



# No Holds Barred

Five years after our first special report, we check in to find out what it takes to be a leading lady in the world of event marketing

*Introduction by Jessica Heasley*

*Profiles and Roundtable by Sandra O'Loughlin*

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Women have graced the cover of Event Marketer magazine 16 times over the past five years. This is exactly the same number of times we have featured the leading men of the industry during the same time period. You might think that we take great pains to make sure that there is gender equality when it comes to the covers of our magazine. But in all honesty, we don't. It just so happens that, in the world of live events, if you follow the dotted line from a highly successful program to the brilliant mind that's running it—about half the time that brilliant mind belongs to a woman.

This unintentional approach to parity between the sexes makes us think we might be on to something. Five years ago, we published our first-ever special report on Women in Event Marketing. And when we polled the women in the industry, 66 percent reported that they knew of men doing the same job for more money, 32 percent thought the glass ceiling still existed and 41 percent said they were not getting paid what they're worth. In most ways, the event industry at the time paralleled the national workplace, gender gaps and all.

Flash forward to 2013 and we're hearing a slightly different story. Women in events seem to be focused a lot less on wage gaps, inequality and glass ceilings and more focused on the work. There is a growing rejection of stereotypes and a greater embrace of the idea that it's not about male versus female, but about elevating the craft of event marketing within an organization for the betterment of men and women alike. Women in events today are not only reporting less concern about their gender holding them back, they're celebrating their inherent skills that make them good at the job, demanding and enjoying more flexibility and reporting greater satisfaction at work while they're doing it.

Which makes us wonder—is it possible that gender inequality in event marketing is becoming a bit of a non-issue? Is the industry blazing a trail and accomplishing in some ways what the larger Amer-

ican workplace cannot? We don't know if we're even-steven in our coverage of the sexes because the event marketing industry is nearly evenly split between men and women (women make up roughly 65 percent of the industry's workforce). Or, if over the past five years women have taken on more notable positions of leadership in their organizations (women appeared on the cover of Event Marketer 12 times compared to 19 times for men prior to 2008). But we do know this: being a woman in the event industry is a wild ride filled with the highest professional highs and some of the most difficult work-life balance challenges in corporate America. And despite this reality, few are letting their gender define their ability to get the jobs and accolades they deserve.

This month, we offer an in-depth special report—sponsored by leading global event marketing agency Sparks—filled with fresh data, tips and insights from some of the top women in the industry. First up, a state of the union in numbers—a roundup of stats and facts every working woman should know. Then, an in-depth conversation with 12 women leading some of the industry's most influential brands and programs. Finally, a Women in Events Book Club—all the business and life strategy books you need to read to give your mind and career a jump start. Ladies (and the men who support you) ... this one is for you. —J.H.

# Just the Facts, Ma'am

We've come a long way, baby. Or have we? Stats, facts and industry-exclusive data every woman in events should know

## THE WAGE GAP



In **2008**, women made **77 cents** for every dollar a man made.

In **2013**, women make **77 cents** for every dollar a man makes.

Over a career lifetime, this disparity adds up to **\$500,000** in lost wages.

Source: U.S. Census

## Fact!

**June 10, 2013** marked the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, a 1963 law designed to eliminate the wage gap. Way to go, corporate America!

# 40%

The number of women who are the breadwinners in their households, **up 11% from 50 years ago.**

The number of women that report being happy about making their household's money has gone **up 12 percent** over the past five years



Total family income is **higher when the mother is the breadwinner** and not the father

Source: Pew Research Center

## WORK-LIFE BALANCE



# '1.3%

Percentage of American mothers in the workforce

Source: Better Life Index from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The United States ranks **25th out of 34 countries** when it comes to work-life balance.



The United States joins Swaziland, Lesotho and Papua New Guinea as the **only countries in the world that do not mandate paid maternity leave.**

## WOMEN IN EVENTS

**2008: 61%** of women in event marketing polled said **balancing family and children demands with work was the biggest challenge** they faced in their job.

**2013: 66%** of women in event marketing polled say they are able to achieve a **good work-life balance** while working in the event industry

Sources: Event Marketer 2008; Sparks Women in Events Event Career Satisfaction Study, 2013

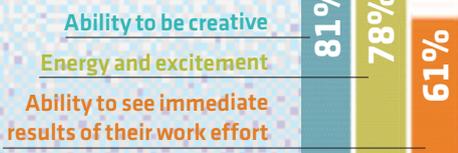
## Fewer than 10

Number of experiential agencies in **Event Marketer's Top 100 Event Agencies 'It List'** that are woman-owned.

- **72%** of women in events say that **flextime** is a **very important** benefit-related aspect of their job
- **24%** of women in events report having a specific **work-life balance policy** at work
- **51%** of women in events **have children**
- **51%** of women **miss out on quality time** with friends and family due to pressure from work

Source: Sparks Women in Events Event Career Satisfaction Study, 2013

What do women in events like best about the event industry?



