

Joy Fulford Success Story – Feb. 17, 2021

By Lorrie DeFrank

Looking back, Joy Fulford believes that having just an idea when she connected with the Jacksonville Women's Business Center gave her a distinct advantage. Although JWBC excels at helping women at any stage of business, Fulford was able to use the expertise of mentors and peers to determine precisely what she wanted her business to be and make it happen. "The timing was perfect," she said. "Very successful business owners were saying they wish they had the benefit of JWBC before they started."

Fulford began taking JWBC classes in 2017 and spent a year interacting with experts before launching Onsite Performance Solutions in 2018. Owner and CEO of the management consulting agency that specializes in customer experience strategy and competitive analysis, she has customers from Maine to California to Texas and throughout the South. Most are home health care agencies. Others include an athletic performance company and a forensic engineering firm. Now she is the expert advising on recruitment, retention, service and growth.

An executive administrator in the automotive industry in Tallahassee when the market crashed in 2008, Fulford honed her competitive analysis skills by necessity to help dealerships take hard looks at what others were doing to stay afloat. Onsite Performance Solutions scrutinizes real data provided by companies to build advantages in determining such business decisions as marketing strategy and what to pay employees. She has been so successful that her business's sales and clients doubled from 2019 to 2020 and have continued to grow rapidly so far this year.

"We have been extremely busy during the COVID-19 pandemic because of how it affected home care companies," Fulford said. "There was a lot of uncertainty with what competitors were doing, like offering heroes pay and taking positive cases. Regulations for every state and locality were different and we had to learn how to differentiate those markets."

Fulford's focus on the home care industry is a direct result of her involvement with JWBC and its strong networking. She knew she wanted to start her own business but her thought process was scattered, she said. She took Marketing Matters and other classes to define her direction, finding the curriculum—including developing a business model, identifying value propositions and doing market analyses—extremely valuable.

Kathryn Murphy, president and CEO of Comfort Keepers-Jacksonville, was in Fulford's Customer Development class and saw not only her potential but also how Fulford's services could improve her competitive home care business. "She was my very first customer," Fulford said. "I still consider her a friend and mentor."

Murphy, who owns three franchises of the global company and used JWBC's services to enhance her own business skills, said she was attracted to Fulford's attributes immediately. "I loved her energy, enthusiasm, motivation, drive and creativity," she said. "She was receptive to suggestions, inquisitive and a great listener ... and sort of fearless in terms of taking risks to make her business as good as it is. She truly exceeded my expectations."

Relishing an opportunity to mentor and assist the next generation, Murphy influenced nearly all of the Comfort Keepers franchisees in Florida and many more across the country to engage in Onsite Performance Solution's services.

Giving back has been important to Fulford, too.

Aware of Fulford's success, Ellen Sullivan, former JWBC director, asked her to participate in the ATHENA*PowerLink* intensive mentorship program of another woman business owner—a 15-month volunteer commitment. Fulford ended up as panel facilitator for Rochelle Stoddard, owner and president of Berman Brothers & Rubin Iron Works, Jacksonville. "Helping Rochelle stay on task with her strategy was great and another example of a long-lasting JWBC relationship," Fulford said. "Now I consider her a mentor."

Fulford considers coming full circle with JWBC a privilege and rewarding experience.

"Coming from the male-dominated auto industry, the ability to build relationships with successful women who are business owners was huge for me," she said.

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