

WOMEN IN EVENT

WOMEN TIPS

In our biggest special report ever, we introduce you to the industry's brightest minds and take you inside closed-door roundtable discussions spanning exclusive insights on building a career, boosting confidence and embracing the era of the women's movement

WE KNOW IT'S CLICHÉ to say, "You've come a long way, baby," but, women in events—you've come a long way.

Fifty years ago, the only role women had in events was sitting on top of a car at the annual auto show. No exaggeration: working women in the event industry were literally car ornaments. In the '60s and '70s, you could find the women in this industry planning beautiful and flawless business events that, no doubt, helped their male bosses close sales and look really, really good.

Flash forward to about 20 years ago and finally—finally!—experiential marketing as a discipline started being taken more seriously, slowly but surely bringing the women who were quietly running events behind the scenes along with it. Fifteen years ago, we didn't see as many women as men taking the stage to accept our annual industry awards as we knew were working to create them. And then that started to change, too.

Today, we see as many women as men running events, producing events, leading their brand and agency teams and—best of all—finding their rightful place at the top of the org chart or in the c-suite where their many talents can be acknowledged and respected. As one of this year's Women in Events said, "It's an exciting time to be a woman in experiential."

Event Marketer started its Women in Events program eight years ago as a way to recognize the unique contributions and the progress being made by women in the experiential marketing industry. Since then, we have featured more than 100 women in the magazine and have flown all over the country to talk to women to find out what it's like being on the front lines of this challenging, exhilarating and fast-paced business, all the while wishing with every conversation that we could bring those discussions, and all of the connections, the inspiration and the motivation that we experienced, to a larger group of women. This summer, that vision finally came to life with our first-ever Women in Events Week—a weeklong, 12-city celebration that included networking excursions, cocktail hours, dinners, afternoon mini-conferences and roundtable discussions with some of the industry's most accomplished female leaders. More than 1,000 women turned out to take part in the events.

The 36-page report you're about to read takes you there, and inside two closed-door roundtable discussions, (one in San Francisco and one in New York City), to hear what the women leading this industry are focused on, challenged by and striving for in their work and in their personal lives. We also offer an in-depth look at how top women in the agency community are navigating the industry and their careers. We talk to three woman-owned agency founders for some perspective on starting a female-led shop. And finally, we take a photo tour of all the action from Women in Events Week.

We hope that by the time you turn the last page of this virtual smart girl's guide to greatness you'll feel as empowered, inspired and connected to the community as we did this summer, *and...* that it will inspire you to check out one of our upcoming Women in Events experiences, coming to a city near you in 2019.

—Jessica Heasley

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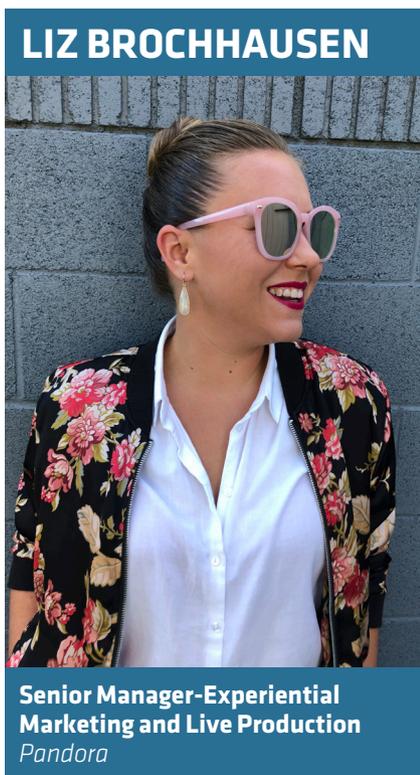
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LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

Every year our editorial team gets the awesome responsibility of looking across the industry to select and profile an outstanding group of female experiential marketers. The 15 women you are about to meet head up marketing and events for some of the world’s biggest brands. (Just don’t ask them to keep their house plants alive.)



Best career advice, given or received: “Don’t ever expect anybody to hand you anything or to say thank you.” I don’t go into any job with any expectations. When there is success and when there is praise given, it’s icing on the cake.

Most effective confidence booster: Being able to identify when you’ve done a job well and to walk away not with a laundry list of things you’d change or do differently, but with a list of things you’re proud of yourself for. At our post-mortems, we don’t start out right away talking about the misses. We always start with the hits and the things that we’re proud of. I think it’s really important, especially as women, to not be overly self-critical and for us to celebrate the things we do well.

One thing every female event marketer should never do: Don’t overly apologize. When we falter or fail it’s important to own it, and identify when we have missed a mark, but I don’t think we should be so quick to apologize

for things we don’t need to apologize for.

Favorite motto or motivational quote: I have a Post-it on my desk that has followed me to three jobs that says: “Quality is not an act, it’s a habit” by Aristotle.

Kids, Plants or Pets: All three. Nothing makes me happier than working in my vegetable garden with my three-year-old on the weekend. And we’re getting her a puppy for Christmas.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand’s: We collaborated with Sony RCA and Christina Aguilera on her album release for her newest album “Liberation,” which came out in June, and we put together a super intimate listening event for 100 guests; 50 of those we targeted as the top Christina Aguilera listeners on Pandora in the L.A. area. We sent out very specialized messages to each of these fans, with audio messages from Christina on their Pandora station. It will be a model we continues to use with A-list artists as they release their records.

ANNA CLARKE



Midwest Regional Field Marketing Manager
Clif Bar & Company

One thing every female event marketer should never do: Underestimate yourself.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into the industry: Remember that feedback is a gift—there is always something to learn even if feedback feels negative in the moment or is sometimes hard to hear. Find the nugget that will make you better at what you do. Learn to give great feedback to others and ask for it from your peers.

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or book: “The book *The Power of Moments*,” by Dan and Chip Heath. It deconstructs the elements that all our most memorable moments in life have in common and then teaches you how unforgettable moments can be constructed. I love thinking about how we can create moments as experiential marketers that can have a lasting effect on consumers well beyond the event or activation.

If money and time were no object, what would be your wildest activation idea: I got the chance to plan an event

for Clif this past summer that was called “12 hours of Adventure in Chicago.” It was incredible how many outdoor urban adventures we fit into one day! I would love to plan “12 hours of Adventure” in every big city in the world to show that adventure is all around you, even in urban jungles. All you have to do is seek it out.

Kids, Plants or Pets: I’m a crazy plant lady. I impulse-buy plants and I’ve started two garden clubs.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand’s: Our Equal is Equal campaign. LUNA Bar is rallying people to raise their collective voice against one of the longest standing inequalities—the gender wage gap. One way women can create immediate change is through negotiation. We partnered with the American Association of University Women and equal pay advocates Gina Rodriguez and Catt Sadler. The campaign came to life with negotiation workshops and an interactive experience aimed to help women identify their negotiation style and find resources to hone their skills.

KIMBERLY WHINNA
COTTRELL

Senior Manager-Experiential & Content Marketing
Autodesk

Best career advice, given or received: The most amazing career paths can’t be planned and only make sense in retrospect. I could have never imagined this when I graduated from college but the role I have today—it completely makes sense. So don’t get too hung up in planning out the whole journey, understand careers aren’t always a linear path.

One thing every female event marketer should never do: Lose track of the guest experience. Sometimes we get carried away with an idea and it’s always important to bring yourself back to the guest experience and how the experience you’re crafting will make the guest feel and what it will be like from their perspective.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry: Not everyone has to get an MBA like I did, but educating yourself on business and marketing strategy is a great thing to do early on. No matter what type of initiative you’re pursuing as a marketer it’s always important to think about why you’re doing something and how it will impact your goals.

Favorite motto or motivational quote: “My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive and to do so with some compassion, some humor and some style.”
–Maya Angelou

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or book: I love the podcast “How I Built This” with Guy Raz. As the daughter of an entrepreneur, I’m endlessly inspired by people who create something from nothing.

Most memorable recent professional win: I was just named as an inventor of a U.S. patent alongside a team of Autodesk colleagues. It’s a testament to the power of a team and how people who have different skills and expertise, when they come together, can create really amazing things.

Email on vacation: Do, don’t or sometimes: Don’t! Vacations are for unplugging. If you commit to unplugging you will come back refreshed and do better work.

Kids, Plants or Pets: I have a toddler and a preschooler. They add a deeply fulfilling and expansive dimension to my life.

MONIQUE HARRISON



Head of Brand Experience Marketing
Mercedes-Benz

Best career advice, given or received:

Be present. A mentor once quoted this as the best way to feel satisfied with her work-life balance. By simply dedicating myself to the environment I am in and always being present, it helps maximize every moment, increase effectiveness and foster balance.

One thing every female event marketer should never do:

Be afraid to take risks and explore new, innovative ways to achieve better results. There's no growth in comfort.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Find one to two good mentors. There's one key factor in getting what you need from a mentor: Make it easy for them to provide value to you. Be prepared, concise and clear on all communication. Don't make them do heavy lifting to help you.

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or business book, and why you love it:

"What Got You Here Won't Get You There," by Marshall Goldsmith. I get the

most out of coaching when I can independently read about it and apply principles on my terms. We all know what we need to do to get better... It's just how and when we choose to act upon it.

Most memorable recent professional win:

We recently opened Mercedes-Benz pop-up retail stores in various cities. We've seen record numbers of converted customers that are new to the brand that represents real ROI as a result of those interactions.

Kids, Plants or Pets:

I kill all plants. Literally, nothing green can survive under my care. Regretfully, no pets. Two amazing girls, Kennedy (9) and McKenzie (3).

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's:

I'm a big fan of Nike's gutsy campaigns. Whether you agree or disagree with Colin Kaepernick's stand on the NFL, Serena Williams' controversial tennis attire, etc., Nike makes daring choices and presents them in a compelling way. I'm a high-risk, high-reward kind of girl and these always pique my interest.

JENNIFER UTZ ILECKI



VP-Buzz Marketing and Partnerships
Marriott

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do:

As our industry continues to evolve, we need to do a much better job of articulating the value of experiential marketing. The onus is on all event marketers both female and male to showcase how our efforts impact and support the overall business. Investing the time to develop those meaningful KPIs and metrics is going to go a long way in solidifying experiential marketing's position as a crucial part of the overall marketing mix.

Favorite motto or motivational quote:

"Be the change you wish to see in the world." –Mahatma Gandhi

One thing every female event marketer should never do:

Don't try to do everything on your own. In my experience, it takes a village to pull off a successful event. So, rely on your team and rely on your support resources. And don't be afraid to ask for help.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Stay curious, keep learning, ask questions, and above all, be open to inspiration and creativity

because you never know where it's going to come from.

Most memorable recent professional win:

Our activation at Coachella the past two years, which was an industry first. We wanted to weave our brands into the camping experience that takes place on the festival grounds, so we worked across eight of our lifestyle brands to turn safari tents into our actual model hotel rooms. It was so successful in year one that we decided to repeat it, except we upgraded the experience and turned luxury yurts into four of our W hotel properties from around the world.

Favorite carry-on item that makes the travel more manageable:

Noise-cancelling headphones coupled with an amazing Spotify playlist.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's:

Refinery29's 29Rooms. This year we integrated one of our brands, Moxy Hotels. It's one of our fun, lifestyle brands aimed at the millennial traveler. We brought it to life in the form of a mischievous playhouse, which is core to the overall Moxy brand.

KRISTINE YAPP JONES



Global Event Marketing Manager
Twitter

Best career advice, given or received:

Treat everyone with respect no matter what level they're at. Especially in our line of work, the best way to do this job is to have contacts and be a people person. If you're treating everyone with respect, it makes it that much easier.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Start at an agency. If you ultimately want to work at a brand and bring something to that brand, being able to work with lots of different clients and being the first one in the room and the last one out is the kind of experience you don't get if you start at a brand. In an agency, you get to see a lot and learn what hard work is.