What do women in events like least about the event industry?



The areas the respondents are collectively **most dissatisfied with** are **workloads** and the **availability of job training and education.**

Source: Sparks Women in Events Event Career Satisfaction Study, 2013



# Meet the Panel



**NAME:** Marissa Barlin  
**TITLE:** Codirector-Strategic Alliances Team  
**COMPANY:** Cotton Incorporated  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Under the consumer marketing division, Barlin handles everything from

partnership outreach in the retail and fashion community to partnerships with organizations outside of the fashion industry such as movie studios, college campuses and experiential agencies.

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Laptop, fashion/entertainment magazines, earphones, water

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** iPhone

**FAVORITE APP:** Twitter

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** Outlook calendar

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids

**BEST ADVICE:** My father gave me this advice once I stepped into the business world, "Always act with respect, but command it, too."



**NAME:** Gilda Benedetti  
**TITLE:** VP-Global Sales Effectiveness, Strategy and Operations  
**COMPANY:** MasterCard Worldwide  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Benedetti doesn't consider herself an event

professional per se, but rather a learning and development professional. Responsible for MasterCard's Sales Leadership Meeting, she focuses on the experience and the educational aspects of the event rather than the logistics.

**FUN FACT:** She took two sabbaticals in her career—once to go back to college and the second to live in another country for a year.

**TRAVEL ITEMS:** iPad with books, games and podcasts

**BEST ADVICE:** When we communicate, most of it is non-verbal. Pay attention to body language and tone as well as content. It really reveals the person. It is really powerful advice that has served me well, from Professor Gerald Bell at the University of North Carolina.



**NAME:** Maxine Chapman  
**TITLE:** Director-Experiential Marketing-London 2012 Olympics  
**COMPANY:** Coca-Cola Co.  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** About two-and-a-half years in advance of the games, she begins planning how the

Olympic sponsorship can promote the Coca-Cola business. Execution begins about nine months out.

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** A mindless magazine for takeoff and landing ("What are Brad and Angelina up to?"), ear plugs and my laptop

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** Blackberry—"I have some of the fastest thumbs at Coke!"

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids!—"I was eight months pregnant during the London games."

**FUN FACT:** Since she is employed by the U.K., she gets a year of maternity leave

**BEST ADVICE:** "When we change the way we look at things, things we look at change."



**NAME:** Kristen Comings  
**TITLE:** VP-Media, Content, Digital and Consumer Promotions  
**COMPANY:** L'Oréal  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** As a pioneer of L'Oréal's integrated marketing communications group, Kristen

interacts with four categories—hair color, hair care, cosmetics and skin care—managing media, content, consumer promotions, web and philanthropy.

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Hand sanitizer, iPad mini, iPhone, KIND bars, True Match Stick Concealer and, believe it or not, actual beauty/fashion magazines!

**FAVORITE APP:** MyFitnessPal—"Helps me keep track of what I'm eating and physical activity or lack thereof."

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** iPhone

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids. "My daughter Vivienne is two years old."

**BEST ADVICE:** "Be nice to everyone. You never know who your next boss or business partner will be."



**NAME:** Karen Dana  
**TITLE:** Senior Marketing Manager  
**COMPANY:** Sperry Top-Sider  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Expanding Sperry's experiential outreach as the brand grows beyond sponsoring events such as

regattas and fishing tournaments

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Water, Blistex, socks and Neutrogena moisturizing lotion

**CAN'T LIVE-WITHOUT-TRAVEL ITEM:** Bose noise-canceling headphones

**FAVORITE APP:** Multiple weather apps—"So working in the footwear industry I know which shoes to pack."

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOLS:** iPhone and iPad

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** "Given that I am pregnant with our first child, I have to say kids!"

**BEST ADVICE:** "Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."—Anais Nin



**NAME:** Shana Gritsavage  
**TITLE:** Director of Global Events  
**COMPANY:** Under Armour  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Handles about 200 off-campus events a year, including 90 trade shows and everything from a high-school

volleyball or youth soccer tournament to the Super Bowl, the Olympics and MLB fan fests.

**EDUCATION:** BS in Economics, US Naval Academy; Served in the Marine Corps; MBA in Sports Management, San Diego State

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Electronics (and chargers!), Under Armour sunglasses and running shoes, make-up

**FAVORITE APP:** Armour39....and Map My Run

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids!

**BEST ADVICE:** I learned in the military to always listen when leading and to accept responsibility with courage and compassion.



**NAME:** Diane Imus  
**TITLE:** Associate Director of Exhibits  
**COMPANY:** Wiley Publishing  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Handles 500 to 550 conferences per year

**NOTEWORTHY:** Created a management and measurement tool that acquires and manages leads and customer data and fulfills customer samples, collateral and catalog requests.

