



For Immediate Release
Contact: Kelsey Lehtomaa Frouge
(813) 252-2409
Kelsey@Conversaco.com

LAUNCH OF CONVERSA BRINGS NEW COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES TO STATE AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

DiBenigno, Frouge and Hopton form full-service public relations, research & public affairs firm

Tampa, Fla., Thursday, November 13, 2014 – A new full-service, minority and women-owned communications firm, Conversa, recently opened its doors in Florida, offering local, state and national organizations public relations, public affairs and public research support.

Founded by partners Arlene DiBenigno, Kelsey Lehtomaa Frouge, and Sarah Beth Hopton, the team uses its combined experience to develop comprehensive campaigns that create conditions for effective change. Employing traditional and digital tools, along with in-house research capabilities, Conversa builds mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its publics, influencing public policy by shifting public opinion.

The firm has already secured several clients from the non-profit, political and association sectors, including Take Stock in Children, Epilepsy Foundation of Florida, Florida Museum of Photographic Arts, USF Health, and Hudson News.

“While Conversa is a new company, our approaches and successes are not,” said Arlene DiBenigno, managing partner. “Our work isn’t limited to one market or industry, but rather transcends across political spheres, non-profit arenas and multi-cultural spaces. Our ultimate goal is to help our clients navigate the complex communications challenges inherent in an increasingly diverse world.”

For more than two decades, DiBenigno has been a vital, trusted adviser on political campaigns, policy development, and ballot initiatives. DiBenigno has conducted public outreach for three separate Florida governors and their administrations, and has influenced presidential, gubernatorial, and congressional campaigns within Florida, Michigan, Texas, and Washington D.C. She has also developed broad and encompassing multi-cultural communication campaigns for major non-profit organizations and advocacy initiatives including: Auto Alliance, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Coca-Cola’s Adelante Movement, the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the Latino Leaders Network, Pfizer, Voto Latino, the 60 Plus Association, and the 2013 Tampa Bay Host Committee for the Republican National Convention. DiBenigno runs Conversa’s public affairs division.

“Public relations isn’t isolated to traditional modes of communications anymore, but rather has to include strategies in the digital and social spaces to ensure audiences are reached through their preferred information channels,” said Frouge. “Individually we’ve innovated in our fields, but together, we’re able to apply those innovations across new sectors, ensuring a full-service and seamless offering designed to move the conversation toward common goals.”

Frouge leads the firm’s public relations initiatives. For the past 10 years, Frouge has worked tirelessly in public affairs, marketing and public relations, applying her expertise to public education, healthcare and insurance issues. She is experienced in national, regional and local media relations, as well as community relations, grassroots and advocacy outreach, event management, and coalition building. Prior to joining Conversa, Frouge worked for an international public relations firm where she managed national public education initiatives and developed solutions for many of the firm’s public affairs clients. She also served as a spokesperson and lead marketing professional for the Florida Department of Education. In this role, she successfully developed and implemented internal and external marketing initiatives; created outreach plans around assessment score rollouts, test modifications and law changes; and organized and executed numerous state and national media events.

“Understanding the visual and verbal cues that translate effectively across cultures is one of the ways we distinguish our work from others’. Everything we design is backed by research because quality research is the difference between communications that move others to action, and those that merely make noise in the marketplace. This is more than just work; it’s avocation in action,” said Managing Partner, Sarah Beth Hopton.

Hopton is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of South Florida and runs Conversa’s public research and design practice. She is the recipient of the 2011 21st Century Digital Fellowship, and a 2001 Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar. Prior to joining Conversa, Sarah Beth served as a political reporter, and was the Legislative Aide and Communications Director to multiple state legislators and government agencies. She is a graduate of Georgetown University’s Institute for Political Journalism, during which time she was a staff writer for the Army Times Media Department at the Pentagon, working directly under then Army Chief of Staff General Dennis Reimer. She has also worked on numerous visual communications, social research and polling projects, and was a former Advertising Federation Chapter President and District 4 Board Member. Her dissertation studies the intersection of language, networks, new media, and public policy in the case of ‘Agent Orange’.

To learn more about Conversa, its clients and team, visit www.ConversaCo.com or contact Kelsey Frouge at Kelsey@conversaco.com or (813) 252-2409.

###

Conversa
106 S Armenia Avenue, Unit 1/2
Tampa, Florida 33602
(813) 252-2409

www.conversaco.com
sb@conversaco.com
arlene@conversaco.com
kelsey@conversa.com