Favorite motto or motivational quote:

"Everything happens for a reason."

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or business book, and what you love about it: A podcast "School of Greatness" by Lewis Howes. I'm also excited to read "Atomic Habits," "Girl Wash Your Face" and "Tribe of Mentors."

If money and time were no object, what would be your wildest activation idea:

I would like a bunch of different brands to get together and create a mission project. A lot of companies and people want to do good, but it would be awesome if they banded together to set up different mission projects around the world to areas that need help. Employees that wanted to could go and help—we've got a lot of man power and brain power and I think it would be the coolest thing ever.

Most memorable recent professional win:

I produced the tour sponsorship for the Lady Gaga Monster Ball. I was young in my career and ended up taking over the account. Still to this day it's one of the most exciting projects I ever worked on.

Kids, Plants or Pets: Definitely not plants, I can't keep them alive.

Carry-on item that makes the travel more manageable: EarPods. I didn't realize how life-changing they were until I got them.

NICOLA KASTNER



Senior Director-Global Event Strategy
SAP

Best career advice, given or received:

Trust your gut. I learned that early in my career. I'm a data geek at heart and realized that brings a lot to the business table, but there's a fine balance to be struck between putting all faith in facts and learning to listen to the information that's conveyed through that gut feeling.

Most effective confidence booster:

Be prepared. Even if you're blessed with tons of talent, the ability to succeed or feel confident doesn't rely on that alone. It's making sure I know what I'm going to say in a meeting and how I'm going to handle transitions.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do: Have a point of view and be confident about sharing it. It's truly a key to climbing the corporate ladder and making a difference.

One thing every female event marketer should never do: This is for anybody: No matter what role you're in, there's always more to learn and accomplish. And never underestimate the impact you have on

others, especially other women.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Often as people start their careers they're so focused on the career path and what's the next step to be successful. Find what you're passionate about and success will follow.

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or business book, and what you love about it:

The TED Talk "Life Begins at the End of Your Comfort Zone," by Yubing Zhang. The lesson that we can take from it is that all your fears and your doubts and insecurities are in your head. And when you work to condition your mind to be free of those, it's empowering and allows you to accomplish more than you ever thought possible.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's:

The Mattel campaign for Barbie. They turned a brand that had lost relevance into something completely different. It showed Barbie is not a superficial toy, but rather a toy that allows little girls to dream and imagine what they want to be one day.

KATRINA KENT



Director-Event Group
TD Ameritrade

Best career advice given or received:

Life is too short for a bad marriage or a bad job. And when people ask to move on, let them go. Don't try to keep them.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do: Actively listen. Event marketers are natural activators and have a tendency to take over. Giving other collaborators the space to articulate their ideas without jumping in to manage everyone's ideas is critical.

One thing every female event marketer should never do: Never jump to conclusions, because when we jump to conclusions we often miss something that's going to be really important.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry: Make sure that you cultivate relationships. You never know what may lead to what. Be interested and open with those around you regardless of what industry they're in.

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or book: I love Gallup's StrengthsFinder. Learning about your top strengths and top strengths

of others on your team and then diving into how they complement each other is a game changer. It's resulted in better communications, results and satisfaction across the team.

Most memorable recent professional win: Due to some bizarre circumstances and schedule changes, I ended up having to call production on a show myself in Las Vegas. On the fly. It was crazy.

Email on vacation: Do, don't or sometimes: Don't. Church and State it. Give it a rest when you can.

Carry-on item that makes the travel more manageable: CBD oil. What isn't CBD oil helpful for these days?

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's: My team recently riffed on our green room ad campaign for a live activation at The Northern Trust PGA golf tournament this summer. We built a green room on the green as a space to relax and have conversations about investing in everyday language. It was great to bring our ads to life.

ELIZABETH MALAFA KURMAN



Director-Global Events
Under Armour

Most effective confidence booster:

Staying on a regimen of working out, even if it's just for 20 minutes a day. I feel so much more relaxed and put together and feel like I can tackle anything.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do: Don't shy away from sitting at the table with all men. I was in football for a long time and I would be the only female at the table. Don't be afraid to speak up and share your ideas, because a lot of times you're the expert in your field.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry: Follow your heart. It sounds a bit cheesy, but this is an industry where there are long hours. As a young professional you're going to be expected to put in weekends and holidays. But if it's something you truly love and you're passionate about, following your heart is the best advice.

Favorite motto or motivational quote: "The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." –Eleanor Roosevelt

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or book:

The "How I Built This" podcast. They interview so many different types of entrepreneurs and creative people and it gives you a chance to see their story. If you can get one nugget from what you're listening to then I think it's a win.

If money and time were no object, what would be your wildest activation idea:

An event lives for just a finite amount of time, so it would be cool to have people travel for a 24-hour event that circumnavigated the globe to different pop-ups. In each city an activation would happen. It would be so fun—you could roll social media for 24 hours.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's:

Our recent campaign that we just finished, "Will Finds a Way," with The Rock. It had an inspirational component that motivated people to create a healthier lifestyle for themselves and their peers. We need to sell shoes and shirts as a brand, but if you can also carry a positive message while doing it, it makes it so much more enjoyable.

LAURA LOVAS



Executive Director-Strategic
Partnerships & Events
ABC

Best career advice, given or received:

The best leaders are the best learners. While it's important to speak up, it's equally important to listen and be endlessly curious, ask questions, seek out diverse perspectives, solicit feedback and always be receptive to new ideas. The moment you stop seeking is the moment you stop being relevant.

Most effective confidence booster:

Project confidence. Doubting yourself and your perspective really gets you nowhere. Embrace the fact that you're in your role because you bring a certain level of expertise to the table that brings your company value.

One thing every female event marketer should never do:

Never lose sight of the end goal. In this industry we're often so caught up in the spectacle and the instant gratification of these experiences, but we need to apply that same effort into ensuring that the impact is sustained beyond the activation itself.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Nobody is

going to hand you anything. It's beyond important to be your own greatest advocate. Always speak up. If you have an idea, share it. If there's an accomplishment you're proud of, tell people about it. Don't be afraid of having frequent, direct conversations with your leaders about what you're bringing to the table and where you see your career headed.

Most memorable recent professional win:

This fall we executed a phenomenal "Grey's Anatomy" pop-up art gallery to celebrate the premiere of our 15th season. We worked with PopSugar and the 1994 Museum to highlight over two dozen iconic moments from the series via custom commissioned artwork and interactive installations and props. We were thrilled to see the real emotional impact the gallery had as attendees experienced their favorite show in such a unique way.

Email on vacation: Do, don't or sometimes:

Don't email on vacation. Burnout is a real risk for employees in this business and those breaks are crucial for long-term motivation and productivity.

AMY MARINO



VP-Global Brand Marketing,
Experience and Partnerships
American Express

Best career advice given or received:

Stay true to yourself and trust your instincts. There will always be a pressure to alter your opinion or adjust your work to satisfy the priorities of someone above you, or maybe to even fit into a new culture if you're starting a new job or find yourself on a new team. Trust your gut and keep in mind that people in this industry respond to and recognize authenticity.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do:

This is male or female: Get into the habit of reading the news every day. It's so important for us to keep on the pulse of what's going on in the industry, who's doing what kinds of events, where brands are starting to show up and what's driving conversation so that you can make that a part of your decision-making.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Stay tuned into cultural heat moments and collaborate with the people around you. Your colleagues might be into a completely different cultural segment than you are. But

if you can bring ideas together it offers new ways to authentically bring your brand to life or insert your brand into different types of conversations.

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or book:

The podcast "Radical Candor." It has helped inform the way that I give and, in particular, receive feedback. Feedback is an important part of working effectively as a team and also being a great leader.

Memorable recent professional win:

Last year our Small Business Saturday team won the gold Effie for our Sustained Campaign. It validated the importance of continuing to invest in things that don't just have an impact on your business but also have an impact on society at large.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's:

What Nike did with Colin Kaepernick. That was an amazing example of a brand staying true to their mission, which is to further the careers of athletes. They happened to take a social stand, but it was connected to their brand and their mission and that made it that much more poignant in the marketplace.

CASEY O'LOONEY



Senior Manager-Global Marketing
Cisco

Most effective confidence booster: More than anything, knowledge in the subject matter. I work with very smart technical leaders and sometimes our subject matter is very complex. You don't need to be the expert but you do have to come away with the big ideas that will resonate with the customers and attendees.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do: Build relationships and partnerships. I am not an expert at everything, but chances are someone I know in my circle of influence will be and I can leverage those relationships in times of need.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry: Try different things—different career paths, different roles—and enjoy the people you meet and things you learn along the way. I changed my overall career at least three times. I didn't plan to work in experiential marketing, but it all led me to this perfect role.

Favorite motto or motivational quote: "Success means we go to sleep at night

knowing that our talents and abilities were used in a way that served others." –Marianne Williamson. I really like the idea of "servant leadership" and looking for opportunities to serve others to achieve goals.

Email on vacation: Do, don't or sometimes: Sometimes. I wish it was a "don't," but it's not.

Kids, Plants or Pets: Cats. There are never enough funny cat videos on the internet or in the world.

Carry-on item that makes the travel more manageable: Noise-cancelling headphones. They're expensive but they are the best.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's: I am really proud of Cisco's Connected Conservation campaign. We use technology to battle poaching and save rhinos and elephants and other endangered species. I am so proud of this cause. I have a soft spot for wildlife and look forward to creating a world where elephants and rhinos can roam free.

MEREDITH STARKEY



VP-Sponsorships and Events
T-Mobile

Best career advice, given or received: "Change the energy and change the outcome." It's really about how we show up with our teams, our organizations and our partners and the energy we bring to conversations, and how it can positively or negatively impact an outcome. When you think about the event industry and what can happen in the pressure of a live event and in a moment, the positive energy we can bring to any circumstance can have such an impact on a team.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do: Prioritize! To me, prioritizing what you're doing and how you spend your time and resources is really helpful in driving effectiveness and efficiency in your work and in trying to achieve work-life integration.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry: Be bold, be brave, seize opportunity, make the most of each opportunity, and more opportunity will come your way. I've seen it in my own career. I've seen it in the team that I have the privilege of leading.

Favorite motto or motivational quote: Not surprisingly, it's a quote from Vince Lombardi, given my team stewards and oversees what we do in sports: "Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection, we can catch excellence."

Most memorable recent professional win? I'm really proud of an event we did with a partner, "T-Mobile Presents the Tonight Show, Starring Jimmy Fallon," live from Central Park. It was the first time in the history of late-night programming that a late-night show was done live in Central Park.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's? Our team's campaign, Home Runs for Hurricane Recovery, #HR4HR. Together with Major League Baseball, players and fans, we raised, over the last year, more than \$5.1 million for veteran-led organization Team Rubicon to help those who have been impacted by the devastating hurricanes. To use an event platform like MLB post-season to do good, and rally fans and players behind that, was special to be a part of.

LINDSAY TOLLES



Global Experiential Program
Manager
Dell

Best career advice, given or received:

Know your audience. From a marketing perspective I think about it all the time, but it's also applicable to managing a career and building relationships with others and knowing what different people you interact with care about so you can position your message in a way that resonates with them.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do:

Learning to say no is really important. We tend to want to say yes to everything and we overload ourselves. You have to say, "There are limits to what I can do," and start to learn to push back and delegate.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Don't stay in your lane—learn everything around you. It gives you a better perspective on how everyone contributes to the overall outcome.

