

EAST VALLEY VOICE

Success comes to women who work hard, take risks, and build a strong team

I have never been one to consider my gender to be a factor when it comes to my career. I am a firm believer that my actions and work ethic bear a far greater impact on my success. I'm not saying that being a woman in business doesn't change the game a bit — especially when it comes to how my actions are perceived — but it certainly has no place in my daily thought process or leadership efforts.

As the president and CEO of the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce for the past 17

years, I've grown right alongside the Chamber and our community. I've worked with some incredible individuals, both male and female, and have learned many valuable lessons along the way. If there is one significant variable I have observed between the two sexes, it is the double-standard in communication. When a male leader is bold, frank and opinionated, he is often deemed to be a visionary or strong leader. Conversely, a woman can be considered pushy, aggressive or rude. Have I com-



Kathy Tilque

pleted for this standard over the years? Of course — but I have also never been fearful of this perception. I can tell you that times are changing and these days I see less and less of a gender discrepancy. Maybe it's the influence of a younger workforce or perhaps it can be attributed to the changing economic and technological times. What I see is a sense of collaboration — leaders coming together

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Kathy Tilque is the president and CEO of the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce. As part of this 'Women in Business' special section, Tilque is sharing with Tribune readers her insights on the dynamics of female leadership in today's workplace.

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to learn best practices and help each other overcome challenges. I see executives of all ages with a willingness and desire to keep up with trends and try new things. I see male leaders seeking a balanced life just as much as their female counterparts. There is a growing expectation that working fathers will be just as involved and hands-on as their partners — especially as moms take on careers. I see employers

becoming more understanding of the need for a flexible work environment and supportive of the idea that family should come first.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have had both male and female mentors. Each of these individuals invested their time in me and my potential. Likewise, my Board of Directors has always been supportive of my professional growth and development and, because of their confidence in my ability, I have been able to take risks and try new ventures. I choose to surround myself with dynamic leaders and professionals and I'm the

first to acknowledge the importance of building and empowering a great team.

It's often said that the world belongs to those who show up and I believe that is true. However, those who do show up and truly make a difference are the ones who are willing to take the risks and weather the storm of controversy for the greater good — no matter what gender. I'm proud of what our chamber has accomplished and I salute my chamber peers for the good work they have done for their communities as well.

• **Kathy Tilque** has been the president and CEO of the Gilbert Chamber of Commerce since 1996.

EAST VALLEY VOICE

Managing change and overcoming obstacles while climbing the care

A good friend once told me that the only constant is change. There is no truer statement.

I believe change is certainly a good thing. But in my own career at the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, moving from the director of programs, to the vice president of business development, to the president and CEO in the span of about five years has been a little bit of a chal-

lenge.

But what is the proper way to professionally manage change?



Sally Harrison

Managing change, expectations

Fortunately, I've learned to ask a lot of questions and not be afraid of making a mistake here and there. Using past experiences as launching pads

for new ones and learning to delegate — admittedly not my strong suit — have

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Sally Harrison is the president and CEO of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce. As part of this 'Women in Business' special section, Harrison is sharing with Tribune readers her insights on career evolution, management style, delegation and learning from past experiences.

been challenges, but I am learning to do both more often and to ask others to step up and do more too. I've learned to shift my perspective to face challenges head on and overcome hurdles, and to become more disciplined in the process.

I've never really felt overwhelmed by my job, but I certainly have felt the chal-

lenge of meeting expectations of others. It's never become too much, however, because of how high I've set my goals for myself.

Never stop learning

In January of this year I enrolled in a four-year program called Institute of Organization Management. I have met some great peo-

ple through the program, and some incredible instructors. Everyone participating is either with a chamber or an association, so many are facing the same issues, challenges and opportunities that I am in my role.

Maintaining perspective

I think back often to that statement my friend said. Change is constant. But knowing that, I've learned to become more flexible and to view mistakes as opportu-

nities for both learning and personal growth. I learned to put things in perspective and decide what is truly important and what can wait till next week or event next month. And, I'm open to constructive feedback. I appreciate the support I get from our members, our board, our staff, and the community in general. Obviously, I can't do this job alone.

• **Sally Harrison** was named president and CEO of the Mesa Chamber of Commerce in 2012.

EAST VALLEY VOICE

Like all else, feminism has evolved — it should be applauded

I am a feminist.

Perhaps it stems from my tomboy roots. While I run and throw "like a girl" with all the negative connotation that stereotype brings, I won every wrestling match with Timmy down the street. Even at a young age, I only wore a dress to church, and my mom immediately changed me into pants when we got home.

I graduated from high school before Title IX was implemented and the only sport for girls was softball.

As an account manager after college, a trucking rep who had messed up a shipment said, "just calm down, honey."

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Mary Ann Miller is the president and CEO of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce. As part of this 'Women in Business' special section, Miller is sharing with Tribune readers her insights on what it means to be a "modern" feminist.

He later called my boss to see if I actually had the authority to throw him off the dock.



Mary Ann Miller

In the early 90s I learned not to take a notebook into a meeting so that the men in the room wouldn't ask me to take minutes.

And not so long ago I actually had someone ask me how it would look if the Tempe Chamber had three women consecutively serve as board chairs.

Being a feminist isn't about the semantics of organiza-

tion names or being offended at job titles. It's not about raising up women to the detriment of men. Being a feminist is being cognizant of where we've been and where we've yet to reach. It's about equal opportunity, which empowers individuals and creates a multitude of options.

It means that a woman can be a nurse or a teacher or a secretary. She can be an engineer; run a company or run for office. She can start a business or start a family. Work 60 hours a week or stay at home with the kids. She can make as

much money as the man she replaced. She can be assertive and aggressive and not worry about being liked. She can do it all with her individual sense of style, both is how she deals with people and in how she presents herself. And it has opened these doors for men as well.

It bothers me when young women vehemently deny being a feminist, but I realize it's because we've come so far that many have not had to face obvious inequality. I pay tribute to the women who have led the way for me, and hope that I can blaze a trail for a few of the folks coming next.

• **Mary Ann Miller** has been president and CEO of the Tempe Chamber of Commerce since 1999.



Audiology Corner

by David McBride, M.S., FAAA

OPEN YOUR EARS TO NEW DESIGN!

If you suffer from hearing loss and have resisted the idea of getting a hearing instrument over concerns about comfort, you no longer have an excuse. Since "open-fit" hearing instruments were introduced, they have revolutionized the industry. No longer does wearing a hearing instrument require plugging the ear canal with a regular earmold. Instead, amplified sound is comfortably delivered through a thin, plastic tube to a point directly in front of the ear opening. The business end of an open-fit hearing instrument is a slender, low-profile component that is worn behind the ear. These instruments produce no occlusive effect that makes listening to one's own voice seem unnatural. Open-fit hearing instruments are popular precisely because they seem so natural.

Our clinic offers sophisticated hearing aids and related devices to suit all types of hearing loss and life styles. Call our clinic for a comprehensive audiological assessment. We have 3 convenient locations in the East Valley, and our goal is to provide you the best possible hearing solution based upon your individual needs. With our innovative digital hearing solutions, you can trust our hearing aids for high quality and superior reliability. *We offer tinnitus consultation, evaluation, and management.*

P.S. Very small open-fit hearing instruments are less conspicuous than hands-free Bluetooth devices.



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