

Rock Me Amodeo

Mississippi Taxpayers Pay for More Branding from Idgroup of Pensacola

Recent reports here at USMNEWS.net have provided loads of new evidence regarding the relationship between USM, under former president Martha Saunders (2007-12), and the Pensacola-based communications/public relations firm *Idgroup*, headed by long-time Saunders associate Mona Amodeo. As of [the newest of these prior reports](#) USMNEWS.net readers have learned that Saunders directed at least **\$547,000** in students' and Mississippi taxpayers' funds to Amodeo's *Idgroup* over the five years of Saunders' presidency. In the spirit of the ongoing 2012 Olympic Games, this report picks up the torch carried by the last, presenting even more evidence of the boondoggle that USM appears to have represented for *Idgroup*.

The insert below is a proposal submitted by *Idgroup* to USM in the spring of 2011. Therein *Idgroup* proposes to produce a new branding video and other commercial spots/items for Saunders, spending \$60,000 in production and \$22,000 in editing. The total for these projects comes to **\$82,000**, with 40% being due on assignment, a second 40% due on 15-April-2011, and the final 20% due upon project delivery. Details about these dates are on page 2 of the proposal, which is inserted at the top of the next page of this report.

idgroup

The University of Southern Mississippi
Budget Proposal: 2012 Institutional Video Projects

Client Contact: Martha D. Saunders, President

Scope of work

The *idgroup* creative team in collaboration with President Martha Saunders will produce a 4-minute brand video. The video will be used to communicate to potential students, alumni and donors as well as internal stakeholders the unique Southern Miss experience. The Brand video is one part of a larger institutional campaign being developed by the University Office of Communications in consultation from *idgroup* creative team.

Using the themes and footage from the brand video two :30 second television commercials and four web segments will be edited.

Production Timeline

This video project is highly dependent upon obtaining key interviews. The delivery date is predicated upon the ability to secure the interviews in April. The client will be informed of any adjustments to the schedule that are necessary.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Concept and Approach | March 1, 2011 |
| Preliminary Research and Interviews | March 20-30 |
| Shooting of Primary Interviews | April 9-13 |
| Final treatment Approval from Client | April 25 |
| B roll shooting | April |
| Delivery of Rough cut to client | May 20 |
| Final Files for Brand Video, Commercials & one web segment | May 29 |
| Remaining 3 web segments delivered | June 15 |

Budget

1. Brand Video \$60,000.00
The budget includes approximately 10 location production days—with shooting locations in Hattiesburg, the Mississippi Gulf Coast and Jackson Mississippi. At the discretion of the client, additional production days may be added to secure interviews or footage from other locations the client feels is essential to the success of the project.

2. Editing of two :30 second television spots using the themes and footage from the brand video. \$10,000.00

3. Development and editing of four web segments for use on the USM website using themes and footage from the brand video \$12,000.00



Travel and other costs

Licenses for music, voice over talent or purchased graphics and footage will be estimated and billed separately based on the needs of the project.

If travel is required for the interviewees, travel and accommodation costs will be paid directly by the University of Southern Mississippi.

Travel, accommodation for the idgroup team will be billed in accordance with the University of Southern Mississippi reimbursement policies.

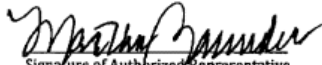
Billing Schedule:

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Upon Assignment | 40% of project costs |
| April 15 | 40% of project costs |
| Delivery of project | 20% of project costs |

Travel costs will be billed as incurred.

Authorization

The undersigned representative confirms that he/she is authorized to enter in this agreement on behalf of the client listed above and agrees to the budgets as presented. Projects are placed on the production schedule upon receipt of this signed estimate.


 Signature of Authorized Representative
 The University of Southern Mississippi

4.3.12
 Date

The insert below is the invoice sent to USM by Idgroup for the first 40%, or \$32,800. This was marked "okay to pay" and signed by Saunders.

