

WIL PROFILE: BONNY BOTTS

It would be impossible to paint an accurate portrait of Bonny Botts, vice president of marketing and public relations at the Louisiana Lottery Corporation, without first describing her smile. It radiates her personality, which is sunny, open and optimistic.

Botts is a marketer who loves the process as well as the result. It's no surprise then that during her four-year career at the Louisiana Lottery Corporation that one of her self-described biggest accomplishments was shifting the advertising function in-house. In the process, the lottery literally redefined the collaborative creative process.

Botts is the mother of one daughter—Mallory Botts (age 7). She is married to Hunter Botts. Prior to her work at the lottery, Botts has also been employed by Yankelovich, Clancy, Shulman; Mazda Motor of America, Inc. and Union Planters Bank of Louisiana.

Botts is a high-energy, foot to the accelerator type person. Her energy defines her passion for life. Even when she is juggling multiple projects at work plus struggling with a myriad of "personal responsibilities," Botts always stays positive about the process.

ADVERTISING IN-HOUSE

Botts describing taking advertising in-house for the Louisiana Lottery Corp. as her most recent success in the area of marketing.

"While change is inevitable, growth is optional. But I have always believed that growth is not optional," said Botts. "Therefore, to grow, we desired greater control over our marketing and advertising creative efforts. We chose to go in-house after evaluating the pros and cons and finally asking 'Why not?' After all, our marketing and advertising program, which is directed by Bob Davidge, is driven by seasoned professionals who are very talented and committed to team success. I'm very fortunate to work with such a great group of people!"

This switch involved reorganizing

responsibilities within the lottery marketing and public relations departments, assembling a team of creative resources, hiring a broadcast producer, managing the production of all advertising and directing the placement of advertising.

Although it is considerably easier to delegate the responsibility for advertising to an outside firm, taking advertising in-house significantly reduced the annual commissions paid to ad agencies and helped the lottery to develop its "signature" tone for advertising.

In 1999, Botts received the Greater Baton Rouge Sales and Marketing Executive's "Marketer of the Year" award. It recognizes excellence in marketing and leadership in the Baton Rouge community. It recognizes career accomplishments and contributions to the community.

"One of those accomplishments was cutting our production costs in half by going in-house," explained Botts. "Another was increasing our sales through our sales and marketing efforts."



GROWING UP

Botts grew up in a closely knit family. She described her mother as "the first



Above: Baby Bonny

and foremost" mentor in her life.

"We have three children in my family, all within 18 months of age, and Mom worked, always cooked a 'real meal' for us and did whatever else we needed. Neither she nor my Dad have a college education and they put all three of us through private school. She made many sacrifices for which I'm grateful," said Botts.

Botts credits her 7th grade teacher, Sister Jeannette, as also having a great influence on her. "She was so much fun and loved life. She laughed a lot and everyone who knew her, loved her. She was a great teacher and friend which is important at that age," added Botts.

The backdrop of a strong family, together with the influence of her teachers, fueled Botts' commitment to succeed. There wasn't any question that she would excel at her school or that she would represent the first generation in her family to get a college degree.

"Growing up I have always believed, and still do, that you can accomplish anything if you work hard and don't give up," she said. "My parents instilled this in me and I believe it has helped me in many ways. I studied hard in school and wanted to go to college and move away to start my career. I was blessed to grow up in a loving and supportive family. I was taught 'if you're going to do something, then do it right.'"

CAREER TRACK

After Botts earned her B.S. in marketing with a minor in psychology from Louisiana State University, she moved to California and went to work at Yankelovich, Clancy, Shulman.

She worked there for two years as a senior analyst, responsible for all aspects of market research project management including cost analysis and project writing, questionnaire development, field supervision, report writing and presentation of results to clients. Her clients included such blue chip marketers as Porsche and Mattel.

In September 1989, Botts was hired

by Mazda Motor of America as a product specialist. Over the next four years, she advanced to market strategy manager, then sales planning manager.

At Mazda, she was fortunate to have another woman mentor play a key role in her professional life. Jan Thompson, vice president of marketing at Mazda Motor of America, was instrumental in launching Botts' marketing career.

"She took me under her wings so to speak and spent a lot of time with me," said Botts. "I was able to travel a great deal, interact with Mazda dealer owners, the advertising agency and vendors. I was given the opportunity to develop and communicate marketing strategies throughout the organization."

In mentoring young women, Botts believes it is critical to be accessible. "I mentor young women entering the

BONNY BOTTS

Position: Vice President Marketing and Public Relations, Louisiana Lottery Corporation

Years at Lottery: 4+ years

Birthday: December 10, 1962

Age: 38

Horoscope Sign: Sagittarius

Spouse: Hunter

Children: Mallory, 7

College Education: B.S. in Marketing and minor in Psychology, Louisiana State University

Cuisine: Chinese

Music: Motown

Author: David Balducci

Book: *Total Control*

Childhood Hero: Walt Disney

Woman most admired: Jackie Onassis

Political Orientation: Republican

Quote: "The only people who make mistakes are those who are actually doing something."

Personal Achievement: To have achieved a balance in my life with my career and family that works for all three of us.

Professional Achievement: This award. When I was in high school, my friends used to tell me that I would probably end up like the perfume commercial "bringing home the bacon and frying it up in the pan!" I guess they were right.

workplace by being friendly and approachable," said Botts. "I try to encourage them to try new things and express themselves as individuals. I offer suggestions but don't try to tell them how to do something."

MOTHERHOOD

Botts was 31 when her daughter Mallory was born. On the issue of how she combined motherhood and work when her daughter was born, Botts confesses, "Quite honestly, I didn't at first."

Botts returned to work when Mallory was seven weeks old. Their family moved back to Louisiana when Mallory was six months old.

"I stayed home with her until she was 14 months old when I could no longer stand not working," admitted Botts. "I enjoyed being home with her but really missed the challenge of working. I went to work for Union Planters Bank as marketing director. On my first day, someone said 'Oh, I hear you have a little girl' and I immediately starting crying. But, after two weeks we both adjusted and I consider myself very fortunate to have been able to stay at home and then continue my career."

As a mother, what does she hope to instill in her daughter? "I think it is most important to teach my child to be a good person," said Botts. "You should treat others as you want them to treat you. The world is not perfect and not always fair, so when life gives you lemons, make lemonade!"

Botts believes having the opportunity to experiment was critical to finding her niche. At Mazda, Botts attended the National Mazda Dealer Show in Chicago and presented the Claritas Lifestyle Segmentation program.

"I was able to develop regional, national and local marketing plans combining indus-


try trends, research, and sales as well as psychographic and demographic buyer profiles. It became clear to me that this is what I really wanted to do. I'm a people-person and enjoy all aspects of marketing," said Botts.

In terms of her management style, Botts' goal is "to truly empower my employees, to give them the responsibility of their positions and then allow them the latitude to accomplish their goals their way. I prefer to focus on getting the job done versus how the job gets done. Most people like to have a sense of accomplishment and be challenged in their jobs. I also like to have fun at work!"

Although Botts still sees challenges in the workplace for women in terms of the glass ceiling, she noted "many corporations have made great strides with women in executive positions."

What policies need to be in place to further women's progress? "I believe in equality in the workplace and paying the person as well as the position," said Botts. "If fairness and equality are practiced, it should work out for everyone."

Botts doesn't believe there is as much a difference in the management style of men and women but people in general.

"I think there are as many management styles as there are managers," said Botts. "A good manager works with his/her employees to know what motivates them and treats them individually." 

Below: Bonny and daughter Mallory

