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ShuBu Creative – Helping Non-Profits, Governments and Individuals Make an Impact by Elevating and Clarifying their Brands and Marketing



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“Our vision is to build brands that make a positive difference in the world.” Becca Cooper Leebove

CEOCFO: *Ms. Leebove, ShuBu Creative website shows that your mission is to create world-changing brands. Would you tell us about your strategy to do that?*

Ms. Leebove: ShuBu is focused on taking on clients that are purpose driven. We assist non-profits, mission-centric organizations, companies, government entities or even an individual who is doing purposeful and positive work. We help our clients make a bigger impact in the world by elevating and clarifying their brands and marketing.

Our vision is to build brands that make a positive difference in the world.

CEOCFO: *Was that the idea from the beginning or was there some point when you realized that this made the most sense to you?*

Ms. Leebove: There was a point when I realized this made sense. I opened the company with the idea that we were going to do good work for good people. We ended up working with people making a positive difference with the work they do and then a lot of non-profits and purpose-driven companies started coming to ShuBu Creative for either a rebrand, a new brand or a marketing campaign. We just attracted that type of person because our values aligned. I always wanted to do philanthropic work or non-profit work at some time in my life, so it was just fate that it happened this way.

In 2020 we were working on refining the ShuBu Creative's brand and I decided to make a shift and entirely focus on purpose-driven organizations. That is when I came up with: "Our mission is to create brands that have purpose and impact." The messaging resonated and we started to attract those types of organizations. It worked out in my favor because I love doing it!

CEOCFO: When you are talking with a prospective client, how do you know that their heart is really in it?

Ms. Leebove: After realizing that we are focusing on purpose-driven clients, I saw that everyone does have some sort of purpose and started asking our prospective clients more specific questions. We ask "why they are doing the work they do" and "how it is making a positive difference in the world."

For example, one of our clients is an organization in Colorado and they were embarking on going through a rebrand. Their name was Colorado Association for School-based Health Care. They have been around for a few decades, and they came to ShuBu to rebrand and change their long hard-to-remember name. They are now Youth Healthcare Alliance. Their mission is to ensure kids (K-12) have access to healthcare. The organization helps implement and advance health clinics at schools in need-based areas.

We see clients like Youth Healthcare Alliance coming to us and it is clear they're doing purpose-driven work. It feels great to be working with that type of client.

CEOCFO: The name ShuBu is very unique. How did you decide on that?

Ms. Leebove: ShuBu is a unique name. I wanted a name that no one else had in the industry, and I noticed that every name was taken for almost every marketing and advertising creative firm that was out there. I was looking at my kids one day, and I thought about the silly nicknames I had for them when they were babies. In fact, I still call my daughter Shu Shu, her name is Sloan, and my son's name is Quinn, but when he was young, we used to call him Boo. Therefore, I named the company after my children's baby nicknames because they are my why.

It ended up that ShuBu means different things in different languages. In Japanese it means "the main thing", which works very well with branding, because you want to make sure we get across your main points. Also, being a unique name, it is one that people will not easily forget.

CEOCFO: Is there a difference in how you create a campaign for a company on a mission as compared to a standard business?

Ms. Leebove: We are taking a strategic approach and I would hope there is not a difference. We are diving deep into "what they do" and "who they do it for" and making sure they understand "why their audience engages in what they do." It is about making sure their brand is clear and engaging and putting it out there to drive awareness and make an impact.

Sometimes the budgets are not as big or there are less resources and we need to be extremely efficient. They often have more stakeholders such as, boards or volunteers or donors.

CEO CFO: *Would you give us an example of two different types of organizations you represent and what you did that resulted in a successful campaign?*

Ms. Leebove: One example is that we ended up working for the Commerce City Police Department, which was interesting because I did not know a lot about law enforcement, and I am always learning from these experiences. The number of people applying to be in law enforcement has been decreasing for years, which is a problem nationwide. We did our signature inside out discovery where we got to know the department by interviewing different types of police, like detectives, the Chief of Police, officers and more. We got to know their culture and who they were as people. We made a campaign focused on what we learned about them. They were very community-driven, but they were also action-oriented. They also were into police reform, change and finding the next generation of police.

We focused the campaign on action, community, and change. We did a digital marketing campaign and took real photographs and videos of the police at the department. We were successful and had over 333 applications. They had not seen anything like that since the pandemic. They ended up hiring fourteen officers and seven civilians by the end of the year. We are still working with them, and we have been asked to speak at webinars that are funded by the DOJ as an example for other departments on how you can show the positive aspects of law enforcement and help recruit for the next generation of police. That was an amazing campaign to work on and it was extremely successful and continues to be successful.

