

Focused Efforts

An Interview with Lisa Quiroz,
Senior Vice President-Corporate Responsibility, Time Warner

EDITORS' NOTE Lisa Quiroz was appointed to her current post in 2003. Quiroz is the founding publisher of *People en Español*, the best-selling Hispanic magazine in the U.S. Prior to this, she created and launched *Time For Kids*, an award-winning classroom news magazine for elementary school kids. Quiroz is a director of the Harvard Alumni Association and the Hispanic Scholarship Fund. She received the 2002 Hispanic Heritage Award for Leadership, and was inducted into the Hispanic Scholarship Alumni Hall of Fame. In 2002, she was also appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg to the New York City Commission on Human Rights, and in 2003, was named one of Crain's New York Business 100 Most Powerful Minority Business Leaders. Quiroz received both her undergraduate and M.B.A. degrees from Harvard University.



Lisa Quiroz

COMPANY BRIEF A global leader in media and entertainment, Time Warner Inc. (www.timewarner.com) has businesses in television networks, filmed entertainment, and publishing, and uses its industry-leading operating scale and brands to create, package, and deliver high-quality content worldwide through multiple distribution outlets.

How critical is corporate philanthropy to the culture of Time Warner, and can you highlight some of the key areas of focus?

A genuine CSR effort for a company has to be rooted in its DNA, what it stands for, and what its values are. Otherwise, it doesn't have the kind of profound impact that it should have.

This company has a very long history of philanthropy, partly because we've had incredible leadership over many years that has felt strongly about giving back to the communities in which we live and work. Our philanthropy is divided between our education portfolio and our arts portfolio.

In the field of education, we focus on organizations that provide opportunities for young people to succeed in college, and we link that with opportunities within the company for internships and part-time work during the course of the year.

On the arts side, in many ways, our work has been groundbreaking. We embarked on a

new portfolio of work called New Voices. We look at finding and nurturing that next generation of talent in the creative world. We've worked with a number of theaters and institutes like Sundance and Tribeca to find the next generation of artists and support them, from helping to get their work to another level to staging their work.

Is the focus across the board about supporting programs and areas that in some way align closely with the business strategy and expertise?

Yes. I came into this job five-and-a-half years ago, and we've had a number of different philanthropy offices that were a function of the various mergers. So altogether, we had a very broad portfolio, but when I came onboard, the prior CEO was intent on focusing our efforts more deeply, having greater impact with the work we did, and leveraging this as a way of building and strengthening our reputation with employees and the public at large.

What I'm most proud of is in building New Works New Voices, we were groundbreakers. The arts in New York City were becoming an increasingly elite place because you could not afford to go to the theater with a family of four. We saw this as a way of bringing art to a greater public.

How critical is partnering for the type of work you're doing?

The partnering is important. If you were to speak to any of our grantees, they would tell you that we're not just check-writers: we're very involved in nurturing and developing our programs. Every year, we hold a gathering of the college prep organizations that we fund to create a dialogue between them, and work with them to share ideas and resources.

Busy nonprofits don't always have the time to sit down with their colleagues to share ideas and best practices. We also have a Nonprofit Board Leadership Program for our senior executives, where we place our senior executives on the Boards of various nonprofits. We also developed a program a few years ago with the Department of Cultural Affairs, which they completely run now. We supplied the seed money and helped conceive this program that provides capacity building for small- to medium-sized arts organizations. We developed a selective process and chose 30 arts organizations to participate in a year-long course,

part of which was virtual, that taught them important skills from marketing to finance to deciding what your board of directors should look like.

We try to be very creative about how we offer help. For example, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) was finding it very expensive to advertise their programs, so we provided them with \$60,000 worth of local media exposure, and they saw a rise in the number of Web hits and tickets sold. So unless you're having a conversation with the people involved in the grant, you won't know if there are other ways you can help.

Is it challenging in these areas to put metrics in place where you can evaluate impact?

For the organizations that we support on the college prep side, it is very easy, because we can track the number of young people who go to college, and how many successfully complete it.

In the case of our New Works New Voices, it's measured by how many new artists we reach. However, it's harder to develop parameters to determine how successful someone is on the arts side.

When it comes to our support of public access to the arts, it's also easy because we can measure how many people come out for a \$15 seat at Fall for Dance versus the number that attend when the price is a huge multiple of that.

Overall, it's easy to put metrics in place. Most foundations and corporate philanthropy offices are very focused on metrics, because they want to make sure their money is being used well. But there is also a part of what we do where you have to take a leap of faith because you believe in the leadership of a program and the concept. You can't lose sight of the fact that there are factors that are less tangible or qualitative that, hopefully, allow you to make good decisions.

In light of the current economic pressures on businesses to cut costs, how critical has the support of the leadership been in maintaining the consistency of the programs?

In terms of leadership, we've been lucky. I can't think of a single CEO that this company had that hasn't been community-minded and involved in their own personal life. For the past two years, since Jeff Bewkes has been Chairman and CEO, we have given toys to a local group as part of our holiday efforts. The first year he was CEO, he was wrapping toys with all of us in the conference room. That kind of personal demonstration says something. ●