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**Women in Business Marketing: An Analysis of the Glass Ceiling**

**Hailey Hornberger**

**April 19, 2024**

**Lee Honors College at Western Michigan University**

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## **Abstract**

The glass ceiling phenomenon continues to be a widespread barrier affecting women in various professional fields, including business marketing. While female representation in business marketing is witnessing a significant increase, persistent barriers prevent successful women from advancing any further in their careers. The purpose of this research study was to understand the perspectives and experiences of women in business marketing professions. The key issues highlighted throughout this study include microaggressions in group settings, sexual harassment, balance of work and life, leadership dynamics, confidence and self-doubt, lack of support, and the gender pay gap. Secondary research was used as an initial framework for these issues, followed by a discussion of primary research findings. The primary research consisted of 10 in-depth interviews with females in business marketing professions. The conversations uncovered barriers and challenges that women often encounter as a result of their gender. The data interpreted from the in-depth interviews was analyzed iteratively to uncover meanings and patterns. The intent of the research was not only to examine how the glass ceiling impacts women in marketing but also to gather recommendations for organizations and individuals to foster a better workplace environment.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Introduction**

The glass ceiling phenomenon continues to be a widespread barrier affecting women in various professional fields, including business marketing. In traditional male-dominated industries, women often see the top of the corporate ladder but cannot reach it themselves (Catalyst, 2023). While business marketing is witnessing a significant increase in women (Von Hoffman, 2024), persistent barriers prevent successful women from advancing any further in their careers. The purpose of this research study was to understand the perspectives and experiences of women in business marketing professions. The key issues highlighted throughout this study include microaggressions, sexual harassment, work-life balance, leadership dynamics, confidence and self-doubt, poor support structures, and the gender pay gap. The intent of the research was not only to examine how the glass ceiling impacts women in marketing but also to suggest recommendations for organizations and individuals to foster a better workplace environment.

Beyond examining these barriers, this study aimed to amplify the voices of women encountering unjust treatment. As a woman, it is important to advocate for all other women. Maya Angelou sums this sentiment up with her famous words from a New York Times interview (2007), “Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women.”

## **Literature Review**

### **The Glass Ceiling**

The persistence of the glass ceiling poses a significant impediment to the career progression of women in business marketing. The glass ceiling is not a physical ceiling, but rather a metaphorical construct preventing women from moving upward in the corporate ladder (Oakley, 2000). The main challenges addressed in this paper include microaggressions in group settings, sexual harassment, balance of work and life, leadership dynamics, confidence and self-doubt, lack of support, and the gender pay gap.

It’s important to note that women remain significantly underrepresented in CEO positions, representing only a small fraction of leaders within Fortune 500 companies. As of last year, 52 Fortune 500 companies were led by female CEOs (Fortune, 2023). Moreover, women at the pinnacle of the corporate hierarchy still encounter significant challenges that men often do not encounter. Studies have shown that women and other minority groups are too often put into leadership roles when a company is in decline, stacking the odds against them before they start the job (Fortune, 2024). While some barriers are noticeable, others are more subtle, making it increasingly difficult to address these unfair practices. Addressing the unjustifiable behaviors that contribute to the barriers preventing women from advancing in their careers is crucial to creating a better workplace.

### **Intersectionality**

While highlighting gender inequality and the glass ceiling, it is also important to address intersectionality. Women’s experiences can vary depending on intersecting factors such as race, religion, sexual orientation, and more. Intersectionality, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, describes social justice issues that overlap and affect people in multiple ways, creating multiple levels of

injustice (Crenshaw, 2016). Women from different backgrounds and identities may face varying degrees of barriers in their professional advancement.

### **Gender Inequalities in the Workplace**

Microaggressions represent subtle yet common forms of gender discrimination, encompassing verbal and non-verbal behaviors (Basford et al., 2013). These subtle acts often occur unintentionally within group dynamics. Women frequently encounter these biases in collaborative spaces, where their contributions may go unrecognized or undervalued. Unless employers can perfectly observe each individual's contribution in a group setting, they must decide how to allocate credit without having full information as to what each member did. This could leave room for gender bias to influence the allocation of credit (Sarsons, 2021). Consequently, women may find themselves marginalized in opportunities for promotions, compensation advancements, and other forms of recognition.

Sexual harassment remains a critical issue in the workplace, with alarming statistics revealing its widespread presence and the challenges women face in reporting such incidents. According to a 2015 Cosmopolitan study, about 1 in 3 women have reported experiencing sexual harassment at work (Ruiz, 2015). What's even more concerning is that a significant portion of these incidents involve harassment perpetrated by male bosses (Bennett, 2016). Despite the critical importance of reporting such abuse, many women opt not to do so, often due to fear of it potentially impacting their careers in a negative way.

Work-life balance remains a critical issue in the workplace, particularly for women navigating the complexities of career advancement. Women are penalized if they prioritize their personal life over work yet feel burnout if they overcommit to the job. There is a double standard that often penalizes women for prioritizing their personal lives over work commitments. While men's decisions to decline extra work are typically met with understanding, women face poor consequences. Many of these consequences include poor performance evaluations, limited recommendations for promotions, and a perception of being less likable by their peers (Heilman & Chen, 2005, as cited in Bennett, 2016). The expectation for women to constantly prioritize professional work over personal commitments not only hurts their well-being but also supports an unattainable standard in their professional career.

Having a diverse leadership is crucial for the success of a business. Women in leadership positions are more profitable, more socially responsible, and provide higher-quality customer experiences (Post et al., 2021). Traditionally, it has been difficult for women to climb the ladder to the top due to several factors, including the similarity bias. Men favor other men who are similar in character to them (Kramer, 2022). If you have a group of men in senior leadership positions, it becomes increasingly difficult for women to step in with them.

Women tend to judge their own performance more critically compared to men, who overstate their own performance. The self-doubt among women can lead to fewer opportunities and success. Women apply to fewer jobs than men after viewing the job postings and requirements. Women feel they need to be 100% qualified for the job before they apply. On the other hand, men will still apply for a job if they only meet 60% of the requirements (Phan, 2022).

Addressing these disparities in self-perception and job application behavior is essential for ensuring equal access to career opportunities for all individuals.

The misconception surrounding the glass ceiling phenomenon is that it solely concerns women. However, breaking through this barrier requires the joint effort of all individuals, regardless of gender. It will take every one of us, men and women, to stand up to this consistent problem. Instead of remaining quiet, men can use their voices to draw attention to women's contributions. Men can also step up by doing their share of support work and mentoring (Grant & Sandberg, 2015). In doing so, workplace culture will become an environment where everyone can succeed.

One of the more well-known unfair practices is the gender pay gap. Despite the push for equal pay, a persistent gap remains between women and men in the workplace. The 2024 Gender Pay Gap Report highlights this disparity, revealing that in controlled environments, women earn \$0.99 for every \$1.00 earned by men. However, in uncontrolled environments, this figure drops significantly to \$0.83 for every \$1.00 earned by men (PayScale, 2024). Closing the gender pay gap is not only a matter of fairness but also essential for fostering a thriving society.

## **Problem Statement and Research Objective**

The glass ceiling phenomenon continues to be a widespread barrier affecting women in various professional fields, including business marketing. While business marketing is witnessing a significant increase in women, persistent barriers hinder successful women from advancing any further. This research study aimed to examine the experiences and perceptions of women working in professional marketing roles. Specifically, this research helped identify specific barriers and challenges that women often encounter when striving to advance in their careers. The following questions were used during the research process:

1. What challenges contribute to the barriers hindering women from succeeding in the workplace?
2. Why do the challenges faced by women contribute to the barriers hindering their success?
3. How have organizations and individuals strived towards a better work environment for women?

## **Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to examine how the glass ceiling impacts women in business marketing. Qualitative research was conducted in the form of in-person and virtual interviews with women in respective industries. The study was approved by Western Michigan University's Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. An informed consent form, which can be viewed in the appendix, was distributed to the women before any research was conducted. In-person interviews were conducted at the Haworth College of Business at Western Michigan University. A conference room was reserved for the interview to create an environment that would feel comfortable for the participants to share information that may be personal. Virtual interviews were conducted through Microsoft Teams. The interviews ranged from 28 minutes to an hour and 27 minutes, with the average time among the 10 interview at 49 minutes. The length of the interview was dependent on how much information the participant was willing to share for the study.



During the study period, interviews were conducted with 10 women possessing expertise and professional experience in business marketing. Among the interviewees, many held degrees from accredited universities and possessed extensive experience in marketing and related fields. The subjects were given fictitious names for the purpose of this study. Other personal information will be withheld to protect anonymity; however, participants were selected based on various factors including years of experience, age, race, and other relevant demographics. This was a selective process to ensure diverse perspectives throughout the study.

Subjects were selected to gain an understanding of the experiences women in the workplace often encounter. The interview process was guided by a structured interview guide, which can be viewed in the appendix, and began with a brief overview of the research topic and the method that would be used. Initial questions explored participants' backgrounds and credibility in the business marketing industry, setting the tone for deeper discussions on the glass ceiling, gender bias, and the overall experiences of women in the workplace. The final segment of the interview delved into how individuals and organizations address and improve workplace environments for women. All of the interviews were recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions from each participant can be viewed in the appendix.

The data interpreted from the in-depth interviews was analyzed iteratively to uncover meanings and patterns. Each interview transcription was carefully read multiple times and examined for common themes among all participants. Organizational tools were used to categorize these themes alongside key quotes, facilitating a structured analysis of the data.

**Table of Participants**

Name	Estimated Age	General Occupation Title	Industry
Riley	Mid 50s	Sales Director	Food Distribution
Mia	Early 30s	Senior Marketing Manager	Food Company
Emily	Mid 40s	Marketing Executive	Food Company
Jane	Mid 40s	General Manager	Sports Management
Olivia	Early 40s	Marketing Manager	Chemical Manufacturing
Sophia	Mid 30s	Associate Director	Consumer Insights
Amanda	Late 40s	Marketing Manager	Packaging Manufacturing
Lucy	Late 20s	Senior Account Director	Advertising Agency
Ava	Late 30s	Marketing Manager	Beverage Distribution
Sarah	Late 30s	Creative Marketing Manager	Advertising Agency

## Results

The data gathered through the 10 interviews were analyzed and interpreted to uncover themes and patterns relevant to the glass ceiling phenomenon. A list of 7 themes were discovered and discussed in this section.

### Microaggressions in Group Settings

Microaggressions in meetings and other group settings are subtle, often unconscious, actions that communicate negative messages to individuals based on their gender. These behaviors can

diminish their sense of belonging and impede their career advancement. One participant noted she felt unwelcome at a meeting and knew her career would be halted by such behavior.

“I was raising my hand and asking questions and providing feedback, but they stopped calling on me. They didn’t want to hear from me.” –Riley

When women are marginalized or excluded in group settings, it can hinder diverse perspectives and innovative thinking. Another participant, in a heavily dominated male scenario, highlighted the subtleness of excluding women from the conversation.

“When I’m in meetings, they’ll say ‘gentlemen.’ They address the whole group. I’ll pipe up and say, ‘and ladies,’ especially on the executive committee, because I’m the only woman. They’ll just address gentlemen all the time or they’ll say, ‘gentlemen and lady.’ Why put me second? Generally, in our vocab and in our culture, it’s ‘ladies and gentlemen.’” –Jane

Furthermore, women may find themselves unfairly assigned to or expected to complete administrative tasks, such as scheduling meetings, notetaking, or managing paperwork, regardless of their qualifications or expertise in other areas of marketing.

“Every man assumes that because you’re the woman, you’re going to take notes, plan the events, and schedule the dates.” –Ava

The perception that certain roles and responsibilities are more suitable for women hinders the ability to climb the corporate ladder. These gender roles undermine their professional credibility and potential for career advancement. Working women may find themselves marginalized within their organizations, with their contributions overlooked or undervalued.

“I’m still sending out meeting requests and ordering food for lunches, and it takes away from my strategic thinking.” –Amanda

The burden of office housework disproportionately falls on women due to gender stereotypes. While some women may volunteer for these tasks, this dynamic can create an uneven playing field. Women may feel pressured to complete the extra tasks in hopes of becoming likable throughout the office. Unlike men, who do not face repercussions for refusing to do the extra tasks, women could experience major backlash. Conforming to the admin work stereotype can hold women back on their career growth because they are burdened with extra responsibilities that may not be recognized in the same way as their male counterparts.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Testimonials from this study shed light on the pervasive issue of sexualization and harassment faced by women in professional work settings. Boundaries were egregiously crossed by men in many of these scenarios.

“I had a [sales manager] that told me he thought it was okay to talk to me about his sex life with his wife.” –Riley

Some individuals may engage in behavior that makes others feel uncomfortable without realizing the impact of their actions. Such behavior often stems from a lack of awareness, societal norms, or subconscious biases. Another female participant highlighted the personal and professional boundaries that were crossed.

“I had a store director demand that I give him my cell phone...He said he couldn’t get ahold of me. My cell phone was a personal cell phone. It wasn’t a work phone. I had a pager for work and I gave him my pager and he goes no that’s not good enough and I need your cell phone. Fast forward 2 weeks, he calls me on a Saturday afternoon asking me out to dinner. He was like 20 years older than me.” –Riley

These scenarios emphasize the complexity of harassment in the workplace. It is important to highlight the need for understanding and enforcing clear policies against harassment but also fostering a culture of respect and sensitivity to boundaries. It's worth noting that workplace harassment can also occur outside of regular work hours and environments.

“The liquor buyer sexually harassed me verbally at a golf outing.” –Ava

Furthermore, women often find themselves burdened with the need to make accommodations, both in their choices of words, actions, and attire, that men typically do not encounter.

“I used to have to tailor my clothing choices based on where I was going. I remember I used to wear skirts and dresses and if I showed up to certain customers like that they would sit there and stare at me.” –Riley

These narratives highlight the urgent need for change within corporate cultures to address the sexualization and harassment of women. Acknowledging the seriousness of these situations underscores the collective power of solidarity among women in combatting such gross behavior.

“The most important part of this whole situation is when I spoke to HR. She put her pencil down and she looked me straight in the eye and she said you need to contact all the other women that you work with at other companies that work with him and encourage them to speak up because you know this isn't the only time. I told them I knew of other situations where women have come to me and asked what do I do.” –Ava

This emphasizes the importance of building a supportive network where women feel empowered to come forward and hold others accountable. Advocating for other women reflects the need for change and fosters a culture of accountability and respect in corporate environments.

### **Balance of Work and Life**

Achieving a balance between professional work and personal life is a significant challenge for women in business, particularly for those with caregiving responsibilities and professional aspirations. Moreover, the lack of adequate support structures, such as flexible work arrangements, affordable childcare, and inclusive workplace policies, adds another layer of difficulty.

“They are expected to work as if they don't have kids and have kids like they don't have a job... I think we have a long way to go to help working moms to be able to be the best that they can within both worlds.” –Sophia

One participant mentioned the unseen mental load carried by the head of the household, which further emphasizes the invisible burden many women encounter, often without recognition or appreciation.

“The head of the household has a lot of mental load that people don't see or understand.”  
–Ava

Women often bear a disproportionate mental load, characterized by the cognitive and emotional labor involved in managing household responsibilities alongside a professional career. Addressing the difficult balance of work and life is essential for fostering a more supportive environment where women can achieve fulfillment and success in both their careers and personal lives.

### **Leadership Dynamics**

Being a leader of an organization comes with significant responsibilities, chief among them being the cultivation of a successful work environment. While the marketing industry has seen a significant shift towards female representation, senior marketing positions remain dominated by males.

“I find marketing to be pretty evenly split or even really women-heavy, but where it becomes uneven is the leadership. There's definitely a higher amount of male leaders in marketing than females, but probably more females in marketing overall.” –Lucy

Women are still faced with this transparent barrier, even when they are in an environment surrounded by other women. For organizations to be successful and committed to their consumers, diversity within the leadership team is essential. When asked about the obstacles that prevent women from securing leadership positions, one participant mentioned the unconscious bias favoring individuals based on similarity and comfortability.

“I don't think that there are a lot of companies who are willing to take that risk or willing to take that opportunity. People have a tendency to hire, promote, and support individuals that look like them. If you have a bunch of men who are sitting at the table, then it's going to be very hard for them to each say my replacement should be a female or your replacement should be a female to equalize the table, unless they're forced to do it from HR, or from a law, or from something like that.” –Emily

Shifting the status quo starts with accountable leaders who recognize the importance of diversity at the top of the corporate ladder. Leaders need to challenge their own biases and seek out diverse perspectives.

## **Confidence and Self-Doubt**

Women in business frequently struggle with self-doubt and imposter syndrome, internalizing societal messages that damage their confidence and abilities. Although there are many external barriers, there are also internal struggles that inhibit women from advancing in their careers.

“I won’t put my name in the hat for a role unless I feel like 90% there. If I don’t think I can go in and show them immediate value, I hesitate. I think they’re going to change their minds or be sad in their decision. I need that affirmation and I need to be able to hit the ground running. I need to show them why they chose me. Men don’t think that way. Men go in and they may only be 40% there. They put their name in the hat and say I can figure that out...I’ve had to reassess how I look at it. I think what happens then as leaders that’s what you see, feel, and know. You’re going to go with the male that is confident in his ability over the female who is thinking she’s not quite there.” –Riley

Women tend to overthink parts of a job, whereas men don’t have that fear of speaking up. This could be deeply rooted in the differences between how genders are raised. Girls are often encouraged to be nurturing, passive, and polite, while boys may be encouraged to be assertive, competitive, and independent. Another female shared the same sentiment about women asking for promotions or salary increases.

“You don’t need to be a perfectionist. So, there’s that mental fear of not being ready, which sets women back.” –Mia

She also noted disparities in self-perception between men and women. Women are holding themselves back due to feelings of self-doubt, a characteristic not shown by men often in the workplace.

“I don’t think men necessarily have that conversation or fear to go for it, whereas women do, which could hold them back.” –Mia

Women often confront internal barriers when it comes to advocating for themselves. Women must switch their mindset and become fearless when applying for jobs, asking for promotions, and taking other actions that will allow them to prosper in their professional careers. By addressing personal doubts and challenging self-perceptions, women not only pave way for their own success but also create opportunities for other women following behind them.

## **Lack of Support**

Employers often fail to communicate their support or recognize the efforts of their female employees, leading to feelings of disconnection and isolation. One participant left her company due to unfair work environments and highlighted how frustrated she felt about being undervalued.

“The most frustrating part for me was I left and I had an exit interview with HR and they said we can’t believe you’re leaving. They said you were like our #1 or #2 retention priority in our department of 300 people. I didn’t know that. I never felt that in any way. I didn’t feel supported and didn’t feel like they cared about my career.” –Lucy

Furthermore, another female observed the dynamic between women in leadership positions and the internal competition between coworkers. Women may view other female coworkers as competitors rather than allies. Women, like men, are not immune to biases about gender roles and capabilities.

“I feel like women managers don't necessarily set the stage for another woman to come in and backfill them...We don't support each other to take that next step.” –Mia

Another female participant underscored the perception of tokenism in corporate diversity initiatives, where women may feel like they are merely checkboxes in the company's diversity agenda. There is a lack of genuine commitment to gender equality, which can break trust with the workplace.

“We're making progress, but it feels like tokenism now, right? It feels like a lot of companies are checking the box and men are playing along with it and they're sitting there silently rolling their eyes.” –Jane

Companies need to go beyond superficial efforts and foster an environment where women feel valued, empowered, and encouraged to pursue their career aspirations. When men sit back and passively participate, it further reinforces the unjust status quo. To foster a better work environment, men and women need to actively engage in practices and initiatives that truly advocate for gender equality.

### **Gender Pay Gap**

The voices of participants in this study echo a recurring issue regarding the persistence of pay disparities. Many of the participants from this study revealed they were grossly underpaid in comparison to their colleagues at some point in their professional careers. Several women mentioned never receiving mentorship or advice on the best ways to handle negotiation and compensation.

“I can tell you, for almost half of my career, I got paid thousands of dollars less than my male peers because I was a female...I drove more revenue to the bottom line than I had done in my whole career, and I was at almost \$30,000 less in annual compensation.” – Riley

Historically, pay secrecy has been the norm amongst organizations and individuals, leading to inequalities and discrimination. However, pay transparency has become more common among younger professionals. The emergence of pay transparency among younger professionals signifies a growing awareness of the need for open dialogue around compensation. Even so, one participant still faced challenges, even after negotiating her compensation to match her counterpart. It is evident that women are constantly facing challenges that men don't experience in their professional careers.

“One of my best friends at this company is a male who was also getting underpaid. Because I was able to get my pay increased, I took that information and I shared that with

my male friend, who knew he was being underpaid. Instead of addressing the issue, he was just trying to look for other jobs. I gave him the ammunition and said here's what I did. Go ask for it, and he did. One of the differences was the rate in which that pay was fixed. His got fixed within a month of him asking, and mine took about 6 months.” – Sophia

Women face challenges in compensation negotiations and it is evident that there are disparities in how quickly their concerns are addressed. A male colleague was facing a similar salary issue and encountered a different response from management. This situation not only highlights the significance of sharing knowledge, such as salary among colleagues, but also demonstrates an urgent need to reform outdated processes.

## **Recommendations**

Throughout this research, many discussions were prompted by questions about improving the workplace environment for women or other minority groups. Recommendations for both companies and individuals were discussed for a deeper understanding of how to break the glass ceiling phenomenon.

### **Organizations**

By investing in employees and providing them with the tools needed to excel, organizations not only foster individual growth but also cultivate a workforce that is motivated to achieve their full potential. One participant highlighted the importance of giving employees resources to be successful.

“If you put the effort in and give someone the resources and the tools to be successful, they’re going to be successful.” –Riley

There is immense value in giving individuals the opportunity to navigate and embrace the learning curve within a role. Rather than solely focusing on hiring individuals who are already well-versed, organizations should recognize the potential for growth and development in nurturing employees who exhibit a willingness to learn. As mentioned earlier, women have a more difficult time with confidence. Organizations can be better about understanding the difference between confidence and competence.

“Everyone's so quick to find the best and right person and how far along the learning curve can we get with the right person. I think there's something to be said for giving someone a chance to really embrace some of the learning curve. I know I'm much better at learning at the job.” –Riley

In addition to providing better resources, organizations must also ensure that all employees have equal access to resources and support networks. While women may find guidance and encouragement from female mentors, there remains a disparity in access to information and opportunities.

“My mentors or coaches in college were other women. It's like women in business, which is awesome, but I also wonder what the men are saying to the other men. You have to mix that up and give everybody access to all the information.” –Lucy

Addressing unconscious bias is essential for creating an equitable and thriving environment for women in the workplace. Unconscious biases, often rooted in societal stereotypes, can influence decision-making processes such as hiring, performance evaluations, and promotions. To mitigate these biases, organizations can implement programs to raise awareness among employees and managers.

“She's on an HR team that's really focused on all of the microaggressions, specifically towards women in the workplace...She said we're looking at hiring an outside company to come in and observe the microaggressions and document the things that are preventing women from being heard, from advancing, from really just having a fair position and voice, and pay.” –Ava

Furthermore, organizations must actively promote gender diversity in networking events and create spaces where all employees feel welcome and valued. Instead of women-only events, it's essential to actively encourage all employees to attend gatherings that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

“These men get together and make relationships with one another and have meetings without us. Here we are thinking that we're doing ourselves a favor, but in reality, they're all still sitting in a room by themselves, networking without us. I also think it sets up a very hostile environment with some men...I can tell you that a lot of the men are pretty annoyed about like women's only events and women's conferences...I would say the men play along with it, but a lot of them are much more hostile than we think to it. I feel like we're harming ourselves quite a bit in that way.” –Olivia

There can be unintended consequences to such events that can lead to exclusion. Hostile environments may be created among male colleagues who feel singled out. No one wants to be singled or left out of an event. Women, who have been overlooked in the workplace for a long time, are understandably cautious about some of these initiatives. Therefore, it is crucial for all employees, regardless of gender, to actively participate in events that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. This will create spaces where everyone feels valued and empowered to participate.

## **Individuals**

As individual employees, being accountable as a leader and advocating for others is crucial for creating a better workplace for women. Individuals in leadership positions, such as this participant, have the opportunity to actively review salary discrepancies and advocate for equal pay for equal work within their teams.

“I would also say that as I am hiring people and moving people within the organization, I have the opportunity to see multiple salaries and see how the discrepancy is between men and women. I've made corrections on my own team to say look HR there's no way that



you can have this male and this female doing the same job with equivalent experience.” – Emily

Moreover, being a leader involves not only advocating for equal opportunities but also actively supporting and promoting the careers of women and underrepresented individuals within the organization. Being a leader goes beyond holding an authoritative position. Leaders need to help create pathways for the career advancement of others.

“As a leader, my responsibility is to champion for others and do it frequently.” –Lucy

Women on all rungs of the corporate ladder should understand the importance of encouraging other women to challenge the status quo. This could include questioning outdated policies, advocating for inclusive practices, and striving for greater representation of women in leadership.

“It truly is going to take thousands of women raising their hands, asking questions, and pushing back.” –Lucy

One participant noted the importance of curiosity and openness. Acknowledging and respecting the experiences of women in traditionally male-dominated fields can help break down stereotypes and biases.

“I have so much respect when someone asks me what it is like to work in this industry, where there's a lot of men.” –Jane

Individuals must educate themselves on issues related to gender equality and advocate for change both within and outside the workplace.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

Even though the research conducted was comprehensive and revealing, there are several important limitations and opportunities for future research. Firstly, the sample size poses a challenge as it may not be representative of the entire population of women in business marketing. Resource and time constraints may have impacted the ability to reach a larger and more diverse group of participants. Conducting in-depth interviews takes time, and a limited time slot was given to each participant, which hindered their ability to discuss the topic on a deeper level. If given more time to conduct the interviews, additional questions would have been beneficial to grasp a better understanding of the participants' thoughts and experiences. An additional qualitative method, such as focus groups, could add a different dimension to topics surrounding gender issues. Additionally, the experiences and interpretations from the conducted interviews were subjective. Many of the interviewees interpreted the questions differently, and the answers varied by person. Lastly, temporal changes present a concern as the findings may not reflect the current state of the issue, due to shifts in trends, policies, cultures, and technologies. Interviewing women at different stages of their professional lives provided valuable insights, yet the breadth of perspectives may not fully capture present realities. Implementing these suggestions in future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by women in business marketing.

## **Conclusion**

Significant progress toward breaking the glass ceiling has been made. Female representation in the marketing industry has seen a notable increase across the nation. Nevertheless, organizations and individuals can't stop their efforts. Despite major improvements towards a better workplace, there remains a significant amount of work to be done.

An analysis of primary and secondary research indicates the numerous challenges women still encounter in their professional careers, including microaggressions in group settings, sexual harassment, work-life balance, leadership dynamics, confidence and self-doubt, poor support structures, and the gender pay gap. Based on these insights, data informed recommendations were established for organizations and individuals to create an equitable workplace for women. To drive meaningful change, it is essential that organizations provide high-quality resources and tools to support the success of all employees. Organizations should actively create spaces where all employees feel valued through initiatives and programs that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Moreover, challenging the status quo by asking hard questions and speaking out against injustices can significantly enhance career advancement opportunities for women. Curiosity to learn more about gender issues and educate others in the work environment can change the way people think and act. Encouraging open dialogue and driving a learning culture is crucial for breaking down gender barriers.

The journey towards an equitable workplace for women in marketing is ongoing. By embracing open dialogue, learning, and taking action, we can change the narrative for all women in business.

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## **Appendix**

### **Appendix A: Consent Form**

Women in Business Marketing: An Analysis of the Glass Ceiling

Primary Contact: Hailey Hornberger and Ann Veeck

Principal Investigator: Ann Veeck

#### **Study Summary**

This consent form is part of an informed consent process for a research study and it will provide information that will help you decide whether you want to take part in this study. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. The purpose of the research is to examine how the glass ceiling impacts women in business marketing. If you take part in the research, you will be asked to provide your knowledge and experience as a woman in the workplace. Your time in the study will take up to one hour. There are potential employment risks for taking part in the study since you will be asked to reveal barriers that you have encountered as a woman in the workplace.

Only members of the study research team will have access to the raw data, which will be recorded in such a way so that the data is not linked to any identifiable information. The potential benefits of this study include providing insight into important societal issues. Your alternative to taking part in the research study is not to take part in it.

You are invited to participate in this research project titled "Women in Business Marketing: An Analysis of the Glass Ceiling," and the following information in this consent form will provide more detail about the research study. Please ask any questions if you need more clarification and to assist you in deciding if you wish to participate in the research study. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing to take part in this research or by signing this consent form. After all of your questions have been answered and the consent document reviewed, if you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign this consent form.

What am I trying to find out in this study?

The overall objective of this research project is to examine how the glass ceiling impacts women in business marketing professions. Results of the interviews will be used to examine the glass ceiling and tackle problems relating to gender discrimination in the workplace.

Who can participate in this study?

Women in business marketing.

Where will this study take place?

The interviews will be carried out either virtually or in person in a location of your choice.

What is the time commitment for participating in this study?

The interview will take about one hour.

What will you be asked to do if you choose to participate in this study?

If you choose to participate you will participate in this project as an interviewee. The interview data will be used in academic study.

What information is being measured during the study?

The study examines women in the workplace and the impacts of gender discrimination.

What are the risks of participating in this study and how will these risks be minimized?

Your name, position, and place of employment will be recorded so they are not identifiable.

There are potential employment risks for taking part in the study since you will be asked to reveal barriers that you have encountered as a woman in the workplace.

What are the benefits of participating in this study?

Examining the challenges women encounter in the workplace provides insight into important issues related to workplace discrimination. The results will uncover the root causes and contributing factors to gender bias in the workplace. The research will also be used as a thesis defense for a graduating student at Western Michigan University.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?

Your time is the only cost to participating in this study.

Is there any compensation for participating in this study?

No.

Who will have access to the information collected during this study?

The principal investigators will have access to the interview transcriptions. Electronic data will be password-protected online at WMU for at least three years. Only members of the study research team will have access to the data. The data will be recorded in such a way that the data is not linked to any identifiable information. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings, but the data will be reported as aggregated data.

What will happen to my information collected for this research after the study is over?

The information collected about you for this research will not be used by or distributed to investigators for other research.

What if you want to stop participating in this study?

You can choose to stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. You will not suffer any prejudice or penalty by your decision to stop your participation.

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You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. Or you may call the investigator at any time, office phone, (402) 472-3279. If you have questions concerning your rights as a research subject that have not been answered by the investigator or to report any concerns about the study, you may contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (269-387-8293) or the Vice President of Research (269-387-8298).

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the lower left. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

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I have read this informed consent document. The risks and benefits have been explained to me. I agree to take part in this study.

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Please Print Your Name

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Participant's Signature

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Date

## **Appendix B: Interview Guide**

### **Introduction/Background**

1. What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry? What interested you about this field?
2. Where did you attend college? What did you study?
3. Can you briefly mention some roles and responsibilities you've taken on during your professional career?
4. What are your professional and personal goals?

### **Challenges in the Workplace**

1. Can you provide your understanding of the term "glass ceiling" and its relation to the workplace?
2. How is your work-life balance? Do you feel it is more challenging as a woman?
3. Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?
4. Does your current position require you to report to a male? Is your company/department male or female dominated?
5. Explain whether you believe business marketing is a male or female dominated industry.
6. Can you explain gender biased challenges that you've faced in your industry?
7. Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently in the workplace? Explain in the context of meetings, projects, etc.
8. Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts, and if so, could you provide specific examples or instances that highlight this inequality?
9. What are some big challenges women face in the workplace?
10. What do you feel prevents women from securing leadership roles?

### **Breaking the Glass Ceiling**

1. In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company? Are there any initiatives or policies in place aimed at breaking the glass ceiling?
2. Have you seen improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace?
3. How can organizations create a better workplace for women? What strategies, such as female mentorship programs, do you believe would be beneficial?
4. Are there any female leaders you admire?
5. How can women in the workplace make their mark?
6. What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?
7. Do you think the world has progressed or regressed in regard to gender bias in the workplace?
8. Do you have any final thoughts you would like to share?

## Appendix C: Transcript #1

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in business marketing? What interested you about the field?

Riley: Honestly I originally started, well I got my degree in accounting from [REDACTED]. I knew immediately that I didn't want to do anything that was behind a desk. I really wanted to be more hands on. I had worked at a local bank during school and I enjoyed the customer interaction. I also enjoyed the finance part of it because obviously I got a degree in accounting. I like numbers and I like the ideas of facts and figures. I stayed at the bank, but I just knew I should be doing something different. Then, I looked at sales. Sales seemed kind of like a no brainer. I, without even really knowing much or having any idea, ended up working for a local commercial printing company. I made the connection through a friend at the bank who knew the owner. I ended up applying and they took a chance. I had never really sold anything other than selling somebody on a new IRA or a CD at the bank. Long story short, I ended up being a sales rep and I loved it and I learned a lot. I needed to be with people. I needed to solve their problems or business needs. I liked the idea of being able to help somebody. Also, it's work and I got paid for it obviously. It was like oh this is cool. I can help somebody out, but I also get paid to do it. Then the ball just rolled from there. So, really from that point on, from about age of 24 is when I really got my first sales job. I've really been in sales technically since, but a lot of my roles have been either supporting marketing activities or selling activities. I've bounced around and done different things where I'm at today where I lead a team of sales folks.

