

40 Under Forty

2006

Jennifer Ann Toone

AGE: 38

POSITION: President, In Toone Communication

RESIDENCE: Providence

LIFELONG AMBITION: To have my own communications firm

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: Camille's

GUILTY PLEASURE: Cabernet

As a teenager, Jennifer Toone aspired to a career in musical theater. That's why she enrolled, "with a song in my heart," at Emerson College. She quickly found it wasn't meant to be. She had the prerequisite purple hair, but she couldn't "let go" in acting class.

So she majored in communications, met and married a Brazilian, and began hosting a Brazilian radio show on Saturdays. After graduating, with honors, Toone got a job at a small Framingham, Mass., station where she was a receptionist, a copywriter and on-air voice for the ad department, and a board operator for a sports talk show at night.

That wasn't her calling, either. She discovered her true niche only after taking a job as a receptionist at Berkley Advertising in Boston. Within six months, she was an account executive, and within a year, she was director of client services.

"Advertising and public relations was the ideal combination of creativity, strategic planning, action and measurable results," Toone wrote in her 40 Under Forty application. She stayed with Berkley for four years, then moved to Rhode Island to expand her horizons.

In 1999, she was hired as vice president at Chaffee/Partners, where her clients included BankNewport, Leonard Hair Transplant Associates and Pinkerton Security. While at Chaffee, she joined the board of the American Marketing Association's local chapter, where she helped grow membership by 40 percent within a year, and rose to the presidency.

In 2002, Toone joined Trion Communications, as client services director, with a staff of five. The job offered "a spirited philosophy

I could embrace," a new mix of services, and "an exciting mix of clients," including the City of Providence, Stone Harbour Condominiums, Blount Seafood and Towerstream.

For years, however, she had been wanting to open her own firm. "For some reason, I kept saying to myself, 'Wait until you're 40,'" she recalled. One day, she decided the time was right. "Before I could talk myself out of it, I cleared my office, grabbed my Joan Crawford portrait from the wall behind my desk, bid a fond adieu to my colleagues, and set out on my own."

Within a year, Providence-based In Toone Communication reached \$500,000 in gross billings; now, as the firm nears its second anniversary, it's "thriving," Toone said. ■

