

MARCH

INFORMING AND INSPIRING FEMALE EXECUTIVES

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EARN MORE, SAVE BETTER.

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BREAKING INTO THE BOYS' CLUB

Men dominate the ad biz. Meet three
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REBIRTH After sustaining a brain injury, Nielsen left school and forged a career in website design.

OUT OF THE WRECKAGE

After surviving a tragic car accident, Angela Nielsen began to explore an unexpected career in website design and development

ANGELA NIELSEN KNOWS an accident can twist fate. Today, Nielsen is the owner of One Lily, Inc., a web-design, -development, and -marketing firm. Though she launched the agency on her own in November 2000, Nielsen now has five employees, as well as an office in Carlsbad, California. In 2009, she won VIP Woman of the Year from the National Association for Professional Women and a Davey

Award (a prestigious design and communications award). She was also a finalist for a 2010 American Business Award.

But her journey to success hasn't been smooth. In 1995, Nielsen, in her second year of college, was studying to be a history teacher. On Valentine's Day, she was riding in the passenger seat of a car that collided head-on with another vehicle. Both cars were going 45 miles per hour.

The driver in the other car was killed instantly, and Nielsen was badly injured: her right heel was crushed, and she suffered brain swelling that caused her to lose parts of her memory. "It was like there were a bunch of holes shot through my memory," she says. "There's a lot of things, a lot of my life, that I don't remember."

Due to the memory loss, Nielsen's grades plummeted from her original 3.8 GPA, and she failed out of school. In need of a job, she began to temp at a real-estate agency.

Eventually, Nielsen became the executive assistant to a broker and was put in charge of updating and maintaining the agency's website. She didn't have formal training—"I went to Staples for software to figure it out," she recalls—but she was a natural, and began to receive requests from other real-estate agents to maintain their websites. "I always loved arts and crafts, color theory, and decorating," she says, "so taking my artsy hobbies to the web kind of made sense."

At first, Nielsen worked only with a few real-estate agents, and a handful of other clients that

“We interviewed our clients, especially ones that had worked with other agencies. And, for them, what was different with us was our strategy.” ANGELA NIELSEN, OWNER

were referred to her. Nielsen says that at first, she didn't have any huge visions of growth. She continued to work alone for the first four years of her business, which grew steadily through referrals. It wasn't until 2006 that she rebranded, changed the company's name to One Lily, Inc., and developed a mission statement with a branding company. "It was hard, because I don't really compare myself to other companies," she remembers, "so we interviewed our clients, especially ones that had worked with other agencies. And, for them, what was different with us was our strategy."

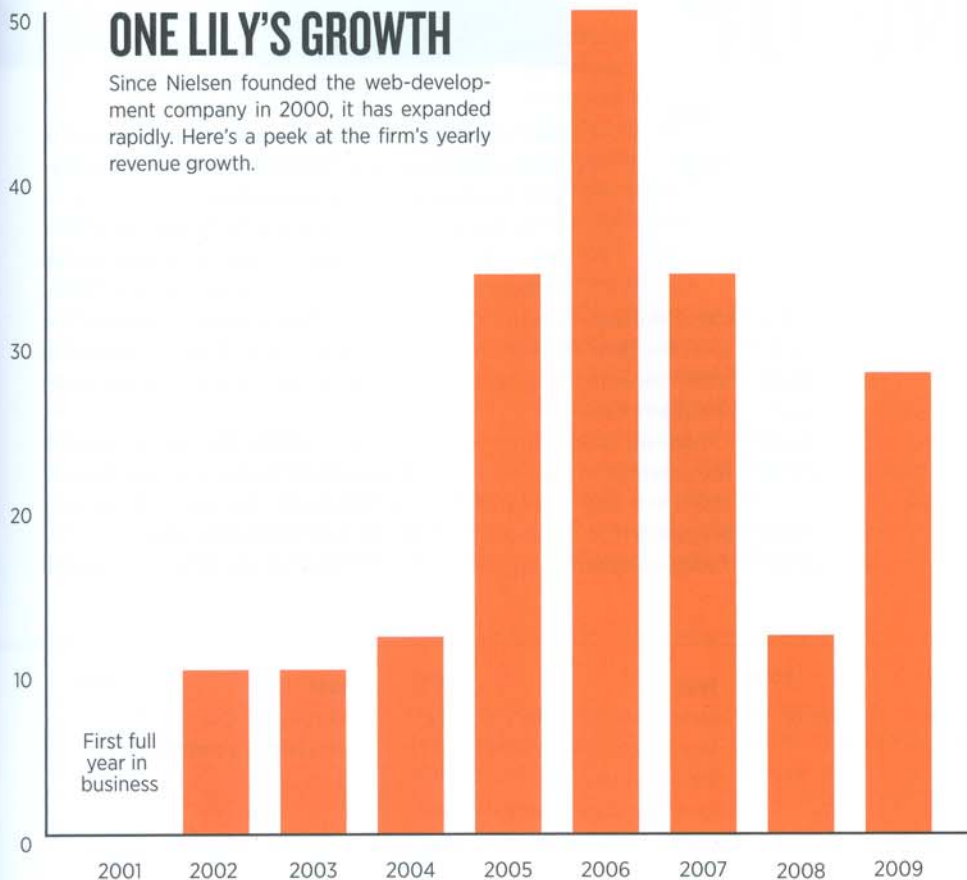
Nielsen says One Lily stands out from its competitors, because it provides clients with personal attention. The company builds its clients' websites, and maintains them, updates them with new images and content, and keeps

their marketing strategies fresh. It's a holistic approach that clients don't necessarily find with other agencies. "A lot of agencies build the site out and send you on your way," she says. "When I launch a client's website, I don't want our relationship to be over."

One Lily is entirely referral-driven, with one satisfied client leading to another; they now have 200 clients.

In retrospect, Nielsen says she wouldn't change a thing about her current situation: "To be that close to death . . . gave me the passion to just jump and not look back. The way I was brought up, you work for someone else. You don't necessarily start your own business. If I hadn't had the experience I did, I'd never have had the inkling to push a new business."

—ANNIE MONJAR



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