

Marketing director refines rebranding of Barnett Group

By Morgan Bernal
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Melissa Smithmier, director of sales and marketing at Barnett Group, has helped lead the company's recent rebranding.

Matthew Craig

Melissa Smithmier

Position: director of sales and marketing at Barnett Group.

Age: 33.

Education: Bachelor's degree in healthcare management at University of Mississippi.

Community Involvement: member of the Le Bonheur Club and the Economic Development Commission of Lakeland.

A benefit of working for a smaller company can be the chance to play a larger role in determining its course. So it's been for Melissa Smithmier, 33, who as director of sales and marketing has helped spearhead the rebranding of Barnett Group, formerly known as Barnett Benefits. "I love to do creative stuff, like think outside the box," said Smithmier. "That's a benefit of working with a company of this size." Barnett, which has nine employees, provides employee benefits as well as financial and estate planning and related services.

"The Barnett Group (name) displays the vision of what we are trying to do," she said. "We are brainstorming about what the next 20 years will look like from the financial side all the way to the employers who are insured through our benefits. "Our new name is less limiting, and we thought it was a good way to make the turn."

As director of sales and marketing, Smithmier is not only responsible for the company's marketing and public relations, but works on the group side of human resource plans, such as life insurance and disability. She's channeled her energy to lead the company into new sales and prospects, capitalizing on the rebranding.

After previously working for a larger company, Smithmier said she was drawn to Barnett by its reputation for personal attention. "Memphis is a small town, although it is a large city, she said. "But the Barnett Group is very respected in the brokerage world, and I jumped at the chance to become part of their team."

Following Barnett Group's name change, an overhaul of the Web site is under way. Smithmier is working with colleagues to find "the best possible way to reach out to clients and develop new software and benefits." For the past three years, Smithmier has focused solely on marketing, so her involvement in the "new, exciting things" at Barnett Group is something different. "I get to touch a lot more people than I did before," she said. "My goal is to really reach out to Memphis businesses and make sure they know we are here, and what we do."