Favorite motto or motivational quote:

"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." —Wayne

Dyer. It goes back to having an open mind and not being too locked into your own plans. And remembering to take another perspective on things and a whole new world of possibilities might open up for you.

Most memorable recent professional win:

Our SXSW activation had some amazing results. We ended up being No. 1 in share of voice for tech brands, outshouting the big brands like Google and Facebook.

Kids, Plants or Pets: One 16-year-old cat. I'm not very good with plants. They fight for themselves at my house.

Favorite recent campaign, yours or another brand's:

The "Slingsers" campaign is really clever and goofy. We also have a great campaign for Dell Technologies right now around digital transformation called "Make it Real" with Jeffrey Wright. It highlights the things that technology is enabling us to do in healthcare and the auto industry and other industries. I think it's really well done and a positive message.

ELIZABETH WINDRAM



VP-Marketing
JetBlue

Best career advice, given or received:

Go slow to go fast. It's good to spend some time, especially at the beginning of your career, building up your skillset, putting tools in your toolbox and gaining experiences so that later it can come together in a very powerful way.

Most effective confidence booster:

Preparation. When I know what to expect and I'm controlling my controllables, I can pivot then when something needs to be adjusted.

One thing every female event marketer should learn to do:

Read as much as you can and look out at the world around you, not just in marketing, but art, current events, trends... The best marketers apply everything they see to modern and innovative brand work.

One thing every female event marketer should never do:

Dismiss sources of ideas, because great ideas can come from anywhere.

#1 piece of advice for young women coming into this industry:

Quiet the negative voices in your own head that tell

you that you can't do things or that you're not enough. Tell yourself a new story that says, "I'm passionate about what I want to do and I'm excited to contribute."

Favorite motto or motivational quote:

"Leaders lead." I say that to my team and then to myself, and sometimes even to my leaders.

Favorite TED Talk, podcast or business book, and what you love about it:

Ben Horowitz's book, "The Hard Thing About Hard Things." It is the most helpful and real account of what it takes to lead people and business that I've ever read.

Most memorable recent professional win:

A program we called "Pie in the Sky." As New York's hometown airline, we sent pizza from New York to L.A., delivering a slice of our home. It highlighted our transcontinental flying routes, got a ton of buzz and worked hard for the brand and tactically for the business.

Kids, Plants or Pets: Kids! I have a daughter and she is the most magical human being I know.

SORRY, NOT SORRY

Candid excerpts from our bi-coastal conversations with this year's Women in Events

EVENT MARKETER: Is the issue of gender equality creating any obstacles for you in your career? If so, how can event marketers make the experiential industry a more equitable place to work?

LINDSAY TOLLES: I don't think about obstacles at all. I don't ever think there's anything I can't do. My organization is dominated by women—really strong women who do amazing work and get it done—so I'm not thinking about what the male factor is. They don't factor into my world because they're not there; they're not doing the work. But I know it's something that needs to be discussed and we spend a lot of time at Dell empowering women internally and externally.

LIZ BROCHHAUSEN: I think it depends on your industry. I'm at this interesting crux between technology and the music industry, which has been predominantly male for so long. I'm constantly having road guys mansplaining to me about how live production works. It's like, "Thank you so much. I've been doing this for 10 years." But I think it just depends on the industry that you're in and how much progress women have made there.

KRISTINE YAPP JONES: The events industry as a whole, and maybe this is what we need to change, is a very thankless industry. People do not understand what we do. Every week we have to educate our cross-function teams on how much an event actually costs. No one

understands what it is and how much goes into it. Maybe that's something we need to change first.

CASEY O'LOONEY: We're fortunate because Cisco Live is, in a lot of ways, really driving strategy. So instead of looking at us like we're "only the event team," they're looking at us like we have a valuable resource that they want, which is that one-to-one interaction with customers. One of the things that we do to help with [that perception] is take a lot of internal marketing teams through the event strategy process. And they think it's one of the best things that has ever happened, because they get to have a facilitated session on what they're trying to accomplish and who the audience is they're trying to bring in. I'm fortunate that we're really seen as trailblazers, mavericks—smart, strategic women on the events team.

KIMBERLY WHINNA COTTRELL: I think in the last few years there seems to be so much more appreciation for what we do. The company rallies around events strategically and there's been a ton of respect for the team that manages them. It's so fabulous to see that appreciated. It's something I'm enthusiastic about. The more that we can be seen as a strategic part of the marketing mix, the more the leaders that are running experiential programs that are women can go up to other positions. It can't be seen as this service niche of the organization, but as a strategic marketing powerhouse.

THE PANELISTS:

Liz Brochhausen
Senior Manager-Experiential Marketing and Live Production
Pandora

Anna Clarke
Midwest Regional Marketing Manager
Clif Bar & Company

Monique Harrison
Department Head of Brand Experience Marketing
Mercedes-Benz

Jennifer Utz Ilecki
VP-Buzz Marketing and Partnerships
Marriott

Kristine Yapp Jones
Global Event Marketing Manager
Twitter

Nicola Kastner
Senior Director, Global Event Strategy
SAP

Katrina Kent
Director, Event Group
TD Ameritrade

Laura Lovas
Executive Director, Strategic Partnerships & Events
ABC

Elizabeth Malafa Kurman
Director, Global Events
Under Armour

Amy Marino
VP-Global Brand Marketing, Experience and Partnerships
American Express

Casey O'Looney
Senior Manager, Global Marketing
Cisco

Meredith Starkey
VP-Sponsorships and Events
T-Mobile

Lindsay Tolles
Global Experiential Program Manager
Dell

Kimberly Whinna Cottrell
Senior Manager, Experiential & Content Marketing
Autodesk

Elizabeth Windram
VP, Marketing
JetBlue

**Co-Hosted with:
Keirsten Hammett,**
Partner
Proscenium

CO-PRODUCED WITH PROSCENIUM

MEREDITH STARKEY: I think we're in an exciting time for experiential, too. The pendulum is shifting in this direction, which means more opportunity. With linear television consumption continuing to decline, it is becoming more about the experience one has with a brand, and with the proliferation of social media the ability to share that experience. It's exciting to think about as we go forward, the role we can play in the marketing mix as we move from a logistics- and planning-first mindset to seeing events as an opportunity to bring the brand story and experience to life in a multi-dimensional way that goes deeper than what TV advertising alone can deliver.

O'LOONEY: Exactly. With live, you're engaging the senses, which you're not really able to do through a screen. And that's what I love so much about our programs, that it's the touch, it's the feel. I also think people are so used to living their lives through social media now, that when you can get them into a room and give them something that's real and tangible, it's just so much more impactful and meaningful for a consumer.

AMY MARINO: I think what is so valuable about experiential that can be much more difficult to crack with some of the other marketing disciplines is that you have the opportunity to build both rational value in the minds of your customers as well as emotional value. And that's where experiential marketing really factors into the brand building process and brand marketing versus just performance marketing. I think we're all lucky if we can work at companies where that is truly valued, because the emotional connection that a consumer has with your brand can be what builds the greatest loyalty.

KEIRSTEN HAMMETT: We've seen a trend where events teams are actually moving from under HR and reporting to marketing, which makes a huge difference in terms of budgets and the importance placed on live events. So I do think there's a ton of opportunity, once events are not a sub-channel, but, an equal channel.

WHINNA COTTRELL: Our experiential marketing teams are all within our brand and impact team and that's so important that we sit alongside the content marketers and social media team and the creative team. The power of what we can

all do together sitting on the same team is so much greater than if we are in different corners of the business. So that's definitely a powerful part of our structure.

MONIQUE HARRISON: I wish I knew it sooner: There's no need to think we're at a disadvantage just because we're smaller in number. Instead, appreciate the voice that can represent a female point of view and operate just as you are viewed: a valuable contributor. This is coming from someone who has worked in technology and automotive for years, where there's often a smaller percentage of women in the room than men. Add on the fact that most of the companies I have worked for heavily invest in sports...so maybe reduce the percentage of women represented a bit more.

EM: Women in events have very unique challenges when it comes to having a family—travel being top among them. Can you share your perspectives on raising a family in this business?

BROCHHAUSEN: I have a three-year-old, and it's difficult to be on the road almost 200 days a year while having a toddler. They don't understand at that age where Mommy goes or what she's doing. But I have always thought that it is so important for us to teach our daughters the importance of following your dreams and the importance of being a badass boss. I think it's important, especially when you're dealing with kids, to realize the value that you're bringing into their lives by being a hard worker and by having an important career that drives you and that

you're passionate about.

LAURA LOVAS: Being a working parent, and especially a working mother, definitely has its challenges. I think we all have a responsibility to be a champion of women and to build them up and to support them and stay away from negativity and gossip and criticism, because I think there's enough of that naturally happening. We can do so much if we ban together and really have that support network as we are raising our children and serving as mentors to younger women within the organization.

WHINNA COTTRELL: With only five percent of Fortune 500 CEOs being women, more representation by women at the top of companies is needed. I'm not saying that it's definitely a gender thing, but if there were more women in leadership, I think systematically there would be more programs that would help women as they navigate parenthood. I have two children and the last five years of having a child, and having another child and navigating that—it's been so critical to work at a supportive company. And yet, it still feels like it's very much a time that we're pioneering how to make that work. I would love for the next generation to have programs in place and more systems that would help them navigate these kind of seasons of life that are really challenging.

YAPP JONES: Twitter is great. They're very supportive. But how do I navigate getting myself out and getting myself back in, because I have not done it yet.

BROCHHAUSEN: I think that's really



about having a strong team that you trust to keep the train moving while you're out, because either way, it's going to go. I was very nervous about going out on maternity leave when I did, but you just realize that as long as you've hired good people, they're going to carry on while you're out.

And I think that brings up another point: we have so many demands on our time as women, to be good friends and mothers and daughters and producers and artists and all of the things that we're required to be doing in this job. And I think self-care is one area that I'm constantly trying to focus on more because as women, we need time for ourselves. We need time for self-care. And I think that was one thing that maternity leave forced me to identify and really nurture and work on, was care of me in addition to care of everyone else and everyone else's priorities.

LOVAS: I have two small children as well, but this also applies to women that don't have children because there are often things that happen in our lives, whether that's taking care of elderly family members or illness or other things that come up, that really demand our attention. I think women traditionally take on so much, whether that's in the workplace or within the household or within the family. So I think it's really just building that support system and seeking out other women who are in similar situations or are likeminded to have a place to vent and to share ideas and advice and figure out how to stay sane because it can be a real challenge.

EM: Many young women still struggle with developing confidence in the workplace. Can you share some tips that have worked for you?

ANNA CLARKE: One way that young women can build confidence is honing their negotiation skills. I think a lot of women only think about negotiation when it comes time for a new job or a promotion, but those skills can help build confidence in everyday situations. Another way to build confidence is to talk with other women—friends and coworkers. Create a network. Talk about your struggles because other women have faced similar challenges and can offer advice from their experiences.

O'LOONEY: I agree. We're seeing a lot of younger women find their confidence

and their strength in communities. When you talk about the pay gap and how people are negotiating their salaries, they talk to each other now. And they know how much each of them are making. And I'm proud of them for doing that because it's strength in numbers. If this is what my colleague is getting or this is what so and so in engineering is getting, then I deserve to get this, too. It's interesting to see the way confidence is derived in different generations.

JENNIFER UTZ ILECKI: That's right. I think women need to be confident, self-assured and willing to think creatively to make their mark. To do this, it is important women feel secure within the organization and supported when it comes to pitching their ideas and plans.

