

Females in Athletic Business

Feb 2017

[FAB] Making a Difference for a Year

[FAB]

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1 year ago this week, [FAB] made its debut on the sports business scene. Immediately, the response from women around the country was swift and strong and encouraged the task force. With 50+ women attending the kick-off event to hear from Chairwoman, Coach Suzy Merchant, it was clear that FAB had real staying power. Then with over 25% of its membership at the time attending the Fall Strong Women in Sports Summit, [FAB] became the premier organization of its kind in Michigan and a growing example of women empowering women in the 20 states in which it has members.

In the year since its inception, [FAB] has created mentor relationships between students and professionals, organized job shadows with hosts working in professions like the NHL and ESPN, and assisted in the job searches of countless young women and professionals. As of February 1st, [FAB] is averaging 1 new member per day, with a make-up of around 60% students and 40% professionals. We've been featured on the radio twice and in a magazine once. Presented at middle and high schools 4 times and career fairs over ten times. And perhaps one of the achievements we're most proud of is the fact that many young women and professionals find [FAB] valuable enough to list us on their resume, as a professional organization they are proud to be a part of.

Moving forward, we have many exciting things to come, including a spring event revolving around education and networking, our 2nd Annual Strong Women in Sports Summit this fall and our next Anthony Travel Discover Your Dream Scholarship contest. We will also be kicking off our HR initiative through which we intend to create relationships with HR professionals in sports organizations around the country, in order to have the best job openings we possibly can listed on our website.



We want to thank you, our members, for believing in our cause and our journey. We are constantly encouraged and inspired by all of you and how strong and empowered you are, and your willingness to pass that on to others. We are grateful for your support and ask that you continue to spread the word about the work we are doing.

National Girls & Women in Sports Day

In celebration of National Girls & Women in Sports Day, [FAB] is hosting over 50 members and their families at the Michigan State Women's Basketball game versus Indiana University, tomorrow, February 2nd.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day (NGWSD) began in 1987 as a special day in our nation's capital to recognize women's sports. The day united premiere organizations and elite female athletes to bring national attention to the promise of girls and women in sports.

In 1987, NGWSD also served as a remembrance of Olympic Volleyball Player, Flu Hyman, for her athletic achievements and dedication to promoting equality for women's sports; Hyman died of Marfan's Syndrome in 1986. NGWSD has since evolved into an event to acknowledge the accomplishments of female athletes, the positive influence of sports participation and the continuing struggle for equality for women in sports.

NGWSD is celebrated annually across all 50 states with community-based events, award ceremonies and other celebratory activities. NGWSD is organized by the members of the National Girls and Women in Sports Day Coalition. Champion women athletes have also contributed to annual NGWSD activities.

From NGWSD.org



SPRING TRAINING FOR YOUR CAREER

Mark your calendars for Friday, April 14th, 2017. [FAB] invites you to Spring Training for Your Career! This education and networking event is scheduled to include:

Recruit Your Career Panel - Featuring women in both high demand careers as well as less well-known ones. Speakers include the Director of Community Relations for the Detroit Lions and the Associate Director of Athletic Equipment for Michigan State Athletics.

Climbing the ladder: Stories of High Powered Women in a Man's World. Speakers include the VP of Broadcasting and Productions for the Detroit Pistons, the Athletic Director for Grand Valley State University Athletics and the Assistant Commissioner of the Great Lakes Intercollegiate Athletic Conference.

Women and Negotiating - Be the Best Free Agent and make sure you're getting paid what you deserve

Rookies and Vets: Advice for interns and supervisors - How to be the best intern and how to be the best supervisor. Featuring Athletics internship Coordinator, Chelsea Brehm.

Registration opens today and the cost is \$25 for students and \$30.00 for professionals. The event will run from 9:00 until 3pm. To attend, log on to our website and click on the events tab. We look forward to seeing you there!