Hailey: Where did you go to college and what did you study?

Riley: [REDACTED]. I graduated with a degree in accounting. I have 2 minors. I have a minor in management and communication. It kind of was more like HR and working with people. It's funny too because I only took the core marketing class. I waited till I was a junior. I was declared a business student, so you had to get a C or better. I got a D the first time, so I had to take it again. I hated the class and I can't tell you why. The second time I took it I barely got a B. It's really funny and ironic. Then, I've spent a lot of time as an adult giving back to the university by working with the food marketing program. Of course, now that's my whole life. I guess if I had known better, but at the time it just was not in the cards. It's funny how you just have to let life lead you down a path. That's my famous story. I had to retake 2 classes. The other was a super hard accounting class. My dad was furious with me, but I still graduated.

Hailey: Can you briefly mention some roles and responsibilities you've taken on during your professional career?

Riley: I started out with the local print company as just a sales rep. That company was struggling and I could tell that it probably wasn't going to be around much longer. I wasn't really sure how much longer. They ran into issues like paying bills and paying payroll. I worked there for actually 4 or 5 years. Then, I started looking. I went to the [REDACTED] company. I put in for a local street level sales job. I really wasn't sure what I was getting into and didn't really know much about consumer packaged goods. That's where I hit my stride. That was a match made in heaven for me because I liked being a brand, supporting a brand, representing a brand, and being able to grow and see your growth immediately. If you sold something tangible, you immediately got the cases and the recognition. It was pretty fulfilling because it was like right there and you knew you won. I loved that. I was there for almost 19 years. I started at entry level and I bounced around from retail and food service. I did a little bit of everything. I did some commercialization work for a couple years. I was the key account manager for a couple years. I was a sales manager at one point. [REDACTED]



Then, I came back into a key account position through that effort. Then, ultimately director over on premise key accounts for the Midwest. At that point I was with the [REDACTED] company, but they were moving into a [REDACTED] situation where they weren't going to own the [REDACTED] any longer. My role was going to be impacted and the [REDACTED] company that purchased that Midwest market didn't really have a good fit role for me anyway. It wasn't going to be long term, so I chose to leave. I went to [REDACTED] in almost the exact same role, but just Michigan. I lost 6 states and I stopped travelling, which was good because I have kids. It was great. I got some of the same customers that I had, so it was a really great crossover. Now I'm in the distributor world, which is so different than CPG. That's really what got me to here and now I manage a small sales team. I support our service team with taking care of the Michigan served contract customers. That's how it all happened.

Hailey: What are your professional and personal goals?

Riley: Honestly professionally I'd love to do something more and something bigger. I'm being very selective because I can and because I'm in a good spot. I am bringing a good level of value to my current team and my current business unit. If there were to be something that caught my eye, I would totally do that. I'm towards the end of my career. I'm actually kind of on the way down, so that's why I say it needs to be that one special thing. I can't really say what that is right now. Although, it would probably be more strategy development and supporting change than front line sales. I've done that for so long that I think I can help bring a higher level of value by helping steer the company with how we do it versus going and executing it. I've been doing that for a very long time. I've been successful at it, so I feel really good about what I've done there. Now, personally, it ties together. I'm probably only going to work for another 4 years. Maybe 5. The whole plan is that I have kids that just started high school and when they get out of high school I'm going to shift into different things. They are very busy young people. They both are pretty accomplished athletes and they want to continue on with sports at a higher level. If that happens, I want to be able to go and watch and support them and their dreams. So, I'd love to retire and downsize and follow my kids around and live like a gypsy.

Hailey: We will get more into the workplace and those challenges that you've seen as a woman. First, can you provide your understanding of the glass ceiling and its relation to the workplace?

Riley: So, the way I understand it and when I hear the term what it means to me is that there's an invisible barrier to women in general of getting to either the C-Suite or getting to a higher level from a senior level executive position. That's the way I look at it. So, the glass piece is that you can see and you know it's there. You work hard and you know what it takes to get there, but there's that ceiling that prevents you from actually achieving it. I don't know if that's what you all consider it to be.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance? Do you find it more challenging as a mom and woman?

Riley: 100%. It is 100% more challenging. I will say when I was with the [REDACTED] company I did not have a good balance. I was giving the company more effort than I was giving my family. It was premeditated. My husband and I made that conscious decision. We knew that for me to do what I wanted to do career wise that we would have to do that. He was very supportive. I'm thankful I did it when the kids were quite young, so they don't have big memories of that. That is good because I traveled quite a bit for a period of time. That was part of the decision of leaving [REDACTED] and going to [REDACTED]. It allowed me to draw a line in the sand and redefine how much effort I gave to both, without having to verbalize or make a big change that anybody would notice. When I went to [REDACTED] I gave them 100%, but I drew the line if my kids had an event or if I

needed to be somewhere. Don't get me wrong I still miss things because work is work and it pays the bills. At this point, my husband has retired and I'm the breadwinner. So, there's certain choices I have to make, but I would say I'm at 90% of all of their activities. I'm there at night and in the morning, cooking meals, and we are doing everything together. It's actually been really good. I will say that decision has really impacted and halted my career growth. Again, it's a conscious decision, so you kind of have to know, if I'm not going to put all those hours or spend more time with my family than with my job, then I'm not going to be as networked or highly thought of. I have accepted that the growth and development from a career perspective has really slowed down. I can't redo what I have with my family. I can always go get another job.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Riley: I can. I absolutely can. I will say today in 2023 it's not as obvious. I will tell you when I started at [REDACTED] it was daily and it was obnoxious and it was heart wrenching the way I was treated versus my male counterparts. Just in how people talked to me and behaved. I'd have to sit back and think about my role today. It's more the role I'm in versus me being a female that is impacting and brings bias. Now that said, 7 and a half years ago when I started at [REDACTED] there were a lot of people in my role that were females. That's not the case any longer. A lot of the people on the team were older white men, which is not the case today. There wasn't any diversity and in fact in my building I was the first female director of contract sales in my operating sites history. When I learned that I was like you've got to be kidding me. That was in 2016. [REDACTED] has never had a female president. [REDACTED] has had very few female leaders. That said, from a VP perspective and up, there's only 1 female on the team. If you include our director positions and operations team, it's almost 50/50 and it has people of color and all ages. I will say they've done a really nice job of that second level leadership team, but our senior leaders only have 1 female. And it's our HR lead, which is probably not shocking either.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male? Have any of your positions required you to report to a male?

Riley: So, I currently do report to a male. I would say more times than not in my professional career I've reported to a man. One of my best mentors and sponsors was a female. She's the one that promoted me to a director at [REDACTED]. Ironically enough, she's now at [REDACTED] and she's a region president. She is kicking butt and doing a great job. So, it's funny that we're back together. She pushed me so hard to push back and to say what was on my mind and to call people out. She's great like that. She helped me find my voice and use it for good. I would say more times than not I've worked for men. I will tell you there's only about 3 of them that I still stay in contact with and that I respect immensely. They were supportive of me. My gender didn't have anything to do with our relationship or recognizing my productivity. I do respect those folks. Other than that, I have had a lot of really bad managers and almost exclusively have all been men. Sadly, consumer packaged goods are ahead of food service distribution. When I was there it was very lopsided. For example, the [REDACTED] company that I left, I was the only female director on the team. The oldest director was about 40 and at the time I was 45. There was 1 man who was of color. Other than that, they were all 35, white, same haircut, same suits, and same everything. I showed up at one of our [REDACTED] meetings [REDACTED]. The first [REDACTED] meeting I went to I sat down in the room and I was blown away. There was another girl and she was the commercialization director and I was director of on premise key accounts.

Otherwise, there was not one other female in a room of 40 people. Those were the ones that were transitioning into this new business and I knew right away. I was raising my hand and asking questions and providing feedback, but they stopped calling on me. They didn't want to hear from me. I went home and told my husband this is not good. We have to look into something new. He was like you don't want to work there then. I've had a lot of really bad managers. I could go on. There are stories for days. I had a [sales manager] that told me he thought it was okay to talk to me about his sex life with his wife. I was maybe 8 months at the company. I went to [redacted] a little later, so I did this other job first. I say a little later, but it was really where I started building my career. I was almost 30 by the time I got to [redacted]. I didn't really find my stride until then. I was 30 and most of my peers were 22 to 24, right out of school. It blows my mind. I don't think he meant anything malintent, but the idea that we would just be on at work and he could just share this information with me. I just remember going home and thinking to myself what the heck. I had a [redacted] store director demand that I give him my cell phone because we mis serviced the account one day, like we didn't build a display or something. It was my responsibility and I had a team of people that would go do that for me, but they didn't show up. He was livid. He said he couldn't get ahold of me. My cell phone was a personal cell phone. It wasn't a work phone. I had a pager for work and I gave him my pager and he goes no that's not good enough and I need your cell phone. Fast forward 2 weeks, he calls me on a Saturday afternoon asking me out to dinner. He was like 20 years older than me. I could go on for days. It was bad. I just remember the first thing I did Monday morning was walk into my sales manager's office and said the guy called me. This isn't okay you need to do something about it. He's like I'm on it and drove to that store and he talked to the director. The director was mortified. He ended up moving to another store and ultimately they gave me that store too. I could count on my right hand the amount of woman I've worked for. Maybe 4 or 5 woman. Isn't that crazy? I'm trying to change it for you and my daughter. We've come a long way, but there's so much to do still.

Hailey: Can you explain whether you believe business marketing is a male or female dominated industry?

Riley: My scope is limited through CPG. I would say there's a lot of women in the marketing field, but probably not leadership roles. I would say it's still more male driven. I say that but I don't know what it looks like in the tech industry. I know from a service industry it's still male dominated. [redacted] is a great example. They are so much better than they were. When I left and went to [redacted] I felt like I took 20 steps back into time because [redacted] made it a priority and got feedback. There's all this analysis done on diversity in the workforce. If you have a diverse company and represent the market in which you serve, whatever business you're in, you tend to have higher profits. It's proven. [redacted] embraced that and were on a mission to improve their diversity and grow their earnings per share. They saw the direct correlation and they were all in on that. [redacted] has understood and embraced that in the last 3 or 4 years. I will say [redacted] has gone further faster than [redacted] did, but [redacted] did it earlier. They were kind of pioneers. They were doing it in CPG where no one else was really doing it. Well other companies were doing it, but the bigger companies were taking note because they were so successful at it so early on. It was slow because it was hard to stop and pivot. It was difficult and I give them a lot of credit. They were pioneers from my perspective. I would say even today our leadership team at [redacted] is really diverse and balanced. From a sales perspective, it's all men. From marketing and commercialization and supply chain, we are in the process of finding a new supply chain lead and she was a female. She came in and she made some things happen. It was a second gig for her. Our commercialization lead is a female, but everybody else is male.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women were treated differently in the workplace? Explain in the context of meetings or projects.

Riley: I've been to meetings before where I was the lead for the meeting and whoever was on the other side of the table didn't want to hear from me. They wanted to hear it from whomever. I've actually gone to meetings where I was the supervisor and my subordinate was a male and they engaged the male because they thought he was in charge. I'd say it's been 5 or 6 years since that's happened. I can tell you I was newer to the company and we went on a sales call and it was like they couldn't believe it. Again, the pattern at [REDACTED] was that men handled it. I've had a lot. Honestly the sad part is that most of it has been internally. So, it's almost like what does your boss say. What does your boss want to do. I can't think of specifics. I've had customers before too. It hasn't so much now that I'm older. There must be something about age, maybe it's ageism. Now that I'm older, more confident, and more comfortable, they get that I'm the supervisor if I were to walk into a meeting. I was a pretty young leader. I started running business units at a young age. I used to have to tailor my clothing choices based on where I was going. I remember I used to wear skirts and dresses and if I showed up to certain customers like that they would sit there and stare at me. I'm like what are you looking at and what is going on. I was going in with such positive intent. I don't want to say this stuff catches me off guard, but more times than not I just hope the best for everyone. In a business situation, the last thing I think of is that they are going to discount me by my gender or my attire. I always think I can help them until they prove me otherwise. They prove me otherwise and I'm like what just happened. It does catch me off guard because I've earned the right. I've earned the right to be at the table so I just go because I should be there and when it doesn't happen that way it always throws me for a loop. I actually had a female customer 2 weeks ago. I'm director of contract sales and we had an operations issue. We had some deliveries issues with this particular customer, so we took our director of transportation from our [REDACTED] site. We met the customer and she didn't want anything to do with me. She wanted [REDACTED] to tell her about the situation even though I'm the one that fixed it for her. I was the one that was leading the meeting. She actually wanted to hear from [REDACTED], which was fine. I just sat back and let her have her moments. [REDACTED] knew enough about the situation, but she started asking really tough questions and he just kept saying [REDACTED] going to have to jump in on that. Finally, she realized [REDACTED] is the one that is going to help me with that. I don't know if it was because I was a female. [REDACTED] is very put together, attractive, well dressed, and well mannered. He is that guy. He commands a presence. I don't know if she thought because he was a guy and the way he was dressed that he was in charge. At one point she asked what is your role and that is when it changed.

Hailey: What are some big challenges that women face in the workplace?

Riley: Honestly, the biggest 2 challenges is opportunity and support. We talked about it earlier. There's no way a man could have done what I did in my career, if he had a family and if he was the lead caregiver. There's no way because it's almost like they were taught and raised that they have one priority. That's to go get a job, be the best you can be, grow and develop yourself, and get married. I saw it over and over and over again. All these super successful guys had a wife that stayed home or worked around them and their careers, so that they could take care of the house. So that that guy could have it all. Women were not programmed that way. We weren't taught that. When I was a young lady, I was taught how to keep a home. I wasn't taught it's okay to go be a career focused female. From a personal perspective, my personal life would never have worked had I married to anybody other than who I married. My husband has been amazing. He owned his own business. He is very flexible, very family centric, very supportive in what I

do. It took a very unique male to make our situation work. Whereas almost every man I know there's all kinds of women that would support that, which is mindboggling. I think it's support. I don't mean just necessary from a personal perspective, but also from a professional perspective. I think companies are starting to understand. Organizations are starting to get it. Honestly, I think Covid was a big deal. I think that was a big part of it. Women can't do it all. We can't do it all. Something has to give. If you want a talented female on your team or in your organization, you have to figure out how you're going to support them. Not just a female but anybody. How do we support anybody who doesn't live what used to be considered the traditional model. More people don't fit into that model than do. I always say everyone's normal is their normal, but there's no normal. My life is not your life. Your life is not her life. Everybody has their own set of challenges and their own set of what they're up against. I think in general there just needs to be more support. I think understanding comes with that. If you're going to be supportive you have to understand what someone's up against. I will say I have a quick tangent on that. After I had children I was a much better leader. I am 10 times the leader than I was prior to having children. I never understood it. I thought I did. Intellectually you think you know. Also, it made me more compassionate just in general. Having children made me a better leader. The other piece would be opportunity. I think it's similar for race too. I think there's this bias and I think for some people it's unconscious. If you see a female's name on the resume or if it denotes any sort of ethnicity or cultural difference or religious difference, instantly there's this discount. I'm sure people don't even realize that they do it. I know I have some unconscious bias. I work on it all the time. I could probably tell you what they are just because I'm so aware of it and I'm trying really hard to not be like that. I'm a mom so I want to model good things for my kids. I don't want them to be that way because that's how you break the cycle. I think part of that is just education. People just need to understand. I think resumes are really tough. I think people discount it based on names. Even for experience I think some people may very well have the skill set or the capability to do something different. You can't see that in black and white. I do think there's a lot of that. Everyone's so quick to find the best and right person and how far along the learning curve can we get with the right person. I think there's something to be said for giving someone a chance to really embrace some of the learning curve. I know I'm much better at learning at the job. There are so many roles I could put in for that I'm from a skill set perspective already there. It's not going to develop me. I might help somebody out of a spot on a project or something, but then there isn't any growth or development. I think that's really where you see the fun. You've got someone who hasn't quite got the skills. You know it's there, but they just haven't brought it out yet or there hasn't been an opportunity. I think opportunity is the other one. Not only am I female but I'm in a part of the business at [REDACTED] that is considered contractual. A lot of our profit is removed because we had to enter into a contract to get the business. When you do that you reduce your margins. My business isn't necessarily as profitable as local sales business. Because it's not as profitable, it's treated different. There's less resources and less exposure. Just go figure it out and don't cost us more money. Because I manage this low profit piece of business, I'm seeing more bias than I would for gender. I want to go do other things, but they look at it and go yeah all you've ever done is manage contract business. That may be true at [REDACTED]. I have the skillset to do the rest of it, but no one has been willing to take the chance. I'm a better coach, developer, trainer, leader, and customer relationship. That's my strengths. This contract business isn't what I excel in. It just happens to be where I landed and what I'm doing. I think it's because of the role and not my gender, but maybe it is my gender too. Again, we haven't had any vice presidents, other than human resources, be females in

Michigan. We have a new president, so we will see what it's like in the next couple of years. I don't know if that answered your question. Females just need to be given the opportunity. I would say education and support. You get what you pay for and you get what you support. If you put the effort in and give someone the resources and the tools to be successful, they're going to be successful. If you hired the right person with the right skillset. If you hire the right person with the skillset and throw them in there. I've read a lot about this and I know for myself, I won't put my name in the hat for a role unless I feel like 90% there. If I don't think I can go in and show them immediate value, I hesitate. I think they're going to change their minds or be sad in their decision. I need that affirmation and I need to be able to hit the ground running. I need to show them why they chose me. Men don't think that way. Men go in and they may only be 40% there. They put their name in the hat and say I can figure that out. I'm going to do that. I'm the guy. I've had to reassess how I look at it. I think what happens then as leaders that's what you see, feel, and know. You're going to go with the guy that is confident in his ability over the female who is thinking she's not quite there. I think the unconscious bias comes out whether you realize it or not. It's bad learned behavior. In my career I didn't have a lot of good role models and the environment in which I came up in the business world.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing those leaderships roles?

Riley: It's mostly men making those decisions. I think it really does tie back to women not putting their name in the hat until they feel like they are almost there. It's both of those things. We've taught women that. I wonder at what age does that mind shift change. Is it your generation or the generation after me. Maybe it hasn't happened. Until somebody starts thinking differently. It's also familiarity. They are going to hire someone that's just like them. We're in this perpetual downward spiral of all these men hiring people just like them; a man who probably makes mistakes and doesn't care. I think that's why. We got to get different people in leadership roles.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company? Are there any initiatives or policies in place aimed at breaking the glass ceiling?

Riley: Yes absolutely. We actually hired a lead for diversity and inclusion at [REDACTED] a couple years ago. She is this dynamo out of [REDACTED]. She is really well known in the industry for her DEI efforts and work. Within 3 years, we're already being recognized for the change. It's been lightning fast since we got her on board. She has turned the company upside down. It's been really fun. [REDACTED]. You should look her up. She is fantastic. Our new CEO hired her. The board of directors broke the cycle. They kept hiring these older gentleman that were in distribution. That's who was running our company. It was the same guy, but he just looked different. He was the same age and came from the same background. They stopped. We got this guy who ran [REDACTED]. He knew retail. He didn't know distribution. It didn't matter. When he got here he probably looked around and went what the heck. He has a completely different perspective. He wants the best person and brings the best value for that role and that's what we need. He's been on fire. We have diversity in our leadership team now. We didn't have that 5 years ago. We have a DEI officer. We didn't have that 4 years ago. Now they are recruiting high caliber individuals, who are younger and outside the industry, to our emerging vice president leadership roles and promoting them to president pretty quickly. There's 36 regions and out of the 36 at one time there were maybe 8 were females. We had people of color too. Now it's 50%. Either a different race or females. It's females that are crushing it. My friend, [REDACTED], was hired out of South Florida, and she turned South Florida around in 2 years. They were unprofitable and retention was low. All the business metrics that you look at for success. She

turned it around in less than 3 years and they moved her to Central Florida. Central Florida wasn't doing so well. They replaced her with another female from outside the industry and she took over and [REDACTED] moved onto a new region. She's doing the same thing there. It's fun because you see Minnesota and New York go through it with a female. Some of them are females that have been with the company for a while, but they are now suddenly getting opportunity. Different people are making the decisions. It's been really fun. Now you look around and they get it. We still have a long way to go. Don't get me wrong. You've got to start somewhere and at the top. That's the only way it's going to work. We just need it to trickle down to Michigan.

Hailey: How can organizations create a better workplace for women? What strategies, such as female mentorship programs, do you think would be beneficial?

Riley: Well, honestly I do believe in having someone take the lead on DEI. That was been game changing for us. If you don't make it a business objective I don't think an organization is going to be successful long term. You can do things in the short term and move some thing around. You really have to have robust and achievable goals. They have to tie to your business goals. It can't just be we are going to be more diverse. You have to say we're going to do x y and z by this date and this is how we're going to do it. It needs to be treated like you would for supply chain or marketing. I think every organization needs a DEI lead. That's a good start. What was the second question?

Hailey: What strategies, such as female mentorship programs, do you think would be beneficial?

Riley: I think it's how you pair people in mentorship. You have to be very thoughtful in how you execute those programs. Personally, I believe true mentorship happens organically. You can pair people through programs and you can get value out of that. I will tell you in my 30 plus years, the best mentorship and guidance I've received has been when the relationship happened naturally. I very rarely keep in touch with my formal mentors. I've been on the other end where I've been a mentor to colleagues and other females and they very rarely stay in touch. It's tough. It's like dating. You are either compatible or you are not. You either connect at a certain level or you don't. Intellectually, I've got some good coaching and feedback. I haven't actually felt like I got good mentorship. [REDACTED] happened organically. She was great. She was my supervisor. She was very upfront with me and straight forward. She was kind about it, but she was tough. She had high expectations for everybody. When you let her down she let you know about it and gave you a second chance. She was right there sponsoring and supporting me. I think it happens best naturally. I think resource groups in organizations are really good. I think they have to be really strategic in how it is executed. It can't just be oh we need more women leaders. How do you take that resource group and champion good progress and change. That's really tough. I will say it's been easier now that we have this DEI officer. We have a women's group. I feel like we only hear from them when it's international women's day. It's challenging. You have to be very strategic. It like has to be your job. That has to be what you do for a living and you have to be dialed in. It's great that we participate. I do participate and I try to support and do what I can. I want to give back and help. I'd love for it to look different for women behind me. I also think that it's tough because you have to be dialed in to make those work well. Have you heard of Women's Food Service Forum? It's an organization. It's a networking group that supports women in food service. It's been around for a long time. They've done a great job. Our company has aligned with them. That's been helpful because it's a resource for our company to look at and model. They've been following trends in the industry and it's all food service related. A lot of it could relate to marketing. If you are inclined you should check them out. They've done a lot of great studies and surveys. Those are all great. I would recommend them. Ours is called impact.

It's for women to make an impact. Part of the success of not only doing it right but also have all genders participating. I'm sure this isn't shocking, but 90% of the members of the group are women. It should probably be more male participation. That's how it's really going to change.

Hailey: Are there any female leads that you admire?

Riley: I do. I admire a lot of female leaders. I bounced around a little bit. I love Condoleezza Rice. I don't know if you've ever heard her speak, but I've been to a few conferences and she's been there. She's amazing. She's so chill and laid back. I mentioned my friend, [REDACTED]. She's an amazing leader. I get warm and fuzzy when I hear from her or talk to her. I have a lot of friends that are female leaders and I admire them. It's mostly women in my circle. I'm trying to think of somebody I would fangirl over. There are some really great young women in the entertainment world. I don't always align with their political or social views. I think they are representing themselves well. I respect that. I love Taylor Swift's message. I love what she does. I think she's a great role model for young women. Also, Kelly Clarkson. They happen to both be singers. I follow women on social media, like Jennifer Aniston. She's not married and doesn't have kids, but she's a great role model. I love Kristen Bell. Jennifer Aniston is more my age. There's this great wave of folks. In media, I see more younger women in media. There are newscasters who are on the show and are pregnant and they have their baby and come back or don't come back. They treat it so much better than they used to. Companies are better about that.

Hailey: How can women in the workplace make their mark?

Riley: You have to speak up. You have to speak up and raise your hand. If something isn't right you have to say something. It's not easy and there could be fall out from it. I really believe in this day there is someone you can take the information to. Don't let it go. It really is going to take years and decades. It takes all of us constantly raising our hands and bringing things to people's attention. I'm going to guess most men and women don't even realize it's unconscious and learned behavior. It's like slang. People use slang that's totally inappropriate, but they don't know it because they don't know where it means or where it originated. They still say it and they aren't aware they can't say it. It's education. People need to have an open mind. Us girls have to raise our hands and say when it's not right. If we don't it will take longer and it will push on to the next generation. I don't think I've made any big changes single handedly. I think indirectly in my leadership I try to leave a positive mark, without sounding overly aggressive. I've been trying to be the best role model I can show that given the opportunity and chance and equal treatment, this is what you get. I am proud of what I've brought to the table and what I've done for all the companies I've worked for and the teams I've led. I've been given good opportunity and responsibility. As a leader, my responsibility is to champion for others and do it frequently. I just had a conversation with my boss 2 weeks ago. My current position is more about my role than my gender. It was hard. I was nervous about it because I haven't called him out on too many things in the past. He was great about it, which led me to not be afraid and to do it the right way. Another woman at the company encouraged me. She told me you have to talk to your boss about this. Right now, I'm in a mentorship program where I'm a mentor and a mentee. The woman that is my mentor is a vice president of finance out of New England. We don't work for the same people and we have different lines of work. She's been doing this a long time. She's younger, but more successful. We were having this conversation and I said he's not treating me fairly because of x y and z and the role. She goes what has the conversation been. I have mentioned things here and there. She goes no have you had the talk. I haven't had the talk. She goes why not. I said he's not going to want to have the talk. She said yeah but you do. So, I talked to him and he was great. I often times get overlooked and left out of certain projects or conversations because of the



role I'm in. I was bringing that to his attention and he was shocked and said to point it out. Typically, I don't know about it until after the fact. He wanted to start hearing about it because he wasn't doing it purposefully. There's been a couple times where I've sent an email and showed an example of what I was talking about. I am getting more information.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?

Riley: Be prepared and be ready. I don't think I would say expect the worst, but you have to expect some challenges. Be prepared. Don't back down. Go do and be what it is you want to do. Find some help along the way. It truly is going to take thousands of women raising their hands, asking questions, and pushing back. I can't change the world by myself. I would say be fearless. Use your voice. Raise your hand. Unfortunately, especially in marketing, it's part of the responsibility. I know some people probably don't want that responsibility, but you have to unless you want to get paid less and have less opportunities. I can tell you, for almost half of my career, I got paid thousands of dollars less than my male peers because I was a female. I'm only 55. That just happened. That wasn't a hundred years ago. I had my last VP at [REDACTED] tell me they were looking at my salary before the merge with the bottling system because I was grossly underpaid next to my peers. I outperformed all of my peers the last year I was there. I had my single best year ever at [REDACTED]. I drove more revenue to the bottom line than I had done in my whole career, and I was at almost \$30,000 less in annual compensation. That was 8 years ago. Think about what that could mean today. That stung. That was part of the reason I chose to leave. It was a clean slate and I showed this is my value and this is what I'm worth. I went back and forth on my compensation negotiation 4 times. Finally, I wore the guy out and he said he couldn't give me anymore. He wanted to but that was the best offer. And I took it. I didn't stop though because I wasn't making that mistake again. I own part of it. Part of the reason I got underpaid is because I didn't ask the right questions. No one taught me that and said I should ask for more. No one ever told me that. You didn't have to tell a guy that. Men would just go ask for more. I was afraid to because they wouldn't give me more. It was stupid. We were trained to think that way. So, think different. Raise your hand and ask questions.

Hailey: Do you have any tips for negotiating compensation?

Riley: I have so many tips. Get grounded with the art of negotiation. The biggest thing I know about negotiations is that there's always trades. You're always going to have something I want and I have something you want. You have to assume that. When you go in and going back and forth, you have to know what's most important to you. I'm going to guess as a graduating college student it would be salary compensation. After that, is it health care benefits, time off, or remote work. You have to determine and prioritize what is important and assign a value to it. You have to understand on the other end what is it that they want. What can you trade for. For salary, I held firm. I went in and said this is my number. This is what I know I'm worth. I knew what the market tolerance was because I've been doing it for quite a while. Bonus I knew would look different. I knew that wasn't a trade, so that was settled. I wanted 4 weeks of vacation. I assumed health care benefits were included in what I do. They give the same package to everybody because we are publicly traded and a big company. Checked that box. Then, I thought about time off. They could only give me 3 weeks. Well, I need 4 weeks. So, then you need to be willing to move on salary for the extra week. We went back and forth. I wanted to be remote and they didn't want remote at all. Know what your priorities are and know what they want from you. Understand what they expect from you and trade back and forth. Typically, if you go to a publicly traded Fortune 500 company they have more bells and whistles. For it to be a good

outcome, it has to be a win-win situation. It can't be all about you or it can't be all about them. I've learned how to negotiate my salary compensation based on how I negotiate contracts.

Hailey: Do you think the world has progressed or regressed in regard to gender bias in the workplace?

Riley: It's gotten better. From where I sit, it's better. People are more aware. I think social media has helped us out a lot. That's the upside of social media. The upside is awareness of social causes and social issues like this. It's been good and actually probably accelerated our progress.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts that you'd like to share?

Riley: I love this and I'm super excited for you. I would love to understand more. Doing this type of activity could really help.

Hailey: Thank you.

## Appendix D: Transcript #2

Hailey: Okay how this is going to go is it'll just be about your experience as a woman in the workplace and specifically tying it to business marketing. So, we'll start with a few questions that are just an introduction and background about yourself. Then, we'll go more in depth about challenges in the workplace and the glass ceiling. Then, towards the end, we'll talk about breaking the glass ceiling and the future of women in the workplace.

Mia: Right. Sounds good.

Hailey: Perfect. My first question is what led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry and what interested you about this field.

Mia: Yeah. I originally started out going into college thinking I was going to get into actuarial science. I like statistics coming out of high school. My family always jokes that my dad's side is full of accountants. That kind of seemed to mix together because it'll be a lot of finance and a lot of statistics. I started my journey doing actuarial and I took an accounting class. This was when I was at [REDACTED]. I ended up graduating from [REDACTED]. I took an accounting class and I really liked it. Then, I transferred to [REDACTED]. I played soccer, so I wanted to switch out of [REDACTED] and get there. I started taking accounting classes. At the College of Business, you have to take intro to marketing. I never really thought that was something that I was interested in. I didn't think I was that creative. I'll just do accounting and it will be a good job. I had a class with [REDACTED] and I would say a lot of things changed. I always say one of my most pivotal points in my career was that class. She walked up to me point blank and said I don't think you have the personality for accounting. What are you doing. You should be in food marketing. I just remember kind of being not taken a back in a bad way, but just like wow that was blunt. I appreciate that. I was like okay well maybe this marketing thing isn't that bad. I like this class. I ended up being her undergrad research assistant. I'll learn a little bit more about marketing here. I'll see if it's something that I like and then decide where to go from there. Long story short, I ended up being her undergrad research assistant. I switched into food marketing. The market research side was my initial interest. As I got into the workforce, I've been very lucky to have multiple roles within multiple divisions. I'm in more of a traditional marketing role now. I wouldn't say like brand management, but I'm in omni shopper. I take what the brand managers run at a national level. I take that campaign and focus it into a retailer. Mine is [REDACTED]. I make sure that campaign comes to life in stores with multiple tactics. I really love that aspect of maybe not creating everything from scratch but being able to do more of the execution standpoint with a little bit more of the strategy and working with retailers to help both. I've also liked always supporting marketing. So, like consumer insights, meaning innovation and helping them decide different innovation, and different communication. I did shopper insights as well, like in the store. I very much enjoy just marketing itself and just the challenges that come with it every day. Some campaigns you run work and some don't. It's always great to get that instant feedback as well.

Hailey: Yeah. That's awesome. You touched on this. Can you talk about where you attended college and what you studied.

Mia: Yeah. I graduated from [REDACTED] in Food and Consumer Packaged Goods Marketing. I believe I just had the basic business minor. I think the one you have to graduate with there. That's what my background is. I did go on to get an MBA too. I got my MBA from [REDACTED].

Hailey: Nice. Can you briefly mention some roles and responsibilities you've taken on during your professional career?

Mia: My first role out of college was with [REDACTED]. I did a category management role at headquarters. I wasn't really focused on the specific retailer, but I had to define trends at a national level that were going on within different [REDACTED] categories. It could have been like pest control, home storage, air care, and home cleaning. It's been a little bit. I've been out of [REDACTED] for a couple years. I got to do a lot of panel data there and just also filling in for different retailer teams if like an analyst or someone was out. So, I got to learn a lot about just the business at a total level. Then, I moved to category management on the [REDACTED] team. I moved down to Arkansas. I was the category manager for [REDACTED], so rate and offer found in multiple locations in the store in [REDACTED]. I was focused on the home cleaning aisle. I worked under category manager. It would have been probably more considered category analyst. Basically, I helped draw the planograms, trends, analysis, and like the future of the pest control category. I got to take some shopper insights from other people and multiple data sources. That was fun to help the buyer understand what items should be sold and what should be left out. All that fun stuff that comes with category management. Then, I got offered an opportunity, which I was excited about, to get more into market research. Then, I transferred into global shopper insights at [REDACTED], and still under pest control. There I did a lot more primary research. I did virtual reality shelf testing. I did pack to purchase work and shop alongs. I feel like that shouldn't be blurry because I did that for a while. I was there which was really fun. I got to travel internationally, which was also a bonus. Then, I switched into global consumer insights. I was on the [REDACTED] business. So, it's actually fun that some of the innovation I helped launch is now in the market. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I help like do the consumer insights of what the base of the bag should look like and are they standing up. Will consumers even find it interesting. I got to work with the communication message there. I'm trying to think what else. That was like the big one. I did that.

