

Spotlight on Women in Business: July 2011

R. Yvonne Campos, Diana Fletcher, Jill Sandilla, Molly Enos



R. YVONNE CAMPOS

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R. Yvonne Campos, a native of Austin, Texas, received the opportunity to move to Pittsburgh in the late '70s to work for MARC Research and Analysis Corp. and serve key clients in the region, like H.J. Heinz Co. Eventually, the company began transferring employees back to Texas, but Campos, 63, declined since she was a newlywed at the time and preferred to stay put. She then became an independent consultant, facilitating focus groups across the country. After several years, Campos decided she needed to do something that would generate revenue and income whether she was working or not. Since she was familiar with research amenities in other markets, she sought out to find why people were not making tracks to Pittsburgh as a market. Her research yielded interesting results: There was "potential for clients to come to Pittsburgh—[they just wanted] to make sure they had access to quality facilities like the ones available in other markets."

After conducting research and doing a great deal of planning, Campos Inc. opened its doors in 1986. Originally a qualitative company, Campos Inc. conducted focus groups during its first official shift; it certainly helped that Campos was able to continue working with clientele she'd amassed as a consultant.

A few years after starting up, the company evolved into a full-service market research organization, offering both qualitative and quantitative services. This year marks its 25th anniversary (the staff is "in the throws of planning" a celebration that also gives back to the community, says Campos), and the company's mission hasn't changed a bit: "What we do best is help clients understand the marketplace so that they can make smart business decisions," she says.

Staff members have the talent to "always ask the right questions" to help organizations get the necessary information while also doing what's ethically proper. Campos is constantly reading about trends and conducting her own research— not surprising for a self-confessed lifelong learner. "I'm just the kind of person who is always thinking about the future and its impact on the business," she says.

Campos, a nontraditional student, received her psychology degree after tirelessly attending multiple universities for seven years, finally graduating from the University of Utah while also working full-time. After graduation, her love of learning continued to grow, attending programs and training sessions at notable institutions like Carnegie Mellon University and Harvard University.

Campos attributes much of her success to being persistent.

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She's quick to note, though, that in her experience, there is not a way to actually "balance" work and personal life.

"Different things cry louder at different times," she says. "Then you just have to do the best you can. People have to cut themselves a break."

At Campos Inc., the staff has evolved and grown, now including teams that use emerging technologies to address clients' needs. And Campos recently received the Diamond Award for Top CEO in the region by the *Pittsburgh Business Times*. So, it's evident that this powerful woman must be driven by something. What, though?

"I am motivated by new ideas," she says, "and seeing other women who've done fantastic things and have impacted the region. I hope I'm motivating other women who want to be entrepreneurs, showing them it's possible to build a significant business."