At Marriott we are fortunate to work for a company that supports the presence of women in the highest level of management and in key decision-making positions. I can honestly say that women's leadership is a business imperative that is vital to Marriott's success. The company has policies and practices that range from creating a welcoming and inclusive environment to providing the tools and resources necessary for supporting employees in managing their work and personal lives. More than 50 percent of our CEO, Arne Sorenson's, direct reports are women.

HAMMETT: I think knowing what you bring to the table early in your career and being able to articulate those strengths to other people is so crucial in career growth. Younger women coming up in their career often wait for people to notice

them and their accomplishments or wait for the acknowledgment that they're doing a good job, but if they have the tools to be able to articulate what their strengths are, they can advocate for themselves. It's a hard thing to do, especially if you end up in the room and you are the only woman at the table, but there is so much power in finding your own voice.

HARRISON: Women tend to be a bit hesitant to aggressively build business contacts. For years, this plagued me. I had no problem doing it at my kid's school events and activities, but I didn't take the same approach at work. I committed to getting much better at it and I've seen a noticeable change in my business support structure and my comfort level to consistently build a network through business channels. As cliché as it sounds, networking works.

LOVAS: I think it's important to reinforce the fact that you have been hired for this role because you bring a specific skillset and a specific level of expertise to the table that is valuable to the company and fulfilling its goals. And speak up. If you have an idea, share that idea. If you have an accomplishment, talk about that accomplishment. Have direct conversations with your leaders and make sure that it's very clear between you what you see in your career, what value you're bringing to the table and looking ahead, where you see yourself going. And then, back that up by becoming the master of your domain and really delivering the goods. Self-doubt doesn't get you anywhere. You have a voice and you've been hired to use that.



BROCHHAUSEN: I think celebrating the wins is a big one. So often we as event professionals will leave a program with a laundry list of things that we want to change for next time, and all of the things that might not have gone the way that we wanted them to, but I think it's really important to stop and take a minute and say, "We did that. We won." I don't feel like enough people really take the time to congratulate themselves on a job well done, especially some of the younger women on my team.

WHINNA COTTRELL: That's a really good point. It's kind of a long-term strategy, but I would also suggest challenging yourself to do things that may seem risky. It will eventually give you a lot of confidence once you get through it and you succeed. Sometimes you'll fail, too, but go for those challenging roles or projects and when you do succeed, you'll be so much more confident.

O'LOONEY: I think confidence comes from having a really solid sense of self. And everyone gets that in a different way. When I go into a room, I want to make sure that I am extremely knowledgeable. So I spend a lot of time trying to be well-rounded, learning different things, being able to have a personal conversation with people. Because at the end of the day, we're all human beings. We're all trying to build a relationship. So, that's the way I approach it—really looking at it like, how can I build a relationship? How can I build a partnership? Just knowing that I'm coming about it with the best of intentions is what builds my confidence.

EM: What makes a great experiential leader in 2018? What are some of the must-have skills?

UTZ ILECKI: Being endlessly flexible is the number one skill needed. Candidly, I've found from working in experiential marketing that there is a high probability something will not go according to plan. It is critical to the success of the activation to develop contingency plans, keep calm under pressure and roll with the punches. Approach activations with a problem-solving mindset so that you're not thrown when things deviate from plans. Also, be nimble, knowing that it's not going to go exactly as you envisioned and there will inevitably be a need to act quickly as



anything can happen such as cancelled flights, issues with talent, shipping delays, delayed visas for teams working international activations, the list goes on. In fact, when things are going super smooth and according to plan, I've said to my team, "This is too good to be true. Something's going to break very soon. Let's stay on our toes." Having everyone at the ready to remedy issues behind the scenes makes a huge difference.

HARRISON: Organizationally, it's understanding the value experiential marketing means to business and being able to effectively communicate that up, down and across, to gain the proper support needed throughout your organization.

STARKEY: Flexibility, agility, adaptability. And, the ability to project a calm and confident presence when others around you may be feeling nervous or uncertain. They are looking to you and how you respond in the moment.

MARINO: Naiveté can sometimes be an asset. When I first started out in my career, I felt like I had to absolutely master something to be really good at it and to advance. But as I've moved up, and as I've taken on different work streams, I've realized that sometimes not knowing it all can help you to pinpoint or find gaps that exist, or come at a challenge from a different angle. And it's something that has made me more confident in my current role and, I think, made me a better hirer when I'm looking for someone to come into an open position. Now I look at a resumé and try to make sure that I'm forcing myself not to

just look at what exactly they've done but more how they've done it and how their skills can be transferrable, which I think also helps me pass on the things that I've learned to whoever I'm hiring, and helps me build out really strong teams.

NICOLA KASTNER: I recently had a team dinner with both men and women and one of the men said, "Men look at a job description as a wish list. Women look at it as a must-have list." And it was really interesting to hear a man actually say that out loud, because it's true. I don't know that the outcome would have been any different if I'd pushed myself earlier on in my career, but it's interesting to think back about it.

CLARKE: Yes! On average, if a man can check four out of 10 criteria for a job, he'll go for it. Women won't apply for the same job unless they can check at least eight out of 10. It's fascinating. That was one thing that I wish I knew sooner in my career, because I probably did pass on some opportunities instead of looking at where I lacked experience but could learn on the job.

HAMMETT: Listening is essential to being a great leader, too, especially in experiential. Things are changing constantly and you have to be able to solve problems and come up with solutions that make sense and often are within budget. Mastering the art of listening to what people are saying and even sometimes what they aren't saying allows you to respond more strategically to those types of situations with clients as well as within your team.



KATRINA KENT: You also can't take every one of your ideas too personally, especially when you're getting started. In my career now I can say, "Here's this wild idea and here's 27 more that I have right now and I'm not going to get offended or hung up on the fact that so-and-so just gave me a thumbs down and hates it." It's not about me. But that was a hard thing to learn when I was coming up.

MARINO: I think that goes hand in hand, too, with learning to accept feedback. That is something that I found much more difficult earlier in my career. Again, I think it's inextricably tied to wanting to be the master of something, wanting to be the best at something and then growing into your career and getting to a place where you realize you can't possibly know everything or be the best at everything. At American Express, we've been doing a lot of work to get people more comfortable giving and receiving feedback, and looking at feedback as a gift that makes you better at your job and makes you a better person. That has been a big inflection point for me personally and has made me much more receptive to hearing feedback.

EM: How has the women's movement impacted your work and the industry?

HARRISON: The women's movement has impacted everyone's work in a significant way. It doesn't matter if it's training programs at the office, discussions that are rooted in protecting women or how social activities take place, the visibility and attention is definitely noticed.

KENT: I'm in financial services at TD Ameritrade. We're obviously a male-dominated industry and conservative overall. So for us, we have content now at our events that we never would have had even just a few years ago. This past year we had Viola Davis on stage at one of our national conferences. She was incredible. And she made such an impact. Afterwards, women in the audience had such positive feedback. Even some of the "old school network-type" attendees had much more of an open, receptive attitude to hearing from someone like her. That would have never happened three years ago.

MARINO: For Amex, it reaffirms the power and the voice of a collective community when everyone comes together with a common purpose to get something done and really how powerful that can be. It's actually transformed the way we think about communities and how we market to different communities and how we're relevant to different communities—purpose-driven marketing is really important to today's consumer.

One recent example, we have a Platinum Collective that we bring together—innovators and disruptors that are at the top of their industry or at the top of their game—and we consult with them to advise us on how to go to market experientially. We added a woman by the name of Audrey Gelman who is the co-founder of The Wing, which is a co-working and programming space that is only for women. Audrey has been an incredible partner, advising us on how we go to market. We

are co-curating programming with her and doing events at The Wing, so that we can have some really serious conversations with these women who matter to us about how to be financially healthy.

KASTNER: We're actually going to do something similar this year at SAP-PHIRE NOW. We have a partnership with the Female Quotient, which is another company that does a lot of great work and programming. And we're going to bring an experience to our largest event to create that "safe zone" for conversation and dialogue, which I'm really excited about. It's a trend you're starting to see in a lot more of the events, which is fantastic.

KENT: I was on a phone call yesterday talking about putting together a panel for something, and someone said, "Well, she checks the female and the diversity box, so that's good." More than half the world is female and we're still looking at it like if you have a female on a panel, you're checking off a diversity box?

ELIZABETH WINDRAM: Rather than buying into the actual reasons for diversity, which is to bring forth the diversity of thought, they're checking off boxes. So, diversity box—great, you're there, but how are we actually including and hearing the voice, getting the benefit from the discussion? I think a lot of people are missing the "why." We have to ask ourselves, what are we really rooting ourselves in? For Jet-Blue, we're trying to root ourselves in the future of our industry. Aviation requires a lot of STEM-type careers—I need people to build the planes, maintain the planes, engineers, pilots, and sort of that brain diversity into those groups, and building a pipeline even more broadly for that industry. I feel like that's where I can root something that's true for us. Also, women make the majority of travel decisions, especially leisure travel. So, there's something we can really root in. And we're working on this program to make sure everything makes sense and isn't just pandering. I'm not going to do the, "Oh, it's an all-female X, Y, Z." That's just noise.

CLARKE: The saying comes to mind, "A rising tide lifts all boats." There's a lot of momentum with the women's movement at the center of cultural conversations. As an experiential community, we have a voice to encourage conversations and change. There are a lot of brands and

companies who are making efforts to help advance gender equality. I'm hopeful that together we can help make lasting change for the better. It is important to remember though that consumers are savvy and they know when they're in front of something that is meaningful and for their benefit versus something that was created to take advantage of energy behind a movement.

LOVAS: A lot of what we do is public facing. And while I am very fortunate to work for some very strong female leaders, we still have a product that we're putting out there and representing to the public. So I think that in this day and age, with the women's movement, and with this great support group of female leaders that we have, I do feel an accountability. There's a sense of responsibility to impart that into the work that we do.

Any experience that we build, any messaging that we put out there, we have to ensure that we are always positioning women and others that are underrepresented in an empowering way. I think it is often as simple as flagging an idea or a strategy that just doesn't sit quite right and isn't doing anything positive to move us forward.

YAPP JONES: In response to CTA not having women on their stages at CES, Twitter hosted an event called #Here-WeAre. It was all women speakers at an event in our space. The response from the community was awesome and we continued to have those events throughout all of our events, at SXSW, Sundance and at Cannes. It's about making sure that women are represented. And it's something that we expect all of our partners to do, too.

TOLLES: We've had a Dell for Women Entrepreneurs Network for eight or nine years. And again, I think because we're so heavily women oriented in the marketing department, it's always been important to ask, how many women are on the stage? We really want to highlight the women who are doing big things in technology and innovation because they're out there and it's even more important today that we keep pushing for that and keep giving them a platform to share.

WHINNA COTTRELL: Autodesk has a strong commitment around diversity and inclusion. And this movement brings it up to the top and it's just something that everyone's talking about and it's just so beautiful to see everyone acknowledging

it. It's amazing to see such a culture shift happening in the world.

O'LOONEY: We've been fortunate in that for a long time most of our executive leadership has been women. The vp of events is a woman, the cmo is a woman, the evp of sales and marketing is a woman. And so, that voice has always been on stage at Cisco. We did start the Cisco Empowered Women's Network at Cisco Live about six or seven years ago, trying to grow our female audience base. It was about four percent of our total audience back in 2013. I think we've grown that to eight percent. We're really proud of that growth. But it's not enough.

We did make a conscious decision this year at Cisco Live to move away from "women only" activities. We moved to leadership and diversity this year, because it's not just women having a seat at the table. It's everyone who feels the need to have a seat at the table, whether that's based on your ethnicity, gender, whatever it may be.