Now where I am today, I wanted to do something new. I left [REDACTED] and I went to [REDACTED] and omni shopper marketing. I think it was like 6 months where I worked on the wholesale account. I had [REDACTED], if you've ever heard of it. It's a wholesaler. So, I got to support them with their omni plans, and military, and got to support [REDACTED]. A lot of smaller accounts. After that I've been in my current role for about a year and a half, a little bit longer than that. I would say on the [REDACTED] account in omni shopper. Like I said earlier, we're trying to have those campaigns to help create that whole path to purchase in the store, specifically for [REDACTED]. That's where I am today.

Hailey: Awesome. Then last question is what your personal and professional goals are.

Mia: It's a funny time right now. Personal goals are just spending time with my family. I have a 17 month old son and I have a girl due here next month. So, I very much want to put them first. I don't know if that's the current theme that you hear. I don't know what that means yet but putting them at the forefront and making sure I'm here for the younger years as much as I can.

Professionally I would say I feel like it's really been impacted by having children. If you would have asked me before I had my first son, I would say climbing the ladder right away.

I mean transparently trying to get up to that director level and potentially VP. Now, my professional goals are probably lame. It's just making sure it's more like work life balance focused where I still get challenges every day. I wouldn't mind being a director, but right now, like I said, I want to put spending time with my children first. If that means if I have to take a little bit of a step back from my professional goals I'm completely okay with it. I personally think work is always going to be there waiting for me at any time. So again, just trying to figure out what I want and what is the right balance for my family and finding a role that I still have fun

with. I don't necessarily need to move up right away. Have to make sure the pay is good though. I'd be lying if I didn't say that.

Hailey: Okay we're moving into the more detailed section of this interview. Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling and its relation to the workplace?

Mia: Yeah. It's always interesting. I'd be curious to hear what you think of the glass ceiling. I've heard it use multiple ways. Usually it implies, especially for women, that there's a certain amount that you could go up before you run into some difficulties, usually in comparison to men.

Usually there's a pay gap or some type of thing in the workforce. There's a barrier that makes it harder for women to enter than men. Currently at [REDACTED], I'm part of like a group called Glass. I'll have to figure out the acronym. It's supposed to basically be a woman's group to help support each other and move up into those leadership roles and to help develop skills.

When we talk in our group about the glass ceiling it could just be some people take it as maybe men being more superior in certain areas. Not superior but like they have it a little bit easier in certain areas. It could also be the identification of what they do well and then making sure we're building skills as women and making it a little bit more in our hands. That's kind of where I see the glass ceiling talked about most now.

Hailey: Perfect. You actually just touched on this. I'm really curious, especially because it sounds like you're a new mother. How is your work life balance? Do you feel it's more challenging as a mother and as a woman?

Mia: I do think it is a little bit more challenging as a woman. I guess where I sometimes struggle with like I'm probably an oddball with the glass ceiling. I don't know if it's necessarily like men and women aren't on equal footing anymore. I think both have equal opportunity. I think I see it more as what I want out of my life. As a woman, a priority for me is my children. I do think as I do have Noah more, I do notice areas where I will become weaker at work when it comes to promotion. I guess what I'm saying is probably very similar to the glass ceiling comments, whereas like a lot of people say it might just be because of outside factors. I think it's stuff now like I have to make the decision what I wanted to do. I don't necessarily see it as like something holding me back. For example, I just moved from Chicago to Howell. I've been downtown Chicago, so I think about it there. One thing I did was step back. My husband got a job out in Howell. It's very close to all of our family and friends. So, knowing that. That's important for me to build the foundation for my child. I'm remote. Being remote, I've been lucky that [REDACTED] allowed me to move remote, but it also takes away from networking. I'm not there in the office. I can't meet everyone. Another thing for me too is I want to spend time with my son and it used to take me an hour basically to get into the city, even though I only lived like 20 miles away. It shouldn't be that hard. I wouldn't say after for happy hours. Again, those networking events, I consciously made a decision that I'm okay potentially taking away some of these opportunities. Right now, I have other priorities outside. There's a lot of other women, especially in leadership roles, that are okay with that. They have kids around my age and they'll still stay out and network. They'll just have their nanny or someone else watch them because the career to them is more important. I do think sometimes taking a break from maternity leave hurts you a little bit. Again, I'm an oddball. I personally think it's okay. It isn't fair to some people that have been working that whole time while I'm out because it does set you back a little bit. Just from the amount of hours that they're there versus not. I do think though in the future that might even out. Paternity policies are catching up to women. They're going to be taking just as much time, potentially, as women are. I'm very curious to see how that comes into play and how that evens out the playing field. I do think as a woman, some challenges are probably going to be uniquely

to us, even though I see like the tides turning with different people I work with. I feel like women do tend to want to stay at home more or more of the at home responsibility gets put on women. That might still be something subconsciously that will always be a little bit more of a challenge. I know some men in general maybe want to stay home and their wife ends up being the career winner. They stay home and they take more of a supporting role. So, that's kind of changing too. So, I'm really curious to see in the years coming as things become more equal even in the workforce and some more historically maternal roles go more toward the male and they might take over more of like the traditional home responsibilities. Things might even out as well. Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Mia: I did a presentation on this with some other people in our glass meetings. Some stereotypical things that women do, and I catch myself doing it as well, is always say like you're sorry. You always in ways of writing come across as this is what I think this is kind of what I feel, maybe a little bit more collaborative. So, instead of seeing it like you have a decision but you want to make sure that everyone's involved and it makes sense, it could come off as having lack of confidence or a lack of direction. Those are just the verbal ones. Women tend to be a little bit quieter, historically, in meetings. Men tend not to have the fear of speaking up, even if it's stupid, and they will talk over and just don't even think twice about it. Women get in their own head. They definitely overthink things, which can be a pro and a con. Women, historically and data wise, are seen as a little bit more hard working and a little bit more of a perfectionist. You don't need to be a perfectionist. So, there's that mental fear of not being ready, which sets women back. I do agree with that data there as well because you can think about it from a pay perspective or a willingness to get promoted. I don't think men necessarily have that conversation or fear to go for it, whereas women do, which could hold them back. I've also read books. I don't know if the trend is holding true, but I can see this as well with my history of women managers. I feel like women managers don't necessarily set the stage for another woman to come in and backfill them. I'm not necessarily saying they're always going for men. I know some books say that in upper leadership they usually recommend some other male counterparts and not as many women. I do see that sometimes. We don't support each other to take that next step. Those are just some examples that I've seen and also what I found by doing some of these presentations.

Hailey: Those are perfect examples. Does your current position require you to report to a male? Is your company and department male or female dominated?

Mia: Female dominated. I've reported more to females and I have males. I've had 1 actual male manager and then 1 that I reported to for short time. After that I've had 4 to 5 female managers.

Hailey: This one is along the same lines, but on a more general scale. Can you explain whether you believe business marketing as a whole is male or female dominated?

Mia: I'm trying to think of everything that's included in marketing. Our department is dominantly female driven. I would say actually more female, to be honest. When you get to the leadership level at least at the company I'm at now. I've forgot what it was like at [REDACTED] before I left. The insights department was still have heavily female dominated. I would say more than 50% female dominated. What I've noticed at [REDACTED] with the leadership positions, it's usually almost split 50/50 and it's usually an odd number and that odd number right now is tending to lean more toward female. Where you don't see females having more of the tip in the scale would be at the like highest level like the C-Suite. Well C-Suite can have so many different things and there's many different levels. That high exec CEO leadership team is where usually you would

still see more male leaning. Us people at the bottom or middle management, I would say in my experience right now, more female dominated.

Hailey: On a personal level, can you explain any gender biased challenges that you've faced in your industry?

Mia: I feel like right now it's really at this point where I do feel like females almost have the upper hand, at least in my department areas. There are biases that potentially could fall under the glass ceiling. I just don't know if it would really compare to being like beat out by a man. That's what you're defining glass ceiling.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently in the context of meetings or projects?

Mia: I'm just trying to think. This is why when [REDACTED] told me about this I don't know if I'm the best person. I would honestly say maybe nothing really on gender. I know sometimes men in general have personalities that can be a little bit more like blunt or talking over other people. Let me think of some examples here. I don't necessarily ever feel like I was treated differently. I feel like there's different things that are going on now when it comes to loyalty with companies, like if you stay at a company too long, you almost get treated worse than staying if you switch or don't stay as long. I don't know if I can honestly say I felt like I was ever discriminated against or seen something. As a woman, I do sometimes see the characteristics of men being more blunt where it can come off a little bit more not as welcoming. I don't know if it necessarily would like help or hurt that person either. I think a lot of people just identify that being more of a personality or a leadership opportunity.

Hailey: Do you know about the biggest challenges that women face in the workplace?

Mia: I guess it's kind of up to interpretation about what people would say is the biggest thing. What we focus on within our glass meetings are things that we could try to control and a lot of it really does stem from networking and making sure you're speaking up in meetings, which I totally agree with. They do say empathy is a strength of females, which is something good to play on. Sorry, what was the question again?

Hailey: What are the biggest challenges that you feel women face in the workplace?

Mia: I would say honestly speaking up and making sure your networking and connecting with the right upper management. I feel like sometimes women are afraid of going up to that higher level or thinking am I worthy of their time. I really do think that's an area, even within my own career, that I probably should do a lot better at because connections really do help you in the workforce. I think it helps you if you get more networks, networking a couple levels up, they can help you more with strategy. My husband and his manager did this really well. They are both men. He saw an opportunity where there was a guy that had a wealth of knowledge. He was interested outside the department. He asked if he could meet with them once a week to talk about strategy and just how this person was thinking about running the business from the different department. He did that for like a year. Once this person left and the person that backfilled them came in, he didn't really know anything about the role. [REDACTED] was who they then went to ask for information. He could almost have got a role in that department and I don't know if women do that as much, like go out on that limb. I think it's so important to do that and try to find mentors, even though it can be intimidating at times. I think that would really help because then it helps build that trust and that leadership. It really shows that you do know what you're talking about and then they can help identify those areas. We were just talking about like communication or perfectionism, like stuff like that. When it starts creeping in, they can give you transparent feedback and help really guide you toward those next opportunities.

Hailey: We talked about those leadership roles. What do you feel is like the biggest thing that prevents women from securing like that top level of leadership?

Mia: I think there's 2 things. Again, we could argue if it's really a glass ceiling topic or not. I think that's just like the personal decision and your personal life choices. I think it's a little bit more on us. I don't think you can have everything. To me, I'm cognizant that I can't have it all and I have to make a decision of where I am at my career, if I want to move forward and sacrifice maybe a little bit more at home or not. Some people might say, we shouldn't have to have that option. I guess it just depends on the person and their definition of work-life balance and what they want for it out of it is. That's one aspect I think is holding women back just because they might have a little bit more conflict about wanting to take steps back or do something outside of work. The higher you get up, the lot more commitment it is. I mean people don't want to talk about it. You're constantly traveling. You're never home. You have a lot more stress. You can't really turn things off. It's a tradeoff. I'm just trying to think to what else hold women back and I really do think it is like confidence. I do think that is something that we talk about a lot when you compare men's and women's behavior traits. Just making sure you're coming off as confident, straightforward, and building those connections. I think that's what's holding a lot of women back. I feel like women do a really good job networking with each other at the same level or just the level above. If women in leadership positions don't really have a good backfill opportunity like you need to call it out and just going for those roles. I think it's important to raise your hands, so they even know that you're there. They always say when you're in the workforce, your career path is really on you, whether you're okay with that or not. It's up to you to make a lot of those connections and advocate for yourself. I think women don't advocate for themselves as much. I think women are doing a lot better job of it now. Some of it is personality driven when you're a little bit more introverted like myself. Sometimes I have trouble saying what I did because I think sometimes it's just like what I do with my job. Whereas like you really do have to go out of your way and volunteer when leadership is asking for example of the best in class and really making sure you're putting yourself out there. Having those connections when doing so can help support you to get you those opportunities is key.

Hailey: Alright. Now we're going to turn to breaking these stereotypes and the future of the industry. First question is what ways have you experienced positive action in your company? Are there any initiatives or policies in place aimed to break the glass ceiling?

Mia: The easy answer are those glass meetings. It's a lot of fun. Each month there are people that are responsible for creating the topic. So, a lot of people come at it from different angles. It could be career building or a little bit of a grammar lesson. These are the words that women tend to put in here and let's practice crossing them out. Just having tools there. I don't know off the top of my head. The initiatives are always changing, but they're always a lot of women focused initiatives that [REDACTED] has and that the HR department goes through. There's a certain amount women and diversity hires in general that they want to make. I think they do a good job of that and really try and stick to it. They're trying to create more mentorship programs to hook women up with more women leadership. They're doing that more on the sales side. So, with my role, I hover in between the traditional marketing and sales. Sometimes I'll get more privy to the sales side of the organization. We switch back and forth constantly with each reorg. So, they're doing more mentorship programs, which I think is great. Because there are a lot more women in leadership and this is an area that's identified, managers, are trying to work with women more to help identify some of these areas that might be considered a weakness. My manager is constantly saying I know it's silly when the global town hall meets, but just participate in the chat, show that



you're here, you're talking, and you have some ideas. Just so leadership shows you're engaged, just little things like that, which I think is good. It's more consistent at Kraft. You meet once a quarter. I don't know if other companies are doing this to get feedback, which is honestly nice. When I was at [REDACTED], it was like once a year. I wouldn't even say there was like a huge priority.

Hailey: Have you seen improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace?

Mia: Yes. I would say as I've come along there has definitely been more of a swing toward women roles. When I first started, you could say in certain departments it was like probably more men leaning. Now, there's a lot more females. I feel like a lot of companies are making that shift. People always say there's things that we can do more of. I do see the shift. It's hard to pick out examples. Like I said, my department is mainly females, but even 2 years ago when I joined [REDACTED], it was probably more males. Well, it's always been female majority, but there's more females. I know a big initiative for [REDACTED] is like at the plant level. So, plant is an area that has been historically more male focused. So, they have a really cool program where they try to have a certain amount of roles be for women and they have that big mentorship program, where the women come in and they get paired right away with the leadership. That's like a plant manager or some type of leadership. Then, they can come in and shadow them. I don't know the details per se, but it sounds like, from what they share, they can go in and shadow them. They work with them to develop different plans within the plants. If they want to be a plant manager to balance it all and even talk through the pros and cons of the role. Even from like a work-life balance standpoint, because when you think of manufacturing, it's not the most work-life friendly balance compared to maybe a marketing role. If the line goes down or if there's inventory issues, you can't take the time off. You have to go in and you have to figure it out. So, I thought that was really cool not only to explain what's wrong, but to give the opportunity more to women and then have that support system in place to then help bring more women into this area if they are interested.

Hailey: Are there any female leaders that you admire?

Mia: I'm trying to think within my company. First, the new CMO. I'm blanking on her name. It's so embarrassing. I can't think of her name right now. I liked her a lot because she came into our glass meeting and she was really honest. She said there's a lot of pros and cons about becoming a manager, or higher up executive I should say. She was saying that when she first started out her career and started having children, she almost took a step back because she wanted to be the ones to raise them. I don't know exactly if she took time off of work or if she just stalled a little bit in her work. Eventually, once her children got to an age where she felt like they were back in school, and she felt satisfied, then she started climbing the career ladder. And of course, now she's the CMO. So, it doesn't necessarily not hold you back, but I think there's just the message too if you want to move up, you can do it. These are how I think you should get there, but if there's little roadblocks or just different times where you wanted to take a step back, it's okay. You can still have both and it just might just not be at the same time. So, I just admire that and to see her still come back and perform really well and still move up. I just think those stories for me, like I said, I really want to give my children my priority, at least for a little bit. That nowadays is not necessarily frowned upon. There's a lot of people that come back after a year or 2 years or 5 years or 10 years and still climb the ladder and make it to those directors and like VP roles. It might just take a little bit longer. I think what's exciting for me is that there is a little bit more of this shift that it's okay to put your family first. You're not going to get penalized as much

for it. You might have to come back a little bit of a lower level, but if you really do have the talent and the drive, you can catch back up.

Hailey: How do you believe women in the workplace can make their mark?

Mia: There's a lot of great things women do and I'm really excited for the future. I think there is this shift already happening toward women. I feel how they make their mark is just still supporting each other and bringing more people up with them. There are more and more leadership roles that are females. I know that there's sometimes some things we can overcome. I'm not saying we have to become men, but there's things that we can learn and help hold each other accountable, while still doing the things we do well as female. Even just thinking about marketing, a lot of the products that I've worked on, like [REDACTED] or home cleaning, I use those products now, especially with my children. With [REDACTED], there's tons of food driven towards children. We are the end users of a lot of our products. So, I feel like as long as we can speak up and drive and really hone in on our personal experiences, marketing is only going to get better. I think that's cool. The empathetic and the excitement feeling around the shop or consumer themselves. Then really thinking through strategically, the real life experience of what you go through, I think is where women can really make their mark and shine. I do think that always having empathy is a strength. There can be too much empathy or at least forced empathy that doesn't come off as nice, but if you're really genuine and you really do listen, I think that is a strength for women to help really develop each other. I think that's the biggest opportunity and then ways that we can make our mark in the future.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?

Mia: I think it's like it really exciting time. There are so many cool capabilities out there. There are so many areas where you could go into marketing. There are startups, there are established brands. There's so much going on. My recommendation is just to go out there and try a little bit of everything. You don't necessarily have to stay at one company anymore. Just go and be confident. Pick an area and just start there and then you can always change. I think it was really cool to have different experiences, like global and local. All of these different experiences and really just find that mentor right away because they help guide you. I still talk with [REDACTED]. She's still extremely supportive and I feel like she always has my back, which is nice. So, even though it might not be someone in the industry, just having that support and knowing someone, like if you want to change your pivot, maybe jobs or maybe careers, there's someone always in your corner. Then, what I really liked about coming to [REDACTED] is that my current manager has always been extremely supportive of me and actually involved and invested in myself. I feel like I was able to get that opportunity of coming on [REDACTED] account, which is a top 4 retailer. I was only 6 months in and new to the company. I would say try different roles and really get a few mentors and network. I'm just saying this because networking is an area I absolutely hate, but I know and identify now how valuable it is. It might seem forced, but it doesn't have to be. There are so many different ways now to network. It doesn't have to just be like happy hour. And if you're not into drinking, you don't have to do that. There are ways that you could just do coffee chats in the office or set up like a 30 minute call with someone new. That's like a big thing at [REDACTED]. Just go and talk to people or just be in the office and ask someone new about their job. Everyone always says to ask someone new about their job. People usually love talking about their job. So, that's kind of some advice that I would give. Just let things go from there. I mean, if you know exactly what you want to do, great. I never did. I think that it's worked out well for me because I've tried so many different things. I think overall if I do get into those leadership roles,

it's going to help because I just didn't go deep in one area. I got introduced to so many different aspects of the business. It definitely changes how I think about things and it will make you a better marketer or whatever role you want to do within business in general.

Hailey: Do you think the world has progressed or regressed in regard to gender bias of the workplace?

Mia: I think it's progressed. I think it would be unfair to say that it's regressed. I bet there's still different areas of opportunity, but I think those are starting to almost work itself out just by everyone trying to go more toward equality. There are definitely things that could still be put into place to make that happen sooner. I don't really feel as much bias, whereas you might have heard that more from people that started their careers a lot later than myself. I think I was coming in at the cusp of this change that's happening for the most part. I heard about it a lot honestly, like when I first started. I could kind of see it here and there. But now, I've been out of college 8 years. It's changed and you'll see a lot more women in a lot more roles, which is exciting. I hope that other women you're interviewing feel that way.

Hailey: My last question is if you have any final thoughts that you would like to share.

Mia: I mean it's an interesting topic. It's very popular in the workplace too. I'm really excited to see what you say. I was a little bit torn about doing this. I might not have exact examples, but I can definitely speak to traits and that might be setting women back as a whole. I hope in a way that you might not hear as many negatives just because there is change happening and there's always ways that you can help make it better.

Hailey: I appreciate all of your thoughts and helping me out with this today.

### Appendix E: Transcript #3

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry? What interested you about this field?

Emily: When I was a kid, I was never one of those people who was like, I'm going to do this that and the other. I actually thought that I was going to go in the route of education, because a lot of my family comes from an education background, like professors, high school teachers, etc. My dad, we didn't grow up wealthy, so he always had a main job and inside jobs, in which he was doing to just kind of make ends meet for the family. One of them was that he owned a construction company in the Chicago area. It wasn't like a big construction company. It was a small mom and pop, like I'll do this job for you, that kind of stuff. I had the opportunity to watch him navigate the things that he did in the world of business. I started to have that sort of exposure to business. And then as a kid, my mom introduced me, or had me surrounded by 3 African American women who taught me things about, like they were in education, but they would mentor me on the weekend or I would have to take an extra math class from them. Just different things of that nature. I also saw them navigate in the world of business. I think watching all of that intrigued my interest in terms of what it is that I wanted to do. When I ended up going to [REDACTED] for undergrad, I actually went to the school of business, and from there it kind of led me on the track of doing marketing, and kind of growing myself within this area. It was the exposure that I had at a young age, especially coming from a family that wasn't well off, to see different people in those kind of environments.

Hailey: Where did you attend college and what did you study?

Emily: I went to [REDACTED]. I studied in the School of Business. [REDACTED]. The funny thing is that after a year or a year and a half of being at [REDACTED], I was like I'm going to go do something different. I think I took a year and decided I was going to prep to be a lawyer. When I realized how much you had to read and all that kind stuff, I was like I'm going back in School of Business. So, that's kind of where I ended up.

Hailey: Can you briefly mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on during your professional career?

Emily: I work at [REDACTED] now. Everybody always says was [REDACTED] your first job. No. [REDACTED] was actually my first job when I was in high school, and I worked there for a month. One month and that was it only. [REDACTED]. I did summer interns when I was an undergrad, but my first real job, where I was accountable for myself, was actually doing a job in sales and marketing. It was working for a company called [REDACTED] out of [REDACTED]. It was a partnership between [REDACTED]. And what I loved about it was that I was doing sales. I was learning about a business from the ground up. I was learning how to interact with people. I was learning how to write a PowerPoint or build a business plan or go behind the scenes of a hospital and understand how that kitchen was making money. It just got really grimy in terms of me learning everything from the ground up. That was my first job and from there I've had jobs in marketing at [REDACTED]. From a brand perspective, I've worked for [REDACTED] and I've worked at [REDACTED]. I've also worked at [REDACTED], where learned how to change a tire.

Hailey: What are your professional and personal goals?

Emily: I've been doing this for a while. I'm going to talk about professional. My professional goals have changed. At one point in time, because I was in sales, I knew I wanted to get into just traditional marketing. I knew that I wanted to go into the brand management track. Did that.

Accomplished it. Conquered that world. I knew that, for family reasons, I chose to get out of that area and move back closer to the Midwest. I knew the type of marketing that I wanted to do was just more lifestyle and getting closer to the consumer. That's how I ended up at [REDACTED]. I would say my goals have always been about chasing a role or a type of marketing job that I wanted to do. I've been very successful at being able to do that and having all the great experiences that are associated with it. Now that I'm towards the end of my professional career, I'm going to say, my goals have changed. I really want to make sure that I am mentoring the next generation of marketers to come. Even if you don't want to do marketing, I want to make sure that I'm mentoring and guiding the next generation of people to work in corporate America, and especially black and brown people. I had exposure to those types of mentors when I was a kid, because my mom saw that I needed to get something that she wasn't able to provide me. I feel like it's my responsibility to give back. So right now, there are different roles I would love to take on, but at the end of the day, I want to make sure I'm paving a way for the next generation. I would say for my personal goals I just want to be the best version of myself. When I was a kid, we'd go over to people's houses and my mom would be like to not embarrass me when we go over this house. Be yourself, but don't embarrass. I'm not going to jump on their furniture. I think about that. What she was basically was telling me was be the best person that you can be. That's my personal goal.

Hailey: That's very inspiring. Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling and its relation to the workplace?

Emily: The glass ceiling is the highest that you can go in any organization or any function or any role. It's a perception. Of course it's not real, but it's something that people see, think, and feel. It's an area that has been perceived as a blockage in which people cannot go any higher than what that glass ceiling is.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance? Do you feel it's more challenging as a woman?

Emily: I think that there is a myth about work-life balance, because people use that term as a way to tell you that you need to slow down. I also think it's individual. You should determine what's best for you, in terms of how you want to live your life. I am single. I have no children. I probably have more flexibility than most individuals. I didn't say women. Most individuals do in corporate America. I still believe that from a work-life balance, I have to determine what that is based upon what I'm willing to give. Most corporations will take everything you will give until you say no. Do I think I have work-life balance? Absolutely not, girl. No way. Are there things that I do to try to have work-life balance? Absolutely. I've had to travel to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] to work on projects. When I started to have to do things like that, I would say if you're going to fly me to [REDACTED] for meetings for 2 days, then I'm going to go in a day early to spend time and see [REDACTED]. I'm going to stay a day late, so I can just see the world. That's the way that I try to balance it off.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Emily: I have been in situations and it's not necessarily me. I may have experienced it. I've been in situations where you walk into a room and there's a meeting happening and somebody may expect you to take the notes. If you're the only female, you're going to take the notes. That's what I've seen to that extent. I've also seen it from the perspective of it seems like a lot of women are in specific roles, whether they are in the roles that are more from an HR perspective or marketing perspective, and not like the line business where you're really owning the P&L and driving the overall growth for the company. You see it in Fortune 500 companies all the time. Anytime a

woman is made a CEO of a Fortune 500 company, it becomes news and you're like why in 2024 is this such a newsworthy story. We should already be there. The majority of people in the workforce have a tendency to be women, but yet you don't see us at that higher level role. It's more of the line roles or the roles that are more junior and having to work your way up versus being put at the top and allowing you just to go from there.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male? Along with that, is your company or department, female or male dominated?

Emily: Our chief marketing officer right now is a male. I have been at [REDACTED] for 20 years and we've had 5 chief marketing officers during my tenure. Of that time, 2 of them have been women and 3 have been men. I report to the CMO and yes, it's a male. Within United States marketing, the majority is women.

Hailey: For the business marketing industry as a whole, can you explain if you believe it's male or female dominated?

Emily: Oh, definitely female dominated.

Hailey: Can you explain gender biased challenges that you've faced in your industry?

Emily: I know that I've faced them. I don't want there to be this perception of she's saying that it's not there. What has happened is that because I've been in the industry for so long, there are things that have happened that you just are like that's just the way things are and you gloss over it. Now I don't even see it, which is a shame. I've just been used to it being that way. I will say to you that I believe that when there are times that women have to take off. Let me take a step back. When it comes to maternity leave and paternity leave, there are a couple things that have happened. I do not have any children. I've never had to go on either one, but I have people who have worked for me from a female perspective as well as a male perspective. I've seen the bias towards women in terms of she's going to be going out on maternity leave, so we need to pull back on our work or how are we going to manage x y and z. It never happens with the guy. I've also seen where rules have changed, where men have been given less paternity leave. Now it's being equalized and they're being given more. I just thought that was very interesting where there was never a big deal about the guys going out on paternity leave. What do we need to do and is he going to be able to take on more or take on x y and z. It was always just the female that was associated with that. So, that's one thing that I've seen. I've also seen that there is an emotion that may happen in corporate America that you see that comes more from women than guys. I mean emotional, teary eyed, that kind of stuff. It is perceived very negative from women if they do that. If a guy does it, it's perceived as so empathetic and he's showing his emotions. Look how great he is. I've just seen things like that that where I'm like why is he honored for it, but the woman is being made to feel like she should not show the kind of emotional at work.

Hailey: Do you know any other examples, like emotions that have a different like connotation when they're talked about for women?

Emily: Yeah, but it gets a little tricky. As an African American woman, I have had comments made about the way my face looks, where someone else's face could look the same way. And I'm like that's just the way my face is shaped. They say you're giving an attitude. Actually, I'm not. That is just the way my face is shaped. I would say that I have seen behaviors different for African American women in terms of the perception of them in rooms and meetings. If they are being attentive or paying attention or quiet, there's a perception that they don't understand or don't know what's going on. If they're loud, it's more like they have an attitude or they're too ambitious. I have seen that and I have experienced that.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts, and if so, could you provide specific examples or instances that highlight this inequality?

Emily: Absolutely. I never even felt that I was underpaid. I knew I was underpaid. At one point in time in the past 5 years, I was told that I was getting a \$40,000 increase in salary out of the blue. At that point, I knew they were underpaying me and they just realized it from a gender study. They realized that they are underpaying me and they were trying to make up for it. I would also say that as I am hiring people and moving people within the organization, I have the opportunity to see multiple salaries and see how the discrepancy is between men and women. I've made corrections on my own team to say look HR there's no way that you can have this male and this female doing the same job with equivalent experience. It's not the same experience. There is a significant difference in their salary. I've seen it across my team and I know that I've had it happen to me.

Hailey: What would you say are the biggest challenges that women face in the workplace?

Emily: I think I'll start with a positive thing and then I'm going to get to the challenges.

Companies have had concerted effort to ensure that women have a seat at the table. That's great. Where I think they're struggling is that women don't want to just have a seat at the table. We've moved past having a seat at the table and being able to have our voice heard. We want to own the table. We want to own the table, and then choose who else is sitting at the table around us. That is the challenge that we're struggling with right now. I don't think that we are truly embracing the opportunity to be able to choose who's sitting at the table with us, regardless of whether it's a man or a woman. We are still trying to get to that point. That's one thing I think is a challenge. I think it's a challenge that there are a lot of women who are in more junior level roles in organizations. Instead of looking around saying we can run the table if we all just come together, there at times seems to be a little bit of not support of each other versus how we all come together and take over. I'll put it that way. Support each other and do the best thing out there. I'm not saying that it only has to be a female led program. You need to have diversity of thought. Regardless of whether it's gender, race, ethnicity. You need to have diversity of thought. I just feel like there's not that camaraderie to bring that diversity of thought. Those are the challenges I think that are being faced, because organizations don't know how to combat that. I would also say whoever is in the position of power, it takes a strong person for that person to say I don't want to hire somebody like me. Most of those C-Suite executives, when they are looking at people, they're looking at people who are much younger than them and they're hiring people that remind them of themselves. I'm pretty sure that I do not remind our CEO, [REDACTED], of himself. I'm pretty sure that I don't. That automatically is a bias or barrier that's there. You may not know. It's hidden in terms of having to work differently or harder to get that attention and to make sure that you can prove that you can still do the job just as good as a man or anybody else. I don't think that companies truly understand how to address that hidden bias.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing those leadership roles?

Emily: I hate this term. I hate it when people say we'll just take a risk on this person and put them in the area and to see if they can do a job. Knowing that I hate that term, I don't think that there are a lot of companies who are willing to take that risk or willing to take that opportunity. People have a tendency to hire, promote, and support individuals that look like them. If you have a bunch of men who are sitting at the table, then it's going to be very hard for them to each say my replacement should be a female or your replacement should be a female to equalize the table, unless they're forced to do it from HR, or from a law, or from something like that.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company?

Emily: I would say positive action that I have experienced and that I have seen is that the second highest position that we had at [REDACTED] was led by a young lady named [REDACTED]. She's gone off to become the COO of [REDACTED], but she was a second highest position in the United States. I've seen that happen. I've seen [REDACTED] invest in development for women that is specifically targeted to them. Whether it's the Women's Leadership Network or the Woman's Food Service Forum that allow women to get the development that they need, so they can show up as them their best self. I've been at [REDACTED] for 20 years and there are things that I've struggled with in terms of things that may have happened just like with any corporate America world. I've also looked back and in my 20 years, I am the second African American woman who's become a vice president of marketing. Before me, there was probably one other female that I know about. In 65 years and you look at marketing, I'm the third African American woman who's been able to become vice president of marketing at [REDACTED]. This is good, but it's also crazy. I don't even know what the numbers are. It's crazy. I've seen good things from that perspective. I've also seen that when we have needed to step back and support each other for something that happened to a woman, that may not happen to a man, we've stepped in as an organization to support them and make sure that they had the support that they need. Whether it was a loss of a child, whether it was a health issue that they were going through, we've said we've got to be there. I think that that's noble of the company.

Hailey: Are there any initiatives or policies that are in place at your company aimed at like gender diversity or any diversity?

Emily: In the hiring process, we mostly have been looking at race from a diversity perspective within marketing, because the gender diversity has not been an issue for us, as the majority of the people in marketing are female. Actually, we have to look at it from the other perspective to say we've got a position available and we've got 10 people are coming in and they're all women. Are we looking at enough diversity of thought or gender diversity in the other way from a male perspective. That's just because we're out of balance in terms of male to female ratio.

Hailey: Have you seen any improvements in diversity equity and inclusion in the workplace?

