

Headed for 100 years: Detroit metro-based marketing agency founded in 1931 looks forward to a changing future

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI (Dec 28, 2021) – Staying relevant and profitable for 90 years is a challenge for any business. But for a company founded and built on live, in-person experiences, the global pandemic has meant actively embracing significant change.

Gail & Rice – one of the country’s oldest and most renowned strategic communications agencies – is closing out its 90th anniversary by staying true to its roots while looking to the future of its business.

“We were originally founded as an entertainment agency. We’ve always been about connecting people through a shared experience,” said Tim Rice, Gail & Rice chairman.

With roots in Detroit dating back to 1931, Gail & Rice is now a diversified experiential marketing and live experience agency known for delivering flawless programs with outstanding quality. Today, the company offers strategy, creative, production, event management, and event staffing.

For decades, audience engagement happened in traditional live-event settings, such as business meetings, press events, trade shows, and marketing tours. The company’s entertainment division also provided A-list entertainment for corporate clients and high-net-worth individuals.

“When the pandemic hit, we took a hard look at our strengths and how we could build on them in a world that changed overnight,” said Jeff MacLean, Gail & Rice president. “We realized that we already had deep experience we could leverage in audience engagement, storytelling, video and graphic production, live streaming, and on-demand viewing. We just needed to look at how we could use those tools and skillsets most effectively to meet our clients’ rapidly emerging needs.”

“The Gail & Rice team was well-positioned to meet the challenges of the pandemic almost from the outset,” said MacLean. “If producing live events for nearly 90 years teaches you one thing, it’s how to solve unexpected problems quickly and calmly. That’s where our people excel.”

The first months of the pandemic were spent brainstorming with clients about getting their messages out to their audiences in a way that would cut through the fog of “Zoom fatigue.” The team came up with innovative ways to deliver a physical, sensory experience while delivering a virtual message.

For example, for one client, Gail & Rice enlisted the help of a professional chef. They then sourced and shipped the ingredients for a simple yet elegant meal to meeting participants. As part of the “virtual event,” the chef-led a cooking class in which participants prepared their meal in the comfort and safety of their homes. Then, while participants dined and enjoyed the fruits of their labor, the formal content of the meeting kicked off and was delivered through a virtual meeting platform that allowed participants to interact with each other and their hosts.

More recently, Gail & Rice has seen a return to traditional live events using appropriate safety measures and protocols. In addition to dozens of live and virtual meetings and events, the Gail & Rice team has produced large-scale live events for clients in New York’s Times Square and at the Chicago and Los Angeles Auto Shows.

“I think it’s clear that people still crave the ability to connect whenever possible,” said Rice. “You can see the genuine enthusiasm and excitement in the audience when we do bring people together in person.”

“To stay relevant in our business, we’ve always had to change and adapt quickly,” said MacLean. “The last two years have accelerated that pace of change. I believe our future will be built on helping our clients find the right blend of in-person and virtual events. But regardless of how that future plays out, we know our first responsibility is to engage an audience and get their attention.”

Focusing on fundamentals like that has been a big part of the success of Gail & Rice for 90 years. “Flexibility, curiosity, and the ability to move quickly are traits that we rely on every day and will continue to in the years ahead,” said MacLean.

###

About Gail & Rice:

Gail & Rice specializes in strategic communications and experiential marketing. The agency combines expertise in communications strategy, content, production, event management, and entertainment to serve the needs of corporate clients from sectors including automotive, pharmaceutical, technology, industrial and consumer hygiene, and professional service providers. Gail & Rice is part of the family of companies that includes G&R Connex, G&R Live, and G&R Detroit. For more information, visit: www.gail-rice.com

Media contact:

William A. Mattiace
575.405.04408
wmattiace@gail-rice.com