



## Marketing Agency a Pioneer for Patients With Innovative Patient Ambassador® Model, Snow Companies Grew By a Third Last Year—And Is Still Hiring

By Melissa James, York County Contributor

When you think of the marketing agency world, you might envision Don Draper and his colleagues on Madison Avenue. In this day and age however, authenticity is key, particularly when it comes to healthcare communication. At the heart of any medical treatment is the patient—specifically, the patient’s story. That’s the niche of Snow Companies. What started in founder Brenda Snow’s attic 18 years ago has become a flourishing York County operation on Waller Mill Road.

Widely regarded as the leading pioneer in patient engagement, Snow was the first in the industry to bring strategic, regulatory-compliant, real-life patient stories to direct-to-patient initiatives. In other words, the company helps life science companies better understand their impact on patients. It’s also focused on helping people with chronic conditions connect with each other and exchange ideas with the life science industry.

As a full-service agency, Snow Companies provides services including copywriting, story writing, graphic design, video productions & editing, advisory boards, call center services, project and event management, database management & analytics, and of course, its

revolutionary Patient Ambassador® program. It’s ranked among the nation’s leading companies, winning awards such as the PM360’s Trailblazer Agency of the Year Award in 2018, MM&M’s Top 100 agencies, Inc. Magazine’s fastest growing private companies (46th in the health industry, 627th overall), the AMCP MarCom Award, the DTC National Advertising Award, and multiple Telly Awards honoring Snow’s video work.

**In February 2019,  
Snow Companies  
received the William Rogers  
“Poor Potter” Award  
for its significant investment  
in York County.**

But Snow Companies—and its transformative patient-centric approach—would not exist today if it weren’t for Snow’s own patient story. More than 25 years ago, while working in marketing in San Francisco, she began to experience strange symptoms. She was losing the ability to walk and to see. Doctors dismissed her problems, calling her crazy. Snow finally received a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis... but no treatments could help. By age 30, she was placed in a care facility. The turning point was when her daughter came to visit her bedside and asked, “Mommy, you’re not going to die, are you?” She redoubled her efforts to get better.

At last, a therapeutic was approved for her MS. Yet when she finally had the medication in her hands, she was unable to open the packaging. She also could not read the instructions. Snow realized the manufacturer had never spoken to an actual patient with MS. Since the drug company was located right there in San Francisco, Snow asked her father for a ride to their facility. Supported by her cane, she went through the doors and asked to meet with representatives. They agreed to speak with her... and thought her points were interesting. So they hired her as a consultant.



Snow's early work soon became a formula for patient engagement and patient centricity. After moving to James City County, she established her company. Soon Corbin Wood joined as co-owner and COO. Wood has a background in the biopharmaceutical industry. He was an early visionary who helped Snow Companies establish a viable business model with plenty of growth potential. To find a commercial location, they turned to York County's Office of Economic Development. "York County did a fantastic job to help," explained Wood. "There was so much collaboration with Jim Noel and his team, and the County was prepared to jump through hoops to ensure we found a location that fit our needs." The company ended up in a modern four-story building.



"At the time we moved here, it was oversize, but it had space to expand," he said. Snow Companies now occupies three floors and is renovating the final one to house its rapidly expanding workforce. Offices and work equipment populate the upper levels, but the building's ground floor is filled with chic gathering spaces and employee perks. You'll find a pool table, video game room, nursing suites, extensive gym with well-appointed shower facilities, large kitchen stocked with coffee and fresh fruit, and most uniquely, their own bar housed in the previous owner's vault.

"We're big on employee culture," said Brenda Snow. "For example, last week we had a leadership meeting where we did 'Snow Trivia.' We also have two yearly events: our holiday party—which this year had a "Night in Monte Carlo" theme—and our big Halloween party, which we combine with a Red Cross blood drive. We also have an appreciation day for our Patient Ambassadors." He said the company has ballooned to 330 employees (over 100 more than a year ago), and that their York County location has been conducive to growth.

"We have a large contingence of CNU grads, and a handful from William & Mary and other local universities. Most of our new hires require extensive in-house training, and we're set up to provide that. Of course, due to this significant onboarding investment, we make a big effort to retain our home-grown talent for as long as possible. We hire for attitude and train for skills."



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