Emily: I have seen improvements in terms of things that we've said that we want to do from diversity, equity, and inclusion and how we show up externally. What I would still love to see the organization do is have more meaningful actions that touch the employees, and to not be just a moment in time. George Floyd shook the world, and companies made commitments. Asian hate came around and shook the world, and companies made commitments. We've all seen in the past 12 months, as jobs have been going away, it's typically the DEI person whose job goes away or is demoted. That's concerning to me.

Hailey: How can organizations create a better workplace for women? What strategies do you believe would be beneficial?

Emily: One of the things that I believe that we've learned at [REDACTED] is that we have mentoring programs where women are supporting women. We have a Women's Leadership Network as I mentioned, and it's a global network where we are supporting each other. However, what we've also learned is that we need to have people who sit at the table who don't look like us, who will still support us. In an organization, if you don't have that formal or informal mentor, sponsor, or relationship between males and females, then there's a problem right there. I think that most organizations will need that. Also, you can put any program in place, but if your leader at the top doesn't believe in it and is not living by it and thinks it isn't important, then nothing's going to happen. I would say the first thing is the organization needs to do a self-assessment and understand if there's a gap or if there's a problem and why and how do you take that on as an



individual and as an organization. The body follows the head. If it's important to them, your CEO or whoever, then it will become important to everybody else.

Hailey: Can you talk more about those women mentorship programs or any of those programs?

Emily: Yes, we have coaching circles. We have a network. First of all, we have a Global Women's Network that looks at things such as being a student of the business, how are you making sure that you are looking at your career development and goals and where you need to go. It's not things like how to be a better mom. Yeah, there may be people who will talk about that, but it's more about from a business perspective and how do you show up as a leader. It's a leadership network across the organization or within your life and your world. Also, there may be smaller circles. There's a circle of Hispanic women within the organization who will come together and say what do we need to help each other look at or do as Hispanic women that we're maybe experiencing different that allows us to show up stronger and better in the organization. Same thing for the African American women. [REDACTED] has been doing a great job of sponsoring those organizations and not prohibiting them or trying to deter anybody from being part of those organizations but allowing them to flourish because it's employee led. If the employees are saying this is what we need then this is how we would come together. Within our Global Women's Network there are coaching circles. There are circles that read books. I can't think of what you call those groups because as you can tell, I don't do that. It may be specific leadership books that they're reading. There's also a conference that happens every other year in which they bring individuals together. We also reward and recognize women within the organization based upon their business contribution and people who are sponsors of the organization. Someone who is not a woman who may be out there celebrating and making sure that they're advocating for women's issues within the organization that we highlight and recognize and reward.

Hailey: Are there any female leaders that you admire?

Emily: Oh my goodness. Tons. I have been fortunate enough that I've had exposure to a lot of female leaders. Of course, everybody says your mom. My mom is one of the female leaders that I do admire because she actually didn't have her high school degree until she was in her 60s and I never knew that until I was an adult. She's 80 something now, but during the time that she grew up, she wasn't fortunate enough to have her high school degree. She went back to high school, not GED, but like actually to high school with 18 year olds and was like I'm going to finish my last year of school with them. I admire that from her and how she led our family. I would say the women that she's surrounded me with at a very young age were all badass women and leaders in their area that I definitely admire. As I've had the opportunity to continue to progress in my career, there are women who have taught me about you need to look at your life long term and not look at it in terms of just this one job or this moment in time. [REDACTED]. She was a global executive at [REDACTED] who basically taught me how to sit back and say what's your 5 year goal or when do you want to retire and how do you start planning for that versus only planning for what's the next job you're going to have. She also taught me that every year she does a long trip by herself. She's said I need to get center and she's married. She's said I need to get centered and I need to figure out what my goals for my life are and what I want to accomplish. She taught me how to take my first long weekend to the Bahamas by myself, where I could just sit there and say how do I plan out my life and what's a priority for me. From that, that was a leadership aspect that I never experienced, but it taught me how to be good to me first so that I could be good to other individuals. As I mentioned, [REDACTED], who is now the COO of [REDACTED]. I admire the way that she leads. I admire how she stands up for herself in a male dominated world.

She's still able to do it in a way that is graceful, but that is firm. I also admire some of the women who I've seen who have cracked the ceiling. Deborah Walls, who went on to become the global CMO of General Motors. Ann Fudge, who used to run Kraft Foods, but then went on to run one of the top agencies in New York. They used to say that she used to have an iron fist that was covered by a satin glove. She did it in such an elegant way. There are tons of women that I admire in terms of the way that they've led their lives and that they are shaping up. I will also tell you right now some of the women leaders that I am in awe of are the younger generation. It's people that you won't know, but I have a niece who is a principal of a high school. She's just my niece that I've known since the day she was born. When I've gone to her high school to watch her lead that school I am like this cannot be the same little girl that I saw walking around in Pampers. She's a woman and look at what she's doing in the world to actually affect the next generation.

Hailey: How can women make their mark in the workplace?

Emily: I would say it's by showing up and being who you are every single day. I don't think that people realize that other individuals are watching you and you should not put on a pretense to be anyone else. If something doesn't feel good, say it doesn't feel good. Figure out why and solve it and move on. Do not try to say I've just got to demonstrate that I can take it or that I can live through this and it's about resilience. Nah. Speak your truth. Own it and move on. There are individuals who are watching you. They are watching how you behave and thinking that that is a way that they're going to have to behave as they continue up. I would say own who you are. I would also say do your job because a lot of people have a tendency to forget that. Do your job and do it well. Own who you are. Don't be afraid to say no. If a position isn't right for you. No. If something is not right. No. It's okay if you figure out how to give a solution in terms of how to make it work. Don't be afraid to own your voice and say no.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?

Emily: Because I was the youngest of 3 kids and my 2 older brothers, I was very curious. I was an observer of things and I learned that from a very young age. What I wish I had learned and what I would like to pass on to the next generation is you can be curious, but don't be afraid to be vocal. There is a sticker that I found. It was when I was in [REDACTED], shopping in the little boutiques. It said take up space. I love that saying take up space because you don't want to go to a room or be invited to have a seat at the table and you're just there saying I'm just happy to be here and I hope no one sees me, but that they know I'm in the room. No, you are there. Take up space. I hate it when you go to an event like a basketball game or sporting event or even when you're on the plane and you're sitting next to that guy. The way guys sit is they spread their legs and you're all pushed in the corner. They're taking up space. You push back and you take up space too. You get in your seat and I'm staying in my seat. We have what we need. Take up space.

Hailey: Do you think the world has progressed or regressed in regard to gender bias in the workplace? Or maybe you have opinions about both of them.

Emily: I think that on a surface we've progressed because there are a lot of women. We're probably more than 50% women within our company and specifically within our department. When I look at how we progress women in the rate and the speed and who are the women we progress, that's where I think we have an opportunity to get better. I want to have opportunity the same as other people in the organization do who may be men. I was doing a job in which I was a senior director and the people who had the job before me were all Latino men and they were all vice presidents. When I was doing the job, it was a senior director role and I was asked what is it

that you want. I said I want the same respect that you gave those men because here's what I've done, here's how I've done it, here's the progress that I've made. Neither one of them can say that they've done the same thing, but yet their title is different than mine. That's why I think that there's opportunity. I do think that we progressed in terms of the quantity. I don't know if we have progressed in terms of actual accountability, the way women are seen, or will continue to be seeing. The struggle is still out there.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts about anything related to the topic?

Emily: I think that women know how strong we are and all that we can do in the world. In the past 5 years, I think that women need to understand how they really are driving the world and shaping the world. Because of my job and marketing, I get to see a lot about the sway in people. From a Latino perspective, Hispanic women will drive the change in the Hispanic community. They will. They are coming up and they're taking their voice. They're owning it. They will take their voice. When you look at any election that has happened in the past 5 years, the women are the ones who are going to sway that vote. Trump realized that. Barack realized that. They all realized that the female is going to sway the vote. It doesn't mean she's going to vote for a woman. She's going to dictate what is important, what is going to happen, and she's going to sway that vote. When you look at what has happened globally when the women started taking the hijabs off their head because they were pissed that they were being beaten in the street. That was a female driven thing. Women are driving everything. We are the ones who are reshaping the way this world is. We have got to realize that and understand that we're taking our power. I think we're doing in such small clips that until we all come together, we're never going to see the bigness of it. That's what I hope and wish that will happen for the next generation and the next generation of them. I'm also going to tell you one little story that I always tell my friends. We debate movies left and right. What do you think about this movie. They always talk about The Lion King. The main character came back and he saved the community. I said actually he didn't. It was Nala who did, because she's the one who went to him and said you are not doing your job as a king. You need to come back to the community. You need to do your job and you need to show up for us so that we can get through x y and z. If that female hadn't went to that man, he wouldn't be the Lion King. I always say it was about the queen who saved it, not him. That's all I got to say.

Hailey: I love that. Thank you so much. Do you have anything else?

Emily: Kudos to you for doing this because I know the conversations that you're having can be hard and challenging. I appreciate you for doing this.

## Appendix F: Transcript #4

Hailey: Alright my first question is what led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry? What interested you about this field?

Jane: My background really started in just business in general by getting a business management degree. I've always been an innate leader just from the minute I came out of the womb if you would ask my mom and dad. I'm the classic oldest child. It was important to my parents to raise a daughter that was independent. My mom often joked that they raised me too independent whatever that means. It just felt like a good space for someone like me. I kind of toggled in college back and forth between exercise science and business. My dad gave me some great advice which is you can always do the pieces that you love, like exercise science, in a business degree. You can do so much in a business degree and you're not pigeonholing yourself into just one area. That made a lot of sense to me, so that right there was a reason why I ended up in business management. I found ways to ignite my passion and live my passion in the business world but creating it into a business. We may or may not get to it, but health and wellness is certainly something I'm passionate about and I happen to work in that industry on the business side.

Hailey: Where did you attend college and what did you study?

Jane: I started at [REDACTED]. I went there for 2 and a half years studying business. Then, I transferred to [REDACTED] and got my bachelor's degree in business management.

Hailey: Can you go through your professional career and briefly mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on?

Jane: It took me 5 years to get my bachelor's degree in total. So, my fifth year of college, I obtained a position in banking. I actually spent 13 years in banking. I worked in a management role for retail bank. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. As I started a family, I took some time off. [REDACTED]. I was in banking leading teams through those bank mergers and acquisitions. I worked my way up into like a more regional management role, training, banking, frontline employees on customer and service sales. A lot of coaching, tons of coaching. I did that and then I moved over after 13 years. I went into the nonprofit sector. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I was at the front head of that transition back over a decade ago. I think it was 11 years ago. I did that for a couple years by really helping small businesses grow and learn. There are some public policy pieces in it. Then, that led me, through building a ton of relationships in this community, to the [REDACTED]. Through the [REDACTED], the relationships I had there. [REDACTED]

Hailey: What are your professional and personal goals?

Jane: I have a lot. I can tell you a few and then some of them bleed professionally. For instance, I read my age every year. It's just something that I'm passionate about. It's both personal and professional. [REDACTED]. I set goals to speak at national conferences or local conferences. This year I set a goal to speak at the National Sports Forum, which I did a breakout session last year on breaking the glass ceiling. [REDACTED]. I'm on a committee for the National Sports Forum now, so that's been a goal of mine. I speak in February in Philadelphia. I also am really passionate about lifestyle goals, not only for health and wellness, but also for like harm

reduction. I live alcohol free. I like to speak at those types of engagements to help other individuals, men or women. I help a lot of women learn how they can navigate their career alcohol free and don't have to belly up to the bar with the guys in order to feel like they're making headway. I like to speak and serve on committees specific to that. I have those goals set up for February. There are other goals that I set for myself financially, like maxing out my 401K contribution each year, which is really important for retirement. I have a goal to do 292 workouts this year. For the math on that, that's 80% of the year I'm doing a workout. That is both a personal and professional goal because I firmly know that I'm a better individual if I take care of myself. I want to take a book writing course. That's a goal I have in mind. Those are some of the personal goals. I've achieved a lot of my professional goals. Professionally, one of my largest goals I have at this point is to be the first chairwoman ever in professional sports for the Board of Governors. That's a longer term goal that I have. It has taken me a considerable amount of time just to get on to the executive committee. I'm the first female ever as the executive committee member for the Board of Governors. I achieved that almost 3 years ago. Now I'm working towards being the first chairwoman. It might take me longer because I'm running into some hurdles.

Hailey: Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling and then its relation to the workplace?

Jane: Yeah. The glass ceiling is something, as woman in a male dominated industry, I constantly run into. It's like I get so far as a woman, and then it's this like thing you can see through, which is why it's called the glass. You're looking at the other individuals above you, men achieving these great feats, but it's so much easier than as a woman. That's how I see the glass ceiling. I defined the glass ceiling in my career. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. No other woman had done that. Now I have more goals I want, like I mentioned, to be the first chairwoman. I have other goals. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The Hall of Fame has all men inducted. 62 men inducted in this Hall of Fame since 2008. My goal this last year was to get a female inducted and it wasn't me. I want to be inducted one day but not now. I have more work to do. I wanted to see a woman inducted. I was able to achieve that without going into too much. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I had the honor to watch her be inducted. I had the honor of telling her I nominated her and having a great moment with her and thanking her for her work to allow me to do my work. My daughters are 21 years old and 17 years old. Whether they work in sports or whatever, I want to know that I'm helping the next generation.

Hailey: How is your work life balance? Do you feel it is more challenging as a woman?

Jane: Yeah. I think yes it is harder. I'm fortunate that I work for an organization like [REDACTED]. I look at this way that I work in sports because when you work in sports, you work nontraditional hours and it's very different in season and offseason. When I started this job 9 years ago, my kids were 11 and 8. My job is one where families come. I was able to bring the kids to game days and they could see. [REDACTED]. If they were really young, like infants, I don't know if I could have done this. That's why when I spent that time in banking and kind of cutting my teeth in leadership, that

those traditional hours that and at [REDACTED] really helped me as I transitioned into a more nontraditional career path. It is harder. I definitely extend a lot of empathy and compassion to my employees, whether they're men or women, that have children or that have aging parent or have pets. All the things that pull us in a lot of different directions. I'm a mom and a wife. I have the ability to tap into a piece of me that that men necessarily can't do. I'm not saying they're not empathetic, but I get it. It makes me just a better leader.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Jane: Yeah, the most subtle one drives me insane. It's definitely a microaggression. When I'm in meetings, they'll say 'gentlemen.' They address the whole group. I'll pipe up and say 'and ladies', especially on the executive committee, because I'm the only woman. They'll just address gentlemen all the time or they'll say 'gentlemen and lady.' Why put me second? Generally, in our vocab and in our culture, it's 'ladies and gentlemen.' It's backwards and it ticks me off.

Hailey: Would you say your company is male or female dominated?

Jane: I would say it's a good 50/50. [REDACTED]. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is really important. I can tell you it's grown since I've been there nearly a decade. I would say we're a good ratio 50/50 in terms of gender.

Hailey: I'm wondering how you feel about the sports industry, but also for business marketing. Can you explain whether you believe it's male or female dominated as a whole?

Jane: Sports is on the easy side. It's male dominated completely. I think on the marketing side, there's more women. Even in sports marketing, you see more women in those spaces. I would say more female dominated.

Hailey: Can you explain any gender biased challenges that you faced in your industry?

Jane: This is a trick one, but not because I'm trying to hide anything or protect anyone. There's a couple. I'll start with the obvious, and then I'll go to the ones where storytelling is involved. I work with a lot of men and they're not afraid to go after what they want. It's not like I haven't been hit on in my time in my role. Is it a compliment? I don't know. I just think they've gotten away with it before, so why not? I've had to learn how to navigate that. A lot of times if someone's trying to pay me a compliment or test the waters, I'll just say my husband thinks so too. That usually shuts them up. I use I just have to use the restroom. That one's a little more global for us ladies. The parts where you know it's less obvious is when I'm in [REDACTED] meetings and there are things said about our franchise on the financial side or how we operate our profitability, where we're looked at differently or were minimized for different ways. It's not outwardly said that it's because a woman runs it, right? There are these subtexts like where you think you don't trust my business acumen because I'm not a 65 year old white man that has millions of dollars. If that person were sitting next to me in the room, that would never come up if our owner, [REDACTED], was sitting next to me in these meetings, I would be treated differently. He fully trusts me to run this organization. That part, while I don't have firm evidence of it, you can feel the undertones.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently in the workplace as far as meetings or projects?

Jane: I've I ran into this recently on the emotional side. We're in a meeting and we're talking about a really contested topic where you've got the room split down the middle. If a man speaks up, everyone leans in and listens. If a woman speaks up, it's emotional. I'll get a text from some of my peers asking are you okay. You see more emotional than normal. It's this constant double

bind. If men express their opinion, they're assertive. If I express my opinion, I'm aggressive. I'm a bitch. I'm emotional. I see that stuff all the time.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts? If so, could you provide specific examples or instances that highlight the inequality?

Jane: Here's how I've handled this one I have. Do I think so? Yes. Do I have evidence of it?

Kind of, but do I know I've chosen to look the other way. I'm not saying it's the right thing, but I know that I have to. I have this belief that if I'm passionate about something, the money will follow. That has served me my whole career. I continue to make more money year over year in my day job and I started my own business three years ago and I do very well in my own business. I'm proud of that because I'm passionate about it and it's the hard work. Do I know men make more money than me in this industry? Yes. Is my work done? No, and I'm only 45, right? I'm really starting to hit my peak earning years. I view that as an opportunity to get there whatever there is. The data that I have, which the league collects, is by role. I can see what my peers make. I will tell you I'm in like the top 6 of earners out of 28 teams. I'm not far off, but I also have to be fair. I've only been in this industry 9 years. I have a 25 year working history, but I also want to pride myself on being rational. Just because I have a vagina doesn't mean I need to earn more money. Do I want pay equality? Absolutely. Where I do know that sports fall down in this area is not for necessarily front office, but it is for women's professional athletes. There is a giant pay discrepancy. There's a great book on this that I highly recommend. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I'm creating all these different mentor and mentee programs within the league.

Hailey: What would you say are the biggest challenges that women face in the workplace?

Jane: I think it's the stigma. I'm trying to find the right words. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is a hot topic, which is good. We're making progress, but it feels like tokenism now, right? It feels like a lot of companies are checking the box and men are playing along with it and they're sitting there silently rolling their eyes. Ah here we go again. Listen. I get it. My dad's a white man. My husband's a white man. I love white men, but I also love all other kinds of people too. When I get asked why I'm so vocal about diversity, equity, and inclusion, my answer is have you ever felt shame? Shame in your life for anything, like choosing not to drink alcohol, being the only woman in a boardroom and being told you're emotional, or shame for not having enough money to pay a bill. If you felt shame in any way, shape or form, that's what I'm trying to highlight and to remove the stigma that is kind of just hanging there. It's just hanging there.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing those leadership roles?

Jane: There's another great book. I don't have it here on my desk, but it's called How Women Rise. They outline 12 areas where women tend to hold themselves back, and I think the number one reason is a lot of women play small. And in all fairness, because I get called out on this all the time, they don't want to toot their own horn. They don't want to humble brag. They don't want to celebrate their successes because that's not how we're taught as women to be. We're taught to be gracious and humble and kind. Now, a man can sit over here and list his accolades off all day long on LinkedIn, TikTok, Snapchat, or Facebook. If a woman does it, then we're cocky, arrogant, or we have low self-confidence because we have to feel like we have to pump ourselves up again. It goes back to the double bind.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company?

Jane: I've seen a lot of progress here, especially within [REDACTED]. They've done an excellent job and it's not tokenism. They mean it. Diversity, equity, and inclusion is

important to them on all levels and you can see that from day one for orientation, which I used to teach there all the way through. I mean the steps that they take are real.

Hailey: Are there any examples of initiatives or policies that you know are in place at improving diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Jane: One of the first things is where I work I don't have to go ask to do certain things. If I want to speak at a conference around breaking the glass ceiling specific to diversity and inclusion, I just go do it. I don't have to ask to say, is it okay? There's so much psychological safety there that I can go and do. I posted up on my social networks when I was in L.A., speaking at the National Sports Forum last year. They took this stuff and put it on their social platforms for the organization. They're celebrating it at in staff meetings. I just opened it up today. It was in the top 10 for the whole 2023. It was highlighted as the number 1 out of the top 10. The work I was doing was number 1 and that's just internal stuff that we see.

Hailey: In general, in the corporate world, have you seen improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace?

Jane: I do. I think I've seen it. It takes leaders who are willing to say so. For instance, hockey is a very white sport, not just on the ice, but off the ice in the front office. One of my sales reps is [person of color]. I talk to him when we're at league meetings. I sit there and have conversations with them. I'm not afraid to say I see that you're the only [person of color] in this room and I just want you to know that I see that and we're going to do some work on this. He ended up winning sales rookie of the year. He earned that for the whole league and for him to be able to stand up and accept that award as the one of the only [person of color] in the front office in a white sport was such progress. Leaders being willing, and I'm seeing this more now, to say I see color, I see gender, and I see your religion. I see these things. I see your disability and it's empowering. It's not a weakness. That's the type of leader I am because I get how it feels to feel shame. It goes back to the shame. I hope that people that are not white don't feel shame working in a predominantly white office or predominantly white sport. That would be hard.

Hailey: How do you believe organizations can create a better workplace for women?

Jane: Oh, just by talking about it. I want nothing more than people just to ask me. I have so much respect when someone asks me what it is like to work in this industry, where there's a lot of men. I love it when people just ask me. Just like I asked the sales rep what it is like to be the only black guy in this room. Because how else are we going to learn? Just by asking and hitting it head on. When you ask, you're seeing. When someone asks, you are now seeing that I'm unique in this.

Hailey: What strategies do you believe would be beneficial? I think you touched on having mentorship programs, so I'm wondering about that.

Jane: Part of what I do for my professional development, [REDACTED], is I've made it a goal years ago to get to all of them and travel and learn from their front offices. I have 6 leadership pillars. The first one is go to the experts. Well, all my peers that are all over the United States and Canada are the experts. I go and learn from them. My second leadership pillar is innovate. I take what I learn there and I make it fit in [REDACTED]. By the innovation piece, I decided when I was traveling around, I was noticed there are young women that are coming up to me and asking me these questions that I love to be asked. I thought, why don't I start a woman's in sports quarterly call. I chair the [REDACTED] committee for the league, which is around diversity and inclusion. I launched that in September. What stemmed from that was a desire to have a book club, which I launched. My second initiative that was brought up was a mentor-mentee program. There was a lot of younger women. It was a great turn



out, but I didn't know what to expect. I didn't know if people would be like we don't care or we love it. There were 25 women that showed up, which I consider success, virtually. I'm meeting with the league this week to start to get that piece together for the mentor-mentee program. There are some of us that have been in our careers longer that could help mentor those that are entry level or younger in their 20s and early 30s. I'm going to be working on launching that this year in 2024, which is another one of my professional goals.

Hailey: Are there any female leaders that you admire?

Jane: It's hard to come by in sports, but I was not the first female GM in the [league]. There is a woman [REDACTED]. She is the GM of [a team]. She was one of the first persons I reached out to when I took this job to say female to female what am I walking into. She's one that I really look up to and I told her years ago that I want to help other women rise in the ranks. If this was something you're passionate about, maybe we can do this together. She's like no that's all you. It's just our personality types are different. Over the years, I took the baton and ran with it. She's definitely someone I look up to. There's one that I can mention.

Hailey: How do you think women can make their mark in the workplace?

Jane: I'm a true believer of hard work. I'm also a true believer in being your authentic self and finding your voice. I'm constantly trying to balance that. Instead of sitting back, find ways to speak up and also give back by chairing on different committees and starting these programs. I'm not getting paid any more money to do that. I don't expect to be. I want to help other women get to where they want to be. I'm willing to do servant leadership. I want to. I would say that's a big part of it as well.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business industry?

Jane: This is the same advice I would have given 20 years ago as I give now. Do not follow the money. The money will follow if you do what you love. Do not follow the money. The other piece of advice I would give is to get involved in your community. Find community. [REDACTED]. There are different subcommittees. There are actual committees for work, but then there's also extras. I was in triathlon for a long time, so I found a community of people there. Find your people. Find a community. It's easy in this day and age with technology to do the opposite but find your people. That's what helps lift you up and help grow you is the people around you. Invest in yourself, personally and professionally. Don't be afraid to ask your employer to help go to a leadership conference. Learn how to pitch that to your boss. Read books. Listen to podcasts. Turn your car into a rolling university. I speak to this when I do speaking engagements, like invest in yourself financially and spiritually.

Hailey: Do you think the world has progressed or regressed in regard to gender bias? Maybe you just have opinions about what we have and haven't done.

Jane: I think we've progressed. Again, I think it's personalities. It's also how you're raised. I think there's a lot that goes into it. It's not a simple yes or no, but I do think we've progressed as a society for sure.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts that you would like to share?

Jane: I think we touched on really everything and I'll be interested to learn or see your findings and what comes out of it.

## Appendix G: Transcript #5

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry and what interested you about this field?

Olivia: I'm one of those kids where their parents kept trying to push them towards the sciences. My family is a huge STEM family. Science, technology, education, and math. They wanted me to go into that, like being engineer or a doctor. My mom used to actually take me to conferences about women being doctors and stuff. I would sit there and draw and look at the ads and the pamphlets throughout the whole thing. It just really was not working. In high school, I got in trouble because I was selling candy bars out of my locker and undercutting the school store. I was also selling my class notes to my classmates before tests. The principal called home and thankfully he got my dad and not my mom. My dad was just like I don't care and how much money did she make. After that he was like okay I think we need to find you some business classes or something. I actually started attending the local community college and taking business classes when I was 15. I don't know other than that just that I find it in absolutely fascinating subject and I'm addicted to it. I love to do it.

Hailey: Where did you attend college and what did you study?

Olivia: I actually started at the community college. I got my Associates of Arts and Business from the community college. I went to [REDACTED] and I got my Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing. While working full-time, I did a part-time Master's degree program at [REDACTED]. I got my Master of Arts and Advertising.

Hailey: Can you briefly go through your professional career and mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on?

Olivia: I graduated during a really rough time when there wasn't a lot of jobs. My first couple jobs out of college were actually sales jobs and they were advertising sales jobs, which are horrible jobs. You're talking radio and billboard, and it was literally walking into local restaurants and asking would you like to buy radio ads? Awful. I did some internships at the [REDACTED] when I was in college. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I was like what am I doing with my life. I want to market something that's good for people. I thought what's a product or service that's actually good for people. Education is something that is always good for people, so I started networking with a wide variety of the marketing directors at community colleges and four year colleges. [REDACTED]. I became the head of marketing for [REDACTED], which means I was responsible for any marketing, advertising, public relations, community relations, and anything that was public facing essentially. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I decided I didn't like living in Michigan anymore. I took a job down in [REDACTED]. Same thing, same job, just a different community college and ended up with an absolutely nightmare boss. I moved to [REDACTED] and I worked at one of their technology startups. I was doing sort of a mix of sales and community development. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was a lot of community development and sales work. That was a really fun and I traveled the country. I traveled 120 days a year, so that was insane. I decided I wanted to make more money and get back to a more traditional marketing role. I left and I went to [REDACTED]. I was the brand manager for [REDACTED], which are

made by [REDACTED]. I was in charge of marketing [REDACTED] to their dealers and trying to get their dealers to sell more of it. It was a lot of trainings and sales incentives. I was moved to their public affairs office and I was moved into internal communications. I was doing employee facing communications for a couple of [REDACTED] and working on employee pride campaigns. I ended up with another nightmare boss, so I left and decided I didn't like [REDACTED] anyway. Now, I work at [REDACTED], and I'm their global head of marketing, external marketing. I'm responsible for our hospitality events, our trade shows, developing a new customer facing software system, and marketing that, working with the sales team to develop acts, persuasive and good resources, social media, and all that fun stuff. On top of that, I do a lot of public speaking. I've always been passionate about that. That's not paid, but I do a lot of public speaking. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I'm also an owner of a company. That's very small part-time work, [REDACTED]. It's not many clients, but it pays very well. I don't want that to become my full time job. It's just for fun and extra cash.

Hailey: What are your personal and professional goals?

Olivia: To be totally honest, mine are a little weird at this moment. I'm 41 years old and it looks like, because I've been so good at saving my money, I will be able to fully retire at age 48 or 49. It's weird that I'm on the down slope with my career now. I honestly don't know if I will be able to retire like mentally. I'm just too much of an achiever. I still want to continue to grow my career while I'm at it. I'm a strategist through and through, so continuing to do more and more marketing strategy and business strategy. More responsibilities, more leadership. I have a friend who's trying to recruit me to become the president of his company. I don't know if I want to do that or not because I'm kind of over that level of stress, but I might be. I think one of the big things I'm working on though is assigning less of my identity to my achievements and work. I'm coming up on maybe not having to work anymore, so I would rather not have a massive identity crisis with that. Lots of personal travel is always on my list, and then focusing on my relationships with my friends and family.

Hailey: Can you provide your understanding of the term glass ceiling and its relation to the workplace?

Olivia: My understanding of the glass ceiling is that it primarily is utilized when women are being held back in their career in some way because they are women. Examples of this would be like not being promoted and selected for leadership positions.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance? How do you define that and do you feel it's more challenging as a woman?

Olivia: I think it's easier for me because I'm not married and I don't have kids. I'm divorced and I have strategically chosen not to have children. I've never wanted children, so I think it's pretty easy for me. I don't think it's easy for women that have both because I think they are expected to do so much more of the caretaking in the household and the children duties. At [REDACTED], I would say it was pretty rough. They expect you to work somewhere around 60 to 70 hours a week. Since I left there, I work probably a solid 40 hours and 2 of those days are hybrid at home. Laundry and other things get done right. So, it's pretty cozy, honestly. Even with the resume consulting business, that's maybe 4 or 5 hours a week, so it's pretty cushy right now. I feel like I have incredible work-life balance compared to most people.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be result of stereotypical gender roles?

Olivia: I thought of a couple of here. I think one of the biggest that I'm actually going to have a talk with a young man about. He doesn't even realize that he's asking me to schedule meetings that he could easily schedule. I'm way more senior than him. Luckily, I have a good relationship with him. I can just have the conversation and say it looks bad when you do that. I see that quite often. Any sort of admin work I see that being shoved to women more often. One of the ones that I think is there but is really hard to put its finger on is men and women traveling together for work. In my roles, because I work at [REDACTED] companies, most of the people I work with are going to be men. Other than the marketing people. I regularly travel with men, like all the time. I have gotten very used to it, and it doesn't bother me. I do feel there are some hesitations sometimes about going out to dinner with me or things that they would normally do with other men because I'm a woman. It might look bad or whatever. I think no one has outwardly ever said to me, but I feel it's there and I can't put my finger on. A small one that that annoys me is I really don't like the whole opening the doors and elevators for me. I am in the South and so there are a lot of very gender gentlemanly things they're supposed to do all the time.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male or a female? Is your company male or female dominated?

Olivia: I report to a male, but above him is a very powerful female and who is very actively engaged. It's a small company, it's like 500 people. It goes me, my boss, who is a male, his boss, who is a female, her boss, who is the CEO, who is a male. That's the whole chain. At the current moment, yes, I do report to a male. Our department is pretty well split because it's a strategy department, so the 2 marketing leaders, the internal head of marketing and the external, were both female. Our environmental and safety and governance person is female, but then we have a couple of competitive intelligence strategists and those 2 are men. It's pretty well balanced. Now, when I was at [REDACTED], it was not. Almost all my bosses were female, and almost the entire department was female. There might be 1 or 2 males in the entire department. Again, I'm in [REDACTED], so it depends how you zoom out. It's a very male dominated industry. It's not uncommon for me to go to a meeting, I mean, it happens probably on a daily basis. I'm in a meeting and I'm the only female in there, so that's very normal.

Hailey: Can you explain for business marketing as a whole industry, whether you believe it's male or female dominated.

Olivia: It seems like it's female dominated. I think sales is more male dominated, which is an extension. Everywhere I've worked, it's definitely been a more female led. Anything to do with communications or marketing. Now, when I was at the community colleges, there were a decent amount of men that did my job. Like I said, I think at [REDACTED] it was really like holy cow there are hardly any men in this department.

Hailey: Can you explain gender biased challenges that you've personally faced in your industry?

