

Focus on Leadership

A SPECIAL SERIES ON CALGARY'S BUSINESS VISIONARIES

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Sasges helps firms find their voices

Sasges Inc. creates visually engaging and intellectually appealing design that allow clients to effectively tell the world who they are and what they have to say.

The firm is led by founder and principal Rita Sasges, who says it is her company's ultimate goal to help clients find their voices.

Before you can find a company's voice, you have to determine its identity and what it strives to be, says Sasges. "Our forte is getting deep into an organization to help find it."

Sasges leads a team of creative, insightful, and meticulous visual strategists who understand how to tackle complex business issues.

She says the firm is recognized for its expertise in two areas in particular — reputation building and branding. "For us, branding is about much more than developing a logo," says Sasges. "It's an entire visual strategy program. We are asked by businesses to bring our design skills and business understanding to help them define — or redefine — who they are."

The firm has been recognized internationally by industry leaders such as Communications Arts Magazine, AR100 and the New York Art Directors Club.

Sasges has collaborated with well-respected companies and organizations such as Enbridge, Calgary Economic Development, the Calgary Health Region and University of Calgary's Hotel Alma.

The homegrown design firm recently worked with CED to develop creatively striking new Calgary. Be Part of the Energy campaign.

"Our partnership and our work with CED has been of great value for us," says Sasges. "It's opened doors and led to referrals and new clients, but it has also given us another level of understanding in regard to this city and we can use that to benefit our clients."

While the firm was established in 2004, Sasges herself has owned a business in the city since 1992.

"Since then, I have seen a lot of big changes in this city," she says. "It has become more sophisticated, and that means there is a need for us to come to the table with sophisticated solutions and with a good understanding of business. Otherwise we're just painting pictures."

She says the firm's work with Hotel Alma, which opened its doors at the University of Calgary in October 2009, was particularly exciting, as well.

With 96 rooms and suites, a stylish bistro and conference facilities for up to 125, it is the first full-service hotel in the country that is owned and operated by a university on its own campus.

"We are always looking for new challenges, and are prepared to tackle the big challenges and the small ones," says Sasges.

"We're not the type of firm where people come in and just say, 'We need to do a brochure.' They come in with a business problem and we help them solve it."

Solving problems gives CCS the edge

It is North America's largest provider of onsite before, during and after service solutions to help oil-and-gas companies realize integrated environmental solutions.

The privately held CCS Corporation employs more than 3,500 with operations across Canada and the U.S.

"We have a very large team of technical experts that help us achieve our goals, and we make sure we provide incentives and opportunities for growth to maintain that team," says CCS director of research and development Preston McEachern, who is also an integral team member in providing innovative solutions in the industry.

McEachern received his doctorate in hydrology and water quality from the University of Alberta and arrived at CCS after spending a decade leading the science research and innovation department at Alberta Environment.

He has been at the forefront in exploring issues related to tailings management, and helped create policy components for protecting water quality and quantity in his efforts to assist in furthering sustainable oilsands development.

"CCS is involved with leading researchers looking at the best practices and technologies for tailings management," says McEachern. "And we're working on achieving some exciting advancements."

The five-year project Forward 3, for example, involves 10 university faculty and 16 master of science and doctorate students from across Canada, as well as leaders in the field of tailings-related research including CCS.

"The ultimate goal is to make the tools available to plan and establish the best treatment for the reclamation of oilsands mining sites," says McEachern.



Wil Andruschak photos

As CCS Corporation's director of research and development, Preston McEachern is an integral part of the company's innovative approaches to solving oil and gas issues.

It is estimated there will be a \$2-trillion investment in the oilsands between now and 2035, according to a study released last May by the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI).

CCS will be a significant contributor to helping support that growth, as the company provides infrastructure and expertise to help its customers meet environmental regulations.

The Calgary company can help clients reduce their liabilities and improve and maintain their reputations within communities and government.

CCS believes the regulatory environment is going to become more intensive over the next decade, leading to stricter requirements, and so CCS is designing solutions to help

customers meet those requirements.

