

## GOING SOCIAL

**BHC Rhodes** is "going social" in 2011, fully embracing social media outlets such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

To celebrate their 19th anniversary June 8, the firm used those outlets to share the story of its humble beginnings. However, they're not just going social online this year.

Carla Hayes, marketing and communications manager for the Overland Park, Kansas-based civil engineering and surveying firm, says marketing efforts are creating opportunities "to engage with customers outside of the 9-to-5 workday. That builds new relationships and strengthens older ones when you can connect on a personal level."

This year's social push happens online and in person, as the firm is offering networking opportunities during hosted monthly "metro mixers," which allow team members to engage with clients and prospects on a personal level in rotating office locations.

"To keep the mix of attendees diverse, we change our focus for the featured guests each month so we're engaging the types that are interested in those guests," Hayes says. "I wanted these to be casual and low-key interactions, and I wanted to attract everyone—from larger-scale companies to smaller groups, whether it would be architects, government employees, real estate contacts, city staff, etc..."

Hayes created a fun and casual logo for this that incorporates the very familiar Kansas City Area Development Council's annual ball to catch the eyes of the bigger development types, and the casualness of the invites catches the interest of the smaller groups, she says.

The mixers have brought a lot of foot traffic through the door, where visitors are met with friendly faces and constant reminders of the firm's "No problem" customer service creed.

"As a marketer it's imperative that the company live up to the reputation you work to build and provide the service you're selling in your marketing efforts," Hayes says. "The fact that my teammates live up to that brand is the cherry on top."



## ANIMATION NATION

**David Evans and Associates, Inc.** (Ontario, CA), wanted to create an animated holiday greeting to send to clients. Not only did the 650-person energy, land development, transportation and water resources firm want something that would be entertaining and carry a message of gratitude and peace, but envisioned something that would make minimal use of non-renewable resources.

"It also needed to represent our four business units of energy, water, transportation, and land development," says Tami Boardman, DEA's director of communication.

"We sent the card to nearly 12,000 recipients, including clients, partners, and employees," Boardman says.

DEA collaborated with Wright Strategies, a creative agency specializing in web and interactive media campaigns, to create a dynamic, interactive experience for the viewer that includes animation and audio: a moving sequence of connected scenes. These start with a view of rotating wind-blown turbines (to symbolize energy) waves of water then appear (water) over which a bridge unfolds as a light rail train rolls toward the viewer (transportation), beyond the bridge a cityscape rises (land development). The sequence ends with falling snow, and festive holiday music.

The closing provides a message of client appreciation with snow falling in the cityscape and the opportunity to replay or forward to a friend.

DEA staff received more than 100 positive comments from clients and partners, Boardman says.

"The card created awareness for the DEA brand and reinforced our core purpose of improving the quality of life while demonstrating stewardship of the built and natural environments," she says.

The e-card garnered an honor award from the Society for Marketing Professional Services in the category of new media last year.

