



OSDBU iNreach

E-Newsletter

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SPOTLIGHT: 8(a) Certified Woman-Owned Small Business Success Story



Information Experts

Marissa Levin, CEO

8(a) Certified Woman-Owned Small Business

iNreach: How did you come to start the firm?

In 1995, I started the company after being told I would never be worth more than \$34,000 in my current position. I was taught to never let anyone else determine your worth. So I started IE with a 3-month contract that paid me \$1,000 more than my annual salary. I've bootstrapped the firm to just under \$10 million, with no outside funding. We continue to grow rapidly.

Information Experts is now the leader in strategic communications consulting, which integrates education, human capital, marketing and outreach, and strategy to build education and communications solutions for government, commercial, non-profit, and association customers.

iNreach: How long have you been working with USAID?

Information Experts, Inc. has been working with USAID since September 2007.

iNreach: What does your firm do for USAID?

At that time, Information Experts began work on a dual-purpose beautification project. We provided navigational cues and visual appeal to seven floors of an otherwise nondescript USAID office space by creating pictorial displays with distinctive themes for each floor. To tie everything together, we placed a corresponding title panel on each floor.

These panels are immediately visible to employees and visitors as they exit the elevators. Information Experts is currently engaged in the creation of dynamic classroom-based training modules on OMA's Tactical Conflict Assessment Planning Framework, or TCAFP. In the near future, these modules will enable multiple facilitators to reach a larger audience.

iNreach: What is the most interesting thing you've done?

Information Experts never has a dull day. The passion, intelligence, and friendship that

permeate and define our culture always make things interesting. However, from a project perspective, our work for USAID is very interesting and meaningful. In addition, our work for FDIC, which includes building the Money Smart curriculum to educate young adults on financial literacy, is a great project.

Also, our EPA work in which we educate the public on their various programs has been very interesting. Finally, our work for the National Association of Manufacturers to build a recruitment campaign from the Gen-Y market has been great. We've completed literally thousands of projects that help to inform, educate, and advance customers, employees, shareholders, partners, and constituents. To pick just a handful of interesting projects is very difficult because I think everything we do is interesting!

iNreach: Any advice for companies like yours?

Align your capabilities to the vision and mission of your client. Lead with value and don't expect entitlements because of your socio-economic status or business size. Stay true to your core competencies. Surround yourself with others that share your values and know more than you do. Publicly appreciate your employees every day. Don't take anything for granted-not your customers, employees, or partners. Ultimately, the CEO's position is to simultaneously lead and serve others.

Never over-promise or under-price to secure a win. Honesty and integrity will always lead to a customer relationship in which both parties prosper. There will always be individuals who want to undermine you or celebrate your failures. Take the high road where they are concerned and focus on positive outcomes. Embrace the challenges for they often provide wonderful teachable moments. This is when we learn and grow the most.

Bridges are for building, not for burning. You never know when you will be working with people from your past, so always be respectful, dignified, and professional. Paths cross when and where we least expect them. Remember to enjoy the journey and acknowledge your daily successes. Give back and be a part of something bigger than yourself. Laugh every day.

Information Experts™
Smart, compelling, transformative.

For more information, visit <http://www.informationexperts.com>

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