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Everything. "I am an amazing packer; I hate to wait so I never check luggage."

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** iPad

**FAVORITE APP:** Yelp—"I use it for finding everything I need when traveling."

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** Camtasia Studio

**KIDS, PLANTS OR PETS?:** Kids. "I've got three, although depending on the week, I prefer plants."

**BEST ADVICE:** "Do what it takes to stay on top of your game."



**NAME:** Clare Kanter  
**TITLE:** Brand Director-ABSOLUT Vodka  
**COMPANY:** Pernod Ricard USA  
**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Moving the business forward by deploying the right tools, including events

**EDUCATION:** Stanford (undergrad) and Wharton Business School (MBA)

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** A pashmina, noise-canceling headphones, something to read and a folding footrest—"because my feet never reach the floor!"

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** Water!

**FAVORITE APP:** OpenTable—"I love having reservations because I hate waiting... and being able to plan ahead in a cab or on the subway is terrific."



**NAME:** Laura McEwen  
**TITLE:** VP and Publisher  
**COMPANY:** *Self* magazine (Conde Nast)

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Runs the business side of *Self*, which includes revenue generation, events and marketing; ideates and creates events such as Workout in the Park, now in its 20th year, and the new Workout on the Quad, which took place at American University, to reach consumers and to support advertisers.

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Beats by Dre

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** Workout pants and sneakers

**FAVORITE APP:** Jawbone Up

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** iPad mini

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids

**BEST ADVICE:** "To thine own self be true"—from my mother's mom, "Nana."



**NAME:** Colleen McKenna  
**TITLE:** Director-Global Brand Campaigns  
**COMPANY:** Symantec

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Leads large-scale branding events for Symantec

**WHAT'S IN YOUR CARRY-ON?** Socks, a pashmina, a bottle of water, my iPad and Kindle

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** My Kindle—"Because when all else fails and I am stuck somewhere, there is nothing like a good book to help the time pass."

**FAVORITE APP:** Yelp

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids, pets, plants

**BEST ADVICE:** "When you are in a tough phase, it feels like it will never pass, but it's actually a small blip in time. Try to enjoy it and know that a new challenge awaits you tomorrow, and you might even miss that crazy event you were working on last year!"



**NAME:** Alex Sapiz  
**TITLE:** Director-Sales, Partner Engagements and Recognition  
**COMPANY:** Cisco

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Handles a number of sales and partner experiences, including the annual sales meeting (also known as GSX), for 20,000 attendees and its flagship partner summit

**FUN FACT:** Born and raised in Rio, Brazil

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Books, a few unread issues of *The New Yorker* and a small moleskine

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** iPad

**FAVORITE APP:** Instagram—"I love documenting my days and travel through pictures."

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** Dropbox

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Kids, mine preferably!

**BEST ADVICE:** "Don't worry about success. If you truly love what you do, you find something more precious: happiness."—From my grandfather



**NAME:** Danalynne Wheeler  
**TITLE:** Director of Marketing  
**COMPANY:** Enstratus, a cloud software company recently acquired by Dell

**RESPONSIBILITIES:** Responsible for all marketing, including events

**IN HER CARRY-ON:** Laptop, cell phone, Kindle, paperback book, Advil, Band-Aids, earplugs, eye mask, Burt's Bee's lip balm, roll of tear-by-hand Scotch Tape

**CAN'T-LIVE-WITHOUT TRAVEL ITEM:** iPhone

**FAVORITE APP:** Words with Friends/Scramble with Friends—"addicting games"

**BEST BUSINESS TECH TOOL:** Evernote

**PETS, PLANTS OR KIDS?:** Pets (cats)

**BEST ADVICE:** "Commit to what you choose to do. Take responsibility for your decisions and your actions, and don't be afraid to take risks—it's better to try and fail than to never try at all."—From my parents



*But wait! There's more.*

Take a tour of our panel's favorite event programs—why they love them, why they worked and what they learned in the process: [eventmarketer.com/wie/favorites](http://eventmarketer.com/wie/favorites)

# 2013 Roundtable

**EM: What are the key attributes necessary to get ahead in event marketing?**

**Sapiz:** Superior planning skills and vision, and by that I mean being able to envision an experience from beginning to end when there is no plan. The event may be nine to 12 months away and you need to be able to outline steps necessary to get to the end point. Secondly, you need passion and understanding of the power of event experiences. We design moments where the customer and brand are as close as they can be. Being in charge of that experience shouldn't be taken lightly. You have to know in your heart it is a deal breaker. Finally, understand your audience. Give them what they want. Spend as much time with attendees as you can. They will tell you what they want.

**Imus:** The ability to always be changing because technology moves so quickly today; the ability to self-educate and stay abreast of developments in your industry. For someone in trade show and event marketing, you have to stay abreast of developments in that area, as well as what is going on in social marketing, print marketing. Spend a portion of your time making sure you are an expert in many areas, because all roads lead to the event—eMarketing and social marketing are there to support face-to-face engagement.

