

## Allen to Revolutionize Hispanic Communications

By Diana Kelly RC'04, SCILS'04

What are you passionate about? If you answered "my career," then you are like Kerri Allen RC'01, who has successfully combined her personal interests with her job. Passionate about the Hispanic culture and public communications, Allen married her Spanish major and theater arts minor to land a role as director of public relations for REVOLUCION, a full-service Hispanic brand communications agency in Manhattan that has received 43 industry awards since its inception in 2000.

At REVOLUCION, Allen spends her days attending industry events, lunching with clients, and introducing herself to media and potential clients face to face. She says that reaching out to the media and making that personal connection is even more important in the less-saturated Hispanic market. While it would be easy to send out press releases from her computer all day and make phone calls from her desk, Allen says getting "out there" makes a difference and makes her job more fun.

The Hispanic population in the United States, REVOLUCION's target audience, is the nation's largest minority group (more than 45.5 million residents) and is growing rapidly, according to a recent Census Bureau report. But Allen says the Hispanic market is still "new" to many advertisers and PR practitioners, especially those who primarily focus on the general market. She believes that agencies with an expertise in Hispanic sensibilities will lead the pack.

"Hispanic PR is growing, and it's going to continue to grow," Allen says. "And that's very exciting to me because in addition to being able to use my skills and passions, I'm in a great position as far as the industry goes."

Allen recently worked on the launch of Casio's EXILIM EX-S10 digital camera in the U.S. Hispanic market with Lili Estefan, niece of Emilio Estefan and host of the Univision show *El Gordo y la Flaca*. Estefan's well-known slim frame is being used to promote Casio's tiniest 10.1 megapixel camera. Allen has also worked with the wine importer Palm Bay International, representing Santa Rita, the No. 1 750 ml Chilean brand in the United States.

### From Rutgers to REVOLUCION

While at Rutgers, Allen studied under theater professor Eileen Blumenthal, who encouraged her to couple her love of theater with writing. After graduation, Allen spent a few years writing about theater and Hispanic culture then was hired by the Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey to handle marketing and PR under artistic director Bonnie J. Monte. Though she lacked experience in those fields, Allen approached the job with enthusiasm. She single-handedly launched the theater's Latino initiative by bringing in Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Nilo Cruz and reaching out to the Hispanic communities in Morris, Essex, and Union counties.

Allen later moved to New York City and continued freelance writing. Then, in the summer of 2007, REVOLUCION contacted her to work on a three-month public relations project for HBO Latino. "I never ever imagined myself being in a for-profit company and advertising. I just always saw myself in the nonprofits and the arts and that kind of world. But at REVOLUCION, they're brilliant. They're all bilingual, they're great business people, and they're really fun."

In March 2008, Allen signed on as a full-time director. "I'm able to use all of these skills I've culled over the past seven years or so, whether it's public relations or speaking Spanish or just my own theater background of being able to go out in front of people and just talk or present something," Allen says. "It's no different than being on stage. In an odd way, I have culminated all of these random skills into this fabulous job."

As for her continuing work with HBO Latino, Allen says: "They produce fabulous series, original programming, and films from Latin America for the U.S. Hispanic community. With an arts background, working with HBO Latino is easy for me and I love it."

Allen remains appreciative for her education and experience at Rutgers. "I'm so grateful that I was able to go to a school that was that good, with professors who truly cared—many of whom I still keep in touch with, to this day."



Kerri Allen RC'01