

# 2014 WOMEN IN EVENT MARKETING

## EVENT INNOVATORS

### THOUGHTS AND COMMENTS FROM SOME OF THE LEADING LADIES ACROSS THE PARTNER LANDSCAPE

Our Women in Event Marketing movement isn't entirely focused on brand-side ladies. On the other side of the fence—across the industry's best agencies and partners—are some of the savviest, most strategic and most successful women.

And you're about to meet a few of them. In an effort to give you a balanced perspective from both sides of the client-agency spectrum, we're thrilled to introduce you to some of partner landscape's leading ladies. On the following pages are insights and comments from a half-dozen chats we've had.

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# Women in Events: Event Innovators



## FEATURED INNOVATOR

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#### **You are a new woman in events, what does this mean for you?**

Having been an EVP and Chief Business Development Officer for several software (in particular SaaS) companies over the last 15 years, my eye has always been on companies offering software solutions that provide cost effective and efficient ways for businesses to improve their client value, loyalty, and ultimately their profitability to remain sustainable as leaders in the market.

The events industry is full of passionate, enthusiastic and fun-loving executives striving to add value to their clients. The strong and powerful women in this industry are committed to changing the way people interact, engage, and grow their businesses through collaboration, social interaction and education. I could not pass up working for a company like etouches that offers an extraordinary software solution to such a strong and growing market!

#### **What buzzwords are you sick of?**

Experiential marketing, Apps, Social Media, Innovation, Agile, Gamification (or any "ification" words)

#### **Advice for clients who want to get bold in 2015 (besides hiring you)?**

Give something back – to your clients, attendees, community or industry. This industry is tired of being driven by companies more focused on profits than people! Don't be afraid to give something to gain credibility: a free offer that everyone can benefit from, a community contribution on behalf of something that supports your company culture/beliefs, or an education to the industry. Stop thinking strictly about your profit and worry about the human aspect of the industry – what can your company contribute that would impact the industry without just thinking about your bottom line?

#### **Thoughts on how quickly women in the event industry are getting more recognition by companies?**

The events industry has always been an industry where women have succeeded as leaders and thought provokers. Today, more

than ever, insight from women is inspiring the industry to empathize with buyers and event attendees, be passionate about the topics and themes at events, and drive new ideas or innovation at events. Through their inspiration and passion for the events industry they have gained so much respect. Not to mention, it has helped women make significant traction in achieving recognition for being leaders in the industry – examples are all around with this Women in Events issue, major events' speaking engagements being led by women, women's industry network events, Executive Women Networks, etc.

#### **What are you excited about in terms of technology, innovation or opportunities in the industry?**

Despite the progress in social media, I think there is a much greater opportunity for engagement at every level – with event attendees/delegates who come to events, among event planners and among the industry solution providers. The connection of delegates, suppliers and sponsors based on the social knowledge gained when they register for an event combined with automatic matchmaking tools will become very important.

I'm excited to see the improved data/reporting on the value or results of an event, particularly understanding why potential registrants did NOT attend your event. In order to do so, the ability to gain real time analytics will be extremely important so that you can modify on the fly based on analytics before, during and after an event.

#### **What has been one of your best moments in the industry thus far?**

I have thoroughly enjoyed the enthusiasm and passion of the industry. This is a fun industry; what is especially enjoyable is seeing the growth in the events market as it relates to adoption of technology!

Specifically, one of my best moments was witnessing hosted buyer sessions. There are not many industries that leverage the time of buyers and suppliers so effectively and efficiently. It makes sense and the investment is well worth it for all parties!

# Women in Events: Event Innovators

# FCB X



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### Give us the quick version: How do you describe your company?

We're FCBX: a collaborative team of passionate experiential marketers—but we're also triathletes, bakers, musicians, dads, moms, Twitter fanatics, nature enthusiasts, adventurers, pet lovers, and strategic thinkers. We're a scrappy crew of solutionists, creatives, number-crunchers and visionaries. We know experiential, and we know that the biggest point of amplification is that intersection where online meets offline. That's our sweet spot—creating sharable real-life engagements that keep living on social media long after the event has ended. We call it the X Factor. And our seasoned group of event marketing professionals are some of the best idea wranglers, integrators and agency partners in the business. We still get geeked about what we do even after all of the years we've been doing it.