Olivia: I have a ton of examples for you. A lot of examples came to mind. I was working at that technology startup and I was their head of community development and I wasn't getting promoted. I was seeing everybody else around me get promoted. I was not. The thing about working at a startup was I would actively build things out, like a customer service department. It would get spun off and then someone else would lead that. I would build up another department and it would get spun off and someone else would lead that. They would say oh we just want to give you enough time to do your job. I'm trying to build myself a little fiefdom over here. Finally, I had a boss that was male and his boss above him was male. Keep in mind, this is higher education, so it tends to be very liberal. I finally went to them and asked why I am not getting promoted. They were like you really don't have any leadership potential. Now, this is

after I built them a 200 college and university organization. I was doing somewhere around 60 to 70 keynote speeches a year for them, like leading major conferences for them. Oh boy, did I cry. They said you just lack the emotional intelligence. They just tore me apart. I went away and I cried and I was reading books on improving my emotional intelligence. Finally, one of the other women in the office, who was very observant of people's behaviors, pulled me into a room. She put her hands on my shoulders. We know each other quite well. She said it's because you're a woman. I was like what do you mean. She said they go into meetings and scream at people and pound their fists on the table. You get in trouble for asking. You are told you're too brash because you asked someone if they're going to meet their deadline or not. She said if you look at the women that have been successful here, they wear skirts every single day and they acted very feminine and they're always yes women. I went back and I looked around and I was like that's exactly what's going on here. I knew at that point that I needed to leave. I also wanted to make more money. I have another story when I was working at the first community colleges as their head of marketing. Now this could be confounded by the fact that I was in communications. Do you know what an anger translator is? It's a fun Saturday Night Live skit. It is essentially some comedians making fun of Obama because President Obama was always so flatlined. They had another guy standing behind him and like translating it in really angry words. When I was working at the first community college, there was the chief financial officer. He was about my age, but male and an accountant. I would have to say things so tactfully. Then, he would immediately say what she means to say is x. I never took it personally that he did it, but it was just kind of this thing. There was one time we had an employee do something very wrong. Let's say they are very lucky not to get fired and more lucky not to get arrested. I was in a meeting and I said we have a culture that truly believes in coaching and retraining people. He was right next to me. He goes what she really means to say is you have to mess up royally before we can fire you. That's exactly what I meant to say. I started calling him my anger translator because he would say what I really meant. I didn't feel like I could. My next story. I've actually had male bosses tell me this. I used to be a competitive martial artist and I am still a martial artist. I just don't compete anymore. I'm very senior ranked. If I was a male, that would go on my resume, that would go on LinkedIn as like a major accomplishment. Because I'm a female, I hide it. No one knows. My boss knows because I told him because I warned him if I come in with bruises, I'm not getting abused. I've been actively coached not to say anything about it at work, so I don't. Also, very early on in my career, when I was selling billboards, I had a male client that cornered me in his office and tried to kiss me. That was really scary. One thing that's subtle is I found that men overall are really afraid to compliment me on how I look. I'll walk up to my male colleagues and say hey you got a new haircut and it looks nice. They don't feel like they can do the same right now. I've had a couple that have no tact and been like nice outfit and I'll be like sweet. I remember I was working at the billboard company and I was out with the general manager. He took a call from his wife and I had just lost a lot of weight like 30 pounds. He's talking to his wife on the phone and asking are you really sure. He hangs up and he's says okay I'm going to say something to you. I'm only telling you this because my wife said it's okay to say this to you. He asks did you lose a ton of weight. I was like yeah. He said you look great and I said thank you. He needed all that reassurance from his wife that it was an okay thing to say. I was getting married and while I was getting married, a really big job was open that I wanted, like an executive director role. I started pitching myself as a potential candidate for that job. I called a female board member that I know well and I was talking to her about the job. She's like aren't you about to get married. I was like yes. She asked if I think it's a good idea to apply for this job.

I was like what are you talking about. She said I'm just saying that your family is likely going to change and grow in the next couple years and you have to think if you're actually able to do this job. I asked are you implying with kids, because I'm not planning to have kids and this is completely inappropriate. I wasn't even considered for the job. Okay I have 2 more. I was a board member, voluntary board member at a school board [REDACTED]. It was a [REDACTED] and there were a lot of angry parents in the board meeting. We went into executive session to discuss something that was allowed to be in executive session. The board chair was in there, mostly all men, right. I walked in the room and at this point I had 20 years of public relations experience, particularly working with school boards. I know how to handle this. I walk in the room and I had been very quiet. I've been on the board about a year. I was easing into it because I knew the environment. I walked into this and said here's what needs to happen. Here's how we need to approach this. I got done and I kid you not the board chair looked around the room and goes okay does anybody have any suggestions of what we should do or how we should handle this situation. My jaw dropped. Luckily, the guy next to him who was like an FBI agent, looked at me goes isn't that what I just gave you. My final example of this is I was working at [REDACTED]. When you work at a community college you pay is public. They were doing an audit of our pay and there were 5 people that did my job across the district. 2 were men and 3 were women. The 2 men were paid \$10,000 more than the 3 women. We, as a collective group with those men, wrote a letter and said we all should be paid equally. If our job descriptions are different, then we should align them so that we are all paid the same. I was threatened with lawyers and everything else to stop talking about that. I will say even now I struggle to advocate for myself. I do negotiate. I was able to double my sign on bonus at the company that I am at now. They weren't going to pay me an additional bonus that goes to all employees because they said there was a stipulation in there that you have to have worked 1,000 hours. I went back and I pulled all of my on boarding documents and I was like the 1,000 hours was not a requirement and was not listed. Therefore, I am requesting this. My boss got it for me. He's a great dude, very understanding of that. I found myself apologizing to him and being like I'm so sorry that I advocated for myself to get this money. I say to them like I have just been taught as a female that you should always advocate for yourself in pay because of issues. Hailey: Can you recall specific times when men and women have been treated differently as far as like meetings or projects?

Olivia: Let me tell you a story about this. I was working at [REDACTED] and we had a big meeting. It was like a brainstorming meeting with all the marketing people. It was a big group. I would say there was somewhere between 200 and 400 people in the room. It was a big crowd. Our leadership team was there and [a colleague], who I introduced you to, was leading it. A male on the leadership team was facilitating it. There was only at that point one other female on the leadership team, which was a woman named [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] is the firecracker from Hell. She makes [a colleague] and I look tame. [REDACTED] is sitting at the leadership table and it's all men and her. [A colleague] is doing Q&A while the male facilitates being supportive. They start coming up with a good ideas and we're like are you going to write these down? And he's like, oh, yeah, we should be writing these down. He points to [REDACTED] and says, [REDACTED] can you take notes? I would have handled the situation differently. I probably wouldn't have even noticed I was the only female, but she did. But not only did she notice it, she took that as an opportunity to call him out. She literally stood up in front of 200 people and said absolutely not the only reason you asked me to is because I'm the only female at this table. I would have said it more tactically if I'd noticed I would have said let's have one of the men try. The room burst out in very awkward

laughter and shock, and one of the men walked up and high fived her and said I will take notes. I talked to him later about that and I said what were you thinking in that moment. He's like I just needed to diffuse that situation fast. Do I think she approached it correctly? No because I think embarrassing him isn't going to help any of us. I think she was right to call it out in some way, yes, but it was such a blatant example of it.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts?

Olivia: Yes. So, that one time it was really obvious, right, that I was significantly underpaid \$10,000 a year. Other than that, it's really hard for me to tell. What I have done in the past is wait until someone's leaving or find a very friendly female and ask how much are getting paid. I tend to be a Pitbull when I'm negotiating pay, so I tend to do quite well for myself in that way. The community college was definitely a time I knew I was being underpaid.

Hailey: What are the like biggest challenges that you feel women face in the workplace?

Olivia: The first one doesn't really impact me, but I think it impacts most women, and it's like they have to go home and do a second job, which is take care of the house and the kids. I feel like that still very much falls on the women and it's not fair and it is what it is. There's been experiments and I'm sure you've read them, where like doctor's offices won't even call the men even though they have the men's phone numbers. I think expectations of admin work is another big [challenge]. [There's an expectation that] we will take care of additional things like make coffee, get food, and schedule meetings. I am straight to the point and I tell people when I started to work with them that I come across as a complete hard ass but let me tell you that I care about you. I just don't come across that way. I think that being soft, having to be softer and gentler in our words in our actions, is something that's really put on us. I think ideas not heard or taken seriously in meetings until either a male confirms it or advocates for it. The other day in a meeting that happened to me. One of the guys said why are we going against what Nicole told us. She's a communication expert and she had a really great point.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing those leadership roles?

Olivia: I do think it's the perception because the women that tend to want those roles tend to be the hardballs. It's weird they won't promote the women that are soft and gentle, but they're taken aback by women like us. We're just acting like the men. I found it fascinating that when I started working at [REDACTED], the women came across to me as so harsh. I realized I'm being biased and they're not harsh. They're just acting like the men and I'm not used to that. The one that sort of gets me and there might be some truth to it, but it kind of sucks too. Women haven't had the same career trajectories as men, and we haven't been able to move up the ranks. Some of the ladder rungs are missing. I work with a lot of executive men on their resumes, and I do find it interesting that the vast majority of the people that call me for resume services are men. I don't know what that says about anything. I'm starting to get women, but it's rare. These men started their career 35 years ago and then worked their way up the ranks. The women were starting careers 35 years ago, so I'm hoping it'll get better with time, but I think that's overused as an excuse by men is like well you just haven't had the same experiences as this men.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company? Are there like any initiatives or policies that you know are in place?

Olivia: I've only been here six months, so I don't feel like it can really answer this question and because I'm too new, yeah.

Hailey: Do you feel that you've seen improvements as far as diversity, equity and inclusion?

Olivia: I've seen efforts. I think all the ways we're trying to lift up women are completely wrong. Let me give you a great example of this. When I started [REDACTED], I went to a conference and

it was like my first month on the job. I had never heard of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace before. They had a lunch during the conference. The conference is about 500 people and they asked which DEI group lunch you signed up for. I didn't sign up for one because I don't know what that means. It turns out there was, like the Asian and Pacific Islander society, the Black society, the women's society. There were all these societies. All the women went in one room, and all the Asian people went in one room, and all the black people went in one room. I went in the room where there was no DEI and I ended up eating lunch with a bunch of white men. I just sat there thinking isn't this what we're trying to fight against, though? These men get together and make relationships with one another and have meetings without us. Here we are thinking that we're doing ourselves a favor, but in reality, they're all still sitting in a room by themselves, networking without us. I also think it sets up a very hostile environment with some men. I have had a window into some communications by men that I wasn't meant to have. I can tell you that a lot of the men are pretty annoyed about like women's only events and women's conferences because they think if we had a men's conference, they would absolutely flip out. I would say the men play along with it, but a lot of them much more hostile than we think to it. I feel like we're harming ourselves quite a bit in that way. My company does do women's only DEI events for networking. I've only been to one. I don't know what they normally do. I'm not fully against them like I've been to some that have been helpful, like harassment in the workplace and what to do about it. This one was a candle making event, which I was very happy about, because I like candles and I will take free candles and make my own. It doesn't help my career in any way. It reinforces the stereotype that when women get together, they should be doing domestic stuff, like making candles. We're actually not ending segregation; we're just segregating ourselves and feeling better about it.

Hailey: How do you feel organizations can create a better workplace for women?

Olivia: I actually believe in mentorship programs, but I read a really interesting insight which was the number one reason men won't mentor a female is because they are concerned about being accused of having an affair with her. I am actually a big fan of male to female mentoring as long as it's assigned because that's how you get around it. Whenever I get a chance to sign up for mentorship programs I actually ask for a male. At [REDACTED], I ended up with an extremely senior executive as my mentor. The reason I ended up with it is he did a talk for the women's group and he said he read a study where when women get mentoring, the mentoring is around communication. When men get mentoring, it's around business strategy. I don't know if that's true or not, but I saw an opportunity. I messaged him afterwards and I said it was very nice to meet you and I said if you have a mentorship slot open on your calendar I actually am a business strategist and would love mentoring around business strategy. I end up meeting with him quarterly and working on strategy. I think another thing I have noticed that actually the oil companies do much better than academia. I used to get sexually harassed quite a bit in academia or be put in uncomfortable situations that don't fly at an oil company. The level of tolerance is none. I will say I never experienced any sexual harassment when I was working there. I think workplaces taking that stuff so seriously, not to the point where people that didn't do anything are being fired before they're even investigated, but no tolerance policies are great.

Hailey: Do you have any female leaders that you admire?

Olivia: Yeah, I introduced you to one, [REDACTED]. I think I admire women like that because I can see myself in them and the fact that I am very direct and I'm very hard working and I'm a high achiever. These women have actually figured out a way to be successful and that's why I asked her to be my mentor. She is my mentor for that reason.



Hailey: How do you feel that women can make their mark in the workplace?

Olivia: I would like to see more women push back against what I call segregated events. I actually found one at [REDACTED], who stood up and said something one day about it. That was awesome. I think we need to focus less on what makes us feel good and more on what actually works. Unfortunately, I don't feel like we're at a point where I can just say be our authentic self. I still feel like you have to play the game a little bit. I have to approach salary negotiations different than a male would. I have to approach some of my colleagues different than a fellow male would. That's just where we're at. I feel like if you buck the system too much, then you're going to get kicked out of the system. You have to be careful. Pick what you want to fight. I don't talk a lot about banning segregate events unless it's a very friendly audience. I know that would not be popular. I think working hard and trying to do higher level work and making sure that it is higher level work. I read an article a while ago about like unpaid labor or non-promotable tasks and really thinking about what tasks are going to make you stand out and what tasks are busy work and trying to get rid of those busy work tasks.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females that are entering the business marketing industry?

Olivia: I think they've got to stay on the cutting edge of everything. They have to be all over AI. I think have to be perpetual learners. That's been something that's really helped me make my mark and helped me with my authority. I can actually cite studies. I can immediately tell you the empirical evidence. I read the Journal of Marketing. I think being better than your males at knowing the information and then picking your moments. I do think it's still play the game a little bit.

Hailey: Do you think the world has progressed or regressed in regard to gender bias?

Olivia: I think to my big question here is since when? I mean if we look back at the 1950s, yes we have progressed. Do I think have we come as far as I'd hoped? No, and I think some of the reason we haven't come as far is that we are our own worst enemy because we're doing things that make us feel good and look good, like doing these women's only events but aren't actually effective. I think we got to really be smarter about what we do and base it less on what looks good or feels good.

## Appendix H: Transcript #6

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry and what interested you about this field?

Sophia: I'm going to go back a little bit further. I am [REDACTED] undergrad, so really my first start with marketing came from [a professor]. [REDACTED]. I'm a management major and marketing minor. One of the required classes was research and that was my first time really gravitating towards a specific topic within the business world. I loved it, but at the time I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do for a living. I actually went into sales right out of college and not because I was interested in it, but because my sister worked for the company that I ended up working with. I didn't quite know what I really wanted to do, so I went there. Sales was not for me. I did it for about 3 years while I was working on my graduate degree at [REDACTED]. At the time I worked for a company that did use [REDACTED] data to help understand what was happening within the industry using a lot of data. I got another opportunity, even though I wasn't quite in the field that I was interested in, I got to see and was exposed to how some of that data is used within an industry that I was in. Fast forward, I know I have an interest. I'm seeing that I have an interest in it here. Let's try to work for [REDACTED]. I applied for a position in [REDACTED]. I ended up getting it and I've been with this company for 7 years and definitely enjoy the aspect of getting to look at the data and be able to tell a story.

Hailey: Could you mention where you attended college and what you studied.

Sophia: My undergraduate was going to be [REDACTED]. My major was management and my minor was marketing. I obtained my MBA from [REDACTED].

Hailey: Can you briefly mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on during your professional career?

Sophia: I would say the biggest responsibility that I have right now is I am a manager of a lot of associates. Most of them are newer within their career. One of the things that I do and I feel that I do fairly well is teaching and training and molding those that are new within the industry. I would say that is my biggest responsibility. Outside of that which I'm the most passionate about, I do own a client and client relations, so having to just handle perceptions from a client perspective. That's a big thing that I have to do and help them understand while looking at the data as well if there are certain issues happening with the data that might delay their ability to understand what's going on within the world. I have to kind of manage that. I would say those are some of the 2 bigger professional responsibilities that I do within my role.

Hailey: What are your professional and personal goals?

Sophia: Personal is going to be easier for me to start with. I am definitely very passionate about community engagement. Everybody should have something that they are passionate about and then go and actually put action against that. For me, my passion is in animal welfare. For me, it's just continuing to be a positive force to help within the world of animal welfare. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I try to find different avenues in which I can just continue to help the community. That's kind of my goal from a person lens. From a professional lens, I really pride myself on helping others grow. It's a way that I have grown is just by helping others, just because being a teacher, it forces you to try to understand other people's perspectives. I have to come up with a new solution for them to be able to understand. My biggest professional goal is actually just helping those around me continue to grow and develop.

Hailey: Can you first provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling and its relation to the workplace?

Sophia: Specifically for women, it's really dealing with the realities that our profession is heavily male dominated. What happens with that is you get this glass ceiling above you that prevents you from being able to rise up into some of these next levels just because of your gender. I feel as if glass ceiling can also really apply to if you are certain ethnicities as well.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance? Do you feel it's more challenging as a woman?

Sophia: Right now, I don't have kids and I think that's one of the differences. I think that it is more of a challenge for women with kids, but in my current state I feel comfortable with my work-life balance. I get to work from home, so that's a play into that. It's also company based. I am very fortunate to work with a company who is ranked as a diverse company. They have a really great maternity leave. They do have a lot of support out there meant to help those who are not your typical person that you would see within this industry. I feel okay about my work-life balance. However, here's what's a little bit interesting for you. I say this now. A year ago, I would not have said this. One of the differences I have seen is I've had 2 different teams in the past 2 years. One of them, I was leading a team of all males. This year, I am leading a team of all females. I am able to hand off more work and responsibility to my female associates than I ever was to my young male associates. I was working late during that time to try to cover all of the bases. I was dealing with a lot of angry client customers because they were not happy with the relationship from the male associates. They are very happy with the team that they have now. This team takes ownership, so that I think is one of the biggest differences, which I think is a little bit little bit relevant for your conversation.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Sophia: Yes. Here's the other thing. Right now, I actually do have a female boss, who supports other females. My previous bosses were a typical older male and then a female who was older, who tended to view women as competition. Where I'm at now is very different because of the people that I am under. Under the past leadership, there was definitely situations for myself in which I was handed or asked to do a lot of the admin type work, like documenting this process. I wasn't asked to go and do the deep dive data analytics to find the insight. That was something that I had faced that was just a microaggression. I've also seen some of my female leadership have small comments made to them in public settings that I don't think you'd say to a male. Some of those, for example or things along the line of course they're going to talk and they always have an opinion. The only 2 female leaders on the team were called out for talking and sharing their opinion. I did pick up on that and the other thing that was called out in a public comment was another female leader. Somebody said of course she was complaining. Those 2 things are definitely things that have happened in recent time frames.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male or female? Is your department male or female dominated?

Sophia: I report to a female and my specific team in my department that I work with is heavily a female team.

Hailey: Is the business marketing industry more female dominated or more male dominated?

Sophia: I feel like it comes in waves. I've been on all male teams. I've been on female teams. I feel like right now it's actually pretty evenly split.

Hailey: Can you explain any personal gender biased challenges that you've faced in your industry?

Sophia: Within the industry as a whole, not necessarily. It could be the company and just some of the people within the industry that I've had the opportunity to move to.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently as far as like meetings or projects?

Sophia: The obvious ones are always going to be the situations in which the female, if you're sitting in a meeting at leadership level, they're going to ask you to take the notes. That's still happening.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts, and if so, could you provide specific examples that highlight the inequality?

Sophia: Yes and no. This one is a little bit hard because it wasn't necessarily that I was being underpaid compared to males. I was just being flat out underpaid compared to everybody. I had found out that actually last year. There was a new associate within [REDACTED], that's the key is they have to be in the same market as you, join the company and was making over 20% more than I was. They were female. They were making significantly more than me. With that information and having been with the company for a lot longer time, I was able to go to my boss and actually have the conversation to help rate increase my pay. Here is where it's a little bit different. One of my best friends at this company is a male who was also getting underpaid. Because I was able to get my pay increased, I took that information and I shared that with my male friend, who knew he was being underpaid. Instead of addressing the issue, he was just trying to look for other jobs. I gave him the ammunition and here's what I did. Go ask for it and he did. One of the differences I would say was the rate in which that pay was fixed. His got fixed within a month of him asking and mine took about 6 months.

Hailey: Along with that, do you have any advice for women who do know that they're getting underpaid and how to fix that?

Sophia: The big thing is going in with facts and of course keeping an even keel. If you can go in and say here's what I know about my associates pay and here's the work that I have done to show that I am performing as a top associate and this is why I deserve that pay. You do have to be your own advocate, though. That's the reality of corporate America is nobody is you are going to be your best advocate. Your bosses can advocate for you sometimes; however, you do have to speak up and defend yourself as well. Just being willing to speak up.

Hailey: What are some of the biggest challenges that women face in the workplace?

Sophia: I think it depends on the stage that there are in. I think one of the biggest challenges I actually see are for working moms. They are expected to work as if they don't have kids and have kids like they don't have a job. The reality is they're going to come into work and be more tired. They're not going to get as many projects as an associate who doesn't have kids. They're not going to be able to dedicate themselves as much. I think we have a long way to go to help working moms to be able to be the best that they can within both worlds. I know that working dads don't have that same issue. They just aren't held to the same standard from a society perspective. In order to fix the issue we're seeing in the work world, the issue outside of work has to be addressed. That includes things dads knowing that the bare minimum expectations need to increase. We also need to have better support for our working parents. I don't know what that looks like, probably from a government perspective, but definitely something that I do notice.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing leadership roles?

Sophia: Society. I think it goes into that mom situation. I think as soon as you have kids, you are pretty much expected to drop your personal aspirations and being a mom becomes your identity. That's where I see a lot of people stop wanting to grow as much.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company? Do you know of any initiatives or policies that are in place?

Sophia: One of the I'd say initiatives that I know is in place at our company is ERG. [REDACTED]. They do have an entire group dedicated just for women in order to help them understand networking and career growth. Some of the other things that have changed is we're getting a lot more women who understand or who have been beaten over the head a little bit and stood up to say I don't want to be like that. They have made that purposeful change to not be the person that limits those coming behind them. One of the things I know I mentioned at the beginning was having a female leader who definitely was not supportive of females. There was definitely a mindset prior generations where women were viewed as competition. Women were just not as nice to each other. I think one of the nice things about women in leadership right now, at least in middle management, is they are far more supportive of women instead of viewing them as competition. Part of that also comes from just the idea of there are more women who are joining this industry and who are joining the workforce, so they don't need to view them as competition because there's so many. That does help to kind of start to remove that glass ceiling of having so many males up top as well.

Hailey: Have you seen improvements in diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace?

Sophia: I think it's that's going to be a long tail process. My company does specifically have a program that targets diversity. Diversity in terms of ethnicity. They have a program I think they said the diversity in that program is at like a 93%. They pretty much seek out that diversity. I think the reason it's going to be a long tail issue is we know that we're not getting a lot of diversity even coming to college and a business school. A lot of ethnicities don't have exposure to those types of industries. Some of the things that need to happen is companies, as well as even colleges, need to start exposing themselves to kids who are in public schools, typically a little bit more of an ethnic diversity. Go in and help them understand here what your options are, because the reality is they don't know. We're never going to fix that unless we actually have people going in and explaining that you have that option.

Hailey: How do you think organizations can create a better workplace for women?

Sophia: I would say again it goes back to working moms, whether that be having better access to daycares or backup daycares or even offering daycares on site. I think that would be a huge win for a lot of lot of working moms. My company gives like 5 months maternity. They don't have any backup though for when that woman goes on to maternity. Your associates are kind of left filling the bill for 5 months. It's really nice for working moms, but everybody else is kind of left footing the bill and then it causes resentment for the working mom because of that. It's nice that you're giving this benefit, but you're actually ruining some morale because of it. Having things like a bench to support people when they do go on maternity and paternity would be super helpful for specifically working moms. For non-working moms, I feel as if we've started to make improvements just in general for non-working moms, from getting more females in the industry and helping the females who are more supportive in the leadership position. That alone is really helping with some of the other females who are not working moms.

Hailey: Do you know of any strategies that you think would be beneficial such as female mentorships programs?

Sophia: I don't know of any other specific programs out there from our company besides [REDACTED], where it's truly just a networking for women. Their whole goal is if you are a woman and you want to engage with other women and have these open conversations about what does it mean to be a woman within Nielsen or even within business, come to this group and we can talk about

that. I know a lot of the other things that they do talk about are some of the ways that they can just improve. It's not always focus on just being a woman. That's the other thing that's really nice. They don't focus on here's my issues of the female. They come up with some solutions just to make our organization better for everyone. I think that's also great that they're not sitting there viewing their gender as a hinder or something that needs to be fixed. They're just trying to bring new ideas and initiative to the entire organization.

Hailey: Are there any female leaders that you admire?

Sophia: Right now, I admire my current boss and she is a VP. She knows when to lead with empathy, but also knows how to get things done. I admire her ability to give feedback in a constructive way that doesn't tear people down. I think that's amazing. She also has she has 3 kids herself, and yet she works like a dog. I know she's great with her kids. Within our world it's kind of amazing to watch everything that she does. I'm very grateful that I get to work with her.

Hailey: How can women make their mark in the workplace?

Sophia: Keep speaking up. There's definitely women out there who still are so nervous and so hesitant to say what are they going to think of me if I speak my voice or if I give my opinion. There are going to be people out there who don't like it. Get over that. Give your opinion. It does matter and there are people who care and who want to listen. Not everybody's going to want to care or want to listen, but don't let that stop you.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females that are entering the business marketing industry?

Sophia: I would say again speak up. Don't be scared to voice your opinion. Have a growth mindset. Don't let feedback tear you down. Nobody's perfect. Everybody has opportunities to learn. I know that females tend to hold things very close and personal. A lot of times within the business world it's not personal. People want to see you grow and develop. They're going to have some feedback for you. The growth mindset will really help you.

Hailey: What advice do you have for a female who is aspiring to be a leader? What are some good leadership skills for them?

Sophia: Make sure you have empathy, for sure. Women tend to be better at that. Don't let the hard world of corporate America make you lose sight of that. That is actually a benefit. Continue to embrace the ability to communicate. Women do tend to be more effective communicators. Thinking about all the things that make a woman special, think about how all of those things can actually translate to the business world. That's going to translate a lot into leadership skills. The other thing women tend to be better at is multitasking. Take that into the business world, but always make sure that you're telling people. Make sure that they know all of the good things that you are doing, because if you are the only one who knows, it doesn't mean anything.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts that you'd like to share that we didn't get to go over?

Sophia: What's great is being a part of the generation right now who is helping to improve things. I am a Millennial, so I've been under Baby Boomer leadership and I'll get to be under Millennial leadership. We get to watch Gen Z come in. I know that Gen Z is a little bit more aligned with Millennials in terms of their beliefs, like supporting others. Having been in a world of that unfortunate glass ceiling that was so apparent to now watching it go down has been absolutely incredible to see. I'm really excited for the young generation to come in and hopefully they don't have to deal with that really thick glass ceiling. Hopefully they do have a woman leader who punched through that glass ceiling and held their hand behind them.

## Appendix I: Transcript #7

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry? What interested you about the field?

Amanda: I went to school at [REDACTED] and just was always intrigued about how marketing moves, even back then, when I came out of school like the needle moved so fast regarding no digital, it was all print. I was just excited about the potential for changes in the marketplace. When I began, I started full-time with a technology company. I knew nothing about tech. It was a really cool thing because they had the latest and greatest of everything. They were doing some neat stuff with email because there was really no digital social media and stuff like that. That was a very diverse company. It was very exciting. I saw the needle moving there and then ended up in finance. I spent a big chunk of my career in private equity, specifically, which when I started there, which would have been 2011, the company was probably 40 people and 90% male. At that time in 2011, not that long ago, that was a male dominated industry. I was the only marketer there. They were owned [REDACTED], so had dotted lines up through, but it was just me. I know we're talking about what I loved about it, but what I loved about it in finance was it was a different kind of marketing. It was selling technology and marketing technology. It was very different in finance. You're selling and you're really marketing money. Private equity is specifically that you want people to fund. That was really exciting. In that company I saw the needle moving very quickly. We started to see digital coming into the scope. I started to see new ways to market and new ways to promote the business. I salivated at it. I am also by fault an avid reader. My husband teases me all the time. I will never stop learning. I read to see the next best thing. I just watched a webinar yesterday about the 2024 social trends about some new information where the needle is moving. It's amazing what you guys have access to and how that's going to move the needle. So, for me, it's all about creativity and that's how my mind works. I'm always thinking wherever I work, sales is your customer, as a marketer. I'm thinking about how you can push them forward in whatever scope that is. My mind always went to okay you guys have this big book of collateral. Is that the right tool to go out with? Let's think about creating something a little more innovative. That's what I was pushing myself for is growth and innovation. I've seen it in marketing because there's been so many changes. When you think about it, when I started marketers were marketers and they did everything. Now you have social media marketing, and press and PR. It's very siloed right now, which is really an incredible opportunity, specifically for women to really hone in on skills. I've had to stay up on every type of skill, whereas the new way of looking at this is I'm going to become expert on all things digital. You can really go into that. So, to me, I guess I would tell you innovation because you see it all the time in marketing changes. You see it all the time in marketing more so than you even see in sales. Sales is about relationships, so is marketing, but you're always trying to give the sales people to move the envelope a little bit to help them go out and sell better and bring in new business.

Hailey: Where did you attend college and what did you study?

Amanda: [REDACTED]. It was a business administration with focus on marketing. So, it took me a long time. When all my friends were going off, I did a nontraditional route and took a really long time to get through it. To me, just seeing the movement just within the university and just talking to people that were in the same area as me, everybody would salivate about it. This is where it's at now, but where is it going? Again, that isn't that long ago, but I think about just even my first job out and where it's at today. It's gone leaps and bounds and I'm excited. That's exactly what I was envisioning.

Hailey: Can you briefly go through your professional career and just mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken?