KASTNER: Women talking to women is incredibly important. SAP has something called the Business Women's Network that's been in place for 11 years, where women inspire and mentor each other and there are meet-ups and all of these different activations. But I agree, it's broader than just us. It needs to be women and men talking about this together because if it's just women to women, we're not going to ever change the dialogue.

EM: Great point. A lot of well-meaning people and organizations are trying to help and empower women by having

them talk to other women. Where do men sit in all of this? How can we help them help you?

HAMMETT: It's a really important question and it can be difficult to figure out how to incorporate men into these conversations, but we need them as allies. There are so many men that want to support women in the workplace. I think we need to create our own safe space that allows us to open up and have important conversations among women without men in the room. And then we need to widen the conversation to include men so that they also understand the issues that women are facing and the role they can play in supporting those issues. I think both are essential in order to make changes.

YAPP JONES: You have to include everybody in the conversation. Twitter does have an ally group for men, but I think it's bringing them into the conversation and really going all-inclusive of diversity of every kind.

BROCHHAUSEN: I also think identifying some of the sub sects of women, like women of color, LGBTQ women, opens up the conversation to different challenges for different types of women, which might be really interesting to investigate. At the very least, just inviting men to participate as guests, as many of our bosses are men, with female-led and dominated teams, would perhaps give them a better sense of how to encourage us and support us.

WINDRAM: I'm working on ways to police language in appropriate ways, because in calibration sessions I sometimes hear, "Well, you know, she was abra-





sive.” I don’t want to say, “Oh, you wouldn’t say that about a man,” But I’d like to have appropriate ways to police language without shaming everyone.

MARINO: Some of this stuff can feel so exhausting day-to-day. Do I still have to be having this conversation? But we all have to be rabidly conscious and then also reflective in all the conversations that we have, whether or not we sound like a broken record, because otherwise, people can slip into their old ways of doing things.

I lead the talent management division at American Express, so I get a lot of inbound requests for who we should be working with as a third-party spokesperson or representing the brand. And I always say, please do not bring me a list of all white men—it’s not reflective of our cardmembers. Once you set the agenda, people respond to it and then they know what the expectation is and they don’t try to show up with anything else.

HAMMETT: I also think it’s important to give men the opportunity to hear personal stories or personal concerns from women that they work with. It is easy to generalize and easy to think, “the women at my company don’t feel that way” if you have never heard from anyone directly. If we can share some of our experiences with male colleagues that we trust, then the issues become a lot more tangible for them and they can hold themselves and other men more accountable for recognizing some of the things that are often so obvious to women.

EM: Gender dynamics aside, talk about

the biggest challenges for event marketers today—what else are you tackling in your day-to-day?

UTZ ILECKI: There is a need to do more to demonstrate the efficacy and value of experiential marketing to showcase ROI to executives. The onus is on all event marketers to showcase how our efforts impact and support the business goals using metrics and measurement tools. Investing the time to develop meaningful KPIs and metrics will go a long way in solidifying experiential marketing’s position as a critical part of the overall marketing mix.

Also, there is a need to be more strategic by evolving the scalability and sustainability of event activations. Large-scale experiential activations take months to plan but sometimes are only activated for a short amount of time. My team and I actively seek opportunities that are repeatable each year and in several markets, so consumers look forward to it. We had great success with this approach for our activations at Coachella and the W Wake Up Call Festivals.

ELIZABETH MALAFA KURMAN: It’s something that is a challenge for us every day as expectations continue to rise. Events aren’t always seen as impacting the bottom line so my team is always asking, how do we get this to live outside of these four walls or outside of this park? What are we doing to tap into our global network? How are we using this as an evergreen program, or building a playbook that we’re able to share out with our regions, that they’re then able to duplicate and share so it can live on?

KASTNER: And how do you tap into the other marketing disciplines, right? So, events are just one piece in the equation. So, how do you connect all the efforts versus working in silos and creating extra work, extra effort, all of those things that don’t necessarily have the same impact, unless they’re combined. That’s a challenge for sure, especially in large companies. How do you connect all those different dots?

WINDRAM: That’s something that I really try to hit home with my regional marketing teams, the field teams that bring our partnerships to life, or bring events to life: what story are we telling? And how could it fire on all cylinders across every channel? It is “do more with less,” but it’s also “tell one story with all of the tools that you have.” My team presents ideas all the time, and if it’s a one-off I say absolutely not. What is it a part of? And who else on the team are you talking to, to make sure it’s working with their roles?

UTZ ILECKI: For companies to experience growth year after year, it is critical that the entire organization marches towards the same objectives, and that starts at the top. Our ceo is a true believer in the power of marketing. As a result, our global marketing officer, Karin Timpone, has great influence in the areas where we invest, so that the company is well positioned for today, next year and the next decade.

I, too, find it is imperative to think in terms of holistic conversations rather than marketing channels. The old model of marketing siloes is not how consumers behave and as a result, disjointed marketing messages bombarded consumers with competing messages. Very ineffective. Within the last two years we have shredded the old model and fully integrated our teams in global marketing so that we are thinking along the entire customer journey, and we’re seeing results!

KENT: We have event strategies that ladder into our marketing strategies, but it’s all tied to that new [purpose-driven marketing] work we’ve done and it’s been a guiding light in everything. If what you want to do isn’t very clearly tied to that, we’re not doing it.

KASTNER: We’ve been going through this as we develop better strategy for our largest event, SAPPHIRE NOW, for 25,000

people, and asking, how do we connect all these different business units within the 96,000-person company? What we've started to say is, let's take a step back and start with the customer at the center of the experience. And if we start with the customer first and the company second, and then the line of business third, it will drive the right decisions. So far, that's working to help drive the right focus. Nobody can argue with "customer first."

MARINO: A lot of people in this room have global jobs so I think there's a natural tension between wanting to extend your global brand strategy look and feel and messaging into your event, but also balancing that with a nuanced approach in the market, especially when you're doing events and experiences that you want to make sure are highly relevant to the audience that you're trying to engage with. I see that as an ongoing challenge: how do you balance those two things and how do you train and educate your market partners to do it in the right way?

EM: What will event marketers be talking about in the coming year? What's top of mind going into 2019?

KASTNER: It's going to be about creating those personalized experiences—the diverse workforces, millennials, people staying in the workforce longer. What's personal to me might be different to you, so how do we create experiences at scale, but allow them to personalize it as well? And I think that's really exciting to think about how that's going to start to come to life. I don't think anyone's clearly got the answers yet, but I think we'll start to see that a little more in the coming years.

KENT: I think the convergence of technology and experience and how those two things are going to influence what we're doing in a live space, even a year from now or two years from now, will be profound.

CLARKE: The smartphone is nothing new at this point but the generation that's now entering the workforce is truly the first generation that's always had the internet in their pocket. So, we have to ask, how can we be "Phygital" in our approach? How can we merge the physical experience seamlessly with the digital side of experiential marketing? That's what the next generation is seeking—they don't see

the distinction between the physical and digital worlds.

UTZ ILECKI: There will be continued discussion in the industry to get on the same page about what, when and how we measure our successes. As technology has advanced, so has our ability to track important metrics, and we must continue pushing so that we can drive the business forward on a day-to-day basis.

MARINO: Something we talk about a lot at American Express that I think will absolutely be part of how we approach the next five to 10 years is the nature of consumers who are living hybrid lives, meaning personal mashed with business, and how that comes to life in an experiential setting. Part of our ethos when we plan and create our experiences is making sure that the customer is front and center, and that whatever we're creating is going to elevate their experience at a cultural heat moment and be additive to their lives. Understanding more about the mindset that they're in when they're in a place, and that it's not just purely personal or purely business, will be really important.

HARRISON: In luxury automotive, we're enjoying a time where vehicle portfolios and buyers are getting younger. These are the attendees of our current and future events. The Mercedes-Benz experiential team has also naturally gotten younger as we bring in staff, which matches well for first-hand knowledge of our future buyers, our products and a different point of view on how they want to be communicated and marketed to. As a result, we're doing more experiential marketing where the next generation lives, works and plays.

LOVAS: As experiential becomes more of a focus, everybody thinks they can get into that game. And while we can all build flashy, beautiful experiences that are going to succeed in attracting consumer attention, it's really going to take that next step of extending the experience once that consumer exits your footprint to be successful. Building teams, making sure that your team is strategic and is telling that story is beyond crucial. I've been to so many activations where there's the flash and the lure of free stuff and there's beautiful things to take pictures with, but I walk away not really taking anything lasting out of the experience. So it's about building a team that is not only extremely creative

and is going to do something that really stands out, but that also has your end goal front of mind as they are developing the experience from the very first moment, making sure that you're achieving that scale and making a lasting impact.

STARKEY: One of our strategic event filters is this idea of beyond the four walls. Whatever we create, whatever we develop has to live beyond the four walls. Our approach needs to extend beyond those attending the event. How can the experience we create, the content that we produce, the message that we deliver drive earned media? Drive social engagement? Are we creating talked about shareable moments? Whether it is a small event or a major launch event featuring the leaders of our company, this idea of going beyond the four walls is part of our strategic approach.

BROCHHAUSEN: And I think that plays into really trying to understand who your audience is. And really understanding what's going to drive them, and activating for that, and not just for photo moments or stuff for social media, but stuff that's really going to impact your listener or consumer or whomever.

HAMMETT: This is the one chance we get to invite people into our home. If our event was our house, this is how we furnish it, and these are the other friends that we invite over with our partners and our products. It's a way to get more intimate with them than you can on any other platform. And they really get that sense of who we are as a company and really create that connection with the brand that sticks with them.

O'LOONEY: It's also about driving business impact for your company. At the end of the day it's not just about creating fun photo-worthy moments, it's how we are moving the needle for business impact. We do a very, very specific measurement campaign before, during and after our events so that we can point and say, "Look, the industry average Net Promoter Score is X and ours was X after our show." Or, going to the emotional connection, X percent of people who attended our conference extremely liked or loved the convention and they love our brand, and it meant X, Y, Z dollars. It's not about the party and the fluff, it's about driving business impact. We are making deals happen. 🚀

WOMEN IN EVENTS WEEK

More than 1,000 women gather across 12 markets to connect, learn and inspire one another

FROM THE EAST COAST to the West Coast to the Midwest, Northwest and Southeast, the Women in Events program officially went nationwide this year, engaging nearly 1,000 women in 12 markets, Oct. 22-25. Women in Events Week offered Airbnb networking excursions, educational seminars, trend-watch workshops, networking meetups, supper clubs and much more.

Networking meetups took place in Detroit, Minneapolis, Seattle, Portland, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Dallas and Austin. Half-day workshops took place in Chicago and Atlanta, and full-day programs anchored the week in San Francisco and New York City.

Women in San Francisco kicked off their day with a “hidden stairways” hike, a tea tasting and making session and a photo-taking workshop. Women in New York City took part in power yoga, sneaker designing and a behind-the-scenes tour of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Each city featured candid power panels featuring this year’s Women in Events honorees (meet them all on pg. 50), as well as a trend-watch presentation by EM editors, a career-boosting talk by Wendy Sachs, author of “Fearless and Free,” and an explo-

ration of marketing to women—without exploitation—by Katie Martell, author of “Rabble Rousers: How Transformative Voices Change Apathy to Action.” After wrapping the day with a mixer and sponsor activations, hosted by presenting sponsor Sparks, women in each city moved on to supper clubs for a full night of conversations, networking and, of course, delicious dinners.

In Chicago and Atlanta, women came together for a half-day program with a drill-down of top trends and an intimate fireside chat with two leading brand-side marketers—Monique Harrison, head of brand experience marketing at Mercedes-Benz, in Atlanta, and Amie Milano, executive producer at World of Whirlpool, in Chicago. Each closed with wine and small bites, music and lively conversation.

