

THE ULTIMATE NETWORKER

Charles Ward has been an entrepreneur in the US luxury marketing and communications industry for over three decades

One of the greatest compliments paid to Charles Ward must be that from Jesse Pruitt, president of Las Colinas Polo Club in Dallas, Texas. "Our club changed dramatically from the day I met him," said Pruitt. "Within a few months of taking on the club, he brought in sponsor contracts worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, and made our club one of the best known in the USA."

In the past four years, Ward's Texas-based company, Idea Works Inc, has contracted to represent the ten leading polo clubs in the US and Mexico in designing and obtaining sponsorship programmes.

The company, established a quarter of a century ago, consults on marketing communications, sports sponsorship and strategic alliances, specializing in wealth marketing. Ward and his team have designed programmes and partnerships for Bombardier Business Aircraft, Tiffany & Co, Lamborghini, Marsh, KPMG, Nabisco, Ford, Motorola, American Express, the States of Hawaii and Texas, Hibernia Bank, Mellon Bank and many others.

Polo is not the only sport to have benefited from Ward's expertise. In 1984, opening a branch office in La Jolla, California, he assembled the sponsorship marketing team for *Stars & Stripes*, Dennis

Conner's 1987 America's Cup victorious yacht racing campaign.

Using creative techniques and direct marketing campaigns, Ward's group raised over US \$16 million in sponsorships and donations for *Stars & Stripes*. He also co-ordinated the America's Cup victory celebrations, including a reception at the White House with President Ronald Reagan and a ticker tape parade down Fifth Avenue, New York City, sponsored by Donald Trump.

Charles Ward started his media and broadcasting career while a journalism student at the University of Texas. "I was lucky, in my early twenties, to become a popular TV news anchorman at KTBC in Austin," he said. "Then, by the time I started my marketing company at the age of twenty-six, I was a minor celebrity in my town, and business flowed in."

Ward still has a weekly radio spot, *The Lord of Luxury*, on the Biz Radio Network, Houston and Dallas, featuring interviews on private business jets, exotic cars, exquisite jewellery, exclusive private parties and five-star resorts. He is also a frequent guest on XM Satellite Radio.

In the 1970s, Ward founded and became the president of Media Communications, an AAAA advertising and marketing agency whose clients included real estate developers, resort properties, financial institutions, legal and medical associations, state agencies and hospitality developers.

The company developed the award-winning Texas traffic safety campaign, *Drive Friendly*, which involved international celebrities on public service broadcast programmes and highway signage throughout the Lone Star state. The agency grew to \$20 million in annual billings, with forty employees in Austin and Houston.

PHOTOS KIM KUMPART PHOTOGRAPHY



Charles Ward and Dallas Cowboy's owner Jerry Jones, enjoy the champagne divot stomp at Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club



Marketing meeting in the sky! Charles Ward (right centre) conducts a polo planning session on board a Bombardier Global Express with Brant Dahlfors, Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club president Chuck Lande and Ambassador Glen Holden

He has also served as a co-founding director of Capitol City Savings, a regional financial institution, and on the board of directors of the Insurance Corporation of America, a national medical liability body. He is also vice-chairman, Luxury

Marketing Council, with offices around the world.

Tourism has also been a string to Charles Ward's bow. His Honolulu office completed a four-year marketing assignment of economic and tourism development in the USA and Asia for



Ideas Works created the annual Lamborghini Polo Cup at Las Colinas Polo Club in Dallas and has brought the Lamborghini Polo Cup to Santa Barbara Polo & Racquet Club, too. Team Lamborghini at Las Colinas Polo Club: Jesse Pruitt, Brent Mirikitani, Gary Seale from Lamborghini Dallas, Billy Mudra and Sain Joseph

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Ward with Dorothy Mason, vice-president Texas market for Tiffany & Co, and manager of regional marketing for Bombardier, Gary Solloff



Ward with the America's Cup in 1987

the State of Hawaii. The programme was developed around the theme, *Hawaii – The Pacific Link*, and was broadcast in English, Japanese and Chinese.

Polo, yacht racing, motor sports – all are grist to Charles Ward's enthusiastic mill; and he is aware that, if he stays in the wealth market, there will always be plenty of clients.

"Today, the wealth market is exploding," he said. "Our Lamborghini client in Dallas sold so many new Lambos that the dealership became the number one in North America in the first fifteen months of operation – and was awarded a second dealership in Houston."

Ward says that his job provides him with an adventure lifestyle. "It's not like work to organize polo events for the blue ribbon clients we work with. We get great satisfaction from seeing our clients get a return on investments from our efforts."

There is no doubt that Ward is held in high esteem. Dorothy Mason, Texas director of Tiffany & Co, said: "Charles is the ultimate networker. He has a keen sense of how companies and individuals can benefit by working together, and he makes it happen. I enjoy watching him work."

Gary Solloff, of Bombardier, said: "Charles presented us with new opportunities in the sport of polo, and forged the way for Bombardier to become one of the dominant sponsors in US polo in a short period of time."

Publisher Lance Avery Morgan has no doubt that Charles Ward gets results. "His strong connections with the luxury market extend across the US and also internationally. He is the first one we call when we want to do something that will be awesome and brilliant."