

# Darlene Rios Drapkin

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## **EXPERIENCE**

**URBAN TRANSFORMATION** – Richmond, CA 2004 to present  
*Principal*

- Contract with local governments, community based organizations and business associations to develop and implement commercial district revitalization strategies for downtown and neighborhood commercial districts.
- Develop recommendations for organizing comprehensive revitalization programs
- Train merchants, property owners, city officials and members of the public about revitalization strategies.
- Serve as contract staff to implement and manage revitalization efforts.

**LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORP.** – San Francisco 2001–2003  
*Program Officer*

- Provided technical assistance to urban non-profit organizations nationwide to develop and implement community-driven and comprehensive commercial revitalization strategies

**UNITY COUNCIL** – Oakland 1996–2001  
*Fruitvale Main Street Director*

- Managed a community driven commercial revitalization program in an eclectic business district
- Trained volunteers to implement the Main Street approach
- Organized and promoted image enhancement events that attracted over 75,000 attendees and generated revenues of \$100,000; created and implemented public relation plans in English and Spanish
- Organized a successful Business Improvement District Management Plan resulting in annual revenues of \$224,000

**MARRIOTT HOTELS OF CALIFORNIA** - San Francisco 1993–1995  
*Regional Director, International Sales, Latin America and South East Asia*

- Designed periodic promotions for travel agents and tour operators generating 15% increased revenue.
- Untapped Latin American potential successfully to exceed desired market share of 7% to 12%.
- Developed and delivered corporate awareness campaigns to various group sizes of up to 100 at seminars and trade shows.

**BRITISH AIRWAYS** - Madrid, Spain

1991–1992

*Account Manager*

- Created incentive programs for top producing travel agents; organized promotional tours for international corporate travel directors
- Conducted corporate incentive presentations to top accounts
- Produced direct mail, newsletters, and awareness campaigns for international clients

**M. COMPUTER, S.A. (Compaq Computer Dealership)** - Madrid, Spain 1988-1991

*Sales & Marketing Director*

- As a manager, trained staff on consultative sales techniques by conducting skills workshops/role-plays. Initiated joint sales calls, provided coaching support
- Doubled sales within six months, maintained 25% growth over a three-year period
- Targeted Fortune 100 American companies in Spain; acquired five national accounts

## **EDUCATION**

### **MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT**

American Graduate School of International Management (Thunderbird) – Phoenix, AZ  
Marketing Emphasis

### **BACHELOR OF ARTS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

Loyola Marymount University - Los Angeles, CA  
French Minor

## **LANGUAGES**

Native Spanish, Proficient in French and Portuguese

## **ADDITIONAL**

- Downtown Management Certification from the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center
- Certified to administer Myer-Briggs Type Indicator

## Urban Transformation

Urban Transformation is dedicated to creating, implementing and maintaining comprehensive revitalization programs in neighborhoods and urban centers throughout the country. Urban Transformation (UT) has first-hand knowledge of the many unique challenges facing neighborhood districts, from diversity to safety and cleanliness, to adequate funding, just to name a few. UT serves local governments, redevelopment agencies, business associations and downtown organizations throughout the United States. UT recognizes that successful strategies for business district activity require practical experience and the ability to balance the needs of property owners, business owners, residents, elected officials, government staff, and other special interest groups. UT's experience in private business, local government and non-profit sectors gives it the ability to look at a project from many different perspectives and to develop strategies that are clear, innovative and easy to implement.

## Key Staff

Darlene Rios Drapkin, principal, is a commercial revitalization consultant specializing in urban districts and BID formations. Independently, and as a Program Officer for Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), a national non-profit, Darlene has provided assistance to implement comprehensive revitalization programs in neighborhoods around the country. She has worked on projects in the San Francisco Bay Area, Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, greater Los Angeles area, Washington DC, Milwaukee, Toledo, Buffalo, several sites in Michigan as well as for the New Jersey and California Main Street programs.

Darlene Rios Drapkin initiated the implementation of Oakland's Fruitvale commercial revitalization program and served for five years as Main Street manager. Her first priority was to help the community develop a consensus vision for what role the district would play in the marketplace. Recognizing that the area was rich with Latino culture and buying power, Darlene led the education of Latinos, Asian and Middle Eastern business owners on the benefits of target marketing to this audience. Darlene galvanized dozens of stakeholders to agree on the commercial district's revitalization efforts. The result was a clear mission statement for "ethnically and culturally diverse groups of people working together, responding to a regional Latino oriented market and creating a thriving bustling shopping area that is safe clean and green." Under her direction, a sense of pride and place emerged in Fruitvale through events like the award winning Dia de los Muertos Festival, the *It's Your Business* training series, and the *Fruitvale Foreword* publication. Over 100 façade renovations were completed under her supervision and 140 volunteers were active on committees. She launched the Fruitvale Ambassador program involving youth and community members to act as neighborhood guides in the commercial area, identifying safety and cleanliness issues and promoting

the district to shoppers. The culmination of her efforts resulted in the passage of a property owner based Business Improvement District.