Amanda: Of course. So, my first what I'll call my role that really exposed me to marketing was for a company called [REDACTED]. In that company, it was mostly women. It was really exciting to see kind of my first role into the gig of marketing. I was using a Mac computer and I was excited about all of this. My role was proofreading. They had one male editor and all women editors. This was for kindergarten through 6th grade. They would write the textbooks for schools, and so I would proofread chapters. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I learned how to manipulate design. I learned how to manipulate text. I was doing a lot of that with the chief graphic designer and she mentored me. I, not only was looking at proofreading and messaging and writing, which I've spent majority of my career writing, but the ability to see it come together in a magazine format. It was very exciting. I knew at the end of the day I was helping kids and that was exciting to me. In my mind, I would look across that organization and in publishing at that time, it was mostly women. I was like wow, there's people doing this and I can grow to move into this type of role, until they downsized and I was laid off. I found myself at that time looking and I was thinking do I go back into publishing. Do I look at something else? I ended up finding, it was tough and it was only a period of about a year, but I had my resume updated and I found a technology company that was called [REDACTED]. When I started there, I remember during the interview. I interviewed with several people, but I remember the gentleman that was going to be my boss, he said to me are you comfortable managing people that are older than you? I thought I don't care how old you are or what you look like. If you're qualified, you're qualified. I remember saying to him I'm not sure what you mean by that, but if you're qualified to work in the role, I don't have any objection managing age or color or race. It doesn't matter to me. So, that struck me. I thought would you ask that in an interview in the future? It was an odd question. During that job, I was an office manager/promotion specialist, so I found out very early on I was going to do it all. I realized at that moment, I salivate on having diverse roles and responsibilities. I need to feel challenged constantly. I do not want status quo. It doesn't work for me. So, we were geographically aligned when I first started. That went on. I did some promotional collateral pieces for them. Again, it very print focused. I walked in and I remember I said to my boss I don't know how to use this. This is crazy. He sat down and he gave me a book. He didn't sit down and train me. He gave me a book and said here's how you use it. That only lasted for about a month, and then we went to ThinkPads, so laptops. I was thinking we're sending emails and constantly updating people. I created a newsletter, and then I started to build their internal Internet. I thought all these messages that are going out and it becomes noise. People start turning off. You're getting too many emails. I don't want to see it. I created this intranet, which was a vehicle for people to use and create expense reports to look at new news from the company to really get excited about the organization in one place. That really connected the unit. We were on 2 floors and there was a lunch room. I think there was like 8 tables. I remember when we would sit down for lunch, even though I was managing, the men were all sit together and the women would sit together. I didn't know what segregation was about like that. It just didn't work. The men would talk to us, but what I saw early on in that career, the way I view marketing is sales is your customer. It's about growing the business and bringing in leads. They would do these competitions where our sales team would create different vehicles to whoever



brings in the most sales. It was my job in my admin team to create on this back wall something unique that would track the sales. As I look back at that, it was mostly men selling. There were 2 women sales reps. In the technical side of the business, there were 3 women and 2 men, so it was not a very diverse organization. At that time, sales was primarily driven by men. I'm seeing a pivot a little bit. It's kind of important to say when I mentioned earlier we were geographically aligned, we became vertically aligned. There was an opportunity for marketers to really shine. The parent company in North Carolina said we're going to have a retail vertical. We're going to have a mid-market vertical. Marketers were told there was a set group of us, ironically all women. There was not one man across the globe. They were all women and we were all given the option to choose where we wanted to go. They chose me for finance because they just thought I would excel here just based on diverse roles within the organization. So, with that, [REDACTED] was doing some really cool things in anti-money laundering. It was kind of at the pivotal point and kick off of that. It was a technology company and so there were user groups across the globe. I was writing content for those user groups. I know I was pushed to go out and be part of it, so there was some excitement with that, but my role never changed. I was still the same role, even though I sat down with my boss and I would talk about advancement and promotion. What do you not see me accomplishing? I never in 13 years received a different role. My title changed but it wasn't a promotion. What I thought was I could retire here. I was way younger, but what they had was once you reached a certain age, plus tenure, your benefits were paid for 100%. I saw that at a young age. I started to think about the future and that could be really great. Fast forward in 2008, there was a massive recession and it affected every industry. In January of 2008, I got a call that my job was being eliminated. I was devastated because I thought I'm here 13 years, but you're keeping people that are here 10 years. I didn't get that logic at the time. I do now. There was another elimination of like 300 people. July was about 500 people. In September, there was 1,300 people. It was a pretty big layoff. I was naïve and thought I'm going to find a job. I am marketable. I started to apply for jobs. This was 2008. I did not land at [REDACTED] until 2011. For over 3 years, I went on 72 interviews across the globe. I reached out to anyone I knew in the network. It was very deflating. I thought I will never get a job. I wasn't on social media at that time. Fast forward to like 2010, I'm still unemployed and I was devastated. [My husband] and I started to market [a small business]. I started to write a newsletter again. This is me always having to read and keep on top of everything and I thought I can't sit here and do nothing. We built a website and we started to market. It wasn't paying the bills, but it was something to keep us busy because my husband and I had both lost our jobs. I started to think how I saw Facebook was out there and I was like there's a way to market myself. I started to see connections. I reached out to a friend working for a company called [REDACTED]. I asked if they were hiring and she said we have someone doing marketing but send me your resume. I got a call from [REDACTED] in January of 2011. I went in and interviewed and it was a small company at the time. It was private equity and it was all men. The woman that was doing marketing was female. The admins were women. There was one other woman that was running capital markets. I was intrigued by that. I interviewed with them. I went for 3 different interviews and on the third interview I felt really good about it. I remember going home and I was on the highway and I got a call and it was all the leadership team, all men, in the conference room saying we want to hire you. I was so excited. I started the job and found out I competed against 32 other individuals, both men and women, and I was really proud and excited about that. I had 20 days with the former marketer. She was leaving because she was going to raise a family. When I came in there, I assessed everything. I thought I am going to give them the best tools possible. I set the

precedence very early on. I was young. I was enthusiastic. I was working 24/7. I was energized about my job, but [my son] was growing up. He was playing sports and I was missing that stuff because I didn't want to miss opportunities to really make my name shine. There was a lot of changes that happened within the organization. Their leadership team was all men. 2 of the leaders were eliminated pretty abruptly. They left and started their own firm, private equity firm, and then that elevated new leaders within the organization and that gave me an opportunity. I developed a very strong relationship with this new CEO and one of the challenges I had for them was there are all these employees of the business have now grown up and they're taking over. How do I market them? I pushed myself. I implemented video content. I started really pushing the envelope. It was exciting times, really, really exciting times. I had a great relationship with the CEO and till I didn't. I'll tell you what happened. It was the 20th year of the business and they had a big event. They invited customers to come in and see the new space because we had moved into a new building. It's all very great. They invited spouses and friends and partners to see our new space. I remember the leadership team sitting along the wall and they didn't get up to greet our spouses and our friends. They wanted us to come to them. A coworker of mine said the phrase it feels a little bit like kiss the ring. You felt almost marginalized a little bit. That night was a pivotal change for my relationship with the CEO because I saw something different. I didn't see him supporting the families of the employees, and that to me was missed because the leadership team before them, they weren't like that. It was all about engagement. It changed the relationships and then there was a dinner that the executive team wanted me to plan again. I made the reservation. I was out at the grocery store with my husband that night and the CEO called me. He's cussing at me. Where is our table? They are kicking us out. I'm sitting on the other end and my husband is going hang up like we're at the grocery store right now. Let it go. On Monday, I went into the office and he cussed at me. Again, I don't believe that you didn't do this right? I told you I wanted the table. I called human resources because I thought no one is going to speak to me like that. I don't deserve it. I'm a professional working woman. I cannot and will not let someone speak to me this way. Would he do that to another man? No, you wouldn't speak that way. I called human resources. I was very naïve. I called human resources and I told them what happened. I asked them to keep it confidential. I didn't want them to run to him. I just said I want this on record because I'm feeling I'm very marginalized, disrespected, and by the way, my new boss was in the room and did nothing to protect me. The very next day they called him and told him that I reported him. Within 2 weeks, I was getting pushed out, so the writing was on the wall. I felt very much like this is how corporate America is and I don't want any part of that anymore. I'm done. While my role was incredible, I didn't advance. I was marketing manager the whole time there. I found myself in 2019 looking and I thought this is the time to reinvent myself. Of course, I'll look at technology. I was getting calls from healthcare companies and technology because at [REDACTED] there were verticals. I reached out to another friend about [a law company]. They're actually launching a private equity line of business. I worked for them June through July of 2020 and learned a lot because they were giant law firm company. I had never worked for a law firm, but I saw a different way of marketing. It opened my eyes to thinking about this a little differently. So, I was still pushing the envelope and sending out my resumes. I had a recruiter call me and said I have this company. It's a manufacturing company. I thought I don't know anything about manufacturing, but I can learn. I said I'm interested and she said it's a marketing manager role. I went for the interview. I interviewed with my boss at the time, and then went back for 2 other interviews. This was at the onset of COVID and so a lot of it was all over screens. I noticed it was all men and I thought this is what manufacturing is. I

started there in August of 2020 and they hired me as a product line manager. I really didn't know what that was. I felt misled because the recruiter told me it was a marketing manager and all things marketing. This was called product line manager and it was a little bit like sales. I thought I'm not a salesperson nor do I know this business. It's very technical. It's induction sealing and it's a lot of technical knowledge I would have needed. I wasn't opposed to learning, so for the first year I was here, I was doing marketing, but I was also trying to learn the business. The things my boss was asking me to do like go out and present to brands and things like that. I wasn't opposed to presenting, but I didn't feel comfortable in the technical knowledge. I kind of threw a flag up a year in and I said to my boss, by the way I should tell you the person I was reporting to the VP of marketing was an educated engineer, so he was very processed whereas my mind thinks big picture. It was very much oil and water. So, after a year I said I'm not comfortable with this. I've tried to learn the business from that perspective of sales and it's just not a match. I took a risk of him saying okay we're done. Instead, he said I've already been thinking about it and I've created a position for you and I thought wow I felt really supportive. They created a global marketing communications manager role. This is fantastic. It was hard to move the needle, though. He would do things like one off advertisements and I just didn't understand because there was no storytelling. It was just really kind of pieced meal together, but I worked with it. I continued to move the needle forward. Again, when we were there, the CEO was the type that would say we hired you for your skill set, you know your job, go for it, run with it, push the needle. You have any questions you need anything from me? I'm here for you, and I felt incredibly supported by the CEO and our sales teams, but not so much by my boss. That was a hard thing. He would give me things like when he gave me this new role as global marketing communications manager, that wasn't enough. He said in the job description I was also trade show manager and office manager. I was working 3 roles in my global marketing communications role with office management. It's ordering office supplies. It's putting together events for the company. It really takes time from what my strategic thinking is. I was really frustrated with that. Now, I get that the company works very lean. We don't have a ton of staff. I understand that. Before, I was doing it, the graphic designer was doing it here. She's trained as a graphic designer and she was working as an office manager too. They were trying to bundle in all this into one role. Everything was going well and then the general manager was promoted to president. So, he came into the mix and started to give projects to me as well. Here I'm working global marketing communications, office management, trade show management, and now I've got the president pushing. So, last November they eliminated my boss. It was interesting because the company was changing with this new president that came in. There was new management. I've seen it at many companies, a lot of changes happen and people get eliminated. What I saw very early on was not just that it's all men, but I saw the marginalized roles of administrative support were always given to the women. I still feel like lowest on the totem pole, along with the graphic designer, even though they call me all these big roles. It doesn't matter. I'm still sending out meeting requests and ordering food for lunches and it takes away from my strategic thinking. What I do have, and I'm very proud of, is the connection to the entire leadership team. If I showed you a picture of the 10 leaders, there's not one woman on the leadership team. Right there is your ceiling. You're not going anywhere. I've seen sales reps get promoted. I've seen human resources reps get promoted. Nothing in marketing. I'm reporting now to the global head of sales. It's just where they're going to put us right now. The graphic designer, myself, and then a colleague of business development all roll up to the global head of sales until they hire a global marketing innovation manager. They're going to put product development back under marketing.

I don't know what that's going to mean for my role. The individual that comes in could say I'm wiping the slate clean. It's a risk. I have no idea. I do feel confident in the relationships that I've built with the leadership team. With that comes some basic work, but I think being visible, being present, being accessible and I didn't set the precedent when I started here. I do not work 24/7. When it's my time, it's my time. Very infrequently do I get a call after 5:00PM, so they respect that. I'm paid very well. I am paid very well. I have a lot of years of experience and a lot of skill set. Does that mean that I should be marginalized the way I am? That's been a big issue. I've heard it from the graphic designer that she's been there 9 years and has never been promoted. Now, in her defense, she doesn't advocate for herself. I would tell you, as a young person, you have to advocate for yourself. No one else is going to do it for you. I can tell you that from experience. If you do not have the confidence to do it, work on it because she's a perfect example. She's a very quiet individual. She doesn't have the enthusiasm like I do, and that's okay but it's her job and she has to feel comfortable to speak up. I've been speaking up on her behalf. She dotted lines to me, so I've been mentoring her and I'm taking a leadership role with her. In discussions with the boss that I have now and my former boss discussions about promotion, like what does that look like? My former boss was starting conversations with me to look at additional responsibilities and I thought when he first said that to me, it was right before he was let go. It was additional responsibilities. If you give me a new stuff, then you have to take some stuff off. What will happen is mistakes will happen. I've seen it. Here I am now 3 years in reporting to the global head of sales I have made under his leadership just since November. I have made leaps and bounds and strides. I just had my review with him and what would have taken 5 hours with my former boss because he's an engineer and needed to know this. He thinks strategically like I do and really applauded the way I wrote this up and so I've got his support. Right now, I am office manager, trade show manager, global marketing communications manager, executive assistant, and leadership liaison. It's a lot. Will the needle move for me? Probably not. I continually I meet with my boss every 2 weeks and we talk about that. I need to see that there's movement because when I'm sitting like this, while there is diversity in my role, there's no advancement. I'll give you another example. The leadership team of 10 members had one woman on it for 6 months. She came in as the head of human resources, global head of human resources, and only lasted 6 months. She had ideas for change and she was told no, so she walked. During that process, the president came to me and said with this move, I'd like you to take ownership of it. Taking ownership from the most basic of order, and the movers and stuff. It was a lot in addition to everything else. Part of me thought are they giving me this because they want to challenge me? It didn't, even though you know I was off 2 weeks over the holidays. I had to go into [the office] 3 different days to oversee. Being available to them because no one else was going to do it. It's just not the right approach, so I sit here. I'm at a point in my life where I don't want to go look for another job. It's a little late in my career to be doing that, to reinvent myself, but what also scares me a little bit is my boss. He was 60 years old. I'm not 60, but he was 60 years old and they eliminated him. How do you start over at 60? Your career is pretty much over, so there's that concern for me. It's great experience for me if I ever start my own business and I always have that in the back of my head, but it's a lot for one person and it causes an undue amount of stress for me. I'm in therapy because it's a lot. I called my dad, who was 94 years old, one day because it was an incredibly stressful day and it just said dad how did you do it? It connected with me. He said you work for a living. It's not your life. And remember this, it's a job. Your family and your friends are your life. So, find the balance in that. We do have 2 wellness rooms, so I can take a break and get the stress off, but it's at warp speed constantly.

When we're in person, the president will say one thing at a time, like let's just talk about one thing at a time, but then he'll call me on the phone and dump 17 things on me. So, what I'm seeing in the last sort of month has been 25% of my role has been doing global marketing and 75% is doing all these other things and it's a lot. They are growing and they're global. There's a lot of excitement about that. I saw the organization grow and I want to be part of that, but something has to give.

Hailey: Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling?

Amanda: I know what a glass ceiling is. Definitely what I'm feeling is you've got an incredible amount of men, in my opinion, particularly where I'm at right now, an entire group of men that are sitting at the top and they are running an incredible business. I feel part of it, but I don't feel another part of it, if that makes sense. I'm going to continue because they see my personality, the adaptability that if they throw it at me, I'm going to deal with it. There's part of me that goes it's sensitive, right. If I say no to something, and I don't mean just like I don't have time for that project and I'll get to it whenever. I mean no, I'm not taking that on. Is that going to be looked at negatively and I'll be punished for it? So, it's a delicate dance for me. The graphic designer comes from a different generation and she's kind of rolling her eyes. I don't have to do that kind of thing and I want a little bit of that, but it's also hurting her since she's almost 9 years and not been promoted. So, I see the balance of both. One day I was with my former boss and in his office. We were talking about moving the needle. I was talking about some innovative ideas with him and he said it's hard to make an investment in that because marketing is soft. I said define what you mean by soft. He said they don't have an impact on the bottom line. I said hold on a second. We do because every effort we put together is to impact the bottom line with sales. He just didn't get that global thinking and I knew under him I wasn't going anywhere because he didn't get it. He just didn't understand it, hence why he's no longer there. I have a new team now that gets it. I do have the support of my new manager, but I know there will be this glass ceiling over me because they're waiting for a new manager to come in and see what that new person's going to do to move the needle. There's a little bit of fear in me to say don't rock the boat too much because this new manager's going to come in and I could potentially be out. I'm trying sometimes you have to play the game. That's a terrible expression, but it's sort of true. You've got to know your audience. You've got to be able to navigate it and play the game a little bit. She's learning that and she doesn't know that fully. Well, I've worked too much, so I do know it. I think organizations are evolving, evolving this diversity. I see it happening in a lot of industry and I'm not just talking diversity in color. It's diversity in roles. I'm seeing more women. The company I used to work at is now about a 50/50 split with women to men, so I'm seeing some changes happening. I think your generation has the ability to really push this because you could become more of an expert with the silos in marketing. I think with every generation you're going to see the needle move a lot and I applaud you for picking this as your topic, because even just this could move the needle. You're going to see some changes.

Hailey: Do you believe that business marketing as a whole industry is male or female dominated?

Amanda: I think now we are more female dominated for sure. I think today you're probably at about a 50/50 split.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts?

Amanda: Yes. I would say because of where I'm at right now because it's manufacturing and it's mostly male, 100%, that's mostly sales. I know sales is paid twice or three times what I make. I know their bonus is 2 times or 3 times or 5 times what I make. I definitely know that where I'm

at when I was in technology because there were enough marketers. That team was big and so I know we were pretty equal paid at [REDACTED]. There were definitely people who were making way more money than I ever was. I didn't know how to navigate that world. Here where I'm at I know how to navigate. I know I'm paid well, but I know I could be making more because I'm visible. I'm doing the work. I'm doing better than the work. I'm innovating.

Hailey: What do you believe are the biggest challenges that women face in the workplace?

Amanda: I think one of the biggest challenges is I think there's a stigma that women are sensitive. They're emotional. They can't be good leaders because they're led by emotion instead of confident and strong. Those words are never really used, in my opinion, with women. Oh, she's so strong and convicted. We have 24 people in the office. [REDACTED]. Globally, we're big, but the corporate office is all men. And then there's the graphic designer and myself. I've been told I worry too much. So, I think just the stigma is there still regardless. Women are in general considered too kind, too big hearted.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing leadership roles?

Amanda: Fear. The fear of no. For me, I pride myself on this position. This connection I have to the leadership team, staying visible, staying connected, and being transparent. I think I'm more transparent than I've ever been in my career. I felt like when I took this job, I have nothing to lose. I really think it's based on fear. I am not afraid to walk into the president's office or pick up the phone and call him. I am not afraid to say to my new boss that I've been here almost 4 years and I'm not seeing any movement in my career. I'm taking on all this new responsibility, but I'm sitting here. There's that insecurity of is he moving the needle for me after I've poured my every skill set I have out on the table to say why? I write emails a lot. So, I have a trail of all of it. I'll continue to have the conversations. I'll hear things at where I'm at right now is we run lean. It's going to break at some point because I'm not going to be able to do it anymore. Something's going to suffer as a result, so biggest thing I would say is fear and insecurity.

Hailey: In what way is have you experienced positive action in your company or any of the other companies?

Amanda: That's a tough question. I think if I was to go back to [REDACTED], I would say there is a real push to hire a more diverse group of individuals. It's not just age but demographic. I tell you that to me, even though I had a horrible end at [REDACTED] with that CEO, because that was the direct hit, I would tell you that I look at that organization now and I'm proud to say that their loan operations department is run by a vice president who is a woman, and that was not in existent when I was there. So, the needle is moving for sure. I would tell you it's a testament to the generation that's coming up. It's happening because of that, not because of what existed already. There's a generation that's saying no more, and I applaud that.

Hailey: How can organizations create a better workplace for women?

Amanda: I think opening positions that historically have been held by a man or males. Opening those up to women and looking at skill set and not looking at it from this is a woman versus a man. An example I'll give you for this is they're interviewing for this head of marketing innovation and I asked my boss how's it going and he said we're looking at one guy's really strong. I hear guy, so giving the opportunity internally and listening to people that are coming to you that are open to advancement and helping to support them. I'll go back to the new generations going to move that needle more than it's ever been moved before.

Hailey: Do you have any female leaders that you admire?

Amanda: Yes, I would tell you when I was at [REDACTED], my mentor was her name [REDACTED]. I was in marketing and she was in capital markets, but she helped me understand the

business coming from technology and to finance. We would meet on a weekly basis and I respected her. She was such a strong personality. She did not hesitate to challenge leadership. She taught me that it's okay to say no. It's okay to question. I was very shy when I went in there and she said no, you have to have the ability to go in and sit at a table of leaders and say I disagree with that and here's why and not be combative about it. Healthfully disagreeing. There are many within the organization. There's a woman that works in our [REDACTED] office. She's part of our human resource team, but we have set up calls about twice a month. We'll talk maybe once a month, but sharing challenges, sharing experiences, sharing positive and negative. It helps both of us to better navigate our roles and our leadership teams better.

Hailey: How can women in the workplace make their mark?

Amanda: Yes, I think get rid of the idea that I have to take on so much to make a mark. Do your job. Do it well. I would tell every woman out there to be transparent, to be honest, and to ask the questions. Don't be afraid. Ask for a seat at the table. You are qualified to do so. I am invited sometimes, so I'm proud to say that has moved a little bit. I think the biggest thing I've learned over my career is don't take on too much and don't set the precedent because you think it's going serve you better. Set the precedent that you want to work hard. Look for the challenges and be honest and transparent. That will serve you well.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females that are entering the business marketing industry?

Amanda: I'm excited for you guys. I'm thrilled because like I said early on in this call, we were all marketing this way. You guys now can silo and become expert in certain fields. That's going to move the marketing needle bigger than it's ever been. There are going to be experts around this world. The advice I have for you is do not let go of the tenacity, the willingness, the drive that you all have and the true grit that you have. The right answer is to be honest about it. This is going to move the needle, so continue to push question and challenge.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts that you'd like to share that we didn't get to?

Amanda: I think the demographic of marketing is changing and it's exciting and it runs the gamut. It's younger people coming up. I'm excited by younger people because they have a different way. I think that in itself, regardless of industry, not just marketing, regardless of industry, I would tell you that is going to change the world. You have so much more knowledge than the previous generation had, and your honesty with it, it's going to open eyes. I know it will, so keep doing what you're doing.

## Appendix J: Transcript #8

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry?

Lucy: I don't really have a good answer for that. Honestly, I fell into it. I majored in finance in school and just didn't love the practical application of that. I had an internship I just hated. I got referred by a family friend for an internship at an ad agency, just to try something different, and I just loved it. I started taking classes about marketing when I was in university and it came really naturally to me, like it just made sense. I really enjoyed it. I fell into it in a way. I have stuck with it since I was introduced to the world of advertising.

Hailey: Where did you attend college and what did you study?

Lucy: I went to [REDACTED], and I actually studied international business and finance. I decided not to change my degree. I already like halfway through it, so I just kept it. I took all my electives in marketing, but I don't have a degree in marketing.

Hailey: Can you briefly go through your professional career and just briefly mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on?

Lucy: I started as an intern at an ad agency. It was an agency that focused on product development and did [REDACTED]. I got lucky that I got on the [REDACTED] account. I started doing like a really fun brand to work on. [REDACTED] is a fun brand and I worked with [REDACTED] a lot. I actually did an internship at [REDACTED] the year after I interned at the agency, called [REDACTED]. When I graduated, [REDACTED] hired me full-time, so I was an account executive on [REDACTED]. I went back to what I was doing as an intern. 3 years later, the I interned with and made connections with while it was there told me she was hiring at [REDACTED]. She ask if I would be interested in coming back to [REDACTED]. I took that job and did menu innovation at [REDACTED] for 5 years. I did product development under the marketing department and worked with supply chain. It was a great experience and 5 years from a marketing perspective is enough time on that team. I got another opportunity to work on branded content, like campaigns, [REDACTED]. I did that for 3 years through the pandemic, which was really interesting timing since the delivery business was growing like crazy. I got on it right before that all started, but it was a great experience. I wanted to work at higher level type of work and wanted to stop doing as much campaign work. That proved to be really difficult to do at [REDACTED] just based on the corporate structure and what they were looking for and how they move people around or didn't move people around. I left last summer. Well, not this past summer, the summer before. I left to go back to the agency side. I got a great opportunity to lead an account team and lead a piece of business and get to that type of marketing strategy work I wanted at a higher level. That's what I'm doing now. I lead the digital business [REDACTED] and it's been really good so far.

Hailey: What are your professional and personal goals?

Lucy: It's changed over time. I definitely came into advertising thinking I want to be a CMO and run a whole business. When you realize what that actually entails, there are so many politics to it, like reputation management and relationships. I've found that what I really love is the work and the marketing strategy work and designing solutions like communications for our customer. I've realized that my professional goals and personal interests didn't really match up. I really wanted to do the work and evolve a business and bring a business forward. Being a CMO is like not that. I don't really know if I have clear professional goals anymore. I'm definitely focused on just doing work I enjoy. I love mentoring and making sure younger people getting into the industry have a good opportunity for learning and development and finding what they love. Since



marketing such a big world, I like what I'm doing now. I'd like to move up some levels eventually, but I don't ever want to get to a point where I'm not able to do the work I love or coach people in the way I really like to do. I'm more worried about the autonomy and the enjoyment of the work than the title.

Hailey: Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling?

Lucy: This is nerve wracking. I think I know what it is. I would define it as an invisible limit on a career of woman or another minority, that isn't like a white male. It makes it really hard to get past a certain level, even though there isn't a technical restriction or rule, but it just exists in bias or preference from people in power at an organization or industry.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance? And do you feel it's more challenging as a woman?

Lucy: Yeah, I think for some women. For me personally, I don't have kids yet, so my personal commitments are the same of a single white dude at this time. My personal experience is that I'm able to balance work and life. I took this job I'm in now because of that as well. It would be a better balance and management of separation between work and life. In general, marketing is tough for women or families with kids. Women are typically the primary caregiver or responsible for the kids more than husbands or dads are, it seems still. There isn't a different expectation of like urgent travel or urgent projects, like there isn't a ton of space for that in the industries. Things come up last minute, like I just went [abroad] last week with 5 days' notice. That would not work if I had a family, so I can totally see how in the future, like if people that do have families or are responsible for child care or have just more responsibility in their lives don't have the flexibility to just up and go and then miss out on opportunities because of that. There is not a lot of planning in what work is going to be coming in and how will you manage it like that. It's kind of done as it comes in, which is definitely a disadvantage for people that have more responsibility or responsible for more humans in some way.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behaviors or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Lucy: I mean the best example I really have is the travel or just assuming everyone is just free to work on things after hours. One example is like my team is responsible for global work, so we work with people in many time zones. They'll be something needed from Japan and they can only meet at 8:00PM in your time. It's like well what if you had a commitment. That lack of organization or foresight or overall structure is tough. There's no expectation that it's okay to say no, like you have to make it work. I think that's just harder on people, who are typically women that are responsible for child care more often than men. I don't have any personal specific examples. My schedule is pretty flexible. There definitely is just an industry expectation that if you're going to be successful, you make those accommodations or make those sacrifices to do that type of extracurricular stuff. There isn't another way you can make up for it if you don't. Being amazing 9 to 5 does not always get you promoted unless you're doing the extra stuff and the extra stuff tends to be the travel, the after hours, and the things that would bleed into your personal time.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male or a female?

Lucy: Male. I report to a bunch of dudes and I always have. I would say it's a better balance in marketing than other industries. It's not like engineering where it's 90% men or like technology engineering roles that are really male dominated. I find marketing to be pretty evenly split or even really women heavy, but where it becomes uneven is the leadership. There's definitely a higher number of male leaders in marketing than females, but probably more females in

marketing overall. I have had women bosses, but right now in the past like 4 years, I've had males.

Hailey: Can you explain any personal gender biased challenges that you faced in your industry?

Lucy: I think like going back to why I left [REDACTED], there was a point where I was ready to get promoted to the next level. The way the organization did that was like you don't just get promoted. If you're ready, you have to find a role or there has to be a role open and it might not be on your team, so you have to apply for those roles within the organization. There's a preference, usually for internal people, but you're competing with your peers. I was told I had great reviews for years. I was told for a really long time that I was ready for that level. I tried applying and I'd be supported in that, but I applied like to 3 or 4 different roles and interviewed for them and every time it was a white dude hired instead of me. Even though I competed against other women, I don't think a single one of those roles went to a girl which or a minority. I guess it's coming from the top, like they just want these people in these positions. There's this preference, like the CEO likes this guy so make sure you take care of him. When those roles come out, they're already earmarked for those people that are appointed. Getting the attention without being a master politician and working the system is really difficult. Even though I was doing really good work and I was told I always was. I just got sick of it and left at that point. I didn't want to fight this fight and continue to interview for those roles. It's been a year at this point and I'm now underpaid for what my value is. The most frustrating part for me was I left and I had an exit interview with HR and they said we can't believe you're leaving. They said you were like our #1 or #2 retention priority in our department of 300 people. I didn't know that. I never felt that in any way. I didn't feel supported and didn't feel like they cared about my career. I was losing to people that were in my department, so therefore they were a lower retention than me. If I was at the top and you still gave the roles to them, so like what did you want me to do? There's a clear bias for a certain type of person here, and I'm just not going to sit here through it. I left and I found a lot more success in an ad agency, like a more creative type of environment where your experience and unique perspectives are valued more. I'm happy that I left. To answer your question that is my example of limitations from this invisible force. All the women I worked with at [REDACTED] talked about it. There's this other guy going for that role.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently in the workplace as far as like meetings or projects?

Lucy: I don't have a ton of personal examples of that. I just think overall there's definitely a difference for note taking and administrative stuff. It tends to get assigned to women or women tend to get asked to do that more than men, especially at the lower level. You definitely notice that like you're never asking a man to take meeting notes for an important meeting. That's a bias and annoying, but it can be a positive because we get more exposure at a younger age too. I do think when you're entry level, as a detail oriented and Type A woman, which I think girls tend to be more, those skills get you attention and advancement early on. That leadership jump is really difficult sometimes. I don't know if I have a good answer to that really because in an everyday setting, I think it is fair. It's the career planning that I find to be really not even in my personal experience.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts?

Lucy: I think the younger generation is amazing because the first thing they do is talk about salary. That was taught to my generation as a thing that you don't talk about, unless it's with your boss, but like it's a service to the employee. I did never do that until I was later in my career like more recently. I didn't find a big disparity at [REDACTED], so I didn't personally experience that,

but I know that definitely existed for others after starting to talk about salaries. I had been in these roles for a little longer than other people, so I had been at the higher end of the salary band because I had been doing that and getting increases over time. I saw that affect other women where they thought why am I at the lower side. So, that definitely exists, but I don't have proof of it personally.

Hailey: What are some of the biggest challenges that women face in the workplace?

Lucy: There's definitely inherent cultural bias in the American culture and probably other cultures as well. It's just societal roles. Every girl has the same, like everyone has the same ability to be successful. Intelligence is not different by gender. There's just inherent expectations that girls will be organized and they won't be as brash or accusatory. When you are more honest or straightforward, you can be called rude or aggressive, and it's like a negative thing. When a male asks for something that he wants then it's like so ambitious. There's definitely that just societal bias that carries into everyone's everyday life. I've definitely had to be softer in my approach, but still ask the hard questions and be told that I was too strong headed or too aggressive when I was younger. I had to figure out how to still get my point across but be seen as like a nice person. None of the guys I worked with probably had to do that. That is just something as a woman that you make a ton of accommodations for others that men don't have to do. You always have to find a way around and be more creative to find a way around and think about that as a cognitive load. I don't think everyone is always thinking about that type of stuff and it really does make you second guess asking for things or make you more uncomfortable with asking for things. I have about 6 people that work for me, like 4 women and 2 men. Both of the men have asked me am I fairly compensated for my work and what is the next level for me. Only one of the women have done so. They all are great performers and I still give them the same information and same access to everything. I make sure that I'm coaching them all, but I have not ever coached the men to say you should ask for this. For the women who work for me I have to say you need to be asking this and that. I can bring it up for you because I'm mentoring you, but in the future, your boss is not going to look out for you like this. It's interesting that just like inherently the men have this confidence to say I'm doing a good job so can I get paid more. The women are like I'm doing a good job and I'm really happy with that. I love to hear, but that doesn't help you in your career later with someone that isn't as mentor focused as I am with my employees.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing those leadership roles at the top?

Lucy: I think it starts in the beginning. Men just come in with this confidence. There's always going to be people that are different within this. Across 1,000 people, men come in with this confidence, and I think it stems back to the way they're raised. They'll come in with this like confidence and some of women do too, which is great. It's who are you getting mentored by in college because that tends to be gender based too. My mentors or coaches in college were other women. It's like women in business, which is awesome, but I also wonder what the men are saying to the other men. You have to mix that up and give everybody access to all the information. If you're having mentors from a previous generation that came in a certain way like I asked for what I wanted and the women are like I worked really hard and got noticed. I feel like the stories are different and then you're just perpetuating that through the next generation. It might be just passed down for some reason.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company?

Lucy: Overall, especially where I am now, everyone is valued equally. I think it just it really comes down to who your boss is. To answer your other question, it's crazy how dependent your

career is on the person that is managing you. If I give one piece of advice to anybody, it's make sure you love your boss and jive with your boss. Don't take a job where you don't jive with the manager because it is so difficult. I've been in the industry for a bit and the job I have now I chose it because I really respected and liked the person I'm going to work for. I try to pick leaders or a boss that's someone that wants their team to shine and gives them space to shine. Getting into that position is always better because then if I have a good idea or do a good job he'll make sure that everyone knows that and never take credit for it. Other jobs I've had where I did everything for my boss and they would just take credit for it. That can be a with a male or a female boss, like it doesn't really matter. I think where I am now, I have a boss that's super supportive and hired me saying like I'm hiring you into this position but I see you as a leader in this company in the future. I'm hiring you for the next 10 years, not the next 2 years. So, having that is a very positive situation and I don't know if that's gender related, though.

Hailey: Do you know of any like initiatives or policies that are in play in place at your company that are like aimed at helping with like diversity, equity and inclusion?

Lucy: We have employee groups. It's basically an employee club and there is a women focused one at our organization, but anyone can be in it, which I think is a really good thing. It shouldn't only be women and a lot of times it's like 2/3 women probably. There's lots of men that come. It's great if that's for everyone because you talk about this type of stuff. The presentations and the discussions are around like can you recognize like an unfair situation and how do you get around that. So like, that's relevant to anyone that's manager, not just women. I love going to that stuff and seeing that there's a ton of managers that are male that go to this to make sure that they're aware of that. I think that's really positive and that's definitely more common in organizations now like in the past couple of years. Having a DEI department and people that focus on making an even playing field for everyone including women is great. I think those extracurriculars have become more legitimate or organized and focus with a goal and more popular since that having that like retained resource that is supporting it. There's lots of stuff like that, which is good. My company does a motivational quarterly series and it tends to always be either someone from an ethnic back or a diverse background. They don't bring white dudes into that. They don't need to be inspired. That's good because most people if they don't attend them, they get a note or a recap. I think that my company does focus on making sure everyone has exposure or a voice. I do think it's much more common in advertising than corporate marketing. In advertising we need ideas and creative ideas. Diverse thought is so important to the success of the business that they make room for people. They get different exposure to different ideas. A large corporation is more about outsourcing the ideas and you just decide what they're going to be. So, it's a little bit less focused on diverse thinking and generating new ideas and creativity and different perspectives and more we are running a tight ship type of thing. It just was super extracurricular like there's this like thing you can do whereas this company now they kind of force you to pick a couple ideas, which is good. It's like a positive thing. You have to go search for it. I think that's also like the way it's presented as like an extracurricular instead of part of your ongoing training is probably a mistake.

Hailey: How do you think organizations can create a better workplace for women?

Lucy: I think it's using these resources. There is an inherent gender bias in our society and in most societies it's worse in other countries. It's just making everyone aware of that and like look for it. Don't be racist. We all don't want to do that and don't be gender biased either. I think it should be required training or like information for managers. Like how you can ensure your team is all on the same playing field as different coaching styles work for different people. You don't

always need to be the same boss. Everyone's different. When you get into corporate America and have a job, there is no one telling you how to be like a boss or do any of this. Like how to be a good person in the corporate setting like there is nothing. So, you just get into these positions and you're like what am I supposed to do? The resources they give you are not great, like here's this template that's like 5 goals and evaluate them. It doesn't teach you that this person has contacts or they were sick for a month and had a family member that passed away like no one teaches you how to deal with that. I'm like Googling stuff all the time, and it's nuts. At [a large corporation], you'd think that there's strict training, like on how we manage people and how we develop careers. None of that. The stuff they put out there is like a weird template. It's barely applicable and too generic type of stuff. It should be there's 5 different management styles and here's what works for these types of people and here's why this doesn't work for others. What kind of manager are you going to be and how can you mix these styles? How do you determine how you should manage? That does not exist typically in any organization, so having that would help everyone. When you become a position of power, you have to be aware that there are these forces at play, like you may have a gender bias and not realize it. You need to know that people will respond to your reactions and feedback and comments differently. You need to adjust your approach to make your employees feel comfortable. This is the expectation of you. That doesn't exist and you have to make that on your own. It sucks because then when you're an employee of someone that doesn't do a good job or doesn't care about that or never knew that was the thing they had to really worry about then like you're disadvantaged. I feel the people that are going to speak up are not always women. If you're in a situation like that and you can't tell your boss like you need to go take a class. A girl's not going to say that, and it's just unlikely that a lower level employee would say that. That would be good if companies took like leadership more seriously and coaching and mentoring.