**Comings:** The biggest, obviously, is creativity. But it is really about collaboration, at the heart of everything. In today's world, these things don't live in a silo. You have to work with your social team or your media team to really get it out there. To have it be a fully integrated program, you need to rely on everyone doing their piece but also have them believe and be invested in what you are doing. You really need collaboration and a teamwork spirit to accomplish that.

**EM: Are these qualities any different for women than for men?**

**Gritsavage:** That's a tricky question. As a graduate of the Naval Academy and having served in the Marine Corps, which is 90 percent men, I know what it's like to play in the boys' sandbox. I've always been able to. They are like my brothers. The way to make it work is that women have to be more buttoned up, women have to prove themselves, but not in a bad way. I love that challenge of showing them I can lead them, that I can stand shoulder to shoulder with them.

**McEwen:** The same attributes apply. Creativity is paramount. You must have a creative and nimble mind.

**Wheeler:** I didn't realize until about five years into my career, because the companies I worked for in the beginning were very small, that all the marketing roles were held by women. As I started to get more into the larger companies, I realized I was seeing more men in senior marketing roles and fewer men in junior marketing positions, which led me to wonder how they got to the senior marketing roles. What I've seen is it is easier for men to cross over from unrelated areas,

perhaps from sales or business development or something other than marketing to senior-level marketing roles. Women have to fight harder for it. Most women are starting from the junior role and working their way up by proving and demonstrating that they have ability to execute and are able to think strategically, to involve stakeholders and work with a number of people and influence people to do what you want them to do, rather than what someone says the CEO wants them to do.

There is a lot more of the spotlight shed on the issue these days and it is much more in open discussion than it used to be. There are more groups promoting women. Dell has LinkedIn groups and women in business conferences that it supports. More of the larger companies are starting to see that they need to think about this.

**EM: Does anyone feel there isn't a great difference, at least at their companies?**

**Barlin:** I haven't seen a difference. Whether you are female or male, you need to be on top of the trends, know the business and the latest tools in marketing and channels; you need to be able to develop relationships because business is built on relationships and that is how you can get unique opportunities going. Also, being personable in business, having a strong team around you and being organized. It is a fast-paced environment that we work in. You have to be able to keep up, what is in today may be out tomorrow. You need to be flexible, that is key.

**McKenna:** I don't know if it is extraordinarily different. In the creative field, there is a lot of parity, which is nice, as opposed to some other fields in which sometimes being a woman is a disadvantage. I don't feel it in marketing or event marketing.

**Dana:** At Sperry, we don't experience a lot of gender issues. Our vp of marketing who leads us on a day-to-day basis is a woman, Karen Pitts. She is a great mentor and has been in the footwear industry for quite some time. The majority of our marketing team is women. The leadership structure is approachable and reachable, we can have a conversation about life, about business, and they always listen with open arms no matter if you are a man or a woman. If you have an idea to help grow the business, they listen. I don't see a difference in the growth plan for myself because I am a woman.

**Chapman:** I look for the best person to do the job when I am hiring my team. I look for passion, the ability to work hard and previous event execution experience. Chances are they have not done an Olympic project before, but both men and women can do it.

**EM: What are some of the unique qualities that women bring to the table?**

**Comings:** Not to generalize, but women are probably better collaborators. It's more of an innate quality in women.

# The Secrets of Her Success

Women in events share, in their words, the skills, talents and workplace perks that contribute to their success

A company culture that fosters and encourages employees to grow, develop and learn as well as have a good work-life balance.

Great supervisors and an ability to network within the organization.

Empowerment to make decisions.

Tenacity, drive and excitement.

Ability to identify innovation and implement it, embrace change and evolve my skills.

Personal drive to be creative.

Bosses that allow me to manage up and break the old way of doing business for more digital marketing approaches.

An advanced degree.

Good mentors, good upbringing, imagination and understanding what can work and what will work.

Being allowed to take risks.

An executive team that finds our events enjoyable and valuable toward business.

Initiative, quality of work product and outgoing personality.

Ability to problem solve and make decisions.

*Source: Sparks Women in Events Event Career Satisfaction Study, 2013*

**McKenna:** A lot of women have the ability to multi-task, and really see the big picture and work through a timeline, and it may come a little more naturally to us. You can have a great idea, but if you can't manage that project all the way from inception to figuring out what your metrics were, it's not a successful event. There are so many things that need to come into place. These are skills that a lot of women especially those raising families at the same time, just know how to do. You budget your time, you budget your money, you are juggling a lot of things at once and need to make sure the event comes off flawlessly and on time and on budget.

**Sapiz:** Women are best suited for some of these roles based on our natural abilities to juggle multiple projects at the same time. We can't afford the single-task process that some of our male colleagues lean toward. Women also are great listeners. Getting to the real needs and concerns of our audience comes naturally to us.