### Got it. Next, it's almost September? What do you think the biggest year-to-date trends of 2014 have been?

Simply put—personalization. As a culture, we may have more digital connections than ever before, yet we oftentimes feel less connected. As evidenced by our current obsession with reality-based content, we're hungry for real experiences. Brands are now thriving by personalizing their messaging and delivering them in the real world through unexpected channels, creating real connections as opposed to superficial ones. One recent favorite example is TD Canada's Automatic Thanking Machine, which was essentially an ATM that dispensed personalized thank-you notes and gifts to loyal TD customers based on personal knowledge including, in one case, a trip to Trinidad so a woman could visit her sick daughter. Not to mention the wild success of Coke's recent global personalized can campaign. These kinds of real-world personalizations are extremely effective and completely in line with our approach to activation.

### Can events be measured? What do you say to the folks who say they can't be?

Thanks to digital technology and social sharing, events can absolutely be measured. And when the idea platform is properly developed with built-in earned media potential, quantifying the ROI on experiential marketing has never been easier. Nothing should go out the doors of an experiential shop without a social and mobile component and an earned media strategy when possible. Any event marketing campaign should be able to provide concrete metrics when keeping those three measurement channels in mind.

### Further thoughts on social media and technology?

The brand-consumer conversation has become far more interdependent than ever before and will continue to evolve as such with the rapidly increasing social interconnectivity of our communities. The online world and the offline world have collided and it has enhanced the ability to deliver more powerful experiential solutions.

Brands are constantly looking for ways to connect with their consumers in digitally and socially cutting edge ways, while still maintaining the proper level of respect for privacy. Allowing consumers to opt in and be co-content creators is where social media and technology will continue to trend. The days of talking to a consumer and telling them your brand story has evolved into inviting consumers to become the authors of their own personal brand stories, thus having the brand become a part of their lives.

At FCBX, we constantly ask our clients and ourselves how our work might inspire consumers' behavior before they join us, while they are with us or in those moments after they engage with us, when they are posting and viewing content. Can we inspire them to learn more about the brand, drive them to our event site, or encourage a conversation with a friend? And, most importantly, is the experience we create sharable? FCBX understands these questions will only become more important as we continue to be at the intersection of online and offline consumer experiences, with the unique ability to help spark authentic and meaningful brand conversations and storytelling.

# Women in Events: Event Innovators



The Art and Science of Engagement

## Give us the quick version: How do you describe your company?

GES is a global, full-service marketing partner for live events. We handle everything from design and fabrication to logistics, AV, marketing, and multimedia. Our 3,000 employees are artists and scientists who create engaging experiences that truly wow attendees.

## Got it. Next, it's almost September? What do you think the biggest year-to-date trends of 2014 have been?

Augmented reality evolved in 2014 and provided more realistic product demos for our clients. We've also seen 3-D printing gain more traction and impress attendees.

## And dare we ask... ok we will: What trends are heating up for 2015?

A couple of trends are merging to form a supertrend. Google employees coined a term, "SoLoMo," which stands for Social + Location + Mobile. It integrates mobile and social with location-based apps. Used in retail environments, it found its way into the trade show world this year with tools like iBeacon.

Our clients want to pair it with experience mapping, which drives home the "location" part of SoLoMo. It's the concept of designing floor plans by thinking about how you want attendees to move through the event and what information they should consume and when, rather than focusing on the show's logistics.

In 2015, there will also be a focus on meaningful, face-to-face brand experiences. As an attendee travels through an event, she needs to experience something authentic to the brand that makes her feel awesome. The question "how do we want them to feel" will get just as much respect as "how many leads do we expect to get." The result will be greater engagement and loyalty.

## How is your company tapping into those top trends?

We're lucky to work with clients who want big change and are willing to make bold decisions. Some of our show organizers are implementing experience mapping in 2015. We continue to use augmented reality when it's right and we've combined it with 3-D printing. We also know that technology can't take the place of personal connection so we incorporate empathy into our experience design.

## Can events be measured?

Absolutely. You can't improve what you don't measure. New



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technologies are allowing real-time measurement which opens the door to real-time improvements.

## Fave campaign of the year from your company?

Launching our new tagline, "The Art and Science of Engagement," at EXHIBITOR2014 was extremely gratifying. We needed to introduce it in a way that wouldn't be forgotten. Our design team proposed approaching William Close and The Earth Harp Collective to perform in our exhibit space and transform the convention center into an instrument. It was the perfect metaphor of art and science.

The focus of our "un-booth" was the attendee experience. There were no walls, just our massive AV screen and live music. We crushed all lead and social media goals with a shareworthy experience. People returned, told their friends, and continued the conversation long after because we provided a memorable experience that made them feel good. When technology and emotion harmoniously come together there is real engagement.

