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Women in the Club Industry

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

HEATHER
ARIAS DE CORDOBA

The last six years have tested the private club industry's resolve and those who make their livelihood within it. For many clubs and vendors it's been an environment of sink or swim with everyone waiting anxiously, for encouraging signs of recovery and optimism.

But what I find very interesting about business survival is that aside from large, publicly traded corporations, the only other demographic to provide a net increase in employment were privately held majority women-owned businesses, according to "The State of Women-Owned Businesses, 2013," by American Express.

Much has changed for women over the past few decades. Thirty years ago, most of America viewed women as homemakers, nurses and teachers. Our feature of prominent women in the club industry wouldn't have been possible, for many reasons, but probably the most evident is there were only a handful of women in the industry, and even fewer in a leadership role.

Today, women are high-ranking employees, influencers and vendors in and to the industry. These women are leaders and visionaries and they are the 'new member' at the club. Their needs and wants are different and the club industry as a whole has been changing to accommodate this contemporary demographic. Because of these women, clubs as a whole are more family-oriented. Women managers bring a different more co-operative perspective to the table and female vendors, service providers and association leaders provide alternative options and insights.

Still it seems the greatest challenge within this industry today isn't about being male or female, but rather about economic conditions, commitment level, time requirements and family sacrifices. A recent study by Cornell Hospitality Quarterly said, "60 percent of the men and women surveyed indicated that they were not interested in reaching a "top spot" in their organization." Some responses for both sexes emphasized self-imposed barriers such as work-life balance, priority for family and life-stage.

Over the course of 2014, we're featuring a distinguished list of Prominent Women in the Private Club Industry. I'd like to personally thank the women for their time and contributions. You're an inspiration to the young women just getting started in this challenging business and a valued part of this industry...continue breaking the glass ceiling.



And we continue our coverage of the industry's top presidents for 2013 and in this issue feature: **Rick Bennett**, President, River Bend Golf and Country Club, Great Falls, VA; **William H. Coquillette**, President, The Union Club, Cleveland, OH, and **Ken Chu**, Chairman and CEO, Mission Hills Group, China. **BR**

Got a comment? Drop us a note: heather@boardroommag.com