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December 8, 2009

## **KSK Publications Associates: Business Profile**

KSK Publications Associates (KSK) is a publications firm located in Newport News, Virginia. The firm is owned and operated by Kerryn Dupont, Kimberly Hancock, and Sarah Terry and was opened in 2009. Each owner brings a different skill set to the company. Using a wide range of skills, each of the co-owners helps to make KSK the premier publications firm in the Eastern Virginia region. Through KSK's dedication to serving, the company has developed a detailed mission statement, vision statement, values statement, and code of ethics.

### **KSK's Company Description**

KSK Publications Associates (KSK) opened in 2009 under the ambitions of three James Madison University graduates. Located in the City Center area of Newport News, Virginia, KSK specializes in designing and writing publications for non-profits and small businesses in the Eastern Virginia region.

#### **Location**

KSK has a home office located at 701 Town Center Drive, Suite 100, Newport News, Virginia. City Center is a booming industrial park which is optimum for a new and growing business. KSK's high-rise office contains three offices and a conference room for hosting meetings. The premium location is also home to many restaurants and small businesses, which offers KSK business and extra locations for meetings.<sup>1</sup> This central location allows KSK to easily travel throughout the Eastern Virginia region from Washington, D.C to Virginia Beach.

#### **Size**

KSK is a small regional business focused on helping non-profits and small businesses design and write publications. The small atmosphere offered by KSK allows employees and clientele a personal connection where they feel important.

#### ***Clientele***

KSK's clientele are small businesses and non-profits in the Eastern Virginia region. The clients of KSK are most important and always involved in the production of publications. The collaborative approach taken by KSK allows organizations to feel involved with their publication. Currently, KSK is working with five non-profits and 15 small businesses. KSK offers competitive pricing, which helps bring back clients and recruit others. Non-profits also receive additional discounts varying on the type of publication and their contract.

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<sup>1</sup> *City Center at Oyster Point - Newport News, Virginia*. Web. 06 Dec. 2009. <<http://www.citycenteratoysterpoint.com/>>.

**Employees**

KSK employs six full time employees and one contracted graphic designer. Kerry Dupont is the Head of Design and Web Services, Kim Hancock is the Head of Editing, and Sarah Terry is the Head of Writing. The company offers three intern positions over the course of three college semesters (i.e., Fall, Spring, and Summer). Below shows the company arrangement of employees (see Figure 1).

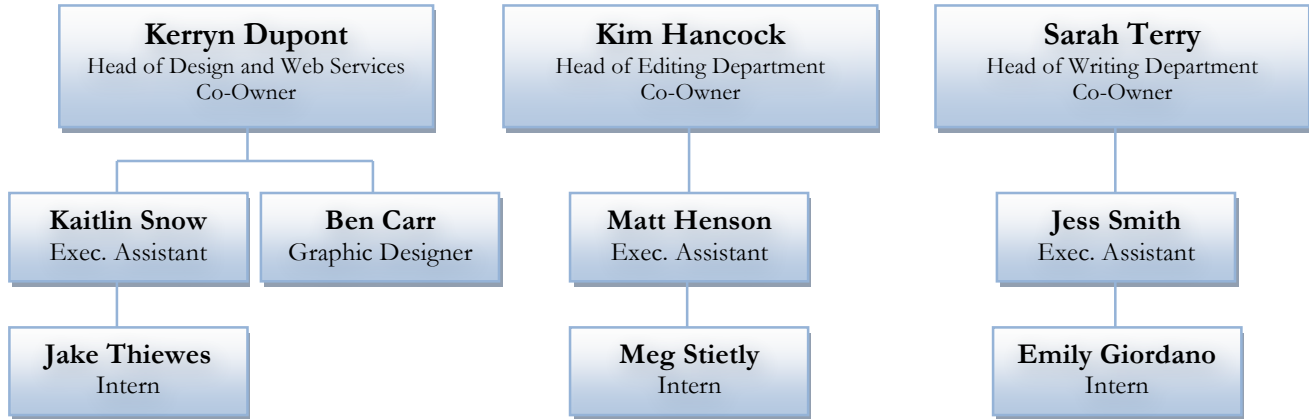


Figure 1. Hierarchy of KSK Employees – Tree Chart of KSK Employees

**Salary**

As a small business, KSK is frugal with its funds. KSK realizes the importance of making wise choices with the company’s money. One way KSK saves money is through its internship program. The company also saves by contracting a graphic designer to be used when needed. To show how KSK appropriates funds, a job and salary table is listed below (see Table 1).

