

Former Samsung, AmEx execs launch Brooklyn firm

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NEW YORK: Ethan Rasiel and Amanda Proscia, former communications executives at Samsung and American Express, respectively, have launched a technology PR agency in Brooklyn, NY, named Lightspeed Public Relations.

The firm, which opened for business last month, has a tech focus but also offers media relations, social media, event management, speechwriting, and content-creation services.

Rasiel, the agency's CEO, stepped down from his role as PR director of Samsung Electronics America in January and began brainstorming ideas for a PR firm, he said.

“The motivation for me to create Lightspeed PR was the frustration I felt working within big bureaucracies at my last two gigs at Samsung and Edelman,” he said. “As great as those companies are, I was swimming in a sea of protocols and PowerPoints, so Lightspeed is a way to deliver great PR programs without all the red tape.”

Before Samsung, Rasiel spent nearly 13 years at Edelman, serving as EVP and GM of the agency's New York technology practice.

He wanted to focus on technology because of how much the industry is growing nationally, as well as in New York, he added.

In addition to Proscia, who is serving as MD of Lightspeed, the firm has five freelancers and a creative director. For the next 12 months, the agency will continue with its freelancer model, but plans to bring on full-time staffers by this time next year.

Lightspeed has two clients on its roster: VSN Mobil and American Pearl.

For VSN, a consumer electronics product-design startup, the agency is handling content development, messaging, branding, and taglines. Lightspeed is also creating content for the company's website and will help to promote the brand as it launches

The work for American Pearl, a jewelry 3D-printing company, is focused on media relations and outreach.

While the agency is beginning its work with startups, Rasiel said its goal is to start pursuing larger clients in coming months.

Aside from traditional account work, Lightspeed is developing a PR diagnostics tool to help companies figure out how to make their communications programs more efficient.

The service would allow Rasiel and Proscia to take their agency- and client-side experiences and provide insight to companies alongside scientific facts, said Rasiel.

Proscia previously served as manager of corporate affairs and communications at American Express. She spent several years at Burson-Marsteller as a manager in the public affairs and corporate practice.

The name of the Brooklyn-based agency came from Rasiel's client-side experiences.

"I was thinking to myself, 'What is the most important thing to clients?', and having been a client at Samsung for several years, I realized that speed is the most important thing," he said.

Creativity and good relationships are also important, said Rasiel, but "if you can turn around results quickly and be responsive and efficient, that makes you indispensable."

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