

Mindy Barker, A Success Story



“When you give you get so much more. My mentoring experiences with the Jacksonville Women’s Business Center have led me to learn so much from incredibly talented women. The JWBC leadership has been amazing! I am not sure how Ellen and the staff manage to help each participant in every program individually and collectively, but each of us feels blessed by their encouragement and insight,” says Mindy. These are powerful words from entrepreneur, Mindy Barker, owner and founder of Barker Associates. As an advisor for JWBC’s ATHENA PowerLink® program, she has mentored women on financial and leadership skills and regularly facilitates a risk management segment for JWBC’s Financial Matters program. Giving back to the community is important to Mindy as she takes time to serve on the board of the Children’s Home Society alongside volunteering to mentor and advise business owners.

Mindy founded her firm, Barker Associates, in 2012 with the goal of providing entrepreneurial business owners as well as nonprofit organizations with Fortune 500-level CFO management and consulting services. She saw the need in the market to equip her clients with the tools they needed to move their businesses forward enabling them to maximize efficiency and profitability. “We want our clients to develop positive cash flow and increase the value of their company with the goal of attracting investors. With my background, I am able to design financial strategies that drive focused results,” says Mindy. Prior to founding her company, Mindy held CFO and management positions in several companies and originally began her career in public accounting with Price Waterhouse Coopers and Ernst and Young. As everyone knows, obstacles and challenges abound as an entrepreneur. Mindy shares, “The biggest obstacle in the beginning was changing my professional identity. Having been the CFO of large and small organizations, there were some who admitted they were concerned about hiring me - afraid that I’d consult until I got another CFO job. I was determined to prove that financial infrastructure behind an incredible idea is essential. Not taking time to develop a business and seek investment funding from investors can lead to losing the enterprise value of the business.”

Mindy’s persistence paid off and even her naysayers have seen the value of her expertise and advice. She has since become a sought-after advisor and speaker educating professionals on achieving financial clarity, pitching to investors and strategically building enterprise value. “I am all about helping others and I am so blessed to have a business where each day I have the opportunity to do just that. It is

critical to have the right financial infrastructure – you must build enterprise value in your business. The same essential tools to sell your business are what you need to run your business. Every business is going to transfer ownership one day - don't burden your family with the headache of having to work through dissolving your business if you kick the bucket.”

Mindy's book, *Pitching to Win, Strategies for Success*, addresses prepping for a business pitch in a holistic manner by preparing yourself, the company and the team. The book shares stories that help demonstrate the true cost of not having the right infrastructure, clarifying the process of raising capital, including specific guidance on the seven essential tools required for a successful pitch. Writing the book was a very emotional experience for Mindy but she is overjoyed when readers at local events tell her how much the content helped them. Mindy is very thankful to the JWBC team stating how supportive everyone is in making themselves available to answer questions or provide advice.

“I initially learned about JWBC when I was asked by Linda Kelso to be on the ATHENA Panel to mentor Vicky Zelen. It was an incredible experience to be surrounded by wonderful professionals that provided the strategy Vicky's company, Zelen Risk Solutions, truly needed. I personally benefited by watching Vicky's business evolve and am so impressed with what she has accomplished today. I have served as a Mentor for the ATHENA *PowerLink*® program several times and stay in touch with my mentees as observing their growth is so rewarding,” says Mindy. As a speaker for JWBC's Financial Matters program, helping them realize that to have a sustainable business they need strong financial infrastructure is amazing to her. Mindy says JWBC has benefited her in so many ways. “I encourage others consistently to participate in the programs and attend the events. For me, working with bright entrepreneurs in JWBC's programs helps me understand how to communicate with those that ignore their business' financial infrastructure. Leaders such as Ellen Sullivan and Carlton Robinson have introduced me to gaining, processing and understanding how others think so that I can effectively perfect my marketing messaging and continue to grow my business,” she says.