

Small Business, Big Mission: Entrepreneurs bridge the gap between Music City's entertainment and corporate sectors

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Weakness: Lucia Folk and Lisa Chader noticed that Music City's entertainment and corporate sectors didn't always communicate with each other. So the CMT veterans formed their own company, The Change Agent-cy, to bridge that gap for good causes. Folk and Chader realized that the two sides could work together on strategy to support diversity and inclusion and speak out against discriminatory legislation, among other things. The duo also wanted to make sure incoming companies and brands from larger cities, which may not have been consumer-facing in their previous markets, knew how to make an impact on the Nashville community. The Change Agent-cy's goal is to make sure corporations and businesses put an emphasis on impacting the overall community, while pairing entertainers with different nonprofits to help amplify their messages.



MARTIN B. CHERRY | NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL
Lisa Chader, left, and Lucia Folk co-founded The Change Agent-cy in October 2019.

The Change Agent-cy

Year founded: 2019

Website: thechangeagency.com

Employees: 3

Address: 901 Broadway, Unit 23656, Nashville 37202

Lisa Chader likes to joke that she lured Lucia Folk "kicking and screaming to the dark side" of entrepreneurship.

During their nearly two decades of knowing each other, the duo has developed a buddy-cop level of banter that allows both their personalities and professional strengths to thrive as they grow their company, The Change Agent-cy.

The Change Agent-cy, which Folk and Chader co-founded in October 2019, is a consulting firm that guides entertainment and corporate clients in supporting the causes and charities they care about in measurable ways. That includes helping a corporation figure out their corporate-social responsibility and their impact on the community at large, helping an entertainer use their platform to make a positive impact, or developing partnerships between entertainers and nonprofits.

The two met during their days at CMT and became fast friends in 2006.

Prior to leaving the company at separate times, Folk ran CMT's public affairs department, while Chader oversaw the company's corporate communications as senior vice president.

"I wanted to be able to create the magic that I had for many years at CMT on our own terms with clients we wanted to work with while doing good work and making an impact on Nashville, because we love this city," Folk said. "We wanted to do work that's smart about making this city better with the power of different brands."

Folk, president and CEO, is a big-picture thinker with deep connections in the business sector and nonprofit space.

Chader, chief communications officer, can see the details in every situation with a focus on the execution and tactics it will take to pull off their ideas, tapping into her nearly 30 years of experience in entertainment television and publicity.

The two formed their company after realizing there was opportunity for Nashville's business, entertainment and nonprofit sectors to work together on strategy to support diversity and inclusion, and make Tennessee a more welcoming state by raising their voices against discriminatory legislation and to help incoming businesses make an impact on the Nashville community.

Folk and Chader believed that while corporations and businesses often donated to certain organizations and causes, the social-impact piece often felt like an afterthought as opposed to a key part of the business.

"Going forward, it needs to be integrated at all levels of business," Folk said. "There's nothing great about the pandemic, or the social and racial injustice we've seen over the last year, except that it's making people pay attention. Corporations are realizing that they have to take a stand."

Prior to the pandemic, Chader said the company was experiencing rapid growth and ultimately made money in its first year.

Chader believes The Change Agent-cy is positioned to continue that growth following the pandemic as more artists, businesses and corporations seek to make an impact.

“The pandemic actually gave us some time to get our footing and figure out what was working as we move forward,” Chader said. “How it changed things is that it might have altered the initial growth, but we’re already seeing the growth pick back up.”

Folk echoed those sentiments.

“We want people to know that we’re here, and that we’re experts on the corporate social responsibility piece and the PR piece so it’s a good combination,” Folk said. “We hope that people take advantage of that so we can continue making more of a difference nationally and here in Nashville. There are a lot of problems that could be solved if we worked smarter across lines to make more of a collective impact.”

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