Careers in Focus—Athletic Communications

My name is Chevonne Mansfield. I offer a unique perspective having an extensive background in college athletics combined with professional and international experience. All of that led me to my current role as Director of Communications at the American Athletic Conference.

My experience includes several years in professional sports, including an internship with the New York Knicks, the WNBA's New York Liberty and the NFL's New York Jets. I also spent many years in collegiate athletics, which I consider to be one of the most challenging and dynamic industries in sports today. I have also worked on the FBS level (in my current position at the American Athletic Conference and the Southeastern Conference), in FCS (with the Southwestern Athletic Conference and Howard University), and at University of Maryland Eastern Shore and St. John's University (N.Y.), which is my alma mater. My diversity of experience in sports, (ranging from communications/digital/social to special events & budget management), has sharpened a skill set in which I take great pride.

As Assistant Sports Information Director at Howard University, I helped coordinate media operations for three homecoming football games. Howard Homecoming is a national brand, and it was a pleasure working with the school for several years. As Assistant Director of Communications at the SWAC, I was able to re-shape the perception and image of one of the nation's oldest conferences, highlighted by the re-launch of the official conference website and growth of social media platforms. In my role as Assistant Director of Media Relations at the SEC, I helped expand the SEC brand and added value to Olympic sports by generating original content on the SEC site and using social media to communicate our message.

I have combined those experiences in my current role as Director of Communications at the American Athletic Conference. In that position, I am the conference's primary communications contact for basketball, a role which allowed me to serve as the media director for the American Athletic Conference Men's and Women's Basketball Championships, while assisting with IMG sponsor fulfillment for both events. Additionally, I work with our branding department to maintain a consistent brand and theme at conference events and championships, and work with member institutions to ensure proper usage of the conference brand. Working at the American Athletic Conference has challenged me to become forward thinking and progressive in many ways, including establishing and maintaining relationships and being creative in the utilization of various media platforms to attract followers and disperse pertinent information to all constituencies.

My educational training consists of an undergraduate degree from St. John's, plus a master's degree from University of Maryland Eastern Shore. I also studied abroad at the University of Leicester (United Kingdom). In addition to opening my eyes to global culture, studying abroad allowed me to gain valuable international work experience after working with the local basketball team, the Leicester Riders, in game operations and marketing. The Riders are members of the British Basketball League (BBL).

Higher Education and working with future leaders is important to me, and I give back to the community through my work as a college instructor at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, R.I.

If I could offer any advice to sports biz job seekers, it would be to work on your soft skills as much as your technical skills. Soft skills are often overlooked but intangible and necessary in professional and personal development. If you have some of those intangibles and can build a consensus, you will fit in well in any environment. Flexibility and being able to relate to different types of people is very important.

Leadership is different for everyone and can be expressed in different ways. Anyone can be a leader regardless of their management style, and leaders aren't always the ones in the highest/senior level positions. The key is flexibility. At all times, you must be your own true genuine self. That is what makes you influential and what makes you stand out from the crowd.



Females in Athletic Business

What Female Executives Can Learn From Venus and Serena Williams

Venus and Serena Williams are two of the most competitive women in sports. They're also some of the most supportive. On Saturday, Venus and Serena Williams will play for the Australian Open title. This is the first time in eight years that the siblings will face each other at a Grand Slam final and the ninth time they've had to compete with each other for a major win. Yet despite spending their lives vying to be number one—they have played each other 28 times over the course of their tennis careers—the sisters have managed to avoid a toxic rivalry.

"I am really proud of Venus. She is a total inspiration," Serena said Thursday during a press conference about the final. "I am really happy for her, and to be in the final together is a dream for us. She is my toughest opponent. No one has ever beaten me as much as Venus," she said. Venus shared her sister's sentiments: "[It] won't be an easy match. I know that it won't be easy. You have to control yourself, then you also have to hopefully put your opponent in a box. This opponent is your sister, and she's super awesome."