Table 1. Employee Logistics – KSK Job Titles and Salaries

Employees	Job Title	Part/Full Time	Salary
Kerry Dupont	Head of Design and Web Services, Co-Owner	Full time	\$52,000.00
Kim Hancock	Head of Editing Department, Co-Owner	Full time	\$52,000.00
Sarah Terry	Head of Writing Department, Co-Owner	Full time	\$52,000.00
Kaitlin Snow	Executive Assistant of Design and Web Services	Full time	Hourly, \$15.00
Matt Henson	Executive Assistant of Editing Department	Full time	Hourly, \$15.00
Jess Smith	Executive Assistant of Writing Department	Full time	Hourly, \$15.00
Ben Carr	Graphic Designer	Contracted	Hourly, Contracted
Jake Thiewes	Intern	Part time	Unpaid
Emily Giordano	Intern	Part time	Unpaid
Meg Stietly	Intern	Part time	Unpaid

## Services/Products

KSK offers a variety of services for small businesses and non-profits in the Eastern Virginia region. The company has three departments: writing, editing, and design and web services. Each department has its own specialty that helps with publications production. The writing department specializes in writing emergency plans, policies, codes of ethics, and content for various types of publications such as brochures, newsletters, and websites. The editing department edits the written content based on its readers. The editors check for grammatical errors, appropriate content, and usability. The design and web services department focuses on the overall look and feel of a publication. Using the C.R.A.P. method (i.e., Contrast, Repetition, Alignment, and Proximity) of design, employees are able to put the finishing touches on publications.

## KSK's Mission Statement

The mission of a company should identify its exact purpose in society. To create the mission statement of KSK, the company considered what was most important for all of its constituents.<sup>2</sup> From those ideas, KSK created the mission statement.

### Mission Statement

*KSK Publications Associates delivers innovative designs, coupled with professional writing and editing services to non-profit organizations and small businesses in the Eastern Virginia region. We are committed to consulting and providing quality, cost-effective, compelling communication materials.*

The mission statement begins with a sentence that addresses exactly what the company does and where its services are carried out. The first sentence involves great detail, which exemplifies the true professionalism of the business. KSK uses innovative designs to set themselves above other top competitive companies. Cutting edge designs and the use of new technology, allows KSK to demonstrate true innovative product quality.

The last part of the sentence describes the level of quality that KSK offers to its constituents. KSK describes their writing and editing services as professional because it is believed no other company, in the surrounding area, takes as much pride in creating the finished product as KSK. The company not only takes their job very seriously, but each project is treated as if it was for the company itself.

The mission statement describes the target clientele and where KSK provides its services. KSK chooses to target non-profit organizations and small businesses because other companies often overlook these. Working with these two types of businesses allows KSK to help small businesses grow and develop innovative publications materials to better both the small business and non-profit. KSK provides services to the Eastern Virginia region, from Washington, D.C to Virginia Beach. This location is currently growing exponentially and allows KSK to continue to increase its clientele.

The statement ends with a sentence that explains exactly what KSK is committed to providing as a company. KSK is committed to using its knowledge and expertise to create high-quality work, while still offering competitive prices. KSK understands the importance of quality over quantity; therefore the company treats every project as if KSK would publish it under its own company name. Through compelling communication materials, KSK incorporates rhetoric into its writing and designs to increase readability and persuasion.

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<sup>2</sup> "How to Write Your Mission Statement." *Business & Small Business*. Web. 06 Dec. 2009. <<http://www.entrepreneur.com/management/leadership/businessstrategies/article65230.html>>.

## KSK's Vision Statement

The vision of a company should explain where it wants to be and exactly what it wants to become. KSK's vision is based on the concept of moving the company forward. It explains what KSK wants the company to become and the shape and direction of KSK's future.<sup>3</sup> From those ideas, KSK created the vision statement:

### Vision Statement

*To be established as Eastern Virginia's premier publications firm, while continually striving to advance our writing, editing, and design skills.*

This one sentence sums up exactly what KSK wants to become through commitment to the fields of writing, editing, and design. KSK wants to be the premier, or number one, publications firm in the Eastern Virginia region meaning that it wants to create publications and products that surpass other top competitors. KSK also wants to constantly build onto the skill level of each employee. KSK takes writing, editing, and design extremely seriously and it understands that in order to stay competitive in today's job market, it is important to stay up-to-date on new technology and skills.

