

pdxbizwomen
COALITION

SARAH SIMMONS

MEMBER PROFILE



PRESIDENT, R/WEST

Where I started

I grew up in advertising. Summer jobs in a Seattle agency were spent filing print ads and running errands. It was fun. I got to see first hand what my dad did for work (Creative Director). This was back in the day when great creative campaigns were born from three martini lunches. One day my dad told me to stop wearing my favorite red lipstick to work. He was neither conservative nor prone to telling me what to wear so I was curious. He said he heard some “talk” and he didn’t trust people. Well 75% of the office was men with 0 women on the creative team. It was that moment I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to be in advertising on a creative team. I went to University of Oregon, got a degree in advertising and found my talents were not suited for the creative team. It was a great place to weed wannabes out but I was damn sure going to go into that business. Today I get to work with amazingly talented creative people in an office of 75% women, red lipstick optional.

What I’ve learned

It’s only taken 25 years but it’s learn as I go. Here’s what helps me today.

Drop a dose of inspiration in your day

Learning something new fuels my soul. Whether it’s digging into a big client research study or taking a creative baking class, the insights and experience inspire me. In my business we say good ideas come from anywhere. Getting out of your day-to-day work zone helps. No good ideas come from staring at a spreadsheet.

Listening attentively can guide the story

Using your voice to speak up is 100% great but sometimes it’s ok to be quiet. I’ve worked with many people who aren’t the biggest voice in the room, but when they speak, it’s thoughtful, informed and impactful. I’ve learned that focusing on listening to different perspectives can lead to the most valuable insights. Personally, the moments when I’ve guided better outcomes are when I truly listened to myself.

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