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Upcoming BizWest Networking Events

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DoubleTree Hotel and
Conference Center,
Greeley

**Boulder Valley
40 Under Forty**
February 13, 2018
Jewish Community Center,
Boulder

**Northern Colorado
Real Estate Summit**
March 27, 2018
Embassy Suites,
Loveland

For more information or to register, go to BizWest.com and click on Events



JONATHAN CASTNER FOR BIZWEST

Judy Toran Cousin stands on the production floor near her office at Circle Graphics in Longmont. She's the chief marketing and innovation officer for the company and responsible for much of its growth.

Cousin key to growth strategy

By Shelley Widhalm
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LONGMONT — In her downtown Longmont office, Judy Toran Cousin of Circle Graphics displays her work in the form of candy bowls, canvas-wrapped awards, framed photographs and coloring wallpaper.

Some of Toran Cousin's candy bowls are made out of acrylic, a material used in-house for printing, and are filled with her favorites like Swedish Fish, Red Hots and Smarties, and for her guests, chocolates.

But what makes Toran Cousin excited is beyond the walls of her office in the 275,000-square-foot building. Excitement for her is what the 460 employees and 40 printers can do to create innovative billboards, business and transit signs, wall décor and art reproductions as the largest producer of grand- and large-format digital graphics in a company founded in 2000.

"The number one thing is the people, both the employees and the customers," Toran Cousin said. "We have terrific customers. We look at customer relations as long-term partnerships."

In January 2016, Toran Cousin advanced to chief marketing and innovation officer, serving as the primary steward of the Circle Graphics brand across the company's three divisions, setting design standards and strategies in each one. The divisions include consumer digital printing, billboard and transit products, and business digital printing for things like banners, acrylic and aluminum signage, and cardboard stand-ups called standees that help with business promotion.

"There is a lot of opportunity in the

signage industry that is attractive," Toran Cousin said. "One of them is improving the ease for small businesses. Currently, if they want to promote their business, they have to go to several printers. ... We operate at such a large volume and scale, giving us the opportunity to offer disruptively priced products and a convenient one-stop-shop experience."

Toran Cousin helped expand the consumer digital printing division when Circle Graphics acquired the Café Press Art Division in February 2017. Under her leadership, the company now offers more than 1.5 million new curated images to retail and wholesale customers.

"Among many impressive accomplishments achieved during her career, the most notable is Judy's proven track record and ability to quickly grow businesses from nothing to substantial scale," said Ryan Nicks, chief financial officer for Circle Graphics. "Judy has a keen eye for disruptive market and industry trends and has the leadership ability to quickly reposition a strategy and team to capitalize on market trends."

Recruited for her sales and marketing background, Toran Cousin joined the company in August 2012 as chief strategy officer and as the general manager of the consumer digital printing division. She oversaw sales and had profit and loss responsibility for the division, which was in its early stages when she joined the company. And she helped grow the division's fulfillment business by more than 500 percent. Other companies that provide printing services rely on Circle Graphics to fill their orders for their own customers.

Through her time with the com-

pany, Toran Cousin identified new business opportunities and developed new products, aiming to attract customers to the company's product offerings. One of the company's core products is a patented canvas wrap that includes a hard surface as part of the construction instead of a traditional wood frame with the canvas stapled or glued to the wood that over time can sag.

"We thought, what are the additional business opportunities?" Toran Cousin said. "It is fun to work with creative individuals, looking at different art opportunities and trend opportunities. By utilizing data, we are able to not only fulfill those opportunities and needs but to also move quickly with product launches and new market initiatives."

For instance, Toran Cousin and her staff came up with the canvas mini and on a larger scale generated even more ideas after the company acquired Café Press. With that acquisition, the company could expand beyond customers taking photos and uploading them for printing to ready-to-sell images and inspirational sayings on canvas and other materials or substrates, such as paper, poster, aluminum and removable wallpaper panels. The wallpaper follows the adult coloring trend of designs on wallpaper that customers can color.

"We try to make their dreams come true," Toran Cousin said. "We really love helping them memorialize their memories through our consumer art division and promote their business through our business and out-of-home divisions. ... Not everyone has access to a graphic designer, and they can be quite expensive, therefore we provide compelling graphic support

through multiple channels."

Frank Luggner, executive vice president of engineering and research and development at Circle Graphics, said Toran Cousin has been instrumental in the company's growth strategies in the divisions she manages.

"She has been a tireless advocate of innovation (and) collaboration and extremely key to Circle's entry into other markets using the core capabilities that have been instrumental to Circle's success in the outdoor billboard market," Luggner said.

Prior to joining Circle Graphics, Toran Cousin served in business strategy, sales, marketing and business development roles for large corporations, start-ups and nonprofits, including Salick Health Care (Aptium Oncology), Health Management Advisors, Reebok International, Procter and Gamble and Blue Sky Bridge. Toran Cousin has a Master of Business Administration degree from Harvard University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Southern California.

During a summer internship for her MBA program, Toran Cousin realized she wanted to continue working in sales and marketing, introducing new services and creating and introducing new products.

"I liked having that full range, and I liked working at an operational level," Toran Cousin said.

Toran Cousin's husband, Andrew Cousin, is the company's chief executive officer. Married for 25 years, they have three children.

Outside the office, Toran Cousin likes both downhill and cross country skiing, hiking, kayaking and paddle boarding. And she's sure to keep all of her candy bowls full.