**Benedetti:** I never think about myself as a woman doing this work. I'm just doing this work. It is hard for me to compare. What I bring to the table is my learning background and everything that happens at the meeting is influenced by that. I also bring more of a strategic mindset in that everything we do at the event is underpinned by a strategy we are trying to reinforce. That is woven throughout. I don't know about being a woman or a man and have never thought about my career in that respect.

**Dana:** There is such creativity in marketing as a whole that lends itself to a woman's thinking. I have some male colleagues who are so stellar on the business side of things and can rattle off statistics and numbers and business strategy behind a plan, where I look at something more emotionally, and how that emotional connection attaches to a consumer engagement is so important. Some women are more tapped into their emotional side. Not to be stereotypical, but... marketing lends itself as an emotional driver and women tend to be more emotional and that can only hopefully help in building smart, emotional plans for any business out there.

**Wheeler:** Women tend to be better at getting people to collaborate and work together. It is kind of a nurturing skill, really. It comes naturally to most women.

**EM: Is the path to success different for women?**

**Kanter:** It's not different. The skills are really quite easy to say and hard to do. You need to have a



strong quantitative facility and couple that with creativity and a good management and leadership style. By quantitative facility, I mean you really need to understand how the business is structured and how it is run, how what you are doing, whether it is running an ad campaign or an event series, is going to impact the bottom line. There is also organizational intelligence to understand how decisions are made and what you can do combining positional authority and other persuasive tactics to influence those decisions. Also, having a clear understanding of where your company makes its money and how what you do affects that.

**EM: Do these skills come to women naturally or do they have to work harder to think in these terms?**

**Kanter:** Women have a challenge and a strength. The challenge is to establish credibility and come across as knowing your stuff and being authoritative. Establishing that credibility may be more challenging for a young woman than a young man. But the advantage that many women have is the natural facility for multi-tasking. Across marketing in the course of a day or a week, you are doing so many things, from a conversation with your operations lead, to a conversation with your advertising lead, to conversation giving feedback to someone on your team. Being able to relate to all of those people and those disciplines is easier for anyone who has a natural facility with multi-tasking, and is one of the things that makes marketing fun and stimulating.

**Imus:** Women gravitate toward event marketing where they have to know so much and be fluent in so many areas because they often are amazing multi-taskers. You have to be able to wear many hats!

**EM: How can women use their skills to advance their careers?**

**Sapiz:** We can do a better job of elevating our roles within our companies. It's not a male/female discussion; it's how companies view experience marketing as part of their overall marketing organization. You have to elevate the discussion. Speak about the power of experience design. Have your metrics together. Show how you can move the needle. I would like to see vp of experience marketing within 100 percent of the Fortune 100 companies. It's not about the cmo and a bunch of events people.

**EM: Do you think it comes naturally to women to speak up for what they want or need on the job?**

**Dana:** No, it doesn't. They need to push harder.

**EM: Event marketing can be a physical and mental challenge. How do you handle the job requirements and still manage to have a personal or family life?**

**Gritsavage:** I talk about this all the time with my team. Event managers tend to be women. It's a high-burnout job, an unorthodox job, with 16-hour days when you're on the road. So we build in flexibility and rest days.

**Kanter:** A team approach works best for me, and extending the team idea across not only my brand team but our

internal marketing team and our agency team and our internal events group as well. If I have done my job by the time an event happens, I am the least important person to be there. Being very involved in the lead-up and making sure the planning and contingencies are thoroughly explored and vetted means I don't need to be at everything. That is predicated on having a strong team and a strong trust relationship with your agency or whoever is executing these events.

**McKenna:** I've always had a job that is global in nature and being able to work remotely has allowed me to get up very early. I'm an early bird, if my project involves Europe, I am able to connect with those folks early, or with Asia in the evenings.

You also need managers who are flexible. Our job is not nine to five. We have to get it done wherever we are and whenever we are, even on a cruise, when I was in the midst of creating our Norton Cybercrime report. It is important for people to have downtime, but with the technology you can go away and do other things and check in. I do some of my best thinking during my morning run!

**Benedetti:** I don't have children, so it is easier for me than for those who do. I have the freedom to come and go and only have to worry about my plants and stopping the mail. That was a choice I made. I also have a really good team that I can leave and not worry. It is demanding, but there is flexibility where I can take the time I need to reenergize as well.

**Chapman:** It's not a sprint, it's a marathon. If you are not looking after your team or yourself, you can burn yourself out before the event is actually there. We do a lot of team building because you need to be able to speak candidly to team members and have them not take it personally. We will force people to spend time with their families because the last month or so before the Games, it is a lot of work. I also make sure that people know that in advance. Part of the team building is with your family as well so they know what you will be going through on a project like this.

