

LIFE IN FOCUS

PROFILE FEATURE ON TAMMY BOUCHER

By Tesni Freed

When asked how she would describe herself, Tammy Boucher shared that she is a people person who is dedicated to fairness and honesty. She has a strong sense of right and wrong, and her desire to care for others guides her personal passions and professional pursuits.

It would be easy to forget what someone is facing, but in every area of life, Tammy insists on putting others first. As she expounded during a phone interview, “For me, it’s just really about relationships... You run a successful business if you put yourself in the other person’s shoes.”

COMMITMENT TO CARING

Tammy’s level of compassion has endeared her to clientele on more than one occasion. She recalled a specific incident in which she was hesitant to pursue a story that involved a father whose son had just passed away. He said that he knew Tammy was the right person to talk with because of the level of concern that she showed when explaining her intentions.

She has no shortage of such stories from her nearly 25 years of experience in public relations and reporting within the state of New Hampshire. Tammy can tell each of these tales with a sense of joy and satisfaction, happy with where her work and her life choices have taken her.

She graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of New Hampshire with a Bachelor of Arts in English and Journalism. When she played a supervisory role, she also received a certificate in professional coaching to better communicate and “help others move in a positive direction.”

In fact, Tammy’s career centers on helping others find success. Her impressive resume boasts key positions at establishments in southern New Hampshire. She was a reporter for *Foster’s Daily Democrat* and *Union Leader* before becoming Account Executive at LTD Company. She went on to be Director of Public Relations at Daniel Webster College and held leadership positions at High Point Communications, ultimately becoming Account Director. She started her own business, Boucher Public Relations, in 2006.

A TURNING POINT

Tammy realizes that life could have been a lot different than it is today. She revealed that the president of High Point took a prominent corporate communications opportunity and wanted Tammy to come along.

“It was the job of all jobs!” she reflected. “If I could have written what I wanted to do, that would have been it. It was going to be great money, work that I really wanted to do. It had all the right pieces, except it meant traveling, extensive traveling.”

While on a business trip to Chicago, Tammy got a taste of what the position would entail. She said, “I literally thought to myself, *I can’t do this! This is not what I want my life to be.*”



Photo courtesy of Tammy Boucher

Her husband, Steve, was shocked when she returned home early, but he was not surprised when she decided against that occupation. Tammy teasingly suggested, “I think I want to start my own business,” to which he responded, “Okay, do it!”

She chuckled as she relived these events. “So that’s literally how I started my business: no business plan, no business knowledge, just a desire to do the work I liked and have the flexibility.” Tammy got her first client through a previous professional connection, and so her journey began. She chose to be with her family and invest in her community.

“And I’ve never looked back,” she said with conviction. “I mean, I really haven’t.”

THE BALANCING ACT

Working with people drove her to take this career path, but Tammy joked, “A bulk of my work is sitting in front of a computer.” She frequently finds herself writing speeches, press releases, strategic plans, and media pitches. She tries to tackle difficult tasks under pressure with seriousness and targeted attention.

Between her profession and her personal life, Tammy has her share of duties to manage and people to serve, especially as a caregiver for her children, Cheyenne, 16, and Cove, 11, and for her elderly parents. Her father sadly passed away in May 2013, but she continues to care for her mother. She sees it as the least she can do for parents who provided a “white picket fence upbringing” of structure and discipline, along with presence and love. Her parents are her inspiration, and she seeks to raise her children the same way.

All of this sacrifice has caught up with her, and Tammy now realizes the importance of making time for herself. She advised, “Even though you might be saying, ‘I have 50 things I need to get done in the next 10 minutes,’ taking even 2 minutes to walk around the house... brings the stress level down.”

Whether having that break from work during the day, relaxing with a good book at home on the weekends, or going out with her friends for a glass of wine, she cherishes relaxation. It took a lot for her to reach this insight. “When your natural personality is sort of that caregiving role,” Tammy explained, “it’s very hard to say — and it’s okay to say... ‘The project that’s not due tomorrow will still be there.’”

DR. OZ SHOW: CAREGIVER BURNOUT

A whirlwind journey with the Dr. Oz Show in November 2013 truly opened her eyes. Tammy thought the phone call from the show was a prank at first, and upon realizing the authenticity of the request for an interview, she was unsure if she should commit. She decided to pursue it for others to know that they are not alone as “the sandwich generation” of caregivers who support growing children and aging parents.