There were many more moments and connections made that we couldn’t possibly capture in words, and so we bring you this photo tour of highlights and sound bites from Women in Events Week. We’re already gearing up for 2019. Until next year, ladies and gents... Cheers. 🍷



FULL-DAY WORKSHOP: SAN FRANCISCO

PRESENTING SPONSOR **sparks.**

“With what we do, we know a lot of time in our heads what we want it to be, but being able to communicate that not only outwardly to partners, but across functions in the company, and to other business partners, is important. I think there can never be enough communication in order for somebody to be successful.”

—Elizabeth Malafa Kurman, Director-Global Events, Under Armour

AUTHOR KATIE MARTELL



“On our team we’ve been trying to foster a culture of ‘Bring your life with you on the road,’ so to speak. Life and work are blurred in so many ways, and when we see family members on the road, on a trip, or at an event, that’s becoming commonplace and the culture we’re trying to build at TD.”

–Katrina Kent, Director-The Event Group, TD Ameritrade



SUPPER CLUB: NEW YORK CITY



BRAND PANEL: SAN FRANCISCO



NETWORKING MEETUP: L. A.



LINKEDIN PROFILE PHOTO ACTIVATION: NEW YORK CITY



NETWORKING MEETUP: AUSTIN



AUTHOR WENDY SACHS

MAKING THE LEAP

Three agency founders share their advice for starting and running a woman-owned shop

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING is an industry that has always skewed female. It's not unusual to find entire event departments that are staffed and run by women. Yet despite this unique gender bias across many brand organizations and agency teams, woman-owned agencies are still few and far between.

Indeed, while many of the 100 agencies on Event Marketer's annual It List are run by women, only five are certified woman-owned businesses.

One of those is Volition, where one-time stay-at-home-mom Treva Cooke translated her formidable PTA fundraising skills into a career in experiential that eventually led her to a spot on the It List. Her first project: a Final Four activation for CBS that eventually segued into a *Sports Illustrated* 50th Anniversary Tour. As a freelancer, Cooke found herself becoming more and more frustrated that she was locked into the "doing process," but not part of the planning process. She was also seeing cost inefficiencies she felt she could fix, so she pitched a client to take over their sponsorship program, won the business, and started the agency.

"I wanted to be able to control everything and I wanted to be able to look my client in the face when I sat down with them with a budget and say, 'This is what you can really expect for your money,'" Cooke says. "It was so liberating, because I knew I didn't have to have some sales guy go in there and pitch something and say, 'OK, now you produce it.' I wanted to get into this industry because I saw a gap between what clients are promised and what is delivered, and I wanted to change that."

Today, Volition counts the American Heart Association, Google, Palantir Technologies, Salesforce and Uber as clients.

Nine-time marathoner and one-time Iron Man competitor Tara Wilson started

her career as a financial advisor at Merrill Lynch, but a passion for owning her own business and a love of planning events led her into experiential. She knew that social events wouldn't scale in the way she wanted, so she shifted her focus to experiential marketing.

"I had built this great events company and we had this phenomenal skill set and reputation, but [focusing on experiential] allowed me to grow in scale and leverage my interest in metrics and marketing efforts, and the ability to work with major international brands," she says.

Tara Wilson Agency stepped out for the first time in 2015 with one employee and no clients. Today, the agency is a two-time Inc. 5,000 company, Nike, Samsung and ESPN are clients, and Wilson's alma mater, Auburn University, named her Entrepreneur of the Year in 2017.

Donna Graves always knew she wanted to be in marketing but she got bit by the experiential bug while working in Washington, D.C., on a charity tennis tournament. The project led her into a marketing role with Club Med where, at the age of 28, she became the youngest vice president and the first female American vice president in the company's history. While working at RPMC years later she met Kae Erickson, who would become her business partner, and the two started NCompass International in 2003 with Best Buy as their first client.

"I saw experiential was going to be the future," says Graves. "I realized that we had to change, we had to move with the times, we had to be ahead. And that has been a philosophy we've had here from the beginning. And I believe our clients always feel that. We're used to being the ones to break through new barriers and try new things before it becomes the norm."

Today, Graves counts Activision, Toyota and, yep, Best Buy as clients and credits



TREVA COOKE



DONNA GRAVES



TARA WILSON

her agency's "no asshole" rule for the agency's culture and success. She's optimistic that other women can—and will—create their own paths, too, given the opportunity.

"I think that we have made great strides," says Graves. "Women need to continue to be great role models, to show how it can be done appropriately, to groom and to mentor, and to give women an opportunity."

What else can entrepreneurial women in the industry learn from Cooke, Wilson and Graves? Here are 14 of their secrets to success.

EMBRACE YOUR FEARS

Starting your own business can be downright terrifying, but you have to lean into the fear. Graves and partner Erickson lived by the saying, "Jump and the net will appear" when they started NCompass. "If you say it out loud enough you start to believe it," says Graves. "You can't succeed unless you open your eyes to the failures and the fears."

BRAND YOURSELF

The bar is high when you're marketing to marketers, so don't skimp on the branding or the marketing materials. "For me, it's highly important that every interaction a prospective client has with our brand feels like an experience," says Wilson. "Our team has worked really hard to come up with great marketing materials. If you receive something in the mail from us, it feels like an experience to open it and engage with it." Case in point: Wilson's business cards are embedded with a hidden chip that opens a secret website for prospective clients.

TRUST YOUR VOICE

Many women struggle with making themselves heard and don't realize it's their own insecurities preventing them from finding their voice. Trust you have something important to say, and say it. "Many times, I was the only woman in the room, and I think that I had to force myself to speak up," says Cooke. "It wasn't because everyone in the room was trying to intimidate me, it was because I was intimidating myself."

KNOW YOUR STUFF

There's just no substitute for knowing your stuff, especially for agency owners. "You have to know what you're talking about

and you have to understand that people are putting their livelihood and their careers in your hands," says Graves. "So, you'd better be ready, prepared, and really understand the subject matter so you can give advice that you feel confident about when you're saying it, and when you're executing it."

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Many woman-owned agencies are built on partnerships that enable one partner to focus on business while the other focuses on creative. Those going it alone find the most success when they stay in their lane. "I brought in talent to focus on the creative, because I know I'm good at focusing on sales," says Wilson.

LOVE YOUR CLIENTS

Long-term client relationships are the key to any agency success story, and woman-owned agencies are no different. Developing the right client base, and knowing when to pass on a project or walk away from a client relationship, is key. "The chemistry has to be the same," says Graves. "You have to like each other and trust each other. And sometimes not every client is right for every agency. If it doesn't feel right, don't pursue it—on both sides."

DELEGATE OFTEN

This can be a tough one for women, but ladies—get over yourself. Ask for help and delegate responsibilities to your team. "It could be about control or it could be about this need to maybe seed your ego, the 'Hey, I can take it all and I can handle it all,'" says Wilson. "But it's a tricky path. I've been an entrepreneur for a long time now, and I've learned to let go of that. If you're the smartest person in the room, then you're in the wrong room. I am not capable of doing everything and all things."

USE YOUR PARENTING SKILLS

Yep, you read that right. Women with kids have an advantage when it comes to running a business. Raising kids is, after all, like running a three-ring circus—on no sleep. "Being a mother empowered me," says Cooke. "Having to deal with other personalities all the time, having to put your own needs in the back and other people's needs forward. Women should not look at [moth-

erhood] as a detriment to their success—you learn a lot being a mom about great time management, detail skills and you also gain a different perspective."

BE KIND

It's a simple concept that can get lost in the chaos of a live activation. It can also be misinterpreted as weakness among many female business owners when, really, it's a competitive advantage. "You have to be strong, yet set a tone," says Graves. "There's a way of being extremely effective, but also remaining calm and respectful and kind."

DON'T LEAD WITH THE WOMAN CARD

Woman entrepreneurs often stand out just by being the only woman in the room. Sometimes it's best to leave your chromosomal differences out of the conversation. "I don't lead with, 'I'm a woman entrepreneur,'" says Wilson. "I see myself as an entrepreneur who happens to be a woman."

LEVERAGE YOUR NURTURING SIDE

Many women in events force themselves to suppress their nurturing instincts because they think they're not valuable in a business context. Successful woman-owned agencies have found the exact opposite to be true. "Naturally, women can be nurturing, and I think that is valuable in developing client relationships," says Wilson.

BE A GOOD LISTENER

Another skill women tend to be good at? Listening. And not listening to talk—really listening. "People want to be heard and clients want to be understood. And they want to feel like you are their partner and you're hearing them, and I think women do that so well," says Wilson.

FAIL FAST AND MOVE ON

As agency owners, you'll win some and you'll lose some. Successful woman-led agencies don't dwell on it. "You're not going to get anywhere by doing what everybody else is doing. So, really, embrace your fears and rejections, and turn those into drive," says Graves. "Take the criticisms as an opportunity to learn. Don't get bitter, just get better." —Jessica Heasley

CALM, COOL AND CONFIDENT

Inspiration and advice from our second annual
Women in Events Agency Roundtable

Ask anyone who has been in this business for a few years and they will tell you: experiential marketing isn't for the meek, the weak or those with an aversion to the occasional all-nighter. Indeed, this industry serves up challenges, stress and the thrills of an event well executed in equal measure, regardless of your age, sex, race or background.

What this industry *doesn't* always do, however, is effectively rid itself of the systemic challenges that still affect many women in business. Whether it's the client who brings his "old boy network" culture to the pitch meeting or the well-meaning but clueless colleague who discounts your ideas (or worse, takes credit for them), women—especially those in the agency

community—still have some glass ceilings to break through.

In this, our second annual Women in Events agency roundtable, we assembled seven of the industry's top female agency executives to find out what skills and talents women need to have, or acquire, in order to thrive in the industry. From getting noticed to getting heard to getting the promotion and more, the women shared their best tips, anecdotes and personal stories of what they've learned on their way to the highest reaches of their agencies. What follows are some of the candid insights collected from our luncheon event, co-produced with leading staffing partner The Hype Agency, and moderated by Content Director Jessica Heasley.

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This year's Women in Events, representing the agency community

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Highlights and excerpts from our conversation

CO-PRODUCED WITH

Hype!

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CO-HOSTS:

Dayna Gilchrist, *Founder & CEO*, Hype!

Stephanie Walfield, *Director of Marketing*, Hype!

CHRISTINE SHOAF



*EVP/Global Account Director
Momentum Worldwide*

BEST TIPS FOR STRIKING A WORK-LIFE BALANCE: Honestly, I stopped trying, and by doing that, I found a way to create an “integrated” life and be happy with both parts of it.

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD NEVER DO: Use tentative language. Don’t start sentences with “just” or “maybe,” or end with “you know what I mean?” We have to remind ourselves that we don’t need to minimize what we think.

MOST LISTENED-TO SONG ON THE PLAYLIST: My answer until I went to Coachella would have been the whole “Hamilton” soundtrack. But coming off of Beyoncé’s absolutely amazing performance, I have returned pretty deeply to “Formation.”

THE BOOK OR TED TALK THAT’S MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND WORK: A TED Talk by Ken Robinson called, “Do schools kill creativity?” It’s about how our school system in the U.S was designed

largely in the industrial age and as a result, we have taught ourselves out of creativity. We work in a creative industry and it’s enormously important to nurture your creativity in a very real way as opposed to wondering whether or not it’s really a skill. It definitely is.

THE QUALITY YOU ADMIRE MOST IN A LEADER: The ability to think on your feet. We work in a live environment and that ability to process information and to respond quickly and appropriately, and to problem-solve—I’m always amazed when I watch people do it. Unlike advertising, you can’t fix events in post.

