

## **Trio Launches Local PR Firm for Healthcare, Education**

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Imagine starting a new company and getting clients before you even went into business. That's what has happened at ACS Quantum Strategies.

It's a new Sacramento venture by three women, each with more than 15 years' experience working for hospitals, health systems and associations throughout California.

The firm specializes in marketing, corporate communications, public relations and strategic planning in the areas of healthcare and education. Two women work in Sacramento and one works in Pasadena. They're a lean operation and plan to keep it that way by partnering with other agencies on specific projects.

The firm was formed July 1 with \$5,000 in seed money from the three partners. It already has almost a dozen clients, ranging from the California Healthcare Association and Johnson & Johnson to the Yolo County Office of Education.

The three principals are Lori Aldrete, Lisa Yates and Sue Wyninegar. They've been each other's bosses, met at association meetings and became good friends through longtime professional association.

In a high-energy interview from the 19<sup>th</sup> floor of the Esquire Building Tuesday, all three said they're ready for a new venture where they call the shots themselves.

"I want to be out there, making a project happen from beginning to end," said Yates. She was the chief operating officer for the California Healthcare Association for four years before taking the same job for Realtime Information Services, Inc. in Gold River.

Prior to her job as COO at the healthcare association, Yates conducted statewide grassroots political action and fundraising campaigns for the trade group.

"There's so much management to be done in a corporate environment, you begin to miss the creative side," said Wyninegar. The Southern California recruit to the company, she formerly directed community programs for Providence Health System's San Fernando Valley service area. Wyninegar has also done marketing and public relations for hospital corporations and health systems.

“What we like to do is develop plans and write copy,” Aldrete said. “The higher up in management you get, the more focused you become and delegate the creative process to someone else.”

Aldrete has been director of corporate communications at San Francisco-based Catholic Healthcare West until the end of June, a job, she said, that gave her new expertise in crisis management. The 48-hospital system is in the midst of corporate restructuring designed to stem huge financial losses in recent years.

Before joining CHW, Aldrete was director of marketing and corporate communications for the California Healthcare Association. She has 12 years’ experience as a television producer and director.

A longtime employer for two of the partners, the healthcare association is now a client and landlord. The trade group has leased an office to the group and hired them to do a statewide grassroots public affairs campaign to raise awareness of earthquake safety issues facing California hospitals.

“They were such a natural,” said Jan Emerson, current director of corporate communications at the healthcare association. “They know the industry so well and are able to step in and immediately pick up the issue.”

One local company interested in partnering with ACS Quantum Strategies is Townsend Raimundo Besler & Usher Inc., the third-largest public relations agency in town.

“They are very talented (and) have a lot of experience with grassroots marketing,” said Townsend partner Kris Deutschman.

“It creates a nice niche, two firms that specialize in different things coming together to work on a specific project,” said Deutschman. “Besides that, we have a personal as well as professional relationship with Lori and Lisa.”