

by Gabriele McCormick

# inc Spot

## Lynn Anne Miller

Founder, 4GreenPs and OrganicMania, Bethesda



### WHAT IS GREEN MARKETING AND HOW DID YOU MAKE IT THE MAINSTAY OF YOUR BUSINESS?

As Lynn Anne Miller was getting ready to launch her green marketing firm, 4GreenPs, in 2006, Tom Scholl, currently a general partner at Novak Biddle Venture Partners in Bethesda, gave her some forward-thinking and extremely valuable business advice. "If you're going to be a successful marketing consultant," he said, "you need to understand social media."

Miller, who had spent a lot of time online researching organic options for her family and posting the results on other people's blogs, decided to start her own blog, OrganicMania. She was soon named to the Nielsen Media Research List of Top 50 Mom Bloggers (one of only two "green moms" named). Taking Scholl's advice, she also developed a Twitter following and, three years ago, won the first Shorty Award (Twitter's equivalent of the Oscars) for Best Green Content on Twitter for @GreenMoms.

Miller, who had more than 20 years of marketing experience with venture-backed start-ups and Fortune 500 firms before founding her own firm, says "4GreenPs"

refers to the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place and promotion. Miller says that too many marketers focus on promotion without first considering the other three elements and that wastes a client's time and money. "What's the point of buzz if it doesn't build your business?" she asks.

From its offices at Bethesda Green Business Incubator, 4GreenPs offers "strategic marketing for

Sunnovations, which produces solar-powered hot water systems.

Miller says that green marketing does have its pitfalls. She warns that many marketers who specialize in green business are green consumers themselves and end up "preaching to the green choir." The point, she says, is to promote green clients to a more mainstream audience. "You don't always have to lead with green and say "Our products are so ecofriendly," Miller says.

Marketers should focus on the emotional benefits of a product and understand what consumers care about, not necessarily what the company thinks will motivate consumers to buy. Marketers must also avoid "greenwashing" or misstating the environmental benefit of their products.

Miller's goals for the future include building the best green marketing firm in the nation, something that is "not a sprint, but a marathon." The most satisfying part of her job is being able to use her marketing talents to advance a sustainable agenda and meeting people who have ideas that could "transform the way we live, consume or conserve resources and the legacy we leave for our children." ■

*Gabriele McCormick is managing editor of 270inc.*

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**“What’s the point of buzz if it doesn’t build your business?”**

sustainable brands" or "green marketing," which includes everything from the development and execution of marketing plans to implementation of public relations, social media and inbound (online) marketing. The companies that Miller works with may have a green-tech product to launch, a social cause to promote or the results of a corporate social responsibility (CSR) program to communicate. Clients have included Mom Made Foods, maker of organic food for children, and

photograph by Jamie Turner