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE: “If each of us hires people who are smaller than we are, we shall become a company of dwarfs. But if each of us hires people who are bigger than we are, we shall become a company of giants.” —David Ogilvy

GUILTIEST PLEASURE: “The Royals” on E! It’s so terrible. And so amazing.

ADRIENNE STRANGE



*Account Director
GSD&M*

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD NEVER DO: Let the word “no” keep you down. There’s always going to be challenges and hurdles that get in the way, but at the end of the day there are going to be alternate solutions. Keep working on something if you feel strongly about it and try to go about it through a different avenue.

CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT PROFESSIONAL TOOL: I have Google alerts set up for nearly every single sponsorship that my clients are involved in. It helps me keep tabs on the conversations that are happening.

MOST LISTENED-TO SONG ON THE PLAYLIST: My all-time favorite artist is Tom Petty. I love all of his songs, especially “I Won’t Back Down.”

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE: “Sometimes it’s better to be kind than to be right. We do not need an intelligent mind that speaks, but a patient heart that listens.” —Gautama Buddha

BEST CAREER ADVICE, GIVEN OR RECEIVED: Never over promise and under deliver. In account services, we always want to be able to say yes to the client right away or always have the answer. But it’s important to take a step back and think, OK, is this really something that we need to agree to? I think it’s important to manage their expectations. And usually at the end of it you’re able to over deliver.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN IN BUSINESS TODAY: Equal pay for equal work. It’s a little bit better, but we still have a long road ahead.

BEST WAY TO BOOST CONFIDENCE BEFORE A MEETING OR PRESENTATION: Knowing your shit. Take the time to know your material and be passionate about what it is that you’re presenting and confidence will just come naturally.

GUILTIEST PLEASURE: Macaroni and cheese. I have a really hard time turning it down—all forms, all cheeses.

ANDREA MITCHELL



VP-Production
Fusion Marketing

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD NEVER DO:

Get ourselves caught up in the fact that we're women and we're in events. Just focus on the job at hand and on what we can do to be successful as a person in business.

THE BOOK OR TED TALK THAT'S MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND WORK:

A book called "Quiet" by Susan Cain about the power of introverts in the world. It changed the way I think about myself and my co-workers and the teams I manage. The key takeaway was that you don't have to be the loudest person in the room as long as the one thing you say is impactful.

THE QUALITY YOU ADMIRE MOST IN A LEADER:

Openness. I find that when leaders give you access it allows you to get more involved and take a bigger stake in the company.

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE:

"Don't be afraid to fail. Be afraid not to try."

BEST CAREER ADVICE, GIVEN OR RECEIVED:

Something I received: "Don't be afraid to be the expert." Be confident in the experiences that have gotten you to where you are and share them with others.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN IN BUSINESS TODAY:

I look forward to the day when we don't have to focus on the question of gender neutrality and can just focus on business challenges overall. But one challenge has to do with working mothers. There's still a perception that mothers need to be the one to manage their children's schedule, activities, appointments and all of that. However, men have been leading large corporations for generations. They're completely qualified to take on the same task for their children that women do.

BEST WAY TO BOOST CONFIDENCE BEFORE A MEETING OR PRESENTATION:

Be prepared. If you're prepared, the confidence just comes out of you. You'll be ready for every question that's coming your way.

CHIARA ADIN



Cofounder
NA Collective

BEST TIPS FOR STRIKING A WORK-LIFE BALANCE:

I use running and athletics. It's my time to clear my head, my version of meditation. And running marathons teaches you to be disciplined and organized.

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD NEVER DO:

Stay silent. Never be afraid to speak up and share your idea.

THE BOOK OR TED TALK THAT'S MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND WORK:

A TED Talk called "Comfortable" about not staying in your comfort zone. It's a really good reminder that when you're too comfortable there's no forward motion.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD IT BE:

The RFP process. It just feels antiquated. Triple bidding on every single project even when you work with the client for multiple years is something that I would like to see approached in a different way.

GREATEST PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT:

I built a skate park on a barge for Nike earlier in my career. I had five weeks to pull it off and I can't tell you how many people said there's no way. I wanted to put one more coat of paint on the top of the barge, but budgets were tight, so I decided I would paint it myself on the ride from New Jersey to Manhattan. I rode a 265-foot-long barge down the Hudson River by myself, painted it and pulled into the dock where all of the people who told me that it was absolutely impossible were all standing there waiting. It was a magical moment.

THE QUALITY YOU ADMIRE MOST IN A LEADER:

I look up to people who have a clear vision and the ability to outline a clear path forward for their team.

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE:

My mom has told me from the very beginning: "If you do what's best for you it will be what's best for everybody."

WYNNE HAMERMAN



Senior Manager-Client Services
Wasserman

BEST TIPS FOR STRIKING A WORK-LIFE BALANCE: Make plans and commit to them. Treat your personal life like you would another meeting and don't reschedule it. The work will get done, and if you aren't prioritizing yourself then you're just not going to perform your best.

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD LEARN TO DO: Listen. If you are coming in with your own opinions and not hearing everyone else's on-site, you're never going to get the job done.

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT PROFESSIONAL TOOL: Slack. I love it so much. It connects me with my team across the country. It helps me keep multiple clients in channels for each project organized and you can pin documents as well so you don't have to dig through emails to find what you need. It also cuts back on emails which is amazing.

THE BOOK OR TED TALK THAT'S MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND WORK: There are so many! One of my favorites is "We

Should All Be Feminists" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She did a podcast and then she did a TED Talk and wrote a book. It's a short read and it's amazing.

THE QUALITY YOU ADMIRE MOST IN A LEADER: Honesty, transparency, humility. A leader who isn't going to B.S. you but will roll up their sleeves, take ownership for their team and also make you feel valued.

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE: "Never get so busy making a living that you forget to make a life."

BEST CAREER ADVICE, GIVEN OR RECEIVED: Don't compare yourself to others. Work hard and keep your head down and get the work done, but at the same time know when to speak up and fight for what you deserve.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN IN BUSINESS TODAY: Balancing advocating for women's rights while also not being pegged as playing the woman card.

JESSICA REZNICK



President
We're Magnetic

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD NEVER DO: Assume that they don't have an influence or that they don't have a voice. Events and experiential marketing have been dominated by women for much longer than other parts of the marketing mix, so every woman in this industry should feel a sense of confidence that we really can make a difference.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD IT BE: Stop trying to force experiential marketing into the box of traditional marketing. If you look at how budgeting and bidding is done between agency and partner, everything seems to default back into these more traditional roles that were created around producing commercials and ads. There's probably a better way of looking at how to select partners that works better for experiential.

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE: "Great things never come from comfort zones." It's a really good one to remember especially when

the work we're trying to do at times has to literally defy physics.

BEST CAREER ADVICE, GIVEN OR RECEIVED: "Trust in the leadership that you respect the most." I worked with Alex Bogusky when I was at CP+B and he would ask for the sky even when it didn't seem feasible. I realized that he was pushing us to make us stronger.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN IN BUSINESS TODAY: Balancing our need to continually fight and discuss equality in terms of representation without coming across as non-inclusive or alienating our male counterparts.

GUILTIEST PLEASURE: Chocolate chip cookies. At any time of the day, any type.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE: WOMEN IN EVENTS ARE: *The majority.* So let's make sure we do something positive with our influence and set a great example for other industries out there.

SARAH PRIESTMAN



President
Sense NY

ONE THING EVERY FEMALE EVENT MARKETER SHOULD NEVER DO:

Don't lose your cool. If you lose your cool, you lose control—in any situation.

THE BOOK OR TED TALK THAT'S MADE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND WORK:

The most inspiring and helpful talks that I've seen over the past year have come from women who have spoken at events I've been to. Seeing Helen Stoddard from Twitter on the EMS stage last year was my first one. She was so charming and entertaining—funny, warm, human.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT THE INDUSTRY, WHAT WOULD IT BE:

In an ideal world, less focus on procurement and more focus on creativity. Sometimes procurement inevitably creeps in during the pitch process and stifles the magic a little bit.

GREATEST PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENT:

This past year leaving my Sense London role after 13 years there and getting the opportunity to setup Sense NY on my own with a small team. It's just been such a big,

exciting and very rewarding challenge.

FAVORITE MOTTO OR MOTIVATIONAL QUOTE: "Anything is possible, as long as you've got enough nerve." —JK Rowling

BEST CAREER ADVICE, GIVEN OR RECEIVED:

"You can do anything," from Paul Leonard, my dad, circa 1987. I think he was expecting a football team and he ended up with three daughters. Some men at that time might have been disappointed but he totally embraced it and made us feel like we could do anything.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE FACING WOMEN IN BUSINESS TODAY:

On the contrary, I feel like there has never been a better time for women. We've found our voice, we've stuck together, we've got momentum. Things should only get better from here.

GUILTIEST PLEASURE: White wine is up there. Ideally mixed with friends and dancing around the lounge to a cracking Spotify soundtrack. My worst trait is not letting anyone else dj.

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CANDID CONVERSATIONS

Leading women from the agency community talk confidence, career advancement and must-have skills



EM: What skills and talents should female event marketers have today if they want to advance their careers in this industry?

CHIARA ADIN: Everybody that I've hired that has been really successful and does a great job at the agency is a hybrid. They have multiple skill sets and aren't experts in just one thing. They also come from a variety of different backgrounds. Maybe they didn't start off just producing events, they were doing something else, but that skill set led them to events. We have one woman who was a high school photographer, but she can manage groups of children, and people, and herd everybody like nobody you've ever seen before. She uses that skill to apply to other things.

ANDREA MITCHELL: Somebody who wants to take the glory isn't going to be as successful running an event. So, I want to look for women who can work as part of a team. You deal with so many different groups within your own company—creative, account, finance—and you're dealing with vendors, and fabricators, and then the client, and all of their needs. You have to be able to work across the board as a team. So, I'm always looking for somebody who has some sort of team, club, or sports background to show they can be collaborative within their experiences.

JESSICA REZNICK: It's such a vulnerable business that we're in, you're making mistakes in front of your clients, you're making mistakes in front of your competitors, and I think finding people that are not only prepared for it, but that can handle it emotionally, and understand how to make the mistake and how to recover from it, and keep going in that moment is really, really important, because it takes a certain person to do what we do. There is a pace and there is a passion that I think you have to find in people.

DAYNA GILCHRIST: I'm always looking for somebody that has that Type-A personality; they can plan, they are task-oriented, they're very detail-oriented, but they also can prepare for the unknown. In the events world, there is always the opportunity for something to go wrong, so being able to prioritize and understand what's needed for events, and putting all those pieces together—I think women are very good at that, because we're constantly prioritizing and putting things in place.

ADRIENNE STRANGE: You are on the front lines, there's no hiding from it. So you have to put on a brave face. You have to be confident. You have to be resourceful, and figure something out, without everyone else knowing that you may be panicking on the inside.

CA: You also have to be nice, as silly as that sounds. If you are nice to all of the people working with you—your venue, your caterers, whoever—and something goes wrong, you can turn to them [for help]. Something is going to go wrong, or your client is going to ask for something that you know is probably not feasible and totally out of your budget, but if you are nice to your suppliers and vendors, then you may have a better chance of calling in a favor. When your team can replicate that, and just be people that people want to work with, you get a lot more help. You get more bees with honey.

AM: And lead by example. I always joke with my team, but I'm actually completely serious: everybody's taking out the trash, right? I'm on-site, I'm emptying trashcans, no matter what level I'm at. And frankly, I expect everybody to be that way. You need to be hyper-aware of all types of details big or small. And that's



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where you can see those shining stars that are willing to keep their head up in a situation, look around, and see what changes need to be made, and just take the initiative to do it.

