



Being a woman activist entrepreneur in a man's world

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Being a woman, an entrepreneur and an environmental activist, I am blessed to be able to follow my heart in business pursuits. In doing so, the path that opened for me was to become an inventor and bring the product that my partner and I invented to the moving and storage industry: a patented reusable plastic moving system that replaces single-use corrugated boxes in office moving. Historically male dominated - and even so today although much progress has been made - the moving industry is not particularly inclined to view women in business as equals.

That being said, add to the circumstances: i) the start date of my business was twelve years ago, ii) the product was ecological and there was no interest in ecological products at the time - no matter how well they worked, and, iii) I was not from the industry. Far from it...in fact, my former career being rooted in the fashion world, made it tough to establish credibility!

Many sales calls in the early stages went like this: "Who is that New Yawk dame coming in here tellin' me about the movin' business and her "invenshun"...Why heck...I don't need no plastic box...what was good enuf' for daddy...is good enuf' for me! I'll show you to the door now, and thank you m'aam!

Given that as our starting point...it took "intense persistence" to grow the "Tyga-Box" name into a nationally recognized and distributed brand.

How does one, as a woman, be intensely persistent in a "man's world" without being perceived as a "bit*h", a "pest" or other flattering references such as "pain in the _ss"? What must she do to get the owner of a moving company to return her call? Or the project manager, whose focus is on more impactful aspects of the project than the type of container used during its final phase...the move.

Over the years, comments from project managers have sounded like this: "the last thing I need to concern myself with is the type of box used for the move - let the mover figure it out." Or a mover would say: I'd rather use corrugated - my guys are more familiar with it.

Clearly unaware of my motivation to keep going, I struggled to counter the negative inner voices that said "give it up girl"..."just move on." It felt plain lousy that nobody really gives a "d*mn" about the environment, and I didn't like, that as a result, I'd been deemed "irrelevant" by so many others for years on end.

And yet...I continued with intense persistence...and have since come to understand that I was driven by my ecological passion...by the vision of being instrumental in saving trees from being cut down for wasteful purposes such as single-use corrugated boxes....and by a vision of what the planet can become if I (and others) adhere to a powerful Native American principle: "leave no trace behind."

Ecological passion compelled me to continuously improve my communications skills; to act on my intuition that although the men empowered to order from our company did not necessarily view the importance of our product's ecological advantage as I did, they were as integral to our ecological vision as the trees we were trying to save. It took nothing less than reinventing "me" and focusing

on a purpose much, much larger than myself to begin to understand the blessing of what it means to be able to follow one's heart in business pursuits.

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