

Kimberly Manning

Chief operating officer,
Cronin and Co. LLC



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Name: Kimberly Manning

Occupation: Co-owner and partner, full-service marketing communications agency

Location of Business: 50 Nye Road, Glastonbury

Miscellaneous: Manning leads the oldest and largest advertising agency in Connecticut, which was founded in 1947.

She joined the Cronin team in 1988 as an account executive and progressed steadily in her career to senior vice president, director of strategic planning. In March 2008, Manning, along with Steve Wolfberg, purchased Cronin and Co.

Manning is active in several community organizations, serves on the board of directors for the World Affairs Council of Connecticut and guest lectures at area universities. Cronin and Co. provides pro-bono marketing services to various civic and charitable organizations.

A Connecticut native, Manning is a graduate of the University of Connecticut and holds a bachelor's degree in English. She started her career at Grey Advertising in New York City, working on iconic brands such as Revlon and Izod.

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Who is your most influential role model, and why?

Professionally, there are two people I would cite. One is Bill Cronin, the previous owner of Cronin and Co., a man of great integrity. I have been inspired by his business sense and strong moral compass. The second person is Liz Vogt, a supervisor from earlier in my career. She provided me with my foundation in strategic planning and taught me the meaning and importance of insight.

Why are you good at what you do?

Prior to assuming ownership of Cronin and Co., I served as the company's chief marketing strategist — a role I continue in today. This requires me to visualize the "big picture," assess our clients' business situations, and articulate strategies that will achieve results. I think I'm known for asking the tough questions and pushing hard to make our work better. I'm big on empowering our teams with the freedom to develop smart, highly creative marketing solutions. I'm also the type of person that doesn't rest on my laurels. I believe there is always something to learn from or improve upon after every success or failure.

How does your organization give back to the community, and what role have you played in those efforts?

Cronin has a long-standing tradition of giving back to the community. This is typically done in the form of pro-bono contributions. A great example is our work for the Jimmy Fund. We're currently in development of a new movie theater trailer to assist in the Jimmy Fund's fundraising efforts, which will air up and down the East coast starting in June.

Locally, we're currently doing work for the World Affairs Council of Connecticut and the Petit Foundation, a cause I feel strongly about given I'm from Cheshire. Our employees love getting involved as it's a way for them to contribute hands-on and it's often a way for us to showcase our creative work.

My business partner and I determine which causes the agency will get behind. In some cases, I'll work on projects in a hands-on capacity; for others, I'll simply provide oversight.

When the stress level gets too high, what's your secret remedy?

I try to keep things in perspective. We manage millions of dollars of our clients' marketing budgets. The stakes are high and we need to be highly accountable for our work. But in the

end, we're creating marketing ideas, and creativity should be fun. When the stress level gets too intense, I can always rely on my business partner Steve Wolfberg, or someone else on our staff to bring some much-needed levity to the situation. Also, like many working moms, I find refuge in my family.

How have you tried to balance your career and your personal life?

I have always seen myself as a wife and mother first, and a businesswoman second. I think of my life

as having two "sides" — both of which are very intertwined. When one side is out of balance, my life can feel pretty chaotic. So, I've also learned to roll with the punches. I have been extremely fortunate to work in a field that is supportive of working mothers. Even though my boys are teenagers now, it's rare for me to miss a school or sporting event, and I work hard to manage my schedule so I can continue to be very present in their lives. ■



Pictured, from left, at Cronin and Co.'s December holiday party, co-owner and chief operating officer Kim Manning with husband, Brad Manning, and company co-owner and chief creative officer Steve Wolfberg with his wife, Jennifer Wolfberg.