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Kimberly Jennings - The woman "behind" the CPAs and success consultants at GRASSI & Co.

kj Kimberly Jennings

**GRASSI
& Co.**

LAKE SUCCESS, NY At first glance many 21st century individuals may find the concept of "a woman *behind* anyone" to be offensive... and even more offensive if that woman is "behind" a group of predominantly male, highly intelligent executives. That's not the case with Kimberly Jennings. She has built her entire career as the woman, behind the scenes, working to promote the expertise of her professional colleagues. She takes great pride in the fact that she is able to contribute to the success of her company in a unique way. Jennings is the marketing and client service director at GRASSI & CO., CPAs and Success Consultants. "I learned at an early age, that lions don't need to roar...their presence is known by the sheer virtue of what they do and who they are." She has never been the type of person that needs to be the expert, front and center, in order to consider herself accomplished. The more successful her accounting, auditing, consulting, and tax professionals are, the happier she is...and successful is definitely a word that describes the firm; in 2002 they were named the nation's fastest growing accounting firm by

Public Accounting Report. Currently the firm is one of the largest and most well respected construction, A/E and real estate focused accounting firms in the region and has offices in Long Island, Manhattan and Westchester County. GRASSI & CO. provides services to government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, and businesses primarily in the tri-state area. Nationwide the firm works through organizations such as Moore Stephens - the 13th largest independent accounting network in the country, CICPAC (Construction Industry CPAs Association) and The Hard Hat Construction Group, an organization comprised of seven CPA firms from across the country with exceptional expertise in construction and construction related financial matters.

Jennings brings a unique skill set to the construction and real estate accounting profession. She helps her colleagues reach their highest levels of professional success by helping them understand issues such as how to identify the types of clients that benefit most from GRASSI's services, how to cultivate key relationships with other service providers such as banks, law firms and sureties, and how to position the firm's services so that clients understand the bottom line value of what they are paying for. Basically...she focuses on the "human side" of one of the most complicated and hard to define industries imaginable. "It is hard to explain to a client what makes one accounting firm better than an-

other," said Jennings. She explains how the average client (before working with GRASSI & CO.) thinks of their accountant as someone who performs audits and prepares their tax returns. Jennings explains that GRASSI's clients see their accountants multiple times a year... not just during tax and audit time. That's why working with her firm is different from working with other firms. "We focus on their success, and in turn, our success follows," said Jennings. Her firm even differentiates itself with its name; last year, she trademarked GRASSI & CO., CPAs and Success Consultants and that name and tag line is now owned by the firm. "Our value statement and end result for our clients is all in our name," she said.

Day to day, Jennings is in charge of all advertising, communication, networking, public relations, speaking, education, and client satisfaction/retention campaigns for the firm. She ghostwrites articles, develops the firm's collateral materials, website, proposals, newsletters and advertisements, as well as, helps the GRASSI professionals identify prospects and ways to communicate and interact with them. She and the firm's managing partner, Louis Grassi, both stress the importance of identifying and understanding how their clients define success. To one it may be making more money, so the firm helps them save tax dollars, cut costs, and identify profit enhancing strategies... to another, success may mean transitioning their

business, so the firm helps them with mergers, sales, ESOPs, or business ownership transfers. Jennings is quick to point out that her firm is in complete compliance with all independence rules related to work that can and cannot be performed for the firm's audit clients. In fact, her firm's quality control record of is one of the best in the country. GRASSI has received the highest rating possible in peer review - three years running... a statistic that less than 5% of the country's accounting firms can claim.

Before joining GRASSI & CO. in 2000, Jennings owned a marketing consulting firm that focused on marketing and business development for all types of professional service organizations. She previously held a national board position on the National Lead Abatement Council (NLAC) and currently serves on the board of directors for the Queens/Bronx Building Association (QBBA) and the executive advisory board of the New York Subcontractors Trade Association (STA).

Jennings believes that growing up in a traditional Southern family has taught her many valuable lessons she has brought into the workplace. "It's about respect and teamwork." Just like a building project is seldom completed by the singular effort of one company... it's the same with professional service firms. The professionals at GRASSI & CO. become team members, both with her and with their clients ... and the end result is simply SUCCESS!