

## 5 QUESTIONS WITH...

# CAROL SKAFF

### OWNER, COHLMIA MARKETING

Marketing has always been in Carol Skaff's blood.

But owning and operating her own business hasn't. For the past year, Skaff has been running Cohlma Marketing since the departure of its founder — her sister Missy Cohlma — to Koch Industries.

It has been a learning year full of exhilaration for Skaff, whose company counts among its clients Genesis Health Clubs and Vantage Point Properties.



Mike Hutmacher/The Wichita Eagle

### **1** What have you learned in the last year as your own boss?

"I think the best part of it has been the confidence that clients have had in us, in continuing to do business with us. And we have also gotten new business. There's just something so affirming about that."

### **2** How has the transition gone?

"I worked for Missy for four years as a contractor. I think that's really what helped me have the confidence to do my own venture.

"When you're a contractor you know how much billing you're doing, you control your income and pay for your own expenses and your own benefits.

"It gave me a little introduction to running a business — like running your own sole proprietorship, only we had a great office to come to work and another professional here (Ginger Ellis) I could bounce ideas off."

### **3** Why did you choose marketing as a career?

"I was an English major

(at Wichita State University) with a journalism minor, and I really had no idea what I was going to do with the degree.

"As it happened, one of my sisters, Barb, was a language arts teacher in the public schools and the other one, Missy, had gotten into advertising. In the marketing industry, the public relations industry, those things were such a natural fit for me."

### **4** Your career includes stops with several advertising agencies and time on the other side of the fence in marketing at Bank IV. How has that broad experience affected your career?

"In the agency business, it is really important to have varied experiences. Something that has helped me so much is that at Bank IV, I was a client. I was served by an agency and creative people outside the company and nothing gives you the sensitivity to client work like being a client.

"Working in the agency field, I've worked for a small, medium and large agency, all

vastly different. You get such a varied experience and you see how it works in every environment."

### **5** When students ask you for advice about a marketing career, what do you tell them?

"I tell them to find something you love to do and volunteer for it — something you would do for free if you didn't need the money. That's how you will know that you've found something you can parlay into a career."

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