

FIFTH THIRD BANK SMART BUSINESS
ASPIRE 2019
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 Jayne Juvan is on the host committee of ASPIRE 2019, which will take place on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. Learn more at:
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Fearless Girl inspires

Don't let others stop you from pursuing your professional dreams

As a daughter of a wealth manager, I grew up with CNBC's coverage of the financial markets. I particularly admired the tenacity and resolve of Maria Bartiromo, the first reporter to broadcast live from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and one of the only women on the trading floor.



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Given my passion for capital markets, economics and law, few in my network were surprised when I decided to become an M&A, corporate governance and securities lawyer. Some expressed concern because I was entering a heavily male-dominated profession, where women hadn't yet focused on helping each other. I saw Bartiromo as a role model, paid little attention to their concerns and initially, may not have fully appreciated what I was up against.

It hit me about a year out of law school when I attended my first board meeting with all men present. I didn't notice the gender dynamics until one of the men sitting next to me abruptly turned his chair so his back was facing me when he started to speak, signaling my "insignificance." I kept my composure, but the level of disrespect stung.

I decided not to be intimidated or quit, given my genuine passion for completing deals. A few years ago, when Fearless Girl was installed to stare down the Charging Bull in the heart of the financial district in lower Manhattan, it validated my decision to push forward.

Here are a few components of my playbook to not only stay in the game, but thrive.

■ **Develop into a recognized thought leader.** After my first boardroom experience, I expressed concern to one of my mentors about whether I would be taken seriously given my gender. He encouraged me to give speeches

and publish articles. He believed that anyone who challenged whether I knew what I was talking about might stop in their tracks if presented a copy of an article I published with a recognized media outlet to demonstrate my mastery of the issues.

- **Deliver value by being a connector.** One of the best ways to build a practice is by helping others grow their businesses. I regularly connect members of my network and have successfully orchestrated deals. Creating business opportunities for others will cause you to become indispensable to their organizations and will lead to opportunities you can monetize.
- **Don't be intimidated by "closed clubs."** Closed clubs for M&A deal teams that freeze certain individuals out, sometimes unintentionally, unfortunately still exist. Instead of shying away, continue to attempt to break down the barriers. Doing so is key to ensuring that you gain enough experience to develop into a trusted adviser and achieve pay equity.
- **Take calculated risks.** As the Latin proverb says, *audentes fortuna juvat*, or "fortune favors the bold." I've never accomplished my goals by playing it safe. If a path leads to a dead end, I try to recognize it well in advance and won't hesitate to take a risk and jump to a new one that has the potential to be more fruitful. ●