

Ruth L Ratny's Reel Chicago Magazine, 2011

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REEL
CHICAGO

Second City director Sandy Marshall's boutique Marshall Creative has ballooned through word-of-mouth into a full-service marketing agency for small-to-medium sized businesses, with its distinctive comedic approach to brand-building.

"we offer a whole new way of doing business that's beyond marketing," he says. "We're more interested in how clients can

develop their business and project a voice that sounds authentic to the right people." Marshall is a director for Second City's national touring company. He's back from directing improv and sketch shows for a Norwegian Cruise Lines New York-Nassau cruise.

His team of staff and freelancers draws from friends and colleagues across Chicago's creative industries. COO Nick Keenan was a Goodman Theatre sound engineer. Creative director Bumper Carroll was the first group creative director for Second City Communications.

Marshall started his boutique service in 2006. Many of his clients are in real estate, a field in which he worked for years, including six as a loan officer.

Marshall's "Office"-style "PERL Mortgage Podcast," starring Pearl agent Dean Vlamis, has become a staple among Chicago realtors. Chicago Agent Magazine named Marshall Creative "A Leading Marketing Agency" in 2009

A recent example of Marshall's signature offbeat approach is Steve Delahoyde's music video for Lakeview's Strongbox Self Storage, to supplement the blog Marshall Creative developed for sister company Strongbox Wine Storage.

"It's mostly for buzz, to make a splash and help deliver a vibe," Marshall says. The main clients we've worked with get what we bring to the table and let us run with it." Marshall's acting chops seen in films, TV and web

Marshall continues to balance acting jobs with his marketing and business development work. He plays a medic in Ron Howard's Vince Vaughn comedy "The Dilemma," in theaters Jan. 14. In February he will appear in John Pinette's Comedy Central special "Stay Hungry!"

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Marshall is also in a web series depicting the farcical mayoral campaign of 53rd Ward Ald. Ed Bus, played by Chicago Public Radio senior content developer Justin Kaufmann. Kaufmann and Marshall are both members of the comedy troupe Schadenfreude, which collaborates on the series. Schadenfreude members are also frequently involved in Marshall Creative Projects.

With Tony-winner Brian d'Arcy James, who played Shrek on Broadway, Marshall created the New York-shot TV pilot "Shiny People," a send-up of the corporate comedy world. "It's very similar to some of the corporate gigs we do," Marshall says. "We had a lot of fun inventing fake industries."

"30 Rock" producer/director Don Scardino is shopping the pilot to networks. While Marshall Creative is fielding opportunities for expansion, Marshall is taking a measured approach. "We're interested in making this work first, and not take it too quickly," he says.

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