## What buzzwords are you sick of?

Best-in-class and best practices are the worst despite their use of "best."

## Thoughts on how quickly women in the event industry are getting more recognition by companies?

My female co-workers and clients are strong, smart, and inspiring. Most of us want to excel at work and raise a happy family. How can we hide our personal life when it sometimes requires traveling with a breast pump? In an industry where women are supported, we can be ourselves and bring everything we are to the table. When we feel good about ourselves and the job we're doing, we can't help but gain recognition.

## What are you excited about?

I'm excited about design thinking, a process created by IDEO founder David Kelley for developing innovative ideas. We've begun using it, and the resulting ideas are game-changing. GES is sending me to training at Stanford in September so I can facilitate client sessions!

## Any changes on the horizon for your company?

We're adding more services so our clients can work with one contact, within one company, for all that's needed for an amazing event anywhere in the world.

# Women in Events: Event Innovators

grow  
MARKETING



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#### How did Grow come to be?

Like many great ideas Grow started over a glass of wine that turned into a bottle. We were each other's biggest competitor, one at Levi's the other at the Gap, always trying to outdo one another. A friend insisted we meet and when we finally did we found that we had a lot in common, including the need for an agency that was equally adept at both strategy and execution. We tried to pick each other's brain on the sly to see if there was any magic bullet out there and there wasn't, so before the second cork was popped we decided to join forces and start our own.

#### What do you think makes a client choose Grow over another agency?

Time and again we hear that we are extraordinarily good at getting all the details right, and it's something we really pride ourselves on. From ensuring the strategy is bullet proof to creating an environment that feels unique and authentic to the brand all the way down to casting and scripting the ambassadors, we connect every last dot. For the attendees, that's often where things fall down. You enter this beautiful environment but the person who greets you knows nothing about the brand or you have a VIP speaker but the A/V is sketchy or the backdrop looks cheap. No matter how much you got right, the things you let slide will tarnish the entire experience. We are also known for playing nice with others, whether it is other departments within a brand or partner agencies. Because we came from the client side and were responsible for ROI and campaign success, we know that everyone working together makes  $1+1=4$ .

#### What do you see as your greatest accomplishment?

Certainly launching and growing a successful business with no background in the agency world is the first thing most people think of and we do take a lot of pride in that, but we both agree that our biggest accomplishment – and what has fueled our success – has been creating a culture that attracts and retains the best talent in the business. Our team is truly incredible and at the end of the day you want to feel like you are working shoulder-to-shoulder with people you respect and enjoy and who keep each other motivated and inspired. We love the company we keep.

#### What are the pros and cons of being a women-owned agency?

Well, a pro of owning our own agency, aside from the fact that we happen to be women, is that we are an independent shop. This allows us to be really nimble and flexible, which is something we know clients appreciate. We have our WBENC certification but would not say it has helped or hindered us from winning business. Traditional advertising seems to be much more of an old boys club and being women-owned might be more limiting there. Clients in our space make decisions based on the blend of creative, budget and team chemistry. We have as many female clients as we do men. We don't see too many women owned agencies out there right now but feel certain that is going to change.

#### What's next?

Last year we bought ourselves a new home and seeing our team energized and inspired by the space has been really gratifying. Clients also love working from our offices and that face-to-face collaboration has supercharged the work. What's next is more of the same. When you have a good thing going sometimes the best thing you can do is not screw it up.

# Women in Events: Event Innovators

## sparks®



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#### Give us the quick version: How do you describe your company?

We are a boutique event group inside a much larger event marketing agency. We are creative, nimble and flexible with the depth, breadth and scale of resources that can truly offer the full range of services from strategy to creative development through production/execution and measurement. We also deliver on a variety of marketing programs, which keeps it fresh and interesting; in any week we could be delivering on something with 50 or 10,000 people. #workshouldbefun

#### Got it. Next, it's almost September? What do you think the biggest year-to-date trends of 2014 have been?

In the trends category I'd have to include digital amplification and extending the conversation, authenticity and experience consistency, culinary curation, upcycled/repurposed/organic design elements and mobile.

#### And dare we ask... ok we will: What trends are heating up for 2015?

Honestly, it feels like pop-up everything (some people call this surprise and delight, magic moments, reinventing random, etc). Brands are looking to create and provide experiences that are unexpected and memorable whether in a consumer facing brand interaction or within the context of a proprietary event. Event marketing activations are more sophisticated, smarter and provide real results. The other big one - I'd call 'technology take-back'. Technology is everywhere and has become a natural part of everyone's daily lives. Keeping true to creating real, meaningful experiences is about getting technology out of the spotlight and making it more natural: humanizing the experience.