Darlene has an MBA from the American Graduate School of International Management. She is a native Spanish speaker and has conducted business in French and Portuguese.

### **Key Abilities**

- **Community visioning.** Her work for local governments and business organizations has involved significant public input and development of consensus visions for business development and commercial district revitalization.
- **Team-building.** Darlene Rios Drapkin is certified in group team-building, experience that is invaluable in bringing together key stakeholders to achieve consensus.
- **Downtown management.** Darlene Rios Drapkin has served as staff to downtown associations and business improvement districts, working with local government and the business community to organize marketing, business development, beautification and cleanliness and safety activities that attract business. Darlene Rios Drapkin served for five years as the Main Street manager in Oakland's Fruitvale district. She has worked extensively with the Main Street Approach™—a nationwide model for comprehensive business district revitalization. Darlene Rios Drapkin is certified as a Downtown Management Professional by the National Main Street Center.
- **Community visioning.** Her work for local governments and business organizations has involved significant public input and development of consensus visions for economic development and commercial district revitalization.

### **Recent Projects— Urban Transformation**

#### **Coachella Concept Plan for Pueblo Viejo**

##### **Client: The City of Coachella**

Urban Transformation worked as a subconsultant with DC&E to recognize the existing assets and components of the City's original downtown and provide recommendations for a community-building and revitalization strategy that builds on those components. Through workshops and stakeholder interviews, including a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) the best fit for a Pueblo Viejo comprehensive business district management and revitalization program was determined.

#### **South Gate Tweedy Mile Commercial District Assessment**

##### **Client: The City of South Gate**

Urban Transformation's on-site assessment analyzed the organizational, physical, economic and promotional building blocks that the community can assemble to initiate a successful comprehensive program. Through meetings with diverse public and private

sector stakeholders, UT identified resources that the community will need to commit and offered practical advice for capitalizing on strengths and overcoming weaknesses. As a result, City Council approved funding to launch a Main Street type program in 2007.

Contact: Gary Milliman, City Manager, City of South Gate, 8650 California Avenue, South Gate, CA 90280. (323) 563-9559

### **Huntington Park Downtown Strategic Plan**

#### ***Client: The City of Huntington Park***

Urban Transformation, in conjunction with Eichenfield and Associates, prepared Huntington Park's *Downtown Strategic Plan*. The *Strategic Plan* acts as an economic development tool that documents downtown's competitive position in the marketplace and identifies short and long-term strategies to help maintain and strengthen the vitality of downtown and its Business Improvement District program. Developing the plan involved extensive public input in the form of focus group interviews, merchant interviews, public meetings, a shopper survey and formal visioning sessions with the City's Downtown Task Force. Recommended activities included those in the areas of downtown management and organization, beautification and public amenities, promotion and marketing, economics and business mix, cleanliness and security, and parking and transportation.

Contact: Henry Gray, Directory of Community Development, City of Huntington Park, 6550 Miles Avenue, Huntington Park, CA 90255. (323) 584-6300

### **East Salinas Action Plan**

#### ***Client: Salinas United Business Association***

To create consensus and a cohesive volunteer base, UT provided SUBA and potential members, a thorough understanding of the comprehensive community-driven Main Street approach and its 4 components – Organization, Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring, and its implementation. An organizational mission was agreed upon and a twelve-month action plan was formulated.

Contact: Erica Padilla Chavez, Executive Director, 1330 E. Alisal Street, Salinas, CA 93905 (831) 796-0896

### **Temescal Telegraph Business Improvement District Management**

#### ***Client: Temescal Telegraph Community Association, Oakland, CA***

Urban Transformation provided start up management to the district's newly formed BID organizing its board and forming committees. Working through priorities to establish a strategic plan, UT galvanized volunteers produce a neighborhood directory and various community building events. UT created an inventory of vacant and underutilized properties and assisted several businesses interested in moving into the district.

Contact: Rick Raffanti, President, Temescal Telegraph Community Association 4920 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94609. 510/531-5522