In addition to tailings management, water usage is on CCS's radar, as the province — and the world — turns its focus to managing fresh water resources.

"Water management is a significant focus for us, and for me in my professional career, as well," says McEachern.

"There is a desire to recycle more water and produce less hazardous waste, and that is driving all kinds of research and solutions."

McEachern is not only active in research with an appointment to the Biorefining Research Initiative, but also with adjunct professor appointments at the University of Alberta in civil and environmental engineering

supervising students in quality and water treatment and at the University of Victoria supervising students in hydrology.

Having worked in southwest Asia, Africa and the U.S., McEachern has a broad understanding of these types of environmental issues.

Being a leader in finding solutions has also led CCS to embark on its relationship with Calgary Economic Development, which helps the company build relationships with other like-minded organizations that can assist in achieving this organizational vision.

"Working together, we can achieve our objectives and move the energy industry forward in sustainable development," says McEachern.

ACAD grows reputation, programs

The Alberta College of Art + Design (ACAD) is a voice for the inclusion of arts and culture in every aspect of Alberta's future growth and prosperity.

"The role of ACAD is to be a facilitator and a bridge-builder that interconnects the community," says Shane Smith, vice-president of advancement at ACAD. "We are a unique presence in this province. In terms of art and design schools, between Toronto and Vancouver, there is us — and this gives a distinctive voice in the Prairies."

The college is one of only four degree-granting, publicly funded schools of art and design dedicated solely to art and design in Canada.

"This institution has been graduating students for 85 years in this province, and we have an esteemed and established history in Canada," says Smith. "We graduate students who then go out and become catalytic in the community."

The 245,000-square-foot college provides a solid, studio-based experience for students in fine art, design and new media, producing innovative thinkers, creative problem-solvers and visually talented students.

Small classes allow for regular one-on-one interaction with faculty, and space-per-student ratios are among the best in the country.

ACAD's mission is to be a leading centre for education and research, and a catalyst for creative inquiry and cultural development.

"ACAD is known for, and respected as, a thought leader, because we help solve complex problems in innovative ways," says Smith.

The college was given degree accreditation by the government in 1995. Since then, it has been able to grant bachelor of fine arts (BFA) degrees.

In 2000, the college was also given the go-ahead to award a bachelor of design (BDes) degree to qualifying students.

In 2009, the college was presented with foreign-equivalency status by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

The foreign equivalency status means the BFA and BDes degrees are recognized as equivalent in post-secondary institutions throughout North America, so ACAD artists and designers can pursue graduate degrees internationally.

ACAD is also pursuing the possibility of offering an MFA program, transforming the institution from an undergraduate school to one that affords an opportunity to earn a master's degree.

"We also want to focus on the 'A' in ACAD, ensuring it is an Alberta institution, not a



Vice-president of advancement at ACAD Shane Smith at the college's glass shop.

Calgary-centric school. We also want to support and engage culturally diverse populations, including building on our rich, rich cultural history with aboriginal and First Nations communities," says Smith.

The school has also long been a leader in providing educational offerings simply unavailable anywhere else.

"We have a world-renowned craft program, and we offer the only degree program in glass, and it is recognized throughout North America and as far as Australia," says Smith.

The institution also partners with organizations and agencies at the national, international and local levels to help further its mandate.

As a Calgary Economic Development Action Calgary partner,

Smith says ACAD can bring something unique to the table.

"Just like you wouldn't want a board that consists only of lawyers or accountants, when you're involved with a group like CED, you want diversity — bring together the plumber, the theologian, the mathematician, the entrepreneur and the artist, you will come up with innovative, actionable ideas, and that's what CED strives to do," he says.

Throughout its long history, the college has offered undergraduate education in a wide variety of art and design disciplines, including painting, sculpture, print media, drawing, photography, visual communication design, ceramics, jewelry and metals, fibre, glass and the latest program — media arts and digital technologies.

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