



Tracey Phillips, A Success Story

Developing relationships in the community has been the cornerstone of growing Tracey Phillips' business. Her relationship with the Jacksonville Women's Business Center of over 12 years has benefitted her immensely. "What a great service the JWBC is to Jacksonville! I enjoy telling others how JWBC is such a great organization that can show positive benefits if you get involved. Taking the different entrepreneurial programs and attending the events is a must.", Tracey exclaims. As owner of Promotional Presence LLC, sharpening her business acumen, helping the community and having a healthy family-work life balance have been her cornerstones.

Tracey left a successful 15-year career in corporate sales to pursue her dream of starting her own business. She launched Creative Treasures, LLC, a personalized gift company in 2002. Her passion and entrepreneurial spirit were the driving forces behind her company and she found great satisfaction helping other women earn income while still being able to be there for their children and families. "We had a total of seven girls at one point doing home shows," Tracey says, "and I liked that because it gave women a chance to be at home with their children during the day but then at night be out and earn some additional money for the family."

In 2004, the roots of Promotional Presence began to sprout when the company was selected to create the commemorative plate for Super Bowl XXXIX. Tracey shares, "Our young company was one of three local businesses chosen to create a product for one of the Nation's most anticipated annual events! Our foray into the business environment began and we started to do more gifts and gift baskets with companies' logos. I tried to integrate two different consumer and business industries into one business model." But every entrepreneur has their challenges and for Tracey, a lack of cash flow coupled with a lack of knowledge on running a company steered her towards educating herself. "I went to as many classes and seminars as possible, read several books on entrepreneurship as well as took advantage of business services that were offered in the city. When the Jacksonville Women's Business Center opened in 2004 I went straight there and asked for help. Throughout the years I have attended many events and programs that have helped me become a better business owner. From one-day seminars to great programs such as Financial Matters and Customer Development, JWBC has such a diverse offering of classes to choose from. The impact can very specific – by attending Financial Matters, the 6-8 week class made me aware of my numbers and how I should keep my eye on different areas of my business that I didn't before.", says Tracey.

In 2009, Tracey decided to refine her business model focusing strictly on selling products to businesses. Newly rebranded, Promotional Presence LLC's offerings now included unique corporate gifts, employee appreciation gifts and promotional items. As she explains, "It took a lot of contemplating, looking at the numbers, running reports and evaluating business models in the hopes we would continue to grow."

As the emphasis of her company shifted, she began to reconnect with individuals from her previous career in the legal environment and business community creating business to business relationships. She was encouraged to join the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce and said she loved it! "When I joined the Chamber there I knew it would put me into contact with a lot of resources and companies that would be beneficial.", she states. Not only did Phillips join the Chamber but she became very active using the annual directory, becoming an ambassador as well as participating on the board of one of business councils. "It's like anything else - you have to show up, get involved and be out in the community," says Tracey. Her company is now

a member of both the Jax Chamber and St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce. Tracey believes that getting involved and giving back to the community helps create a culture that will elevate others and build a foundation for a successful business. She was the President of the Northwest Business Council 2011-2012, President of the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors in 2013 as well as serving on the Board of Directors and more recently, Tracey has just been named the 2017-2018 Community Outreach Chair for the St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors.

Today, her company, Promotional Presence LLC has two business development managers and a sales support admin with a goal of hiring two more people by the end of the year. The company has also moved out of the Phillips home to an office in Northwest St. Johns County on State Road 13. Her future plan is to franchise Promotional Presence LLC, packaging everything she's learned over her 13-year journey. She also hopes that by franchising her concept she can continue to help people achieve the kind of work-life balance she knows is possible. "Since the first day I started this company I wanted to help others to have a business, working from their home while spending good quality time with their family and enjoying life. We have a big business plan mapped out for the next three to five years and we're looking for people that are excited and want to be involved in that.", she says excitedly. As a proud mother of her son, Landon and a supportive wife to Dave, she enjoys her work life balance always making her family priority number one.