We are working on publishing a graphic novel about a group of superheroes that have disabilities. The purpose of the book is to raise awareness of disabilities for those who do not have them but also to empower those that do have disabilities. We just signed with a publisher, and we are going to be publishing in the fall.

We helped to brand a community health center in Arizona that has been around for 45 years and was not portraying the quality healthcare network they are. We modernized their brand and shortened their name and now seeing that they are even having better results with their employee retention because there is more pride in their brand and their marketing. They received several rewards and grants in the community since rebranding as well.

We love what we are doing and the success we see.

CEO CFO: *What do you know about creating a successful campaign that perhaps less knowledgeable people in your industry might not recognize?*

Ms. Leebove: What people might not recognize is that we take the proper amount of time to look at things strategically and do the work up front vs. just jumping into creating a brand or marketing campaign. A lot

of marketing firms and people think it is easy and quick. Even the clients think we can get this done quickly. It might take three to six months to go through the proper brand study and declare who you are and what you aspire to be and get your brand elevated to the point where people are going to pay attention to it.

Another step would be talking to not just people inside an organization but outside. A lot of organizations think that they can do it themselves and the stakeholders know exactly what they want for their image, but we take the time to not just talk to the internal stakeholders but to talk to the external stakeholders. That could be either customers or strategic partners as well as other types of people that are close to the organization.

We get themes, soundbites, and insights from our research and we incorporate those into the brand. We call it our 'inside-out' approach. We do this methodically and make sure we are all in alignment on the brand position of an organization before we move forward into design and production.

CEOFCO: *Your site has info about the ShuBu commitment to DEI. Why is it important for you to let people know?*

Ms. Leebove: It's important to me to have different types of people be a part of branding and marketing campaigns because we are speaking to the world and the world is made up of a lot of different people.

We are not just one type of person or group working on a brand. Since I have started in this industry, I have been fortunate to meet creative people from different backgrounds and now I am pulling these people together to help. I am seeing the amazing contributions that a diverse set of people have on a project, and it is so critical.

CEOFCO: *Are you able to ramp up as needed?*

Ms. Leebove: We are small but nimble and we have had a group of steady contractors that are in the creative field working with us from the beginning. If we need to, we bring more contractors on a project. We just tap into our mainstay contractors which is a robust group of creative talent and we have been able to handle all of our projects with ease.

Our next step is to hire another account manager that can manage more accounts.

We plan to take on more accounts and get bigger. My vision is to have a full staff with many accounts.

CEOFCO: *How do you stay on top of changes and trends that sometimes move with lightning speed?*

Ms. Leebove: I will quote someone that I worked for a long time ago, Rip Ripley, a longtime advertising guy, he said to me "in this industry, just always keep your eyes open 24/7." I always took that to heart. I am constantly looking at billboards, signs, social media, and things outside of my little bubble, as well as reading articles and books constantly. I always have been interested in pop culture, music, commercials and

movies. I think it is about just being a sponge and being an observer of things, which keeps you up-to-date on trends.

The other part of this is not being scared to try new things. For example, ChatGPT, not being resistant and using those things that change the industry fast. Another example is the online graphic design tool Canva, which we started using in 2020. I was a little scared and I wondered if this was going to take over our jobs since it made design so easy. We found ways to use these tools help us do our jobs better and more efficiently.

CEOCFO: *As ShuBu Creative grows and evolves, how do you deal with all the moving pieces as CEO and continue to provide the focus and results your clients deserve?*

Ms. Leebove: Having good processes. We have developed a straightforward process. We have tight templates and processes that help keep us moving efficiently. It is about having good processes and then consistently making them better.

CEOCFO: *What if anything might someone miss when they first look at ShuBu Creative?*

Ms. Leebove: Our values. We have been in the creative business for so long that there are values that we believe in. You cannot have an ego in this world, if you want to truly make it and be happy. You must be collaborative and hear people speak and listen to other people's ideas.

One of our values is to be a "learn-it-all" and not a "know-it-all." You do not need to be a know-it-all with everything. I understand that advertising and marketing people are dealing with a lot of new trends and technology, and we may come across as smart and egotistical, but at ShuBu we are constantly learning. It is ok not to know everything and this is important and one of our key values.

It is important for ShuBu not to be "too cool for school" as well. We are not going to be an intimidating firm. We are extremely approachable and collaborative.