**Comings:** I am fortunate to work for an organization like L'Oréal where we have policies in place to make it a little easier. Two days a month, people can work from home, and we have an extended maternity leave policy. Personally, being a working mom and having women report in to me, I have learned the most from my peers and mentors along the way and talking about the struggles. Part of working everyday is figuring out how to get it all done. People put what they can't do first in their mind. It is about a choice and your own priorities and values.

**EM: What kind of support systems do you have in place?**

**McKenna:** I am a single mom so it is tough in some ways. I couldn't go out of the country for a week at a time without the support of my network and my family.

**Imus:** My method is massive organization and an amazing support system at home. My neighbors are amazing. We all have husbands that travel and we travel, too. We literally have a very cooperative system among us. Just as you are organized at work, you have to be organized at home, and you have to make your kids be as organized as you are. We have a massive



calendar and everyone has to put their activities on it. We find ways to make it work, but a lot of it has to do with a village approach and helping others. I help, and it comes back to me. In this industry, it would be impossible not to have that.

**McEwen:** I have an amazing husband and he is in the business, too, and an incredible son and stepkids who are generous to me in supporting and understanding my dream. I get a lot of leeway and a lot of help. You really have to carve out your weekends and evenings, and make time when you are not as busy to be there and when you are busy, check in. You have to pay attention to them and know how much is too much. You can't be gone all the time or you're not going to have a family.

**Barlin:** I rely on loving help at home. My parents care for my child most of the time so that makes me feel more comfortable if I have to work late in the evening. But it is a struggle because I always want to give all in my professional life and personal life. I give my all Monday through Friday and give my all when I am home during the weekends. I'll go to the park in 90-degree weather on the weekends if I know it will make my son happy. It is hard and I do struggle with working mom's guilt, so I try to overcompensate with any free time that I have.

### **EM: What do you think of Sheryl Sandberg's book, *Lean In*? Does any of that apply to you?**

**Wheeler:** It is a choice, and this is her choice. But it is not right for everybody and it doesn't mean that if you don't do this, you can't succeed. I tend to be more of a "Lean In" type of person. I don't have children, but I do have a wonderful supportive boyfriend who works from home most of the time and looks after the cats. It is easier that way. I have friends who have done quite well in their professional careers, and who have made different choices and don't spend as much time working and traveling, and that shouldn't be held against them.

I know it's not easy, but if you are in a job where you are not happy and you are not getting support and feel you're not able to progress, you need to find another job. If you want this badly enough and you are good at what you do, something will come along, it may take a while, but it will happen.

**Dana:** I haven't read the book yet, but I have read some top-level headlines. I feel like there is a difference in people's personalities. You either have drive and determination and a goal in mind to achieve what you want in your life. Sometimes that is innate and sometimes people have to force it or feel uncomfortable doing that, or asking for what they deserve or what they want. I've never felt uncomfortable about asking. I am responsible for my life and for what happens in my life and, sure, there is a time and a place for everything, especially in a corporate environment but if you don't own it you won't get it.

**Sapiz:** I agree with Sandberg's premise. I like the book and applaud her for writing it. So much of what this book is doing is helping us talk about things that we all have thought about but never felt we should turn into a larger and more public discussion. It is giving us permission to have a national dialogue about this. The dialogue will be great for us in the long run. My daughters will get to see a change in the work-

place by the time they come out of school. This has been an important dialogue here at Cisco at the executive level.

**Comings:** In general, chunks of it really applied to me. Some of the facts I found shocking—like men's success and likeability are more positively correlated, whereas for women it is inversely. That makes me mad! I applaud her for bringing this conversation back up again. The other, was the anecdote that men will take a job that they may not be qualified for, whereas women often will not take that risk. Women overthink and don't want to be in the position of being found out. Men take the chance a lot more. That rang so true for me. On a more personal level, the notion of making your partner a real partner is critical for today. That is where women feel a lot of the stress—having two fulltime jobs. Engaging men more in the home is really critical to everyone's happiness.

**McEwen:** I think she hit on a lot of points. She took a lot of criticism and I tried to read it in a neutral position to decide if it was warranted, or if it was elitist. There are take-aways for women at all economic levels. If you are in a meeting and want to put forth an idea or concept, you need to lean forward. She makes sense. Within a lot of people is a capacity to achieve, but you have to make the choice to go for it.

### **EM: Can women have it all?**

**Wheeler:** Realistically, if you want to be able to succeed, you can't have it all. You have to prioritize and figure out the most important things to you. If it is having a family, you can still have an event marketing job, but you have to prioritize. I have some friends who have three kids and a nanny, which is a compromise; they are missing out on their kids upbringing, but they are in a role where they do have to travel 40 percent of the time, so they say, okay, I can afford the nanny so I will travel and still spend some time with my kids. Or maybe you can't travel and have to put yourself on hiatus for that. More companies are becoming more and more family-friendly and allowing remote work when possible.