With these statements of support, each Williams sister is acknowledging the skill of the other. She does not say she doesn't want to or deserve to win. Rather, she acknowledges just how good her opponent is and how difficult it will be to best her. This, according to some sports analysts, is the key to their mutual success. As ESPN's Greg Garber writes: "They have always pushed each other onward and upward. Neither would be where she is without the other, as a person or a player. What if Venus had never been born? Would Serena have won 22 Grand Slam singles titles? Without the constant pursuit of Serena, would Venus have seven major championships? Almost certainly, the answer is no."

The need for women to push each other "onward and upward" is as strong in the workplace as it is on the tennis court. In the former context, the idea of women supporting women can be called "shine theory," a phrase first coined by feminist writer Ann Friedman in 2013. In a nutshell, Friedman hypothesizes that because of a perception that there are few seats for women at the table (be it in a boardroom or any other meeting room), women tend not to support other women in the workplace out of a fear that it is then they themselves who will lose out.

"Have you ever seen a campaign ticket or a boardroom that's more than 50% female? There's a deep-seated belief that there can be only one—or two, or three at max," she writes. Instead of putting down other women in the climb, a much more effective tactic for all is to lift them up—because if another woman shines, "you shine too," Friedman notes. The key is to win more seats at the table, not fight over the one or two already there.

There have been a few notable examples of this kind of thinking last year. One of the most high-profile was a Washington Post feature that documented how women in the White House ensured their voices were heard. When one woman raised a point, other women would repeat it, crediting its author. The tactic, dubbed "amplification," forced men to recognize the contribution of women and made sure they couldn't claim the idea as their own. "I just feel like no matter what happens, we've won," Venus said about Saturday's match. The same can be said for any professional woman who gets ahead. In a corporate world that is still almost entirely male-dominated—just about 5% of Fortune 500 CEOs are female—a win for one woman is a win for all.

By Valentina Zarya for Forbes.com



Presentation skills help women advance careers

Women in the workplace sometimes find it difficult to get the recognition and promotions they deserve. While women make up almost half of the workplace, they still earn 80 percent of what men make, according to the Institute for Women's Policy Research. There is a crucial skill women can learn to help them stand out from their peers: dynamic delivery. Each time a woman begins to speak, she has an opportunity to either grab positive attention or lose her competitive edge. Women need dynamic delivery skills in order to catapult themselves above their peers and make it difficult to discriminate against them. Without this skill, highly - competent women can remain submerged in the general employee pool. During my 25 years of studying women in the workplace and how they can best achieve their professional goals, I've developed these "three Cs" to become great motivational speakers:

Command Attention - If a woman doesn't gain audience attention at the beginning of a presentation, she's lost her audience before the first Power Point slide is advanced. Vary your vocal pitch so there is a roller - coaster effect when you speak. If you are dynamic all of the time, you're dynamic none of the time. Use questions, quotes or props to wake up your audience. Vow that "Good Morning" will never be your opening line again.

Command Memory - People relate to stories, but most stories are too long and fail to make the point. Learn to tell a story concisely and effectively so the lessons are apparent to the listener. Immerse your audience into the story by using sensory description: when people see, hear and feel the experience, you create a compelling story.

Command Action - People make decisions based on their own needs, wants and beliefs. Count the amount of times you use "I" in a presentation. Without a "you" focus, people tend not to listen.

Speech coaches know that audience involvement in an activity of some kind makes presentations memorable - and the desire to act rises from 10 to 90 percent. Pauline Frederick, an American star and film actress from the 1920s, said, "When a man gets up to speak, people listen, then look. When a woman gets up, people look, and if they like what they see, they listen." That's as true today as it was almost 100 years ago.

Women who succeed in the workplace work hard, dress professionally and get along well with others. But those who present themselves positively in public - whether it's in a one-on-one meeting, a board meeting, or presenting to an audience of 1,000—are provided with an express pass to promotion and career success.

-Kay Fittes—CEO of High-Heeled Success