CHRISTINE SHOAF: I also look for an interest in pop culture. So much of what we do is about creating things that are of interest in the moment, and you need people who are actually paying attention, and appreciate whatever the “of the moment” thing is, because otherwise, what we create isn't relevant enough.

DG: Women in events should also be self-motivated, willing to come to the table and give you their ideas, and be confident enough in what they're doing. Because at the end of the day, you are relying on them for a lot of the work that you can't do. So we are looking for them

to not just say, “I'll do it, no problem.” We want them to say, “Yes, I'll take care of it, but I think it would be awesome if we added this.” We need people to be giving us that feedback from every level from the business.

SARAH PRIESTMAN: I really try hard to listen to everyone at all levels of the team, and make sure I include them as much as possible in the early stages, during the first draft creative ideas, because—depending on the brand and audience in question—some of those people will have better initial judgments than I do. We recently had a pitch where there were 75 people in the room for a cross-agency briefing, and the idea the client ultimately picked was from one of our account handlers who was on a six-month stint with us and came to the table

with a pretty brave concept. Half of the people involved in the process were like, “They’ll never go with that.” But they did. I’m glad we listened.

WYNNE HAMERMAN: I also think personality in general is such a big thing, because everyone spends so much time at work. You are on nights and weekends and you’re living with these people, essentially, so it’s great if they are hard-working and smart, but also likeable. That’s something I always look for; would I talk to this person outside the office, or would I be annoyed if I sat next to them on the airplane for eight hours? I think it’s such a big thing, especially in events.

EM: Let me flip this script and talk about the skills and talents that you have developed to manage up. For the female event marketer who’s looking to advance her career, what have you learned along the way?

JR: I started in more traditional advertising agencies, so it was very male-dominated. I think at that time, one of the skills that I had to learn as my career kept going was using different communication styles for different people. I have a very different way that I communicate when I’m in a room with male counterparts than if I’m speaking to junior people that report up to me. I have to actually physically change my tone, and my voice, and my word selection. Because you’re trying to cut through and make sure people hear you, and I think there are different styles.

Over time, I’ve sort of mastered the many languages of working with men working with senior men in power, working with men that are equals, working

with people you manage, working with women, and a large group of women, because that can sometimes be its own communication challenge.

And then I’d say, hard work. I know it sounds silly, but I think the through line, at least for my career is, I don’t think anyone ever doubted that when I was on a project, or any deliverable, that I wasn’t going to put 150 percent into it. There was just a level of trust there that I was willing to do it and to be there, whatever it took, and that I was reliable.

WH: I also think you have to set boundaries. My last company was very male-dominated, and the head of my group once emailed me and asked, “Can you print this label for me?” I wrote back, “Absolutely, let me know if you want me to show you how to use our FedEx account.” So, you have to set yourself up for a [level of] respect. I know what my strengths are, and where I’m best utilized, and this is not where I’m best utilized.

AM: I’ve noticed that in a lot of meetings, when there are women in the room, they complement each other, and bring the idea to a bigger picture, whereas men independently state their ideas and don’t look for input from others. So, I think one of the observations and challenges that I’ve had as I’ve moved up in the industry is how to bring my voice into that room, and make myself be heard. Men tend to have a different style of communication, which can be dominating if you let it. The challenge is learning how to interject into the conversation so that your idea is considered and valued.

CS: And learning to actually acknowledge and take credit when it genuinely

was your idea.

CA: The most important thing that I’ve learned is to manage up, and to always make sure people knew what I was doing, when I was doing it, and that I was working my butt off. In every review I’ve ever given to an employee, I say the same thing. I don’t care if you work your butt off, if you work weekends, and you work until 2:00 in the morning—if nobody knows you did it, it doesn’t matter (and more importantly they can’t help you with your workload). You’re just going to get bitter about it later, and it’s not going to do anybody any good.

Once you get to the point where you feel more confident, you’ve spoken up and managed up and they’ve heard you, you’re now either leading meetings or more senior in your role. Once you reach this point your job is to make sure that you help the younger ones, and help make sure that they’re managing up. It’s now your job to mediate conversations, and get your point across while you’re mediating, because you’re setting the tone for your role in that meeting and expecting others to speak up.

SP: I would encourage people to be brave and say what they think. I remember going into some of my earliest meetings with male bosses, knowing they couldn’t care less that I was there, but being brave enough to say something I thought was interesting, different or challenging when every part of the conversation was going one way, and my instincts were burning and I was feeling like that’s not the right thing to do. This wasn’t always easy and sometimes I was ignored, but other times it changed the



direction of the work for the better. I remember the chairman of our agency in London once got up and was like, “I really applaud your bravery for saying that.” He remembered me after that. It was one moment in one meeting, but that was all it took.

CA: I get really frustrated if I say something in a meeting and everybody writes it down without question. I think, “Don’t walk away and just do exactly what I said. I don’t want you to just listen to me. You’ve all been hired for a reason.” I don’t care that I started a company—I’m not always right and I certainly don’t know everything. I’m sure I’m wrong a lot. You have to have your own thoughts and opinions. I want you to question me, question the approach or the idea. I am not a dictator and the best work doesn’t come from dictatorial style leadership. I want you to think about it and either say, “I think that’s a great idea,” or “I don’t think that’s a good idea, maybe we should do it another way.” Once everybody starts to brainstorm, it can only get better, ideas get stronger. If you just listen to everything I say we’re in trouble.

EM: Can you weigh in on some practical confidence boosters?

AS: You have to know your shit. You can’t fake it. You have to know exactly what it is that you’re presenting on. Be a subject matter expert of whatever it is that you’re expected to be a SME on. You have to know what you’re talking about, and the confidence will follow. Even if you are an incredibly shy person and it doesn’t come naturally. If you feel confident in what you’re talking about, that’s going to show.

WH: And don’t worry how you come off. There will always be someone who’s going to think you’re “difficult,” and that’s just how it is. There’s also somebody who’s going to respect what you’re saying. But if you believe what you say, you should never apologize for what you believe in.

CA: I think it is a very good skill to be able to say, “I don’t know,” but to not say it in an apologetic manner. To say it more like, “I don’t know but I’ll get back to you.” You don’t have to have the answer to everything. I notice a lot of people will

spin themselves out of control by trying to respond without knowing the answer.

SP: Don’t be intimidated by people. We’re all just people, you know? Yes, the client’s in the room, they might seem scary because they work for a really big brand and it is a really big budget. But don’t be intimidated by them, they’re just people. I think when you get past that, and you can have a normal conversations with people, they’re just as relieved to have a normal conversation with you. I genuinely believe that a client in this day and age who still enjoys making me feel uncomfortable is not who I’m supposed to be working for.

CS: Defending your decisions is a big part of confidence. As long as you can explain to me why you made that decision, and there’s consideration, and thought, and logic in it, even if I don’t agree, you can at least defend why you got there.

JR: I’ve created a “do-over” policy at our company and I think it’s probably best illustrated by asking for raises, which I find that women tend to be not as great at. I’ve had a couple instances where people will ask for a raise because they got a new apartment, and it’s more expensive, or they want a promotion because their friend got a promotion. I’ll literally say

to them, “You know, here’s the thing. There is a right way to have this kind of conversation. I want you to go back and think about it, and let’s talk about your value, and let’s talk about the work you’ve done, let’s talk about all the things that you can do. Put this meeting on the books with me again in a couple of days, and let’s redo it, and let’s start all over.” And they come back in, and they have the conversation, and they can get the result they want.

I’ve also walked into meetings and I can tell they’re not ready, they don’t know their shit at all. And I’ll just say, “You know what? I feel like you guys aren’t ready for me in this meeting. I’m going to leave, and why don’t you guys work together and you let me know when it’s ready?” I think just giving them the permission to make mistakes and come back from it builds confidence.

CA: You can’t just check the boxes because you want to get to that next stage. You’ve got to wait, you got to feel like you’ve done all of your research, you’ve got to feel confident, you have to know what you’re talking about. You can’t just skip the step because you want the title or you want the money.

AS: People on the outside are sometimes a good judge of that. So, if I look





around at my creative team or my production team and they are confident with somebody that I'm managing, or if the client is so confident that they can call someone on my team with pretty specific questions that are a little bit above their pay grade, but they still have the confidence to be able to answer, that's when I know they're ready.

EM: Are you feeling like it's a different space for women in experiential than it was five, 10 years ago? Are there more opportunities and more upward mobility, or are there still challenges?

CA: When I first started working, all of my managers were females, and they were all total badasses. There were two male bosses over them and those male bosses could not function without them. So, the guys always needed the girls, and the girls needed the guys, and it was always this good balance. I've never gone into events thinking that, as a woman, I couldn't do what anybody else could do, or that I needed a man, or I struggled because I worked under a man. They were always very respectful. But I know that my experience is not the norm for a lot of people.

DG: Five years ago, or even when I started 12 years ago, there was always that "boy's club" that existed, that I competed with. I used to feel like I'm not going to be able to win some business because they go out for cigars and they have drinks together. And maybe that was the reason, or maybe it was because he was

better than me. But now I feel like if a guy is presenting and I'm presenting, they're looking at what my services and my capabilities are. They're not looking at me as a female, and my competitor as a male.

WH: Our company has a lot of women who are in charge so I believe it does come from the top down. But there are still those moments when I'm working an event and someone will say something a little bit sexist where I'm like, "Whoa, I just went back 30 years." But I think it's good in a way that they are sort of jarring, versus the norm. I don't feel that happens in my day-to-day. It's more like, "I can't believe they just said that." The men on my team and my company definitely support me when I'm pushing back on an experience like that.

AM: I'm the only Midwestern person in the room here, and I truly believe the culture in the Midwest, as opposed to the East Coast, is different for women. Many women that I have worked with over the years, who have moved up in their careers, ultimately opted out at a certain level, because they made the choice between a family and a career. And so it seems to be a lot more male-heavy in the Midwest.

On the flip side, choosing to move forward with my career and what I want to do, I have had a lot of great support from the males in the agencies I've worked for. It's almost like they're interested in having a woman's perspective, because there are fewer women at my level. I don't think there has been a lot of

discrimination that I've had to face, it's been more of me proving what I can do and making a point to accomplish my goals at both work and home.

JR: The opportunity really for us at the table, and for anybody else that we know in this industry, is that it is historically women-led. If you look at traditional agencies, if you look at digital agencies, there's a lot more male-dominant leadership that still needs to change. And I think because events and experiential are being taken more seriously across the overall marketing mix, a lot of women have been very quickly pushed up into very visible positions, which is great.

I think there's a real opportunity for all of us to show the rest of the marketing industry what it looks like when women lead companies, and departments, and find balance, and make teams, and give confidence. I think it's a really, really big chance for this industry to lead the conversation and say we've been women-driven for a really long time, and this is how it's being very fruitful.

WH: And it's just such a good time in general. Last week was Equal Pay Day. You have Time's Up, the Women's March, #MeToo. It's so relevant right now, diversity and inclusion in general. I think we're going to look back on this time in 20 years and realize we were in the middle of a massive shift.

SP: Hopefully the nice thing for people who are coming up in the industry is that there are so many more of us now who are doing this with kids. With other things going on in our lives. Thankfully, it's more common and acceptable now to say, "Actually, I feel fine about going and having kids for a year and coming back."

AM: I think that male perception is changing a lot, too. I have men on my team that are now in their early 30s, they're having kids, and they're coming to me interested in figuring out a balance. They're getting more involved in their kids' lives and I think it's great and fantastic for all families. I would only want to encourage that behavior within their environment as well, because it creates better quality event executions as well as work-life balance, happier employees, and in the long run, more dedicated employees. 🍷