Hailey: Do you have female mentorship programs and do you believe that like those in general would be beneficial?

Lucy: We don't have female specific ones besides like a group like women in business employee group. We have that which applies to everybody. There is a lot of mentoring and coaching available within that. From a perspective of being a manager at this company, you need to do this and this, like that doesn't exist. I've had an overall really great career experience so far. I've gotten into these fun positions that I've really loved. I've had an overall very positive experience, but I didn't get the training or coaching that I wished I had. I learned it through like annual reviews. My boss would say you're a great job but you should think about your approach this way. I'm like could you tell me that like 5 months ago because I've been doing that and not realizing it was a problem. When I became a manager my boss said you need to think about what kind of manager you want to be. I had never thought of that before in my entire life. That didn't even cross my mind. I don't have to be just what I am now, like there's other options. I had a whole realization like no one else knows. No one else is being told this. I just got lucky because he made that comment to me and it really resonated with me. Now, I have the ability to make sure that everyone has a better experience than I did when I started in here. I want to do that because I learned kind of a hard way. It wasn't that hard, but my personality type is not everyone's personality type. Everyone has something good to contribute and we love to have diverse thinking at my company. I want everyone to be able to have a good career and understand that they're valued. I feel like you lose talent sometimes when people don't feel valued because they're not being talked to in a way that is like their language. Training people is honestly this is kind of selfish in a way because I hate training new employees. I want to keep the

ones I have. It's like less work for me. So, I want everyone to be happy and stay forever, so I will give you all the attention and support I could possibly do to keep you with me for longer and keep you at our agency for a longer. I don't like letting people cycle out and hiring more. I want everyone have a better experience. I also loved my first job so much like it was the best thing that could have ever happened to me. I want everyone else that comes in to feel the same way about the company because I just loved like my experience so much. I think it's just such a special place to work. But again, this is me and the people that work for me tell me that no one else does that. It's slowly creeping into other people at my company and I tell them to do this.

Hailey: Are there any female leaders that you admire?

Lucy: Yeah. I think I've been lucky in that. At [REDACTED], there's this woman and she's amazing. She's just the first leader that led with kindness and was real. She would be so calm and nothing ever flustered her. She would fiercely protect you or her team, even if you were wrong. She once told me you're not right in this situation, but I'm not going to tell them that. We will just address this later. I'm not going to let our team look this way because this is like something I should have told you. She takes the hit for it. My hero, like she's so awesome. That's what I kind of wanted to be. At the same time, there was always cons, like she was so not involved in the work. That's also why I was doing the wrong thing because she didn't have any interest in what I was working on. There's always been people like that and I've been lucky that there's always been people like that in my life. She's the girl crush, like that girl is awesome. Within the department, I've been able to get access to that person and have a quarterly meeting or some type of like thing. So yes, there are people like that. I don't have like a Sheryl Sandberg. I don't really love to read like those types of books. I just find everyone's experiences are so different and I've always been a very academically interested person. So, the theory of something is more interesting to me than someone's personal tale of it. I'd rather learn about leadership from an academic type of perspective than read a bunch of people's personal stories. I don't get really attached or inspired by like a celebrity type of leader, but more the everyday examples that I see and that I can replicate that for my team and hopefully inspire someone else.

Hailey: How can women make their mark in the workplace?

Lucy: The same way a dude can. I don't think that anyone's contribution is better or worse based on their gender or ethnicity or history. I think everyone brings unique perspectives. Keeping your ideas like quiet is a disservice not only to yourself, but to the organization. You get hired for your potential impact. Be yourself and say the stupid comment if you think it might not be stupid. I'm constantly in meetings saying this is going to be very controversial as most things I say are, but have we thought about it this way? Usually everyone is like that doesn't apply, but sometimes everyone's says that's not a bad idea. Don't be ashamed to embarrass yourself because for every 10 bad ideas I have, maybe one of them is really good. No one is going to think she is stupid like that doesn't happen at work. It's not as caddy as like school can be. I would say don't ever hide your ideas or think that you're less than someone else, even if you're like brand new. Good ideas can come from anyone, and sometimes an outside or untrained perspective is actually the best one. At [REDACTED], it definitely was. There's so much Kool-Aid drinking happening there that if someone that comes in and is like why we do this this way, then it's usually the best idea.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?

Lucy: Talk about your salary. I love that. That was something that I'd never even thought of. It was so trained that it's secret information. My boss recently said all these young kids talk about

their salaries. I love it. Good for them. I was like don't be negative about that. We should pay everyone fairly, but it shouldn't be at this like weird thing. Your generation breaks those stupid old corporate barriers down. It's a good thing. That's going to help everybody advance and help everything be fairer. Just whole salary transparency thing is how certain types of people get ahead. The more money you have, the more risk you can take or taking another job or saying something insane. If you feel comfortable financially, like that's where it comes from. If people are even in terms of pay, then they can be on an even playing field in terms of like their voice and their thoughts and the way they conduct themselves. If you feel like you don't have financial security, then you're going to be a lot more conservative in everything you do. That's just how people I feel work. Ask for what you deserve or what you think you deserved. Don't think that you're less than anybody else. Call out people when you're being treated unfairly. There's a couple of girls in my organization that are like are you asking me to take notes because you think I'm detail oriented because I'm actually not like I take really bad notes. I love that they're like I'm actually not good with this. I'm going to take worse notes than him. We have a very informal setting, so that's like very appropriate. I love when everyone shares what their strengths and weaknesses are with each other. There's like no shame in that. I feel like my generation thinks everyone has to be perfect or like I would never tell someone my weakness. My advice is just keep that going. There's always something you can work on and just don't be afraid of that and let someone else know what it is and ask for help or coaching on getting better at that.

Hailey: Do you have any advice for negotiation?

Lucy: When I was your age, for my first job I was so excited for everything. In my head there was this thought that they'll rescind the job offer if I ask for more. That's so not true. Now, being on the other side of it, once you get to that point, you've already decided you want this person and going back and forth on salary is not going to change your mind. I want this person and I don't care how much it costs, so that is like a fake thought. Your expectation should be that if you counter for the offer they give you and they say yes, then you did a bad job. You didn't find the limit. You always want to find the limit. You want to be told no. You should go into a negotiation and know everything is a negotiation. Money isn't the only thing you can negotiate. There's time off. There's flexibility in work. There's many other things that might be valuable to you. So, first determine what is valuable to you. Are you going after money? Are you going after title? Are you going after autonomy or flexibility in your hours? Work remote like days in the office like vacation days. What are your levers? Rank them in order. When you negotiate, I start with dollars because that's where the limits usually exist. I lie about what I make every single time. Let's say I make \$150,000, but I tell them I make \$175,000. Usually, the limit for money is the strictest, like the thing that can't be moved or there's a limit for salary bands. So, I lie about how much I make. I always expect a 25% increase or try to ask for 25% increase. If I'm making \$150,000 and I'm getting a job offer, I want it to be for \$200,000, which is like crazy, right? That's a really big jump. If I'm not told no from them, like the immediate response is not that's way above what we can pay you, then I've done a bad job because I want to be way over. I want them to know think they can't afford me. I've just now created a higher value for myself. If she's paid this then she's got a lot of experience and like that organization must love her. We need to counter if we're going to get her and we need to really go in high. That's what you want them to think. Even if this is your first job, you can say I think I have a lot of value and I have other offers on the table. Lie about all of that. They'll never validate it and they'll never know if it's true or not. They'll say I have to go back to the team and see what we can do. When they come back, they'll say we can't do \$200,000, but we can do \$175,000. That's not what I'm making right now.

I'm making less, but I told them that's what I'm making now. That's not really an incentive for me to leave, like my company can match that. What else can you do? Is there a bonus? Is there any more flexibility in pay? Can I have a higher bonus structure or like can it be more tied to my performance versus the company's performance? There might be flexibility in those types of things, like can I have another week of vacation to make up for it? What's valuable to me is money and time. Go through that and there should be a counter and then they should say okay I understand I'll see what I can do. They'll probably come back with like \$10,000 more, like that's usually the max of what they can do. I'll just usually go back and forth one more time and say I really want to do this job. Is there any way I can get in another 2 days of vacation. Whatever the thing is that I want and usually I settle after that. You should expect a back and forth and if you don't get that back and forth then you've left money on the table. So, don't be afraid of that conversation. If the organization says you're asking for too much and we don't want to hire you anymore, then you dodged a bullet because in your review that means you're not going to get raises very often. You're not going to be allowed to ask hard questions and you don't want to be in that type of situation. So, it's better to wait for a job that values you and wants to work with you to feel happy and feel valued. Even if you do get to an organization and they're like this was too hard to negotiate, we need someone that just wants to take the job, then you're going to be a cog in the wheel. That's not the place you want to be.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts that we haven't gotten to that you would like to share?

Lucy: I feel like I've covered a lot. This is advice to you as a college student going into the real world, it doesn't matter where you start. Your first job will probably not be your favorite. It might not even be in the industry you want to be in. Just take things that are interesting to you, like don't go for the brand names. If that isn't your dream, like usually the really great places to work where they care about the people and they profit share with the people are not those big companies. They have too many rules and they have shareholders. Consider a small company that will coach and train. Ask about that type of stuff, especially when you're really young and might have like really good connections to other things. Think about your next step during your first step. If you don't know what you really want to do, just take something that's really interesting and sounds like really cool and then see where it leads you. Don't be afraid of that. A lot of my friends took jobs that they thought I want to do this and they hated it and they didn't really get into what they liked doing for like 4 or 5 years. That's totally normal. You never know where something is going to lead you. Industries are small, especially in [a big city], and people bounce back and forth. Go after what sounds cool. You're going to spend at least 8 hours a day doing it, so you'll have to like it. Make sure you jive with the culture of the people you interview with. If they're like coming off as something you don't feel is like not me, then you're not going to like that organization because the people represent the organization. So, try to drive with the culture. That's the most important thing is cultural fit. Just look for a place that you can learn at and you'll be fine. Don't burn bridges because I went from [one job to another] and back to [the first job]. Thankfully I left on really good terms and stayed in touch with everybody because you just never know. So, there's a good chance that you'll meet the same people over and over throughout your career. There's people I interned with that I now have to deal with them at a different agency. We're on opposite agencies and have to work together. Thankfully we were friends. Otherwise, I could come in to this company to work with this dud and they'd hate me. Not related to your thesis, but yeah that's my advice.



## Appendix K: Transcript #9

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in business marketing? What interested you about the field?

Ava: My mom was in marketing. She was in marketing research, more specifically, and analytics. I saw a constant need for that role in the world. I enrolled at [REDACTED] and I started my college career with the intention of becoming an entrepreneur and owning my own business, which also involves a lot of marketing. I decided to go the corporate America route because I saw more stability for my family knowing that in 5 or 10 years I'd like to start a family. My father owned a business and my mom worked at a large food company. There was just a lot more stability there. Food specifically intrigued me about a year into my 4 years at [REDACTED] because the way that the people in the world work today, it's going away from growing your own food. It's going away from sustainability and just self-sustainability within your own community. So, knowing that there's more and more and more of a need for corporate food companies, I decided to look into that avenue. That answers that question.

Hailey: Where did you attend college? What did you study?

Ava: Yes. So, I went to [REDACTED] straight out of high school. I was on the honor roll in high school and received scholarships at [REDACTED]. So, even though that wasn't in my mind and it wasn't my first choice, I discovered through coming to [REDACTED] that there was a wealth of business connections and wealth of business knowledge. I was actually really glad that I came to [REDACTED]. Those connections actually led me down the path of my career today.

Hailey: Can you go through your professional career and briefly mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on?

Ava: I was an intern at [REDACTED] for a couple of years. It was a co-op position and worked 30 hours a week, nearly 30 hours a week, and went to school. When I was about 6 months into my senior year, halfway through my last year, I applied for a position at [REDACTED]. I achieved that. I got that offer. I planned to move, actually, and work as a sales rep in the field. That was kind of the standard. It was the entry level position for everyone in that company and in many similar companies. You have to carry a bag. You have to work as a merchandiser. I had a knack for marketing research and analytics. [A close connected professor] saw that and encouraged that. She was one of the few people. She was my connection that has remained the strongest throughout my career now. A job opportunity came up. It was pretty flexible, but it was mostly analytics. It was still sales oriented, but it was analytics. Long story short that got me into the wine industry. [That professor] said take that job and leave the other one and take that one. So, I changed my mind just a couple weeks before graduation. It was a kind of a cold shoulder move to [REDACTED]. I felt bad with that. You have to do what you have to do for yourself. They took months to get things in writing for me, like concrete, other than an offer of intent. So, if there's anything I have learned, complete the interview, go through the interview, keep the relationship even if you don't finish the interview, or even if you don't take the job, keep that connection network and always be polite and keep those bridges intact. Anyway, I started at [REDACTED]. My first role within the wine industry was an analyst position supporting a sales director, specifically on the [REDACTED] account. [REDACTED]. I had really great exposure to over 35 states in the U.S. and their needs and the sales team's needs. So, that was actually way more effective for me learning than a sales merchandiser role, which is very locally focused, pretty myopic. You have goals and you really just focus on hitting those goals month to month to month, whereas I was planning annually and 18 months out. I was working with the corporate buyers on all their strategies and I was the right

hand person for managing meetings, scheduling meetings, and providing all the analytics for 7 buyers in the corporate office and my directors and VP's on my team. So, I loved it. I created all the reports from the ground up because they have just created a whole new team and brought me in. That really set the footing and foundation for the other students that were recruited into [REDACTED] after me. I was the first recruit. I was pretty stoked about all that. I was high energy. I really wanted to go, go, go. I pretty quickly moved on from that position. I'll rescind a little bit here and focus on your question. So, I went to category management after that and drew planograms did even deeper analytics into why the consumer shops and how the consumer shops. The whole spectrum of point of purchase. 80% of the sales come off the shelf and 20% come off display. So, knowing that I had the power to change planograms where 80% of the volume came from was pretty impactful for me and rewarding. I quickly got recruited onto another team within the same company. I went to [REDACTED] team and worked drug channel, which is completely different than grocery chain. The reason people shop and the way our reps work with the chains is completely different. It was one end of the spectrum to the other. Then, about 6 months into that role the VP said we need to have you in the corporate position running the whole chain. I was 24 years old and I was running the number 7 chain with 3 people reporting in to me in the company. It was very fun. I loved it. I did it for a few years, and lived out in [REDACTED]. Every one of these job changes, for the most part, I relocated. In the first 6 years, I lived in 6 states with the same company. It was a lot, but that's the time, in my opinion, to move around. I had heard that from my mentors. You have a husband. You don't have kids. You don't have dogs. Go for it. After that, I said I need to get out of the East Coast. Culturally, I wasn't quite meshing with the groups of people out there. It's really hard to make friends. That's a whole other conversation. I was applying for a [REDACTED] position. The [REDACTED] team heard that I was applying for a [REDACTED] position. The Saturday before I flew out for my interview they made an offer and said you need to come back to [REDACTED]. Okay. I move back to [REDACTED] a second time. I became the first sales account executive and the sales team lead that reported into the director. I had the biggest chunk of the country. I was the first one centralized in [REDACTED] was trying to pull in all their sales account teams and have them based out of the corporate office. So, I was the first move for the [REDACTED] team to bring it back into the corporate office. Because I had analytic experience on that team and category experience on that team, it was a really great fit for me. It was very natural and I could coach everyone in the team on how to work together. Then, life events happened and for personal reasons I decided to leave. The culture was changing. About 6 months after I left, they let go 150 people in category and sales, which was huge. This was devastating for a lot of the people that I worked with. I took 18 months off and did my own thing. I really felt refreshed and now I am with a different company. I started with an alcohol distributor, so out of the 3 tier system I've now been in tier 1 and tier 2. I'm on my second team in that company. First, I ran the national account team for [REDACTED] for 4 years, and now I've started in a very specific marketing position, trade marketing, and it's really the conduit between overall marketing and the sales teams on the street. It makes the cases move. It's pretty.

Hailey: What are your professional and personal goals?

Ava: I would say personal goals are coming first and they really should come first because that's your why like why you're in the profession that you're in. For personal goals, really just being there for my family. I have a 4 and a 6 year old. I've always wanted kids, but I also wanted to go out and do lots of fun things before I had kids. We traveled a lot. That's still on my bucket list is to travel a lot with the kids. We're getting there. For professional goals, really just to achieve a really fulfilling position where I can mentor others around me. I think it's really important to

share your stories, especially when you've been through a lot and when you have been accelerated through a program well before you were like ready for it. I've been on a lot of pilot groups for a lot of different things at [REDACTED] and now at [REDACTED]. They've all turned out really positive, so I don't want those to fall just and be dead in the water. I would like for the findings of those pilot studies and mentorships to flourish and grow because that's the only way that we're going to advance more strong candidates, women or men, through the right channels and get them in the positions that they deserve to be in.

Hailey: Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling and its relation to the workplace?

Ava: Yes, I would say it's pretty big. Many people think it just pertains to women, but it really pertains to all the minority groups and even if you are from a lower income. There's a lot of things that can work against you. You could even be a man inside an all woman team and have a glass ceiling. So, there's definitely a lot of reasons, but it's just a general capping or stunting of someone's growth or potential.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance? Do you feel is more challenging as a woman?

Ava: In the last month, my work-life balance is great. I started that new position on a team where everyone has small children. All of us, virtually, have a little toddler and diapers running in occasionally on some meetings. My prior role for the last 4 years though, there's a lot of meat that I could discuss there and at [REDACTED], but it was very poor work-life balance. When I started at [REDACTED] in that team lead position, I didn't actually apply for the team lead position. I knew my work-life balance would be off. So, I applied for a category manager position, which in my past that would have been 2 steps down from where I was. I was okay with that. I wanted to enter the workforce again in a lower position. It was easy to maintain that work-life balance. They decided to put me in the team lead position because of my background and my assertiveness in my voice. It was rough in the beginning, all 4 years, every single person I worked with on my team was male. They were all 15 to 20 years older than me. So, that naturally, you can probably pick up, on was pretty challenging. I had to earn respect. My boss, an amazing man who hired me, but he was located in [a different state], so wasn't physically in all the interactions. He said why are you always trying to impress someone. Why are you trying to prove yourself all the time. Why are you trying to prove yourself. I said I don't understand what you mean by that. I have to prove myself like no one believes me. He said you just need to keep doing what you're doing and eventually they will see and you can't force them. I stayed the course I wanted to quit a couple times in that 4 years, especially 12 months. I had a nightmare of a buyer who was very mean to me, also a woman. I just let that stuff fall off to the side and I focused on what I can do and how I can contribute and how I can be a leader. When I left the team a couple months ago, the older men that were very stubborn cried because I left the team. They just said you are by far more of a leader than any other man that we've worked with than anyone else on this team. They also said that I have bigger balls than any of the guys and I am less emotional than any of the guys. So, all the stereotypes that you typically hear, that they even impressed upon me when I started, they realized it was completely wrong. Unfortunately, it took you know 4 years for them to see that, but I think it's important to just stay constant and steady in your community and that's part of being a leader.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behavior or responsibilities in the workplace that might be a result of those stereotypical gender roles?

Ava: Okay. We'll start off with something easy: event planning. Every man assumes that because you're the woman, you're going to take notes, plan the events, and schedule the dates. You're the

admin. There is subtle behavior in the way that meetings are run. When you login, especially virtually, you login to a place where everyone's box is the same size. They don't know titles. They haven't seen body language of how your coworkers greet you or present themselves to you. It's like when you envision who's sitting at the head of a table, right? When everyone sits down in a virtual meeting, which is 90% of the meetings nowadays, everyone sits on the side and you're all equals. Everyone assumed that I was not the one to start the meeting until I started the meeting and I ran the agenda and I controlled the time and the flow of the conversation. It's really subtle, but it's still there and it's incredibly infuriating when you feel that and when you see that. I let it go the first or second time usually, but when it continues repeatedly. I worked in my old role as a team lead, I worked with 200 suppliers and 6 different call points at [REDACTED]. Every meeting was different. Psychologically, you have to be 4 or 5 steps in front of everyone in the room to strategically guide the conversation to where it should go. Also, when I left that position, all the men on my team said that I did very well in that space. They said we don't know how to run meetings without you. We don't know how to control the conversation. I would say that's a subtle thing. It could be summed up to first impression. Text messaging. Old school business used to be really limited to snail mail and memos and in-person meetings and phone calls. Phone calls could definitely be in the same vein, but text messages, it's like a whole another space between e-mail and phone. It's undetectable, unless you take screenshots, it's undetectable on what's being said. No one else can hear it. In my line of work, alcohol is pretty prevalent and men will find gray area of where they are allowed to be. So, it's not all the time, but it's typically men of a buyer position. They already have power, so to speak. Luckily, I've always had pretty good management. I've had one toxic manager. Yeah, it's usually buyers that are unfortunately offenders.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male? And is your company or department male or female dominated?

Ava: I have 2 perspectives on this. I'm going to share my old position first, so that sales team lead. Everything sales for the most part is men. My mentor at [REDACTED], who really pressed forward in promoting me and saying she's completely capable and we need to put her in this position because she's capable. Every other man said no she hasn't done x, y, and z. She said it doesn't matter. I can teach her the basics and put her in this position now. So, she's the one that put me in the team lead for our #7 chain in the U.S.. She was the first sales senior vice president in sales at [REDACTED]. One of the first senior vice presidents over an alcohol company sales position in the entire alcohol industry. That was only 6 years ago. She's now held like 5 different senior vice president positions. I would not be surprised if she is on the chief like executive board soon running the entire company. There are women like that who are so important to have as mentors and to watch and learn and listen from. She the one that told me she said I'm applying for positions where I am the only female in the interview pool and I haven't gotten the last couple ones even though I am more than qualified than all these men. Every one of my bosses that I've had in the past will tell you that. When there's an interview panel and most of the men don't know the woman, there is a there is a cap there for sure. As far as that old team, sales is almost all men. It was all men. My current team on the marketing team, we have a male vice president and we have w males on the team, but we have about 25 women on the team. I would say marketing as far as brand development and consumer insights and the research part of it, a lot of that is women today. The sales side it's still a good old boys club.

Hailey: Can you explain any personal gender bias challenges that you face in your industry?

Ava: A lot happened in 2023, unfortunately. I'm trying to sift through which one I want to talk about first. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. The liquor buyer sexually harassed me verbally at a golf outing, which is pretty common. Everyone loves to golf. You have to learn to golf to be in on meetings. Everyone assumes that because you're a woman, you don't know how to golf or you have no interest in golfing. I didn't know before I was in business, but luckily my husband loves it. He taught me and I love it now. Still to this day, when they plan golf outings, they will omit me. It's my coworkers who are very supportive men who are like why is she not here. She's the lead of the team. If any of us should be here, she should be here. We've tried to fix that. It doesn't work with everyone. Most teams have kind of figured it out. Well, the buyer likes to drink even at 9:00 in the morning on golf outings. He didn't really drink before this position, but he really got into a habit of being a lush. He made a terrible comment to me while I was eating a sandwich at the turn on the golf course. I had to report that to my HR. I let it sit for a minute because, well I shouldn't have, but it was almost like a shock. Did that really happen? I said straight to him when he said it to me. I said did you really just say that? Are you serious right now? He just turned around and walked away. He didn't care. I ended up reporting it to my HR team, which the team is made up of a couple of women that I worked with. They took it down word for word. I don't know if it was right or wrong. I guess there's no way to do this. No right or wrong way. I tried to contact him first and have a face to face conversation multiple times. He dodged it every time. He didn't want to talk about it. So, I had those text messages of him dodging my conversation over and over and over. The HR team asked for that too. I mean they wanted everything and the [REDACTED] HR team ended up talking to him. The most important part of this whole situation is when I spoke to HR. She put her pencil down and she looked me straight in the eye and she said you need to contact all the other women that you work with at other companies that work with him and encourage them to speak up because you know this isn't the only time. I told them I knew of other situations where women have come to me and asked what do I do. They're all first tier suppliers. They're one step further away from the buyer and they're desperate to get in with him and like have meetings with him. They will let things slide more than I will. I am closer to him and I work with him every single day. Those women come to me for advice and they ended up documenting. A couple of them shared it with HR. I know a couple of them didn't because they were just scared for the recourse that would happen. That's one example. My toxic manager that I had, overlaid the same time last year, he just believed that I wasn't doing my job and he tried to talk to HR to have me fired. This was after my old boss before him said that I was doing an amazing job and I need to just keep going. It's just it's pushing water up a hill with no other tools. It's very hard. It's impossible, essentially, because the account is so hard. It's not at all my team or me. That manager believed I couldn't do it, so he hired and I welcomed all help. My job should have been 3 or 4 people. My job alone should have been 3 or 4 people. I said that for multiple years and no one listened. Finally, they said well we're going to bring in someone who's going to be above you. They're going to be a director. We're going to leave your position as is. You have all the same responsibilities still. We're just going to add him on top. I said wait a minute he's supposed to relieve me. The agreement was that he was going to take some of the work away from me. We're going to share responsibly. They said no you keep running the team as is. I just started crying honestly to HR. I said my work-life balance is [messed up] and it has been for 3 years. When I started in that role, I had a 4 month old. I was breastfeeding and my husband would just come in and hold the baby like I don't know what to do. I'm running calls with 200 people and he's like I

need your boob. This is not this is not how this needs to go. It was really hard and I was strong through it all. I learned a lot. I cried a lot at home at night when it was just I felt like I was failing everyone. My boss just kept telling me you need to say no to more people and you need to be okay with failure because what is expected of you right now is too much. That old boss was trying to advocate for me. He was trying to create more headcount, but it wasn't there at the time. Now, the new boss comes in. The toxic manager boss says I'm not doing my job and brings in another guy, who's the golden child. He's my age actually and has been with [REDACTED] for 14 years and everyone believed that he could do something that I couldn't. So, about the first 3 months, they tried to fire me. The new director believed everything the toxic manager said. He followed his direction and thought that my word had no value. I just finally said okay I'm going to stop fighting. I'll do it the way you want it to be done but understand that the work will not change. The team won't change, and the results won't change, and the things that you're taking ownership of are going to fail. They did pretty hard core. He just said I don't know what I'm doing and I need you. So, he had a humbling moment, and for the next 4 months, he apologized as we worked together. He apologized for how terrible he treated me and how terrible the VP's were treating me. He said he was advocating with all of his might behind the scenes for me in meetings when I wasn't there. I said okay well I haven't felt any more pressure from HR. Everything dropped. I was fine. Then, the director left. The new director left the company because he said it was the hardest year of his entire career. He couldn't handle it and he couldn't believe the disrespect that he experienced in the company. I was like are you serious, man? So, then it was my responsibility to not only train my backfill as I'm leaving, but this was also when he was leaving. We were both leaving at the same time and it is now my job to train 2 people to take over a very tough account. Both men had very large egos. So, the first week that I had to train my direct backfill. He ignored every phone call, text message, or e-mail from me when I was just saying hey when are you available? We'll just put it on the calendar. It can be 2 weeks from now. We were going through a major reorg. So, everyone's jobs are changing. I said I'm going to have respect for what you need to do, but you need to get on board ASAP or else you're going to be lost. You're going to be drowning, so I'm trying to help you. He ignored everything. He answered every e-mail from every other man on the team. He talked to all of them all week long. It got to the point on Friday where I said [what the heck] and I texted him because he wasn't answering anything. I texted him saying are you okay and is everything okay. That got a call really quick. He said oh sorry I've just been so busy. I said you've talked to everyone else on the team except me. What you need to know is that the only experience you have coming into this role is wine and the state. You now run a national account team across 6 states, not one. You don't know the other 5 markets. That's where half of our business is done. You also don't know liquor. I had to point out to him his shortcomings in order for him to be humbled just a smidge to start listening, and I did not back off after that. The other men on the team said you need to keep the gas pedal down, because if you don't, our whole team will fail. He has to be better than where he is today. I said I know. So, we kept pressing and the guys supported. The way my old boss used to say it is when someone hears it in stereo, they tend to receive it a little bit better. They might not hear it well from a female, but if they hear it from everyone, then it must be true. So, we went through that whole experience and he is still learning. He's a few months in. We had a call yesterday and he had no idea what he was doing on like all 5 pieces, even though I told him right before the call this is how you do it. I'm coaching him up. It's been quite a learning curve. People don't listen when you try to coach them. The director that took over for the new director. So, we've now had 2 directors in one year. He left after 8 weeks. He left the company. Everyone

has called me and said wow you lasted 4 years in that role. When I took over the role, the company that we were calling on and our company had completely changed. So, the prior man who had my position had one call point and had a much simpler job. Then, it was handed over to me and COVID hit that same week. I was new to the company and COVID hit. I had no computer for 2 weeks and I was a female and like all these old school men didn't know how to do virtual. I was in a terrible position. My 60 year old coworker still to this day will tell me they dropped you out of an airplane in the middle of Antarctica with no life raft. Yes, that's exactly what happened. It was a wild ride, but I gained respect from a lot of people in the end of it. Unfortunately, I think women have a harder path to earning respect than men do.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently as far as like in meetings and projects?

Ava: We'll go back to meetings, especially in the beer world. In the beer world, I think it's actually worse than liquor, which surprised me, but there is a beer and liquor supplier out of Michigan. They live close to us. I've worked with them on many projects. Still, to this day, 4 years in, they call my coworker, who reports into me, and they invite him to meetings. They invite him to golf outings. They don't even copy me on emails. That person is the one that recruited me and said you should come work with me. I love working with you in the past. You should come to [REDACTED] and start here. He has a lot of respect for me and I love that. He has flat out said I am not coming to this meeting unless you invite her. Unfortunately, you have to have advocates out there. It still happens to this day. 4 years in, working with the same men. They just will never learn. Oh, liquor. In [REDACTED], the position that I had in my company was, other than the 3 VP's that run the state of Michigan over in the Detroit area, I have the highest position of seniority in the state. There is 250 people that work in the state. So, that was awesome when I fully realized that several months into my role. I understood how the whole team worked and the dynamic was. It was like okay maybe I can be heard and I can get some things done. 2 years in to my role, things have been going up and down and sideways and all these different directions with COVID that we finally got in-person meetings back on the books where the entire state of Michigan came into one office. It was called a general sales meeting and you got 200 people in one office. There's a big stage up front and we have these monthly meetings, so I don't have to be part of it because I'm not actually part of the state team. I'm national accounts. I'm like this overarching position. I want to be involved in my #1 state for my business and I think it's important. There are women in that state team who I've tried to mentor. The reason I say tried is because they didn't listen. Anyway, that was a whole another scenario. So, I walk in. It's not my meeting. I don't have to be there at 7:00AM like everyone else does. These Friday, once a month meetings. So, it goes from 7:00AM to like 3:00PM. Then, everyone drives back to their homes across the state. I walk in at night because it's a 2 hour drive from my home. I walk in at 9:00AM. Every single man, which was the entire room of this liquor team, turned and looked at me and just stared and had this like confusion. There's a presentation going on and I'm entering the back of the room quietly. I want to present to them to tell them who I am and invite them to work with me. So, I went and sat next to the VP of that entire team and just started chatting with them in the back of the room, quietly and respectfully, but chatting with them. Everyone was like just staring like I had a third eyeball, like how is she talking to him? I call him whenever I want and he answers every time and we're good partners. We are working together actively, but that's their boss's boss. So, there was this like, who is she? I got a lot of I wouldn't say it was negative behavior, but it was again that subtle behavior. When I got up on the stage and introduced myself or came around and shook hands and really engaged, I wanted to make sure that they understood

who I was and they could call me for help. I would say out of that entire group, only 2 or 3 people have actually reached out and asked for help from a woman. So, that's been a couple years of working with that team. I felt a sea of eyes on me and I don't think that would have been the case if I was a man entering the backroom.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts, and if so, could you provide specific examples that highlight that inequality?

Ava: Yes, I don't even have to say that I've felt it because I've been the team lead and I see what everyone makes and they all make more than me. 10 years or 15 years in. I would say around 20,000 to 25,000 more, which is about I'd say 20% more. It is notable and when they find out that I'm not even at the midpoint in my pay band. I kick ass at what I do and I've been doing it for 10 years in a team lead position. Pretty floored.

Hailey: What are the biggest challenges that you believe women face in the workplace?

