

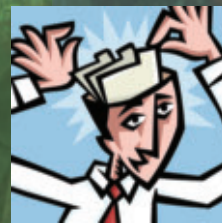
# TRADE

JULY/AUG 2010



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# Bi-lingual, Multi-cultural and Globally Creative

*Andrea Sommer from Ludwigshafen designs with a passion*

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I was the middle child of a typical German, blue-collar family in Ludwigshafen/Rhine in the state of Rhineland Palatinate. While the city itself is very industrial (headquarters of BASF chemical factory), the countryside stretches all the way to France with one side of the Rhine river boasting beautiful wine country and the other enchanting castles. I graduated college with the equivalent of a Bachelor of Science plus a Business degree. I always

had a fascination with English that was nurtured with school exchange trips to England and baby-sitting for American military families stationed around

where I lived. Since I wasn't sure how to combine my talents in a career, I initially decided to work as an Au-Pair for a family in NYC. Five days after college graduation – at the age of 19 –

I took my first airplane trip and landed at NY Kennedy airport.

## Why America

Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to live and work in Manhattan. I dreamt of being where skyscrapers could stand right at the edge of the water without falling in. My Au-Pair job gave me the opportunity to fulfill my childhood dreams while getting acquainted with the American culture. During that first year, I also took classes at the School of Visual Arts and Parson's School of Design. Next thing I knew, I got a job at an advertising agency and have been in the creative field ever since.

## Cultural Surprises

Living among these two cultures, I see how extremely different they are in the business and social worlds. Initially things are “never a problem” in the US, but then obstacles come up, people don't come through as promised, then somehow it works out. In Germany at first everything is a “problem” but then things work out smoothly like clockwork. People in America are open and easy to meet, but hard to keep and maintain as friends. Whereas

*Samples of Andrea Sommer's work:*





Andrea Sommer, owner of Sommer Designs

it takes a long time to warm up to Germans, but once you do, you have a friend for life. Here it is very possible to create your own American dream, with hard work, determination, creativity and flexibility. There is no real financial security here so maybe that's why people seize opportunities. If your interests and goals change with age, it is possible to change that dream as well. Germany is very set in its ways and it is easy to live a life without ever experiencing the life you dreamt of. But then again people are comfortable knowing they will have good stability and security in Germany.

### Biggest Challenge

My biggest challenge turns out to be also the most exciting part of my job. This is when I think myself into my client's field of work, their background, culture,

ethics, and so forth. Through this skill, I am able to come up with the best creative solutions that provide effective communication for my clients. Just as different countries have different cultures, so do the clients I work with and their unique businesses. Because of my background and my experience, I am able to achieve solutions quite successfully. Another advantage I have is that the creative work is being done on the computer. With today's technology, I serve clients and work with freelancers and suppliers worldwide. I reside in Colorado whose central location gives me fluid access to both coasts of the US.

### Greatest Inspiration

I am most inspired by following my dreams, making them a reality, and changing them as my life changes. I am always trying to

find the best solutions for my client's needs and to get the job done right. Maybe it's my German side, but I want the most practical, most satisfying and most effective solution. I like to create happiness around me for the client, the job, my family and the people close to me.

### BUSINESS BACKGROUND

I was fortunate to have learned from and worked with the very best in advertising: Chiat/Day, Ogilvy & Mather Direct, Publicis, and Quark. My Graphic Design and Advertising work took me from New York City to Los Angeles, back to Frankfurt and Düsseldorf, then Massachusetts, Chicago and Denver. It gave me an extensive cross-cultural background in advertising for international markets. With my 20 plus years of professional experience I am able to quickly

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### FAST FACTS SOMMER-DESIGNS

<b>Names of President:</b>	Andrea Sommer
<b>Hometown:</b>	Ludwigshafen/Rhein, Germany
<b>Age of President:</b>	47
<b>Location:</b>	Denver, Colorado
<b>Year Founded in the U.S.:</b>	2003
<b>Business Activity:</b>	Advertising and Graphic Design Services in German and English
<b>Number of employees:</b>	1 (additional freelancers as needed)



[www.sommer-designs.com](http://www.sommer-designs.com)



Andrea and her son Jeremy

learn the intricacies of diverse industries and create global strategies for my clients.

### Reason for Starting Business

I started my own business because I needed flexibility being a single mother with no family around to help out. The solution was being my own Graphic Design Agency. It gives me the inspiration and freedom to be creative and work the flexible hours that come with the nature of my business. I can devote my time and talents to my work, while spending maximum quality time with my son and donate to community volunteer work. It has proved to be quite produc-

tive. Having a home office means I don't have to take off work for my kid's sick days, school holidays and vacations. With my Laptop, iPhone, and Skype I'm accessible even when traveling.

### Biggest Obstacle

Initially, my biggest obstacle - after getting all the legal papers - was deciding which country to settle in. Should the decision be temporary, or permanent? Where are the best opportunities, where are the best benefits? What am I missing out on by not being in the other country? These were questions I needed to answer. So I moved back to Germany after nine years and got a job. Being back in my native country again was another culture shock. But after working on both continents I could now make my decision as to where I felt the most comfortable in fulfilling myself as a person and in my profession. Colorado won.

### Future Goals

I hope for a continuous stream of international customers with challenging work, despite the economic down times. As my child grows up and leaves home I envision expanding my design business. I would like to include a full-time staff of like-minded creatives who are fluent in other languages where we can bring my design technique to clients all over. **GAT**

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