



The Fairmount Group president Dawn Hanson

10
TOP
COMPANIES

**ORGANIZATION:
FAIRMOUNT GROUP**

LOCATION: CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

PRINCIPAL: DAWN HANSON

FOUNDED: 2006

EMPLOYEES: 9

COMPANY DETAILS

The Fairmount Group is an independent consulting practice that provides communications counsel, training, and services to businesses and nonprofit organizations. Its core practice areas include: strategic marketing and public relations planning; market research; brand management; media relations; presentation and media spokesperson training; and digital communications. For its nonprofit clients, the company provides counsel and support in the areas of fundraising and development, member recruitment, and volunteer management.

“No doubt, the past year has been a challenging one for the Fairmount Group,” president Dawn Hanson says. “At the end of 2008, we lost our oldest (and largest) client due to budget cuts within that organization — and it hurt. Ultimately, though, the loss of that client provided valuable lessons that have helped our business grow stronger.”

2009 SUCCESSES

Having lost its most prominent client, the company scrambled to find new business and was successful in that attempt. However, some of the new clients weren’t profitable or “enjoyable” or beneficial in any way, Hanson says. The experience taught the Fairmount Group the importance of remaining true to its motto — “profit joyfully.” The firm rededicated its commitment to work exclusively with clients who share its values. An ensuing highlight of 2009 was learning that the crisis communications plan that the Fairmount Group had developed for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District won national recognition as a “best practice” by the Council of Greater City Schools.

“With the new business we have won during 2009, we have more than made up for the lost revenue from our dearly departed client — and there is significant potential for expanding our business with some of our new clients,” Hanson says. “One thing definitely unaffected by the economic downturn is the Fairmount Group’s commitment to excellence, which has always been our hallmark.”

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2010 INITIATIVES

The Fairmount Group will continue to focus on maintaining costs while expanding the business. Hanson says the challenging economic environment taught her the importance of keeping overhead costs low in order to keep the firm’s professional fees reasonable for clients. She responded to this challenge by building a flexible staffing model comprised of eight senior level professionals who work with her on a contractor basis.

“The Fairmount Group is now poised for continued success and growth,” Hanson says. “We are so optimistic about the future that we moved into a larger office suite in October. We’ve come a long way in the past year and we look forward to a long and prosperous future as one of Northeast Ohio’s best small businesses.”

Hanson says she will also devote more time to networking in 2010. “Cherish your networks!” she says. Before moving to the Cleveland area, Hanson worked in public relations in Louisiana and Washington and spent a decade as a corporate communications executive in Europe. She has never lost touch with the people she clicked with in her previous business life and local communities. “I’ve grown the business almost entirely through referrals. I am so grateful to everyone in my personal and professional networks. I need to devote more time to nurturing those relationships,” she says.

ADVICE FOR CBC READERS

“Remember that all business isn’t good business,” Hanson says. “I believe that professionals do their best work when they work on projects for which they have a passion and with clients with whom they share a common goal. All of us at the Fairmount Group share a deep commitment to education, social responsibility, diversity and inclusion, and a healthy environment. It’s no coincidence that the firm has done a significant amount of work for clients in these areas.”

For more information: www.thefairmountgroup.com

STORY BY THOMAS SKERNIVITZ
PHOTO BY DON BENSMAN