**Barlin:** At the end of the day, I really think something is going to unfortunately suffer. If you give it your all and you are working 10 hours a day to get to the next level, something will suffer. That is a fact. While I agree that women—and men—should be all they can be in the workplace, it is challenging and that something might suffer but you have to make that choice, and can you make it up in other ways.

### **EM: What advice do you have for other women looking to get ahead in event marketing?**

**Gritsavage:** Winning in this industry takes endurance, spunk and a whole lot of charm. Those who require lots of rest and grumpy days need not apply.

**Wheeler:** Don't give up, hold true to what you believe in, and educate yourself. There are so many wonderful industry associations and professional associations, and web sites and briefs and a lot of them are free. And just through that education and networking with other people in the industry you can learn a lot. It will also help you with your career when you are

going to look for another job if you have a network of people who know you and what you do.

**McKenna:** Attend conferences, join professional organizations and stay connected. Brand yourself. Create your own website, make it easy for people to see who you are and what you do. When you are young, get to know what your personal brand is and promote that through social media and your own personal web site.

Also, be open to project work and not just having to work for some big company. We have hired lots of consultants over the years, some have become our employees, but some don't want to do that.

**Dana:** As I mentor the woman who works under me (she had never worked in event marketing before), my biggest advice is to always ask why. Ultimately, as a producer of something you need to always know the bottom line, fully understand what it is going to take to produce XYZ. Make sure you know the answers. And, from an event marketing standpoint, it is fun. Where else can you have instantaneous consumer feedback? You don't get that from a print ad or a digital ad. There's no better feedback than having that one-on-one interaction with the consumer, and that is what experiential marketing is all about.

**Kanter:** Don't pigeonhole yourself and don't think I'm just doing events so I don't need to know how it affects the rest of the business. Bring that curiosity to the table and it will not only make your events better but influence your career in a positive way.

**Sapiz:** Have a point of view. Getting a seat at the table isn't the primary issue. The challenge is to have a point of view when you are sitting at that table. Your voice, your perspective, your point of view is your most important aspect. Carefully craft your beliefs, what you stand for, and be ready to share that in the boardroom.

**Imus:** Educate yourself in every channel that merges in the event—direct, online, digital, social, sales, face-to-face, you have to have a piece of everything under your belt. Not just theoretical. Sometimes you get the best experience going to smaller shows. You learn so much by watching and observing. Don't be afraid to try new things even if they don't work. Experiment, be innovative and stay self-educated. There are a million supporting education avenues you should be exploring. They all converge.

**Benedetti:** Know where you want to go. I made intentional career changes. Don't let things happen to you. Take responsibility. As much as you can, be intentional. Leverage your

## *The Secrets of Her Success*

Being driven, organized and flexible.

Recognition of achievements, hard work and loyalty to previous companies and positions.

Having the opportunity to work for a very diverse collection of events in various industries and of various sizes.

Working smart, communicating well, meeting deadlines and a willingness to learn new tasks or technologies.

Determination, education, drive, ambition and knowing when to take risks to get ahead.

Ability to self-manage with the support of a team.

Keeping current with technology.

Communication skills and the fact that I am solution-focused.

Recruiting, hiring and training a high performing team.

Willingness to put in extra effort.

Curiosity, flexibility and a love of learning.

Diligence, attention to details, ability to manage multiple tasks and projects at same time.

Big thinking.

## *The Secrets of Her Success*

The ability to attach revenue to event participation.

Buy-in from senior management on my program's goal and objectives.

Ability to take risks to try new event technology.

Autonomy and being able to explore new areas of marketing and try new things.

Creativity, drive and motivation to succeed.

Opportunities for coaching and mentoring.

Passion, love for the job and the brands.

Working hard and collaboratively across the company.

My ability to build relationships with my clients.

Drive and ambition—knowing what I want and going after it. No one will hand it to you.

My team and the people I work with—both internally and externally.

Networking, repeat success and referrals.

Being given the opportunity to manage a new and untried approach or project.

Being stretched to breaking and then breaking through.

accomplishments as a springboard to where you want to go. Recognize where you want to go and ask for opportunities in a way that is reasonable. But it's not easy.

**Chapman:** Begin as a brand ambassador. You get a sense of what it is like to work in events, to work hard and bring smiles to people. Events and projects to me are kind of like a drug. You get an extreme sense of satisfaction that you don't get in your day-to-day job. But it's not for everyone. Being a brand ambassador will give you a sense of that. Also, baby crackers are a godsend!

**Comings:** Roll up your sleeves and soak up all you can learn. There a lot of key, basic elements to event marketing that help you regardless of where you are in an organization, managing a process and a timeline. The attention to detail is critical and the creativity. But the most important thing you learn is you are so close to the consumer, which is the most important part of the journey. Leverage that learning and communicate that to your organization. It is powerful and will serve you wherever you go.