## KSK's Values Statement

The values of a company should signify its core priorities. Values demonstrate how a company operates and serves. They drive policy and strategic planning within the company and do not change with time. To create the values statement of KSK, the company considered what was most important for all of its constituents.<sup>4</sup> Based on those thoughts, KSK created a values statement:

### Values Statement

To better our company and to preserve the professionalism of our business, we value:

*Passion* – dedicated to producing products that we believe in

*Collaboration* – everyone contributes to the larger picture

*Innovation* – committed to providing creative, cutting-edge solutions

*Sustainability* – creating a lasting impression in the heart of the community through our philanthropy

*Measurable Results* – delivering what matters most

To begin, the statement starts with a preamble that says, "To better our company and to preserve the professionalism of our business, we value." This preamble explains that the values of KSK were chosen to make certain the company is always putting its best foot forward and always maintaining a professional atmosphere. The values listed, passion, collaboration, innovation, sustainability, and measurable results, enhance the bettering of KSK and the professionalism of KSK.

### Passion

Passion is the first value listed. At KSK, it is believed that passion is the driving force behind dedication of employees to their jobs and production of the best possible products. Passion is a value, which shows the enthusiasm of KSK's employees and builds a desire within clientele to work with those who believe in what they are creating and producing.

<sup>3</sup> Pass, Elizabeth. "Company Profile: Mission, Vision, Values, and Code of Ethics." WRTC 250: Ethical and Legal Issues in Technical and Scientific Communication. James Madison University, Harrisonburg. 17 Nov. 2009. Reading.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, Sherri. "What Is a Value Statement?" *Ehow. How To Do Just About Everything! How To Videos & Articles*. Web. 03 Dec. 2009. <[http://www.ehow.com/about\\_5063071\\_value-statement.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_5063071_value-statement.html)>.



### **Collaboration**

Following passion, KSK has added collaboration. Those affiliated with KSK know that collaboration is an important value. They value the ideas and opinions of all who interact with the company and feel it is important in order to create the best product and generate a positive working atmosphere. Without collaboration between employees and customers, KSK may not produce the publication the customer desires. In addition, if our employees do not feel there is an open-minded environment where they can contribute ideas and opinions KSK may not be able to be the best company possible. Therefore, collaboration is a key value needed in making KSK the best company and in maintaining the company's professionalism.

### **Innovation**

The next value is innovation. KSK believes that innovation is the driving force of their company. This value shows KSK's skills in using the highest-quality technology to construct the finest products for our customers. The employees of KSK will also use innovation to solve any dilemmas that may be presented. The ability to offer creative solutions to problems is often needed to maintain a company's positive image. Innovation allows KSK to keep up with the times and have solutions to any potential problems again enhancing KSK's professionalism and continual bettering.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is another value of KSK. However, KSK does not look at sustainability through business transactions and making money but through helping the community. KSK believes that the best way to sustain a company is through creating personal ties within the community through philanthropy. Philanthropy can range from helping out at a local school, recycling, and contributing to charities. KSK values its customers and those in its community.

### **Measurable Results**

Finally, yet importantly, is the value of measurable results. KSK believes its customers should see results whether it is in the product they are receiving, or a solution to a problem. KSK wants our customers to know that the company is there for them. Offering results is important in creating a positive image. Measurable results also contribute to having the best company and the highest level of professionalism.

### **KSK's Code of Ethics**

An organization's code of ethics is a system of principles that govern employee's moral behavior within a company. A code of ethics asks one main question: What principles are important to follow in order to operate as an ethical company?

KSK's code of ethics is organized through the fundamental principles model. This model highlights a company's fundamental principles and cannons. These principles are the employee guidelines for ethical behavior within the company. Each principle within the code of ethics is unique to the company that it serves. The fundamental principles model for the code of ethics begins with a motivational preamble which outlines the overall intent of the company in its practices and what the company ultimately stands for. The preamble for KSK's code of ethics explains that as a company, KSK consistently operates with ethical principles in order to serve its clients to the best of the company's ability.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pass, Elizabeth. "Company Profile: Mission, Vision, Values, and Code of Ethics." WRTC 250: Ethical and Legal Issues in Technical and Scientific Communication. James Madison University, Harrisonburg. 17 Nov. 2009. Reading.

## Code of Ethics

KSK Publications Associates recognizes the importance of our profession and all that it entails. By accepting a personal obligation to our constituents, our company commits ourselves to the highest ethical conduct and agrees to abide by the following:

- Integrity* – acting as you would want others to act to you
- Professionalism* – seek assessments of our own performance
- Quality* – endeavor to produce excellence in project deliverables
- Fairness* – avoid conflict of interest
- Competence* – pursue professional self-improvement through education
- Proactivity* – have a better outlook for the future and more motivation and optimism in resolving situations

The ethical principles of integrity, professionalism, quality, fairness, competence, and proactivity are arranged in a hierarchy with the most important principle listed first.

