint customers in a box, so that's why they don't issue catalogs, said company vice president Paul Painting.

"We'd rather say, 'What is it you're trying to do?' and then come to them with ideas," he said.

Vista Marketing got its start in 1996 in Dee's basement. Her expanding client base soon forced her to rethink those plans.

"In 1997, we were granted the contract for the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial by the governor's office," said Dee. That project helped the company outgrow Dee's basement.



Vista Marketing account executive Penny Pirtle talks with a client on the phone at the Freedom business Thursday. The company specializes in making logo products for area businesses. *Post-Crescent photo by Mike De Sisti*

Manage My Subscription



Homes »



Search for a Home

Jobs »



- Search for a job
- Post a resume
- First Jobs

Your Local Career Resource

Cars »

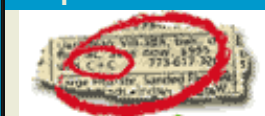
Car shopping just got fun!



Classifieds »

The Appleton and surrounding areas Classified resource listing. [Click Now!](#)

Apartments »



[Click Here to Find Your Apartment!](#)

Businesses »

- Beer Man
- Food
- Homes
- Your Health
- Special Moments

City Guide

- Event Calendars
- Movie Search
- Business Direct

Classifieds

- CareerBuilder.com
- Cars.com
- Homes
- Apartments.com
- Classifieds
- Place Classified Ad
- Cancel Classified Ad
- Local Coupons
- National Coupons
- Dating

Customer Service

- Subscribe
- Contact Us
- Post-Crescent Profile

Company Links

- Gannett Co., Inc.
- USAToday.com
- USAWeekend.com
- Gannett Foundation



Wisconsin Newspaper Association
Newspaper of the Year 2004

Today's
Front page



After spending two years in an office on Northland Avenue in Appleton, Vista Marketing moved to its 8,000-square-foot location in Freedom in August 2000.

Five years ago, Painting came on board, bringing with him years of experience at an area consumer products company.

"The business had grown so fast, we were hanging on by our fingernails," Dee said. "When Paul came, we started being more creative and trying different elements."

In addition to promotional programs, Vista coordinates employee incentive, reward and safety campaigns for corporations, small businesses and even other advertising and marketing agencies. Clients often approach Vista with just a vague idea of that they want to do.

"They'll say, 'We want to do an apparel program for our employees,'" Painting said. "But how do they know what they should be giving away, what marketing tools to use? We go in and put those kinds of things together and execute them."

Those extra services help Vista retain clients in the competitive world of promotional marketing. "There are 21,000 distributors nationwide. Our customers are constantly getting called on a national basis," Painting said.

Vista's high-visibility clients include Target, Kimberly-Clark Corp., Johnson Controls, Secura and the Special Olympics.

Dee credits her faith with leading her to business success.

"We're a very strong Christian company. That's our pulse," she said, "but we don't push it or force it."

She modeled her office atmosphere after a former client in Milwaukee. "When I walked in, they were always professional, always warm, always helpful," she said. "I thought, 'that's what I want.' Plus their office had antiques — I love antiques."

Dee got what she wanted. Today, Vista Marketing employees wear business attire, and the office is filled with a homey collection of furniture.

Painting sees Vista Marketing's personal touch as a competitive advantage. "For each of our accounts, we have one key account executive. It's really much more of a human approach. I don't know if it's efficient, but it works for our customers and they like it."

A similar attitude carries over to employee treatment.

"Connie has created an attitude of caring," said Painting. "She jokes that she's the mom. The decisions we make aren't always about the best business decisions. The flexibility that Connie allows puts people first."

Kristin Stankewicz can be reached at pcbusiness@postcrescent.com





Send us a news tip | Ethics policy

Comment on this Story

The Post-Crescent's news and online staffs uses all comments we receive from this feature to help improve our news report and Web pages and provide feedback to our editors and reporters. If you also wish us to consider publishing your comments in our newspaper and on our Web site, please fill out the required fields below. An editor will contact you for a final check prior to publication. We do not publish anonymous comments.

* Required fields for verification

Your name*:

Your phone number:

Please include phone number for verification purposes if you want your comments considered for inclusion on our opinion page.

Your email address*:

Your city*:

Your comments*:

Your age*:

The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) requires us to ask you the following question about your age. If you have any questions about COPPA, please see our Terms of Service.

- under 13
- 13-17
- 18-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65 or older

Back to Top



[Front Page](#) | [News](#) | [Packers](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Community](#)
[Autos](#) | [Homes](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2004

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service.
Send your questions and comments to [Gannett Wisconsin Online](#).