**McEwen:** Keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening in our current landscape. Watch what is going on in entertainment and music. Think big and think creatively and utilize all the new technologies. Be attuned to pop culture, with how young people are thinking and get on that wave of what is next. Try new things. If it isn't uncomfortable or isn't a little bit out there, it isn't going to move the needle. Be a risk taker. Take a chance.

**Barlin:** It comes down to relationships. Do your research, see what is out there, what area of marketing you might excel in. Find an outlet that you enjoy, then delve in, learn all about that industry, what you like about it, what needs improvement. Talk to people and always evaluate opportunity. Nine times out of 10 it won't be the right opportunity, but always evaluate it.

At the end of the day, from what I've seen, it doesn't come down to gender, it comes down to your attributes. Are you a hard worker, creative, a team player? I follow this advice from my dad: "Act with respect but command it as well. Speak with conviction."

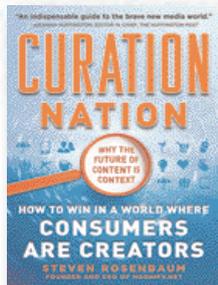


*But wait! There's more.*

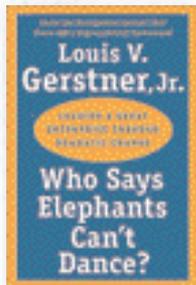
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# Buy the Book

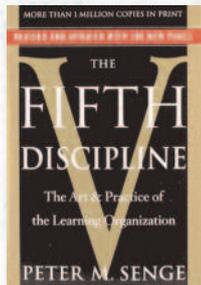
Just a few of the business and life strategy books recommended by our women in events panelists



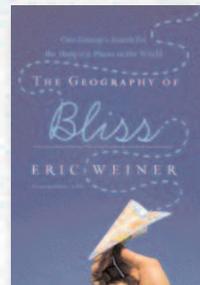
**Title:** *Curation Nation: How to Win in a World where Consumers are Creators*  
**Author:** Steven Rosenbaum  
**Who picked it:** Laura McEwen



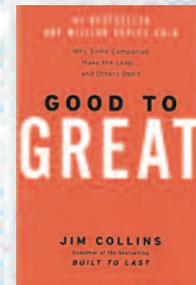
**Title:** *Who Says Elephants Can't Dance? Leading a Great Enterprise Through Dramatic Change*  
**Author:** Louis V. Gerstner  
**Who picked it:** Alex Sapiz



**Title:** *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*  
**Author:** Peter M. Senge  
**Who picked it:** Gilda Benedetti



**Title:** *The Geography of Bliss: One Grump's Search for the Happiest Places in the World*  
**Author:** Eric Weiner  
**Who picked it:** Shana Gritsavage

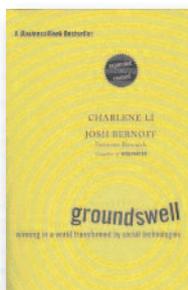


**Title:** *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't*  
**Author:** Jim Collins  
**Who picked it:** Maxine Chapman

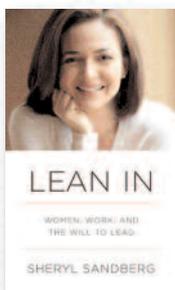
**Title:** *The First 90 Days: Proven Strategies for Getting up to Speed Faster and Smarter*  
**Author:** Michael D. Watkins  
**Who picked it:** Colleen McKenna



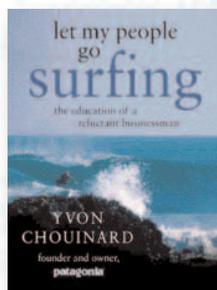
It's a book I always share with my new hires because the first three months are so critical to the overall success at a new job. It seems to me that the job market is turning around and many people are being hired at new jobs. It's great to start off on the right foot.



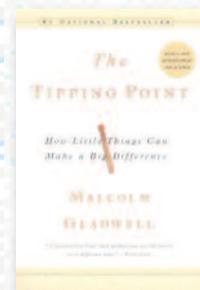
**Title:** *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*  
**Authors:** Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff  
**Who picked it:** Danalyne Wheeler



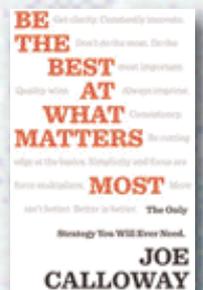
**Title:** *Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*  
**Author:** Sheryl Sandberg  
**Who picked it:** Kristen Comings



**Title:** *Let My People Go Surfing: The Education of a Reluctant Businessman*  
**Author:** Yvon Chouinard  
**Who picked it:** Karen Dana



**Title:** *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*  
**Author:** Malcolm Gladwell  
**Who picked it:** Marissa Barlin



**Title:** *Be the Best at What Matters Most: The Only Strategy That You Will Ever Need*  
**Author:** Joe Calloway  
**Who picked it:** Diane Imus