

WOMEN IN EVENTS

EVENT INNOVATORS



FEATURED LEADER

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GIVE US THE QUICK VERSION: HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR COMPANY?

Highmark is committed to innovation. Since the 1980s, we've introduced new products that have had a significant impact on the event industry, products offering superior design that are flexible, light-weight, re-useable, and easy-to-install. We began by developing modular exhibit structures for indoor events and recently launched a product line for outdoor events and activations. This outdoor line ranges from large structures that can function as temporary buildings and VIP spaces to mobile products that can pack and go in a snap. These products are designed and built to weather the elements but can be used indoors as well. The range of our offerings enables us to practice what we preach in our tag lines, "Go Up. Go Out. Go Mobile" and "We've got you covered." We want our exhibit and event agency clients to design to their hearts' desires and create the best experiences for their customers while we worry about the structure behind it all.

GOT IT. NEXT, IT'S ALMOST 2020? LOOKING BACK, WHAT DO YOU THINK WERE THE BIGGEST EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING TRENDS OF THE YEAR? WHAT DO YOU THINK THE BIGGEST TRENDS OF 2020 WILL BE?

Probably the biggest experiential marketing trends of the past year and heading into 2020 are:

- Events are moving away from traditional venues. We anticipated this trend and launched Highmark Outdoor so that when brands choose to create a new space, they have real options—not just tents or structures that can't withstand weather surprises.
- Sustainability. Highmark has always embraced "Reduce. Reuse. Recycle." Design and manufacturing excellence means that there is an elegance not only to our products' form but also to their function because they reduce weight in transit and streamline set-up time. Our products are meant to be reused indefinitely, and our aluminum extrusions are recyclable. Plus, since our products are manufactured in the US, the carbon footprint is significantly less than that of competitive products.

- Paying down what Deloitte calls "the experience debt" by bridging the divide between our digital and face-to-face worlds and by designing with empathy to elevate the human experience. More than ever, the trend in experiential marketing will be to demonstrate shared values so that customers find meaning and belonging in a brand's products and services.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE MARKETING CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR FROM YOUR COMPANY AND WHY?

My favorite campaign from our company this year was our Block Party. The best way to show our outdoor and mobile products was...outdoors! Block Party attendees traveled from near and far—literally—and enjoyed weather that could not have been better. With a DJ providing music, a professional photographer doing headshots, a spot where you could tie-dye a Highmark t-shirt, and of course, a food truck and beverages, the Block Party showed how you could create an event outdoors with something for everyone.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU HAVE EVER RECEIVED THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER?

Run your privately-owned business like a Fortune 500 company in terms of holding yourself and others accountable as if you had discerning shareholders to answer to. – advice from my father, Mick Parrott, Highmark's founder.

WHERE DO YOU GO TO GET BUSINESS INSPIRATION?

I have gained much inspiration from my mentors – my father, Mick Parrott, who has had the vision, confidence, smarts, and determination to take risks in starting businesses. He always puts relationships and ethics first. I have also had some incredible role-model bosses who happened to be women – in particular, Billie Wyeth, Paula Duffy, and Carol Franco at Harvard Business School Publishing. A woman who continues to be a great inspiration to me is Pat Friedlander for her uncanny, brilliant ability to stay connected and to connect others in ways that make their businesses and brands better.