### Integrity

Integrity is a principle in KSK's code of ethics because it is a valuable skill. This, with integrity being a skill, it is not something that can be learned all at once. KSK strives as a company to hold themselves to the highest of personal standards. KSK's employees are always responsible and respectful to all of its constituents. Employees with integrity will act with a personal decision to stand firm on principles that are inherently good. As a company, KSK recognizes that integrity is a skill and expects all of its employees to be aware of themselves and show utmost respect to other employees, interns, and most importantly, the clients.

### Professionalism

Following integrity is professionalism. Professionalism is defined as a “meticulous adherence to undeviating courtesy, honesty, and responsibility in one's dealings with customers and associates, plus a level of excellence that goes over and above the commercial considerations and legal requirements.”<sup>6</sup> KSK recognizes the importance of being the top professionals in the writing, editing, and design field.

It is important to KSK that all employees convey professionalism when dealing with clients as well as other employees and interns. Professionalism is not strictly a personality trait. KSK's employees show professionalism through accurate and timely scheduling, precise budgets, and responding to clients in a timely and responsible manner.

### Quality

Quality products and services mean satisfied customers. KSK endeavors to produce excellence in all project deliverables. Product and service quality are important to KSK. As a company, KSK believes working with quality products alongside quality employees will produce deliverables as efficiently as possible.

Product qualities that are important to KSK include:

- Delivering products to clients on time
- Making products that are easy to maintain when completed
- Matching a client's needs to their wants
- Working with clients to ensure a good value for their money

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<sup>6</sup> “Professionalism Definition.” *Business Dictionary*. Web. 30 Nov. 2009.  
<<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/professionalism.html>>.

Service qualities that are important to KSK include:

- Being available for clients to contact when needed
- Continuing to be a credible company
- Acknowledging the importance of the client
- Acting courteously toward all constituents

### **Fairness**

KSK offers equal opportunities and services for all clients. Each client will be offered an equal amount of time to discuss his or her individual project needs and goals. KSK understands each client is different and has varying time schedules. With this in mind, KSK will strive to work with the client fully to satisfy his or her scheduling needs while avoiding conflicts of interest. KSK understands that a conflict of interest could occur when dealing with many clients at once. KSK is involved in multiple projects at one time, one of which could possibly deter the motivation for working on other projects. KSK will avoid this by creating schedules, not only for their clients but for themselves as well, to properly designate an amount of time to each project in order to remain fair and unbiased.

### **Competence**

In order to remain the best in the publications field, KSK pursues professional self-improvement through education for all of its employees. It is important to KSK as a company to constantly seek out new and improved methods in writing, editing, and design. Also, KSK employees are encouraged to learn new technologies and share them with the company in order to produce the best products possible.

### **Proactivity**

By becoming more proactive, KSK will have a better outlook for its future and more motivation and optimism in resolving situations. Planning and acting in advance allows KSK to properly manage all of its clients. KSK views being proactive as a company will eliminate any unexpected problems that may delay certain projects or affects clients in any way. We strive to deliver the best product possible and cut out any distractions in advance by constant planning. Ultimately, KSK's main focus is the relationships KSK develops with clients and work to keep them as strong as possible to ensure future work.

### **Kantian View of KSK's Ethics**

As a company, KSK follows a Kantian view of ethics. Kant argued that a person belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality. Kant states, "he is the subject of moral law, because of the autonomy of his freedom."<sup>7</sup> This aspect of Kant's philosophy sets him apart from other philosophers in his view on the responsibility of one's self to others. KSK has adopted Kant's moral and ethical views because, as a company, KSK believes it takes each person acting ethically to run a successful business in order to keep constituents satisfied.

### **Integrity**

KSK's integrity principle is based on Kant's concept of the categorical imperative. Kant believes people act morally because it is their duty. In Singer's book entitled *Ethics*, Kant explains, "to help others because one has kindly feelings towards them is of no moral worth; an act has moral worth only in so far as it is done out of a sense of duty."<sup>8</sup> In order to be good at what you do, you need to be a good person overall. The main aspect of KSK's integrity principle follows the *Golden Rule*; do unto others as you would have done unto you.

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<sup>7</sup> Singer, Peter. *Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Singer, Peter. *Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994. Print.

