



## Michele McManamon, A Success Story

There's something so inspiring about watching your parent succeed as an entrepreneur. That's what happened to Michele McManamon, owner of Sandler Training. "I got the bug to be an entrepreneur early in my life as my father owned a small radio station in New Jersey.", she says enthusiastically. When Michele and her husband moved to Houston, Texas for her husband Pat's career, she was keen on starting her own business. Her career began as a Meeting Planner for a large logistics company, followed by starting a Window Treatment company when they moved to Baltimore, Maryland.

Once Michele and Pat were transferred to Jacksonville Florida, her husband asked her to go into business with him. "Pat wanted to travel less and be around more for the family, so that's where Sandler Training came into the picture.", Michele says. After Michele reviewed the business plan they both decided it would be best if they started the company together. With a leap of faith and trust in God, Pat left his 18 year career at CSX and started Sandler Training – North Florida with Michele in 1998. Sandler is part of a franchise network of about 260 offices around the country. Sandler Training is a sales effectiveness, sales management, customer care and development company. They specialize in addressing Attitude, Behavior and Technique to have a well-balanced training that is based on the Adult Learning Model – it takes consistent, long term reinforcement to get the best results from training.

Early on, they worked out of their house and rented space to do the training and have meetings. After a few years they bought a building to house their offices and training room. The challenges were to find the right people to join their team, from an office manager to a bookkeeper to additional sales and training staff. Michele and Pat believed strongly in not borrowing so they personally funded everything. "We had to figure out each of our gifts and talents in order to outsource things neither of us wanted to handle! Looking back, I couldn't imagine doing anything else for a career. Every day is more fulfilling than the day before. Changing lives whether it's helping a business owner, large organization or an individual exceed their goals financially and personally or helping a veteran find a fulfilling career is a gift from God.", beams Michele.

Along with her passion for helping entrepreneurs, especially our veterans, Michele gives back in other ways. Jacksonville is home to The PLAYERS Championship. It depends on more than 2,000 volunteers each year to help them present one of the most anticipated tournaments in golf. Each year, an exemplary volunteer is honored with a bright red blazer. It denotes that person as chairman of the next year's tournament. Michele was selected for the honor for the 2016 season. As a Red Coat, Michele was in charge of the tournament, the volunteers and oversaw distribution of \$8.5 million raised to benefit over 300 charities in North Florida. One of a only a handful of female Red Coats, Michele sees this experience as one of the best in her life.

Approximately five years ago Michele and Pat realized the training they were providing through the Sandler system was so powerful in helping their clients become stronger and more confident not just in their business profession but in their personal lives as well. They introduced a scholarship program for Veterans as a way to give back to the community and potentially help a Veteran get a career. One of their first graduates, Justin, helped them brainstorm how they could make a bigger impact on a greater number of Veterans. Welcome Operation New Uniform - a non-profit organization in which they train, encourage and empower Veterans in Jacksonville. Already, over 200 veterans have benefitted from their program.

Michele attributes much of her success to JWBC's ATHENA*PowerLink*<sup>®</sup> Program. She was awarded a panel through ATHENA*Powerlink*<sup>®</sup> in which the panel members consisted of a number of experienced professionals. The marketing team made the biggest impact on her company, as well as their organizer/lead who had an accounting background and was able to help resolve a major issue in bookkeeping. Michele and Pat believe the ATHENA program is a great asset to any organization and that women entrepreneurs should apply for the program at any stage of their business.