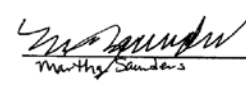
idgroup

300 East Intendencia
 Pensacola, FL 32502
 850-438-7823
 850-438-7820-fax

| Date | Invoice No. |
|-----------|-------------|
| 3/29/2012 | 3133 |

| |
|--|
| Bill To |
| Office of the President University of Southern Mississippi 118 College Dr #5001 Hattiesburg, MS 39406 |

| |
|--------|
| Terms |
| Net 15 |

| Description | Amount | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|----------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---|--------------|-------------------|
| Brand Video, 2 (30 second) Commercials, 4 webettes | 32,800.00 | | | | | | | | |
| Budget: \$82,000 | | | | | | | | | |
| Billing Schedule 40% Upon Assignment, invoice 3128 3133 40% April 15 20% Upon Completion | | | | | | | | | |
|  DATE | | | | | | | | | |
| PO # 1074515 | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <tr> <th>Phone #</th> <th>Fax #</th> <th>Web Site</th> </tr> <tr> <td>850-438-7823</td> <td>850-438-7820</td> <td>www.idgroup.us</td> </tr> </table> | Phone # | Fax # | Web Site | 850-438-7823 | 850-438-7820 | www.idgroup.us | <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>\$32800.00</td> </tr> </table> | Total | \$32800.00 |
| Phone # | Fax # | Web Site | | | | | | | |
| 850-438-7823 | 850-438-7820 | www.idgroup.us | | | | | | | |
| Total | \$32800.00 | | | | | | | | |

The insert below shows the Purchase Order for \$32,000 (missing \$800; appears to have been a typo during the process) regarding the first payment to Idgroup.



USM Purchasing
2609 WEST 4TH STREET
HATTIESBURG MS 39401
USA

Purchase Order

| DUPLICATE | | Dispatch via Print | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| Purchase Order | Date | Revision | Page |
| 1074515 | 04/13/2012 | | 1 |
| Payment Terms | Freight Terms | Ship Via | |
| Net 30 | FOB:Destin, fxt prepd/ohrs back | BESTWAY | |
| Buyer | Requisition # | Requestor | |
| Holder, Becky | 000055716 | Odom, Polly | |

Vendor:0000034757 FAX: 850/934-3155
IDGROUP
300 EAST INTENDENCIA
PENSACOLA FL 32502

Ship To: 2609 WEST 4TH STREET
HATTIESBURG MS 39401
USA

Bill To: 118 COLLEGE DRIVE #5104
HATTIESBURG MS 39406-0001
USA

| Tax Exempt? | Y | Tax Exempt ID: | 64-740188K | Dept: | Other Institutional Expense | Dept Id: | 120009 | ProjGrnt: |
|-------------|----------|----------------|------------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|--------|-----------|
| Line | Quantity | UOM | Item/Description | Unit Price | Extended Amt | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|------|----|--|------|------|
| 1 | 1.00 | EA | New Brand Video Project plus reasonable travel costs reimbursement. The production cost for the video is \$82,000; the travel costs will be billed in accordance with University policies. | 0.00 | 0.00 |
|---|------|----|--|------|------|

First Invoice is attached for payment in the amount of \$32,000.

Contract proposal is attached—40% of project costs due upon assignment; 40% of project costs due in May; 20% of project costs due upon delivery of project.

The process above got another ball rolling, this time at a cost of **\$82,000**, as stated earlier. But that was not to be the end of it. In the e-mail exchange below between Polly Odom, Saunders' secretary, and Lindsey Braxton, the director of operations at Idgroup, wherein the two are discussing this then-new venture for Saunders and Amodeo, Braxton informs Odom – not the other way around – that “Martha,” referring to Saunders, has approved an additional **\$5,000** for this bundle of projects, reportedly for “travel expenses for the interviews.”

Polly Odom

From: Lindsey Braxton <lindsey@idgroupusa.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 29, 2012 9:56 AM
To: Polly Odom
Subject: Re: New Brand Video

In addition to what I sent you, Martha has also approved a \$5000 travel budget for travel expenses for the interviews.

On 3/28/12 3:20 PM, "Polly Odom" <Polly.Odom@usm.edu> wrote:

We recently received **Invoice No.: 3128** that included charges for a new Brand Video with an estimated cost of \$82,000. Please submit a separate invoice for this project because a separate purchase order will need to be issued. Also, was there an approved proposal submitted to the President and/or Jim Coll? I will need to attach the approved proposal to the PO.

Thanks,

Polly Odom

Polly Odom
Executive Secretary to the President
The University of Southern Mississippi
118 College Drive #5001
Hattiesburg, MS 39406
601-266-5301
polly.odom@usm.edu <<mailto:polly.odom@usm.edu>>

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Of course, Braxton's instruction to Odom raises the total commitment of Mississippi taxpayers for this bundle of projects to a whopping **\$87,000**. It also means that a to-date total of **\$634,000** in student and taxpayer funds was transferred by Saunders to Amodeo's *Idgroup* between 2007 and 2012. Sources conclude that it is now, in the post-Saunders era for USM, that many in the USM community are waking up to what appears to have been a very disturbing chapter in the institution's history.

Stay tuned for more.