KSK employees feel it is their duty to do whatever it takes to make the client satisfied during the process of publication creation, so that the client is pleased with the overall finished product.

### **Professionalism**

Professionalism is a concept that KSK expects of each employee and client. Kant explains that people have goodwill. By this, he means that they are a person of integrity who knows right from wrong. Kant states, “There is no possibility of thinking of anything at all in the world, or even out of it, which can be regarded as good without qualification, except a *good will*.”<sup>9</sup> A person’s conscience, according to Kant, is also a part of his or her goodwill. Today, good will is discussed in the form of a conscience. A conscience is often thought to be the voice in a person’s head to help him or her decipher what is right and wrong. Therefore, as a company, KSK employees know that when a situation arises there are appropriate ways of handling it.

### **Quality**

The principle of quality reiterates Kant’s concept of universal law. Universal law is an idea that Kant considers imperative to society. According to Kant,

Man was viewed as bound to laws by his duty; but it was not seen that man is subject only to his own, yet universal, legislation and that he is bound only to act in accordance with his own will, which is, however, a will purposed by nature to legislate universal laws.<sup>10</sup>

Kant’s universal law relates to KSK’s concept of wanting to do what is best for its clients and not just what is best for the company. In Kant’s opinion, KSK’s moral obligation is to treat each project as if the project is being completed for the company itself. Quality holds more importance than quantity, and Kant was a firm believer of that. The quality standard of a project should not be lessened for any reason. It is KSK’s responsibility to deliver each client with high-quality and professional products.

### **Fairness**

Kant’s philosophy on practical reasoning can be applied to KSK’s principle of fairness. Kant says, “Consider your responsibility to self and others and to act only on those principles that you would have generalized to all.”<sup>11</sup> In relation to KSK, this concept refers to the idea of conflict of interest. Kant was an advocate for treating each individual the same. KSK agrees conflicts of interest have no place in a professional setting. As a company, KSK agrees that equality is essential in the workplace. The company believes each employee and client deserves equal opportunities to succeed and be satisfied.

### **Competence**

To KSK, competence relates to Kant’s duty to tell the truth. According to Kant, “To be truthful, or honest, in all declarations, therefore, is a sacred and absolutely commanding decree of reason, limited by no expediency.”<sup>12</sup> It is KSK’s duty to tell the truth and only to accept projects the company knows its employees can complete both successfully and correctly. The term competence refers to doing something a person has the skills to do. Kant believes that individuals should be honest and if they cannot complete a task correctly, than the task should not be taken on. For example, if KSK’s Design and Web Services Department do not have the skills to design a product that a client is asking for, then KSK should not enter into a contract with that client. KSK should be honest and explain to the client that they do not have the means to complete that project, even if by doing this it means the company will lose the potential client. In Kant’s eyes, it is more

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<sup>9</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Thomas Abbott, 1785, Philosophy Eserver, 15 Sept. 2009 <<http://philosophy.eserver.org/kant/metaphys-of-morals.txt>>

<sup>10</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals*, 1785, Philosophy Eserver, 8 Oct. 2009 <<http://philosophy.eserver.org/kant/metaphys-of-morals.txt>>

<sup>11</sup> Leslie, Larry Z. *Mass Communication Ethics: Decision Making in Post Modern Culture*. 2nd. ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Singer, ed., *Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 281.

important to tell the truth and lose the client rather than be untruthful and take on a project that cannot be completed successfully.

### **Proactivity**

KSK bases its proactivity principle on Kant's idea that a person is a part of something larger than his or her self. Duty, according to Kant, means that a person should do what is right because he or she is a part of something bigger. A person's sense of duty can be large or small. He or she may only be obligated to do what is best for his or her family or company, as well as obligations which can be larger. Situations often affect a person's duties. Nevertheless, it is important for each individual to realize he or she is a part of something bigger than his or her self. This helps people to do what is right. KSK's proactivity principle is exactly that. It is the idea that the company is always moving forward and doing something more. Kant states:

An action done from duty has its moral worth, not in the purpose that is to be attained by it, but in the maxim according to which the action is determined. The moral worth depends, therefore, not on the realization of the object of the action, but merely on the principle of volition according to which, without regard to any objects of the faculty of desire, the action has been done.<sup>13</sup>

By having employees accomplish tasks, they can prevent problems from arising. Therefore, doing one's duty, and doing one's duty well, will help make KSK the best company it can be.

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<sup>13</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. Thomas Abbott, 1785, Philosophy Eserver, 15 Sept. 2009 <<http://philosophy.eserver.org/kant/metaphys-of-morals.txt>>