

Natalie Beck

Founder and president
Beck Marketing Services, Cave Creek

BACKGROUND: Beck previously served as vice president of marketing and communications with JPMorgan Chase & Co. and Bank One. The north Valley resident was born in Cheyenne, Wyo., and moved frequently with her family. Her father was a U.S. Air Force pilot. She married her "high school sweetheart," now a Phoenix police officer, and has an 8-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter. Beck founded her Cave Creek-based marketing and communications firm in August 2007 after being laid off from the mortgage division of 1st National Bank of Arizona.

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in communications from Arizona State University, attended Northern Arizona University for the first three years

AGE: 36

RESIDENCE: Cave Creek

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ASSOCIATIONS: Lone Mountain Elementary PTO, Junior Coyotes Amateur Hockey Association Travel Council, National Association of Women Business Owners



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Business philosophy

BEST BUSINESS DECISION: Starting my own business was the best thing I have done. While it hasn't been the easiest decision to see to fruition, venturing out on my own has been a great adventure, and I don't look back with any doubt that it was the best decision I have made.

BUSINESS GOAL: Building a full-service marketing and public relations firm geared toward small and midsize clients.

STRATEGY: Maintaining 10 to 15 clients on a project-by-project basis, rather than the traditional retainer fees charged in the past by larger marketing agencies.

On the move

HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN ARIZONA? Air Force brat. Lived in Phoenix in kindergarten, fifth and sixth grades, and high school to now — in all, 23 years.

WHERE HAVE YOU LIVED? I was born in Cheyenne, Wyo., then I lived in Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Phoenix, Seattle, Germany, Phoenix, Virginia, Tampa and then back to Phoenix.

Fun stuff

HOBBIES: Teaches aerobics/spinning classes, sports and youth hockey. Beck, above, shops at sports store Behind the Mask for her son.

PETS: 11-year-old black lab, Maverick.

YOU DRIVE: A 2000 Ford Expedition.

YOUR ORDER AT STARBUCKS: Tall mocha, skinny, no whip.

YOUR ORDER AT HAPPY HOUR: Vodka tonic on the rocks.

LAST MOVIE YOU SAW IN THE THEATER: "Bolt" in 3-D.

FAVORITE SPORTS TEAM: Phoenix Coyotes.

LAST BIG VACATION: Disneyland.

True confessions

BIGGEST CAREER HIGHLIGHT: Early in my marketing career, I had the opportunity to work with many major sports teams across the country, including the Arizona Diamondbacks. I was part of the Bank One senior marketing team that launched Bank One Ballpark, Diamondbacks Banking and the bank's overall affiliation with the team.

BIGGEST CAREER LOWLIGHT: I think everyone has had a point in their career where they face a layoff or downsizing, but this turned out to be a huge career highlight for me because it was the turning point that encouraged me to start my own marketing consulting business.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? With a prosperous and growing small business.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOUR COMPANY IN FIVE YEARS? I look forward to hiring more employees and branching out into other industries over the next five years.

BIGGEST BUSINESS/CAREER REGRET: There's really not anything I regret. Any adversity that I've faced in the past has been an opportunity to grow and improve.

WHAT WOULD YOU BE DOING IF YOU WEREN'T IN YOUR CURRENT JOB? Not sure.

MAJOR CLIENTS: Unicef, Omega Legal Systems Inc., World at Work, M&I Bank, Biltmore Bank, La Torta Rica, C3 Staffing & Investigations, Home Concierge Services, Dr. Jef Gazley, Arizona Sports Complex

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST MISTAKE SMALL BUSINESSES MAKE? Growing too quickly and not providing the level of service their customers deserve. Having a good business plan is not the same as having a solid marketing plan. Both need to be integrated effectively to be successful.

— Mike Sunnucks