

THE CREATIVE TEAM BEHIND THE NEW WOMEN OWNED LOGO

“Men shop like hunters and women shop like fisherman,” explains Ann Macdonald, President of Rouge 24, a branding and packaging firm. “Men know exactly what they’re going in for, they go straight to that item, and they do not deliberate. Women, they go in and they want to be informed purchasers, and they really study the packaging, they read the copy and they will stand there in the store a compare features and prices.” As an expert in brand management and packaging, Macdonald spends a lot of time making sure she understands her consumers.



ANN MACDONALD
President
Rouge 24

Macdonald began her career working as an art director for magazines, before working freelance with traditional advertising agencies. While working in freelance she was offered an opportunity to work with the PBS show Word World, working to direct the brand, “to basically figure out what the brand identity was and then make sure all of printed materials and packaging were in-line with that brand experience.” It was her first contact with brand management, and she was hooked.

“I had an opportunity to effect what a brand voice was, to listen to the client, hear how they felt about the brand, what they were looking for and so I felt like my brand work was more satisfying just for me personally to be able to accurately reflect what the client was looking for and what they wanted out of a brand.”

Macdonald focused the rest of her freelance work on brand management and long the way she began working on individual projects for Walmart, building a strong and regular business relationship with them. Her relationship with them was so strong and regular that she actually had to begin hiring other designers in the industry that she knew were great creatives to assist with the workload, and without explicit planning she had begun Rouge 24. Since officially filing the paperwork for Rouge 24 five years ago, the business has doubled every year and has grown to a team of 18. Today, the company still keeps its focus on branding and packaging.

“Our core competencies really lay in creating the brand and then generating packaging designs that support that vision.”

As a designer, Macdonald is keenly aware of the consumer.

“One of the questions I always ask my clients is ‘who is your target?’, because we want to make sure that whatever packaging we are developing is obviously visually geared towards that buying demographic. When you are designing packaging you cannot be all things to all people, you have got to pick a lane.”

Knowing this, Macdonald studies the current dynamics of purchasing power.

“Well it is a very different world now than it was in the 1950s and 1960s and women have a lot more purchasing power now. Women are really impacting a tremendous amount of finances in the market place.”



With women making 85% of the buying decisions Macdonald realized the impact the packaging design could have on a product's success.

"For most of my designs that are going into the marketplace, the sweet spot that we need to hit is with the female shopper."

She began tailoring her designs to increase her clients possibility in the marketplace, at which point she realized the significance of her being a 100% women owned business.

"This is something I very passionately believe in, so what can I do to stand on that, promote that, make that a very clear communication can know how they can benefit based on our knowledge of their shopper?"

She did research, learned about WBENC, and in 2012 Rouge 24 became WBENC-Certified.

When MiKaela Wardlaw Lemmon, senior director of Women's Economic Empowerment at Walmart began looking for an agency to develop the new Women Owned Business logo a colleague pointed her towards Rouge 24. Macdonald was thrilled at the opportunity to be a part of the new initiative.

"I have for a very long time been very interested in not just women-business owners but women in the workplace and the impact that women have in the market place."

At the beginning of the project, Macdonald set out to determine an initial direction from the leadership behind the new logo.

"What people definitely didn't like or did like, pink can be a fairly controversial color, some people love it, some don't, are we doing pink? Or are we opening it up? What kind of graphics do you like to see?"

Other parameters were set as well, the logo had to be able to shrink down very small without losing its detail, it had to be able to be incorporated into many different packaging designs and the team wished for it to have a mark that at some point could stand alone. With those features in mind the Rouge 24 team started creating a variety of options for the logo that incorporated an iconic mark into part of the typographic lockup.

Rouge 24 worked with WBENC, WEConnect International and Walmart to evolve the new design until it satisfied all of the original goals and could be sent off to be rigorously consumer-tested. The final logo made its debut at WBENC's National Conference and Business Fair in June and will begin appearing on store shelves in Walmart this September. WBEs interested in using the Women Owned logo can find more information about its usage in WBENCLink.

<http://www.rouge24.com/>