#### How is your company tapping into those top trends?

Through creative development and experiential program integration. It's all about the end consumer, client, customer. They are the ones that matter.

#### What buzzwords are you sick of?

I feel like I could spend a lot on this one but I'd have to say my top five words/phrases are: game changer, out-of-the-box experience, non-traditional, gamification and push the envelope.

#### Finish this sentence: Experiential marketing is...

#everywhereandeverthing

#### Where did you go on vacation this summer?

The middle of the woods in the Finger Lakes. Not quite glamping but a definite off the grid/de-teching escape with my husband and dog-hter.

#### What are you excited about?

Smart marketing.

#### What inspires you and how do you stay inspired?

I'm fascinated by social media, technology and self-expression. We live in such a fast-paced, interesting world where communication boundaries continue to be broken on a daily basis. Being exposed to new things, news ideas and new people inspire me. I'm passionate about life, human behavior and big ideas. Whether it's a world event, trending topic, or simply a personal story of success or failure, there are so many opportunities for people to learn and grow from others creativity and originality.

#### What advice would you give to other women starting out in their careers in event marketing?

1. Be accountable. It's really important to own your mistakes as much as your successes. Get in front of situations, think a few steps ahead and problem solve.
2. Don't let your passion be confused with emotion; stay focused and have confidence. As you are faced with harder situations and bigger challenges there is more opportunity for second-guessing your skills and experience. So stay strong and push yourself.
3. Offer a firm handshake with eye contact. I'm not kidding. It's a deal breaker.
4. Take risks. The opportunities in life you miss are the risks you don't take. You can't succeed unless you are also willing to fail.

#### Any changes on the horizon for your company?

Our event experience platforms create relationships and foster community. Digital (including social) extends those emotional connections. Live Events + Digital = Our Future.

# Women in Events: Event Innovators



## FEATURED INNOVATOR

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### What are the trends you see heating up for 2015?

When speaking about trends, people in our industry frequently rattle off a list of new and interesting techniques for grabbing attention and delivering content—holograms, 3D printing, RFID, mobile apps, projection mapping, etc. —it's a long list. These are great and have a place in our industry but, do they really drive people to take action, motivate behavior and drive businesses forward? Technology should be utilized in such a way to allow relationships with people; not just mere interactions. Relationships create a greater level of responsibility and motivation.

### How does your company capitalize on trends?

At TBA Global, we believe it takes a different skill set to sense the market and identify the emerging signals that are going to matter most to the participant in an event.

You have to really understand people to create events that work and drive results. Understanding people doesn't stop with demographic and psychographic profiling — you need to understand motivation and triggers. There are several behavior trends we are tracking which can be utilized to motivate and affect participant's behavior during and after an event. Within the last year, the average consumer had an enormous appetite for hyper personal technology such as voice activation, fitness trackers, biometric clothing, watches etc. This trend is not about the technology as much as it is about a more "me-centric" approach the average consumer is taking. Couple that with the focus on social media—not as a communication device but as a harbinger for behavior, habits, likes and dislikes and you've created a great networking tool for events — seat guests based on their social networking connections and profiles. You now have instant communities that can be leveraged long after the event is over.

### Advice for clients that want to get bold in 2015?

Well, start by hiring TBA Global.

All kidding aside, when I sat on that side of the desk, I was always attracted to agency partners that could bring a fresh perspective — those that saw things slightly differently than the rest of the pack. At TBA Global, we take the "me-centric" economy very seriously. However, we also understand that humans, by nature, thrive on social interaction so, there needs to be a balance. To understand what motivates the ultimate participants in our events, we have to expand our team outside the usual suspects — creatives, producers, account managers etc. — to include cultural anthropologists and social scientists, for instance, that help us design events with less subjectivity and more objectivity. All design decisions should be purposeful and drive participant behavior. Way too often, people in our industry say, "Well, there is no right or wrong answer — it's subjective". We believe it isn't. Every dollar spent should be effective and measureable.

### Can events be measured? What do you say to the folks that say they can't be?

Events are just like any other medium in the marketing arsenal—they should be designed to drive a desired effect and therefore measureable. The grey area comes from defining the desired effect. Because of our approach, we spend quality time up front with our clients clearly defining what action they want participants to take during the event and afterwards. We then define the "triggers" which drive a particular behavior and this becomes the basis of our ROI analysis.

### What keeps you up at night?

Cruelty to another living creature.