Ava: It's really hard to define it until you've lived. I have always been the breadwinner. I'm the head of the household no matter what and that's always been great. The head of the household has a lot of mental load that people don't see or understand. So, even if you don't have kids, you have a mental load that your spouse doesn't understand. Then, layer kids on top of that, even if you don't breastfeed or if you adopt, even if that secondary parent is incredibly involved and trying to take on the primary parent role, it doesn't matter. The mom in a relationship with children is the primary parent. It's not that I would ever not want to. There is another whole huge mental load on top of that that people don't understand, even your own spouse doesn't understand. Then, on top of that, as much as your spouse is engaged and wants to know about your job, they will never understand the mental workload of your job. My husband, as an example, he's been in physical labor person his whole life. He's building engines, working in cars, building houses, and working with home construction. He just got his first desk job 3 months ago to try to save his back. It's very intentional. We're trying to save his back. He's not even 40. For the first 2 weeks, every single day, he came home and he's like oh my I'm so tired and my head hurts and I'm just so exhausted. Why am I so exhausted? I said welcome. This has been 15 years of me and you didn't believe me because I quote sat at a desk all day. I really think that it's something that isn't tactile and it's a slowly creeping thing, right. It slowly piles on, and especially women who are strong enough to be in breadwinner positions or in corporate marketing positions, they're strong women and they think they can handle it. I think it's really important to have a self-awareness to let that go and delegate as much as possible.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing leadership roles?

Ava: Those things that I just mentioned. They hit a wall and they burn out, as far as mental load. Children are such a blessing, but they are a time consuming part of life. That's part of work-life balance. You have to choose which you find most important. Many of the men at the top, they have families. They're not as involved with their families. Those families might survive pretty well because they have a mom figure and that mom is killing it at single mom status while receiving a paycheck from her husband. It's very hard. It's very hard. You need a village. We'll put it that way. If you don't have a village, that would keep a woman from having an upper an executive level chief position, for sure. Whether it's a nanny or you need cousins, whatever aunts, uncles, grandparents, you need all of the above. It's very interesting the VP over our entire marketing team is male and he's awesome. He's great. During my interview, just a couple months ago, he went down a rabbit hole of questions asking about my location. I said I'm not moving. I have my roots here now. He said but what about the nearest office? I said it's 2 hours away. I'm not going to that nearest office. So, he regrouped with my director, who was the one female



hiring me. She's awesome. He said what are we going to do? She said yeah, so it doesn't matter. Well, can she do it? What do you mean? Can she do it? Can she do the job well? Can she travel? She said I really don't want to have this conversation and she asked how did the interview go. It's very strange. I said he went down a path of asking me questions about my location. It didn't make any sense to me and had nothing to do with the business. She said he was asking if you can do the job because you're a mom that's living remotely. I said really because I have my village of people. Honestly, that shouldn't have to even be said, but I have my village of people and I can travel anytime. I have traveled insane amounts of time, my entire career, whether I have children or not. Now, I try to balance it and pick and choose my battles. Well, now that I have kids because they miss me a lot more. They come with me on some of my trips and we make a weekend out of it and we go to an amusement park or we see family. She goes yeah I figured I just was told to ask. I'm like he also has 2 small children. He also is responsible for having the same work-life balance and travel load. It made no sense, yeah. It's subtle and he means well, but it's still there.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company or any company? Are there any initiatives or policies that help?

Ava: At our company, we recently hired a senior vice president over in HR and she is a phenomenal woman. She's changing old school policies left and right. We're a privately owned company, so I think that unless the family looks into it, no one looks into it. No one challenges it and pressures it. That's always been my number one thing like you should challenge things when you see something wrong. Do it appropriately, like have your data and your backup. Don't just be an emotional flailing person out there, but you should challenge. My new director loves that. I keep saying am I pushing the buttons too much? She said no, no keep going. Yeah, I ask am I pushing the buttons too much only because I had such a toxic manager this last year that tried to fire me and didn't understand my calls for help. So, with that being said, this new vice president of HR is kicking ass, taking names. She's making policies more applicable to LGBTQ families, so insurance policies are now covering spouses that are of same sex, or families who are adopting who are same-sex. It is covering adoptive families like it's giving them more leave and more flexibility because apparently if you don't birth a child then you don't need the bonding time, which is ridiculous. So, a negative story to explain the positive. After my toxic manager made it very clear that he did not want me on the team anymore, which I called my old boss and he just said oh he's just trying to make a new team and I am so sorry you're in the middle of this. You're a victim, but it's not your fault. So, I clearly need to get out for the stability of my own family. We just bought a new house, and I'm the breadwinner. So, if I don't keep my job, we don't keep our house. I started searching around and I had really great levels. I was proceeding through interviews with suppliers, major, major suppliers. I actually would have had like a powerful move above this toxic manager in the first the supplier tier of our business. I was actually kind of looking forward to that if I could get that job. I got an offer from internal [REDACTED] but before that came I had applied for another position only because other directors and VP's called me. I know you want out like I know you're tired and tapped out of that role. You'd be a perfect fit. This is a great commercial strategy analytics. I would be the manager of commercial strategy, reporting into the VP. Multiple people called me and said you are perfect. I'm going to go call and put your name in. I said hold on I need to actually read the job description and apply like I didn't know this was posed yet. So, they didn't care. The directors and VP's supporting me said well I already sent a note. So, if you want to apply, go for it. If not, at least your name is known. That toxic manager blocked me from ever getting an interview. The old school HR

policy in place says that I need approval from my manager in order to interview. You can at least notify the manager that your person's trying to leave their position. That's fine. I've already had those discussions with you, though. Every good employee really should have those discussions before they try to leave. It's almost like an exit interview, right? You let them know what they're doing wrong. Yeah, that happened one time. Then, I touched base with HR about the sexual harassment claim at the same time, like, later on. I said by the way, I don't know why I got blocked like why I got denied. I never saw why I was declined and I talked to the director and he didn't know because he had approved it. We still need the VP's position to approve. The HR director got red in the face and said he didn't talk to you. I said no, what are you talking about? Well, he was the one that declined it, and he was the one that was supposed to talk to you. I told him explicitly to go have a conversation with you before he declined it because that's the policy. So, he bent the policy, right. He followed what he wanted to, but then he bent it where he wanted to and didn't follow it. She said I'm so sorry, but there's nothing I can do because the policy is as it is. Yeah, it turned into a scenario where I was afraid to apply for another position. My current manager called me about a month later and said I really want you on my team. You and I have been networking for a year. I love the way you think. I want you on our team. I said there's going to be some hurdles and I'm going to need you to help pull me through this. She's like what are you talking about? I shared my experience with her. She didn't know me all that well at the time. She knew me somewhat, but not all that well. So, she sat on it for a bit. She's someone who really thinks things through, which I think everyone should do before acting. She talked to an old mentor of hers, which happened to be at [REDACTED]. He also worked in [REDACTED] in a prior life. It's a very small industry. It's incestuous almost. That mentor advised my manager. She said I know exactly who you're talking about, even though you have not used names and he is a terrible person. She said just give that girl a chance. Give that woman a chance and understand that what she's saying is probably true. So, she proceeded on to help me get through the interview process. We had to fight. At that point, HR was on my side. She is on my side. He is the only one that's just sitting on his hands, not approving things, but also hadn't declined it yet. So, she said screw this whole formal process. We're going to have you continue on with interviews and you're going to interview with all these senior vice presidents that you'll be directly supporting. I have my interviews and find out 2 days later that he went into every one of their offices in Texas and told them all that I was not dependable and I was a terrible hire and they should not hire me. So then, she said he has stirred the pot and there is some doubt entering a couple people's minds because he has a title up here and I have a title down here. He's in-person in that office and I'm not. There's a lot of things involved. So, I said what can I do. She said let's talk through these questions. She said if there was anything that you could do differently, what would you do. I said I would not be as honest. She said what are you talking about. As the new manager of me, what are you talking about. I said I shared with him every win and every struggle along the way. He only recorded the struggles. None of my wins were recorded. I said I look like a terrible employee. I achieved every goal in the end. I should have kept my mouth shut and had less transparency with him until the goal was achieved. She said I completely understand that and you're hired. I love my position now and I love my team. Obviously, there's still some struggles and there's still some biases and there's things going on, but internally we are a team of women that have all had very similar stories and we empower each other. I have formerly been diagnosed with PTSD from things in my life, and it's an ongoing disorder where you get slapped around and you are timid around that style moving forward. I'm still in the same company as him, so I'm timid. My voice has been curbed a little bit.

She's trying to bring my voice back because she knows that that's not fair, and there's a lot of things wrong. The other thing that I see that's positive. I mentioned to a coworker of mine the other day. I just met her. She's my age and I get pretty excited about that when I meet a female my age. It's very few and far between. Age discrimination is a whole other thing. I can share one small story on that too. She shared with me her new job and what she's applying for next. I said just caution around him. He's still in the company and I don't want to bad mouth anyone, but just caution. She said I understand. I'm glad you said something because I am on the employee resource group, ERG. We have all these employee resource groups that's focused on like ethnicity and different cultures, LGBTQ, etc. People are really like banding together in those ERG's, which is great. That's another positive thing and really supported by this new HR team. She's on an HR team that's really focused on all of the microaggressions, specifically towards women in the workplace. She said I'm glad you said something because I have heard a couple people mention his name before and he is not well liked. I said I am gathering that too. I didn't know that to begin with and I'm gathering that too. She said we're looking at hiring an outside company to come in and observe the microaggressions and document the things that are preventing women from being heard, from advancing, from really just having a fair position and voice, and pay. She said we're honestly working on that right now. That is awesome and I will help however you need to get that done. I will fund it. I will help fund that because it's not just changing the access for one woman. It's everyone after that, and that's what HR really empowered me to do during the sexual harassment case. I was approached 2 years ago to become a mentor for another woman in our company. She was relatively new to our company, but her resume was deep and she was a very strong person. She had a lot of great jobs. I said what am I supposed to do to help mentor this woman. I don't understand why I'm being asked to do this. They said just talk to her and you'll find out. Within 2 minutes, I realized she is a very kind and sweet woman who will let everyone else talk before her. She's the smartest one in the room. So, said I said I love you very much already and I can see your personality. I know that you're working with this person and this person and this person based on your job description, and I want you to know that it's not your fault and she just started bawling. I said I know those people are strong personalities. They're not necessarily trying to hurt you, but you feel it, don't you? She likes yes, did someone tell you. No one told me, but I can read the room. I can see what you're working with and in your personality. She said I just needed a friend who is a female in this industry and she's like even the females are mean. I know, but unfortunately, they've been trained to be mean because they've been around. Yeah, it was really cutthroat. I mean, the stories that I've heard from the people, the men that I worked with, they said we literally fought. It was like fisticuffs out in the back alley of stores because we wanted one more facing on a shelf. I've heard that from so many people. I believe it's true. That's sad. We shouldn't have to physically fight like animals to get something done. Women are not going to fight. Honestly, men are often way more emotional than women in every way. They freak out. Their ego is so big or they're just not humble. They can't accept that they're wrong or this is how it was supposed to go. Women can adapt a lot faster. We roll the punches a lot faster and it's there's a lot of things that like in our innate beings. We can understand things a lot quicker. Anyway, it can go on and on and on. There's a lot of positive things that are happening. Women just really need to stay connected as mentors and mentees with each other.

Hailey: How can organizations create a better workplace for women? What strategies such as mentorship programs do you feel would be beneficial?

Ava: The employee resource groups, I think every company, especially privately owned companies.? It's all rooted in the fact that they have no checks and balances beyond what the family wants to do with their own money. There's nothing wrong with the family. They make the best decisions that they can at their level at their place that they sit. However, there is no physical way for them to be ingrained and involved with all the decisions that all the people make that they hire. So, it gets pretty incestuous and as generations go on it gets worse and worse. It steers off from what is right and true. [REDACTED] family tries really, really hard to be very inclusive though. However, they're not. I know they're not my company, but I work very, very closely with them. So, I'm going to share a story, or at least a point of view on that. They are a family owned company that is based out of a very white part of the U.S.. I have a very good friend who I've become friends with through business. She is brilliant. She is a very dark black woman and she has been hired back by [REDACTED] multiple times because she's so smart. They cap her and never get her a position that she deserves. They never put her in a place where she can be heard. Her strategies that she builds that are awesome, don't go anywhere. They don't get approvals. It's never like one specific person at fault, so she tries. She keeps pressing. She's like they hired me back because they wanted to hear these things. Well, it's the upper echelon that understands that she's a genius. It's the upper echelon, like the family or the people who reporting to the family, that love her. All the middle tier management does not give her the time of day that she deserves, so she left again. Multiple times she has been hired in and multiple times she has left because she gave them 3 years this last time and it just kept getting worse and worse and worse. I feel for people like that. That is not a good example. A privately owned company desperately needs to invest heavily in programs that. Help elevate the voices of those who are feeling that way. I really love formal mentorship programs because it gets everyone out of their comfort zone. She was in a different state and a totally different team. She and I have been besties for 2 years now that we've known each other. I have a call her this Friday. I helped her walk through a time where she thought she might lose her job even though she was very well loved in her position. They acknowledged her as a rising star. They knew that her resume was awesome. She was just new to our company and our industry. So, they're like we're going to figure this out and figure out where you fit. Her and her husband had been applying for 7 years to adopt from an international country. So finally, finally they got the green light to adopt a little boy from the [international country]. Part of the agreement with this adoption agency and the orphanage in the [international country] is to have 3 months off of work to bond with your child and to help them adjust to the new culture of the United State and to help them adjust to your home and feel like they can trust their world around them. She told me I'm nervous to tell my management that I finally get the chance to have a little boy. I mean, she has tears in her eyes. She said I don't know if I'm going to be able to keep my job. I said you should not worry about that at all because if they don't keep you, they're in the wrong. I will help you find a job any way possible. You should have absolutely no fear in that because that's not right and you wouldn't want to work for them moving forward. She said okay I got this and she went and had a conversation and they said we will welcome you back whenever you want to come back, even though it's outside of policy because we are a family owned company with ancient old policies created by old white men in blue, button up, collared shirts, balding, and overweight. That's 90% of the people you will see in every meeting and they're the ones that make all the decisions. I knew her team was great and I just said there's no way that they're going to do that to you. They didn't. They bent the rules and they changed everything just for her. I would say having formal mentorship programs is just the start, the budding of informal ones. The mentorship program at [REDACTED] brought me into

with that, it wasn't even something that corporately we did. It was just that state level team, the awesome team that she worked with, they're the ones that said we need to start this. I was the only person on national accounts that was brought into it. An outside source, if you will, to this program. After the first 6 months or 12 months of the mentorship program, she shared what we had learned and grew from. They decided that they were going to launch more national account state level relationships and they were going to cross pollinate more with more states across the across the U.S. and so they saw the value and they said this needs to be the source of more. It's just inbreeding if you don't spread out. If you don't cross pollinate, you don't grow. I have a very unique background because I have sales and category experience. 99% of the people I work with do not have sales and category experience. I don't know if it's because they don't want to or they haven't been given the chance. Now, I have formal marketing on my list too, and I've been told by one of my old mentors they're like you're like a swiss army knife now. You have the cross section of different departments all under your experience. You've seen things that work and don't work. You can really deliver support to teams. You asked for professional goals. I don't have a title in mind. I've never cared what my title is, which is probably an issue of why I don't get paid what I get paid because so many people do base pay off titles. I do find is important is that you pay me for the job that I'm doing. I don't care what my title is. Those 2 men who left my prior team very quickly after they backfilled me. They both cared about the title a lot more and they were upset that their job duties had so much burden. Just for the record, the third guy, the direct backfill of me, he is also talking about quitting. He's only like 10 weeks in. At this point, I feel pretty proud that like everyone has jumped ship. I feel really bad for my remaining team, but it's the Titanic and I stayed on top of that Titanic for a really long time.

Hailey: Do you have any female leaders that you admire?

Ava: Yes. Unfortunately, it's not like in the public eye, if that makes sense. I don't know that I have a lot of trust for the publicity part of female leaders and people who are really going for they're in just very high level positions. I'm sure they're awesome. I don't know them day in and day out, and I think leadership is something where you can't just see a news article and be like wow that's a leader. You don't know. They could have a really good PR team. I really find the strongest leaders in my life in the form of, and I can't believe I'm saying this, my mother-in-law. The reason I can't believe it is because she has never held a job that's paid over \$19,000 or \$20,000 a year. The strongest leaders in my life are women who know that they have so much more potential than what they're allowed to have. They have experienced the glass ceiling and they honestly don't let it bother them too much. They keep going and they keep representing and they keep encouraging others and they keep mentoring. You have to kind of find the hidden gems in the in the rough. Those are the strongest leaders that I like to follow. I know that's really vague and it doesn't pinpoint anyone.

Hailey: How can women in the workplace make their mark?

Ava: I would say when you see biases and you see harassment, don't be silent. Don't be belligerent with things. Don't be silent. Go the right way of documenting things. Unfortunately, I have to say that. Also, stand up and mentor those around you so that they have a voice. There are so many times where at [REDACTED] our VP came from military background, like a military family. He was obsessed with certain things. He hired in people that were of similar nature. This one director I had was an absolute doofus, and I knew it. I was like I can't believe I'm reporting into him. I'm just going to do the things that I need to do. I know business needs, so I would do that. He's like why are you doing that? That is a waste of time. I'm going to share it anyway. Everyone said that was the most loved tool of the entire year. This is exactly what we needed. I

keep the path of doing the things that I know are right. Well, I wanted to apply for another position to get off his team because he was just an absolute airhead that was like sucking the life out. When you have managers who don't understand your potential, you don't reach your potential. Unfortunately, there's that cap and that glass ceiling. It doesn't have to be all the way at the top for just the top echelon. It's all the way along the ladder, so to speak. I said I need to get off this team. I'm applying for another position. I was 6 months pregnant. He told me multiple times that I cannot apply for that position because I'm pregnant. You literally can't say that to me. That's not okay. The irony of all of this is, that he would even try to say that the person who encouraged me to interview was the hiring manager. It was my old boss. My mentor. The woman who is now a senior vice president over all sales at [REDACTED]. She said I want you in this role and please apply for this position. I want you to interview and I think you're going to do great. Even though I did not get the position, mostly because I don't know where some dude had a really stellar resume and she hired him. I know that she hired him for the right reasons. I know that he was the right person. However, I was pissed that the manager I had currently kept telling me I couldn't do it. I went to HR. He called HR before I did and told her what he said to me. So, when I called HR I said I'm calling about him and she goes oh I know he's already told me all about it. You really just need to let him go and understand that he means well. I'm like are you kidding me right now? He was trying to lessen the blow on him by tattling on himself first. I've still never encountered anything like that to this day. He was an absolute idiot. I went to our VP and I said this is a problem like he keeps treating me this way in many different ways. It's very subtle. Some of it's pretty obvious. Can you just give me a different position on the team where I don't report it to him? I can do category and move me over there. He said oh well he means well. I'm like why does everyone say that? Why does everyone say that? In the end, it stunted my growth and I didn't want to be there anymore. So, I left the company. Now I had personal things come up about 6 months later. I told them that I have a timeline and I'm going to leave because there is not the right tools and resources and culture embedded in this team for me or my other coworkers to succeed. The whole reason I share this is because we have to stand up for the women around us too. The other women on that team had wanted to apply for other positions and felt like they told me I couldn't do it, so I didn't apply. I said you're the reason that I'm calling HR right now and telling them that it's not okay that he told me not to apply. I love you dearly, but you don't have the strength and the gut to go tell HR that this is wrong and this is happening. You should feel empowered in yourself to go apply for a job, and if you're not the right fit, you're not the right fit. That's okay. Don't let him make that decision for you. That VP that hired that person, that started that culture, he also told me the same things when I was a year out of college and I believed him. A year after that, I found out that he just wanted me on the team because I was a good asset. He didn't care about my progression, so it circles back to always look out for yourself. Always take the interview. Interviews could really be the most critical point for a glass ceiling. That's where you can get shut down really quick. If you get the job, then you have to start standing up for yourself and others, like in little ways along the way.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?

Ava: Don't only fixate your eyes on one leader or one person. [A professor from her attended university], I love her dearly, but she was not the person that I was looking for advice from when I was trying to decide on my career. The professors of specifically food marketing were just really loud voices. It's not that they were men. They were well connected and networked and I

felt that they can help me in some way. No, I stepped out of my comfort zone when I followed [that professor's] advice and it led me down a path that propelled me much faster to a place where I was happy. Again, it's not climbing the ladder in a specific way or getting a certain title. It's doing a job that fulfills you and that you really are challenged by or belong in. She saw that you should take an analytical position over a sales rep position. Those men probably would have encouraged me to go to [REDACTED] and they saw that they believed that sales rep positions were the most valuable. There's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with those professors encouraging someone to go that route. For me, it wasn't right for me. Having a collective group of people that you listen to, it's really important.

Hailey: Do you just have any final thoughts that we didn't get to that you'd like to share?

Ava: Hopefully you can follow my train of thought through all of that, or at least pull some stories. One more thing, age discrimination. When I started at [REDACTED], I was 21 when I left [REDACTED] and 3 weeks later started at [REDACTED]. I was by far the youngest person by about 7 or 8 years at the company. At least in national accounts, like any sort of exposure to corporate positions. I was very much so discriminated against as I went through my 8 years of [REDACTED]. It was a great company, but people are the ones that discriminate more than a company per se. Those biases are very subtle. Age discrimination is very subtle. I knew it was age discrimination because people would bring that up. They would literally say well you're only this old. Well, how old are you? Well, wait a minute. I was the youngest person in the company before you started. How did you get hired? How did you get a dream job at a supplier, like a supplier role is a dream job for someone who's in the back half of their career, how did you get here? Why do you deserve to be here? I was even told that I cheated on a pilot study. They thought I cheated on a pilot study. It was the first year that the category management association partnered with the category management knowledge group to build online modules to certify people through the CMA. I'm sure you're all familiar with it because this program is pretty closely tied to it, but it's like category management, analytics strategy, and category manager. That was just being piloted and built. I didn't know the team here had anything to do with it. I figured as much because it said CMA on it, but I didn't know. I was asked by [REDACTED] to add her to the pilot study. I complete the pretest. This is December of 2010, so I am 6 months into my job at this company. I'm 22 years old at this point. I took the pretest and I scored like 94% or 96% on the pretest which you're supposed to like flunk that. So, that you do better in the gap is what's measured. They called me. I pick up the phone and they're in a conference room with people saying well no one scored anywhere near that. You must have found something. You cheated basically without saying the word cheated. I said, with all due respect, word for word, that was my final exam at [REDACTED]. I had to prove and I had to show that even though I was the youngest, they should have known that fresh out of school from a category management perspective at a food marketing like I should be able to complete most of this stuff. I was doubted quite a bit. I had a couple people who loved working with me even though I was young. That's what they would say. Even though you're brand new and even though you're so young, you know so much. Well, I'm probably the first person on the team to say I don't know how to do this. Therefore, I absorb more and faster. So, it's always really important to ask questions. Always, always, always.

H: Thank you so much. This was this was great.

## Appendix L: Transcript #10

Hailey: What led you to pursue a career in the business marketing industry and what interested you about the field?

Sarah: Yeah, so growing up I was always a creative kid and always wanted to be involved in everything, such as after school activities. In high school, I got involved in a yearbook and then a specialized print production program. That opened up my eyes to applying creative thinking to a profession. For me, that was thinking like do I work in magazines and layouts. That got me to [REDACTED] for the advertising program in business because I didn't want to go just to like an art school. I didn't feel like that would give me enough level for a career. [REDACTED] opened my eyes. I did a print minor, so that is what got me excited about how I could apply creativity in a future life.

Hailey: Can you say where you attended college and what you studied?

Sarah: I went to [REDACTED] and I did an advertising major with a graphic and print science minor.

Hailey: Can you just briefly mention some roles and responsibilities that you've taken on during your professional career?

Sarah: A lot of what I have done in advertising is more of the production management and relationships. It's hard for me to explain to people, but it's a lot more people management than actually doing art, right. I work in between the account people, who deal with the clients and requests to put all the information together, and then the creative departments, who actually do the work. Whether it's a copywriter or director or anything else and doing that in between project management, so I've taken on a lot of tasks in terms of like timeline management and operations management and people management are like the main 3.

Hailey: Can you mention what your professional and personal goals are?

Sarah: I always wanted to do something to make a difference. I always saw marketing as how you communicate what people or companies want to do to help either better the world with their products or bring good experiences into the world. I mean it's hard when you work in [a big city] and a lot of the companies are consumer packaged goods. Some of them are better than others. I think a goal in the future is to work more with services or even like nonprofits to really get the word out there in terms of marketing for organizations that are trying to help in some cause or another.

Hailey: Can you provide your understanding of the term the glass ceiling?

Sarah: I think you get to a point where you've been told that you can advance and work hard and get anywhere in your position, but really there's that feeling, right. It's glass because you can see that there's other people above you, but there's hindrances for women to get there for one reason or another.

Hailey: How is your work-life balance and do you feel it's more challenging as a woman?

Sarah: I would say that my current company does try to balance work-life balance pretty well. I mean I'm still a single professional. I don't have a boyfriend or a family or anything. I think where it gets into the difference between like men and women is women always just rather get the thing done and stay late and make sure everything is prepared versus saying it can wait till tomorrow, right. I've seen this with me and people that I manage.

Hailey: Can you explain any subtle behaviors in the workplace that might be a result of stereotypical gender roles?

Sarah: I think some of the things that I deal with are with male coworkers who don't want to do some of the smaller tasks, like clean up tasks, right. They say oh well I gave you the information,



so now you put it where it belongs. It's very hard to have men coworkers do things and put them in the right place to do things versus women. I wonder if that's a mindset or that's just like one thing that I've noticed. They're like just give me a link to where I'm supposed to save that file and I'm like I've explained this to you 20,000 times.

Hailey: Does your current position require you to report to a male or a female?

Sarah: A female.

Hailey: Would you say your company and department is male or female dominated?

Sarah: It is female dominated. I'm actually transitioning departments right now, so both of them are more female dominated.

Hailey: Can you explain whether you believe business marketing as a whole is male or female dominated?

Sarah: That is a hard one. I honestly think it is going more female dominated. I think more of the creative roles as well as when you get briefs from like clients or businesses a lot of the times it's like for the busy mom. Even the biggest bosses in the biggest Fortune 500 and 100 companies know that females spend more money, whether or not they make it or not. It is a lot of the times like the Gen Z woman or the busy mom. It's just an easy go to, so then speaking to that person it's more advantageous sometimes to have a female perspective.

Hailey: Can you explain any gender bias challenges that you've personally faced in your industry?

Sarah: There have been times where I'm working with male coworkers in very close proximity to get things done and it's like you say that we're not going to get that in time so let's ask [a male coworker] to just make sure like the male has like the final say. In my current team, we have a lot of women in the team and I notice that when they get listened to you they definitely take on that more male personality like this is what we're going to do and there's no thinking about it and I made my decision. I think that's where I've noticed it the most.

Hailey: Can you recall a time when men and women have been treated differently in meetings or projects?

Sarah: I think it's usually the men that will manage the highest rank in client relationship or even like strategic directors more often are male. They're the ones that you're waiting on to walk into the room to start the meeting. They're the ones that start the meeting or have the final say. I don't know if it's just that men can carry on their careers and get to those higher levels versus women, but it's still something that I notice even with my current position in my company.

Hailey: Have you ever felt that you were underpaid in comparison to your male counterparts and if so could you provide specific examples of that?

Sarah: Absolutely, yes.

[REDACTED]. We were growing the department and hiring and interviewing a bunch of people and this male candidate put on his resume instead of an objective line he had this disclaimer that was a minimum \$100,000 and will not negotiate down. Well, that's more than you and I make, so if we hire him do we know that he's already going to be paid more than us or will he actually negotiate down. I don't know if I could ever put that on a resume in writing, so that's been interesting. There's also recently, within the same department, someone coming in and they were going to be a contract freelancer just helping us out for a little bit. Then we offered him a full time role and he was like no I want to higher title and negotiated getting a higher title instead of just being happy with a full time role. I don't know if that's just men are more ballsy to do those types of things, but it's

single time I've talked to a woman in my career we're more hesitant to do stuff like that and stand up for ourselves.

Hailey: What are some of the biggest challenges you've seen that women face in the workplace?

Sarah: I think it's being taken seriously. Whenever I've seen women in high roles, they take on that male persona of laying down the law and being firm. If there's ever something about your personality or as you get to know your coworkers, I've found that my male coworkers make fun of me, and it's all fun and games, right. When is it not fun and games anymore that they feel it's appropriate to pick on your personality traits and then put you down.

Hailey: What do you feel prevents women from securing leadership roles?

Sarah: I think it's a little bit of confidence, like being afraid to go after something. This has been proven in the last couple of years that men will apply for a job that they're like 30% qualified for and women will wait until they're like 80% qualified for the job description to actually apply. It's just that confidence and thinking that they can do something.

Hailey: In what ways have you experienced positive action in your company and do you know of any initiatives or policies that are in place?

Sarah: My current company, even though it's ran by 2 men, it's very much inclusive. We have 3 women on the C-Suite, so it's pretty balanced. For the head of department, there's 2 of 4, so that's balanced as well, male to female. We are focused on DEI hiring. Nowadays a lot of companies will want to see that you are more than 35% or 50% diverse company, and that includes women management.

Hailey: Have you seen improvements in diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and could you give some examples of that?

Sarah: For my current company, I work on a government client, so it has to be basically a consideration when we're hiring or bringing someone into our team that they have a diverse background and are representative of the whole United States. We have a big [REDACTED] brand that they wanted at least 50% of the team working on the business to be a minority race. I think it goes to understanding the market. Majority of the time we have to do not only English spots but also Spanish speaking spots. We don't want to just have them translated. It's a completely separate creative that speaks to that audience and may even have different pillars of what they will connect to.

Hailey: How do you feel organizations can create a better workplace for women?

Sarah: There's a lot of stuff that is already government mandated. I think another one is mental health days and having that rolled into your PTO. I mean I've seen it in my own company where somebody just needs to take a day or take an afternoon. My boss is definitely very helpful. She's like don't even take your day and I'll just mark it as you working on this project for me. I think just that camaraderie and honesty. In my company, the account department does it a little bit more and sometimes the operations department. Both are led by women and have that camaraderie and ladies that lunch where you can just have other connections.

Hailey: Do you know of any strategies that would be beneficial for that like mentorship programs or female groups?

Sarah: There have been some instances where I've seen mentorship, especially with DEI and bringing young women of color and like helping them get into the workplace. I know that there's a lot of new organizations that are coming out too. [There's a club] where you can schedule and talk with other people, like different departments or your dream companies. I feel like that's switching where it can be very digital and easier to outreach with people versus going to a happy hour after work and then that therefore is hindering depending on if women don't have a family

and kids. They aren't necessarily always going to be available to go to happy hour networking thing.

Hailey: Do you have any female leaders that you admire?

Sarah: There's a few in some other companies that I've been privy to. I think it's because they've offered themselves. I went to grad school as well, so during grad school I got exposed to a lot more people especially in the [REDACTED] East Coast area. While I was in that program, they provided opportunities for speakers to come almost every week. I guess the people that I do look up to were very open and either worked in a position or company that I admired or would like to work with a company similar to that eventually and have kept in touch. Specifically, there's one [REDACTED], but she worked for this awesome company that I admired and was pretty much a dream company in [REDACTED] and had a really good conversation with her after this meet and greet thing and she was like connect with me on LinkedIn and if you ever need anything hit me up. When I did actually live in [REDACTED] for a little bit, I end up having coffee with her twice and she was very open and honest. She said we're not looking for anybody at the time but let me connect you with this person and then that person got me a freelance job and then opened up my network. I think just them being open and available and having that resource. I still keep track of their posts on LinkedIn and try to interact with them.

Hailey: How can women in the workplace make their mark?

Sarah: I think it is really all about attitude and coming in not wanting to be like I'm here to be your boss. You need more of the listening and one-on-one, knowing that they can be your resource to people. When you are in group situations making sure you are speaking up for yourself and speaking up for your ideas and your opinions. Asking questions that maybe other people aren't thinking about. I think that's the best way to get yourself noticed is to ask the question and say have we been thinking about this and either it's like yeah we thought about it and no because of this. There have been so many instances where as a new person coming in, bringing up really good questions has gotten me noticed.

Hailey: What advice do you have for the next generation of females entering the business marketing industry?

Sarah: I think the most well looked upon female are there ones that do something right away when they're either asked or they said they're going to do it. Being prompt and being able to be someone that is reliable and can go to. Also, having that like work-life balance where there's a time to shut down your computer, but also establishing that with your coworkers or your peers. There may be days where you can tell them I'm going to be online later if you need anything, like I know you're working on this. That balance of being there for someone, but also keeping your own boundaries.

Hailey: Do you have any final thoughts that we didn't get to that you'd like to share?

Sarah: Stand up for yourself and don't do anything that you don't want to do if you're put in the pigeonhole. That was just recently something that I had to deal with and I know that my boss was coming from a place of wanting to make sure that everyone was happy and the situation got dissolved by switching our teams up a little bit. I told her I don't want to work on that project and I have personal reasons for why I don't want to work on them. She just pushed like see if you want to do it and learn about the team. I had to tell them 3 times that no this is not right for me. Just sticking up to your gut versus being put in a situation that isn't going to be good to you. I think a lot of like young people going into their career think it's a job and it's an experience, but if it's not something that aligns with what you want to be doing future in your life, then don't do

it. Someone's going to look at your resume and say you worked in this vertical, but you don't have any experience in my client, so why would I hire you. You're stuck in that other vertical if you say yes to something you don't want to do.