

# Field Reports

## Morello Takes Manhattan to 15 and Beyond

By Thomas Haire (thaire@questex.com)

NEW YORK — Since 1995, Manhattan Media Services Inc. has been one of the leaders in taking DRTV products into direct response print. With the company celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Response* recently caught up with its founder, president and CEO Marianna Morello to discuss the company's past — and its future.

**Q: What's the most memorable moment of Manhattan Media's first 15 years?**

**A:** It has to be our 10-year anniversary celebration. It feels like it happened yesterday — just a blink and now we're at 15! I don't know where it's gone.

**Q: Have the past 15 years unfolded how you envisioned? What have been the biggest surprises?**

**A:** While it's been fabulous, I couldn't have imagined how we would grow and how great the team I've put together would be. Many on our team have grown up here — a lot of them have been with us 8-10 years or more. I'm blessed to have such an incredible team. It's like a family, which is hard to find in business and harder to keep. Aside from that, we're not just a player in the DRTV world. We have many big accounts that are not DR driven, but rather come from the traditional branding side. It's hard to believe that we started out going after DR clients and have evolved into a full-service agency.

**Q: What do you consider the most successful campaign you've worked on and why?**

**A:** We've had so many, because we've been blessed with clients whose products have gone through the roof. We've had so many successes with IdeaVillage, TELEBrands and others. There are so many, I don't want to leave people out, but what we did on Smooth Away is special. We exposed it everywhere — buses, taxi tops, billboards, trains. It's the one campaign that we really reached blitz levels, and that's because Andy Khubani decided to make it a household name.



**Q: How have the Internet, the economy and other recent factors affected the company's outlook for the next 15 years?**

**A:** We've seen budgets going to the Internet and mobile. It's affected everyone's business. Marketers need to incorporate it, because today you need a true media mix. So, we've incorporated it. All clients that need to be on the Web, we get them involved there. And now our publication partners give us added value on buys with Internet opportunities, list sales, E-mail blasts. The economy totally affected spending, and the Internet costs less out of pocket with a bigger reach. It can add to the mix, but it's not the only way to go. Print is one of the strongest drivers to the Web. I don't think I'm going to live to see a "no print" world. Yes, it's shrinking, but the strong will survive. There is so much DR in magazines now, because people are buying at such low rates. We're paying less for some print buys today than we did 15 years ago. It just doesn't make sense not to do it as part of the mix.

**Q: Where would you like to see Manhattan Media in 2025?**

**A:** That's a long way off. I hope it doesn't go that fast again! We must continue on the same path of growth, expanding into the Internet, mobile — the places where clients need us to be. God willing, print will hold up and continue to be a strong option. I sincerely hope the company — and the people who have devoted themselves to it — carries on past me, and it ends up being their company.



Marianna Morello credits her tight-knit team for 15 years of success.