

women in events

EVENT INNOVATORS



FEATURED INNOVATOR

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What were your experiences as a woman in the industry when you first started out and how did it shape your approach to work?

Being a woman in the events industry when I first entered 25 years ago was, to say the least, a different experience than today. It was hard not to be identified by gender first and our accomplishments second. It was essential that I approach interactions and tasks with precise focus to prove my ability, knowledge, willingness and value.

That's not to say that I wasn't surrounded by great support or mentorship in those early years. I wouldn't be where I am now if I wasn't.

Those early days have stuck with me and inspired me to help establish a new standard in the industry. As an industry leader, I aim to cultivate an environment of positivity and efficiency. My management style is to focus on each individual's strengths and accomplishments -- positioning employees with different areas of expertise in roles they will flourish in and provide them the level of support needed to succeed.

How have you seen ASV encouraging opportunities for diverse groups of people?

Diversity is a foundational value for ASV, something I experienced firsthand when I was hired in 2001. Our CEO told me then, "I have heard such great things about you. I just plan to let you do the magic I hear you can do." This led to my promotion to general manager at a time when the industry was still hesitant to elevate women to positions of leadership. This is the kind of forward-thinking entrepreneurial mindset that gives our employees a sense of ownership and the drive to push ASV beyond conventional boundaries.

What would you say are the key changes or differences you have seen for women in the industry?

One of my most vivid memories from the early 90s is sitting in a "managers" meeting and looking around the table to see that I was the only woman in a room of 20 plus managers.

I'm happy to say, due to companies such as ASV, the needle has moved a bit. Today the industry has a fair saturation of influential women in various capacities. It was especially rewarding to

me when I attended the Women in Events Conference in October alongside five professional women that work for us in a managerial or director level. We now have some loud and proud decision makers helping to guide the future of our industry.

What has been the impetus for increasing diversity in the industry?

Like everything else, opinions and views evolve over time. Experiential marketing in the last 20-30 years has evolved from a less familiar discipline to something more mainstream. With this new focus, we're seeing newer, younger, and more forward-thinking voices affecting the marketplace.

We've seen this materialize in how companies hire and market themselves to potential talent and customers. Since the early 2000s, companies have devoted parts of their annual spend to internal diversity efforts.

In short, as times and people have changed, the world -- and our industry -- has evolved with it.

It is obviously a different dynamic for women in the industry now than it was when you started. Have we "made it" yet in terms of inclusivity?

We haven't "made it" yet, but we've certainly made headway. It's on us as industry leaders to continue the push for more colorblind and gender neutral practices. Women still make about 85 percent of what their male counterparts do, and the number of minorities leading our industry's organizations or participating in high profile panels is not where it should be.

Since entering the events industry, leveling the playing field is something I always strive to do, and it'll continue to be an objective for both myself and my company going forward.

What do you look forward to for 2019?

It has been rewarding to have experienced the various ways that our medium delivers a platform for brands to showcase their relevance to targeted consumers at various enthusiast events.

In 2019, I envision more companies entering the playing field and hope more colleges and universities will provide formal curriculum focused on experiential marketing. Bringing in new passionate professionals that we can hand the torch to is selfishly gratifying and essential to the evolution of our industry.