“There needs to be an understanding of what that means in support for caregivers,” she said. “I can’t even tell you how many comments I got from people that I didn’t even know that said, ‘Thank you for doing this story because this is my story.’”

There was a short turnaround time between Tammy’s story being pitched via an AARP campaign, her response to the call, an interview at her home, and her trip to New York City for the taping. She explained the advice that she received during the Dr. Oz Show as, “You have to find *me time*. You have to find a way to step away from the stress.”

Over the past year, she has been working hard to *not* be working so hard. She understands that taking better care of herself on every level allows her to take better care of others.

PERSONAL PRIORITIES

Tammy clings to the moments she has to herself and to the time she spends with family. For her, “family comes first.” She, Steve, Cheyenne, and Cove play sports together in the yard, hold movie marathons or mock debates in the house, and support each other in their activities, like cheerleading and baseball.

“I feel like our lives are just crazy,” Tammy said. “Everybody’s running so much that there’s not just that down time... If you don’t create it, [that time] isn’t there. It has to be a conscious effort.”

That is why she insists on consistent family check-ins, limited electronic use, and no technology at the table. She wants to preserve her home as “an environment where everyone is supportive of one another.” Tammy noted that, like anything, family life can be difficult, and it is crucial to think outside of oneself.

“People say, ‘Oh, it should be fifty-fifty,’” she stated. “My dad would always say, ‘No, it could be seventy-thirty at one point’... It’s being conscious of who maybe is going through a rough time at a given time, or who just has a lot on their plate and how can I help take some of that off that person’s plate.”

Such sacrifice has contributed to Tammy’s resilience, helping her through hard times while also bringing her great joy. Her family saw this level of support when they accompanied Tammy to visit her dad in the nursing home, an emotional tradition that was featured in the *Concord Monitor* days before his death.

Despite her worries about the children being at the nursing home and despite their busy schedules, she ensured that Steve, Cheyenne, and Cove, in order to emphasize the need for family and compassion. Tammy cherishes these memories, and she is grateful that her children learned valuable life lessons.

HER APPROACH TO WORK

Tammy particularly enjoys partnering with businesses and nonprofits that put people first and make a sizable difference. She explained that she wanted to serve clients who “were really impacting peoples’ lives on a daily basis.” She added, “You have to pay the bills, but I don’t think you can do your best work if you’re not picking clients that you really care about.”

Because she maintains a strong work ethic and a high standard for her efforts, Tammy is careful about how many clients she takes on at once. She said, “I [want to] give 150% to them, and it works where one client will be really busy and another won’t be quite so busy at that time.” She occasionally has to turn down offers to maintain her workflow and personal flexibility.

Her clientele is diverse and currently includes a senior center, a farm, a nonprofit, a chamber of commerce, and a couple of medical facilities. She believes that public relations has a host of applications because “if you know how to promote, you can promote anything.”

Tammy assures clients how hard she will work for them by saying, “I will be the person you’re working with... You know what you’re getting, and I will be here for you.” She is confident that this has been the secret to her success. “I didn’t pretend to be something I wasn’t, and I tried to be really reasonable.”

Helping clients achieve recognition is her favorite task. Tammy described a conversation with a client who recently won a business excellence award: “She came up to me and hugged me, saying ‘I can’t thank you enough for what you’ve done. I honestly didn’t believe in public relations work until I saw the types of things that you’ve been able to do for us...’ That gives me the satisfaction of why I do this work.”

BOUCHER PUBLIC RELATIONS

Tammy does not want her company to grow much more than it already has in eight years. Rather than taking on new employees, she prefers to work with a team of other specialists as opportunities arise. She has connections with marketing representatives, web designers, advertisers, and the like.

Whenever collaboration is necessary, Tammy is “a huge believer in doing what you do well and letting others do what they do well.” She thrives in situations that require teamwork, “where people value your expertise and want to hear what you have to say.”

She continued, “Open communication to me is really important, personally and professionally.”

Her clients always make the final decisions, but she finds “disheartening when you give someone the best advice you have, that’s built upon your years of experience, and they choose not to take that path.” Often she finds that issues arise when her role and the nature of public relations are misinterpreted. She said that it “can be extremely challenging when people don’t understand what it is you do or why you do it.”

ACHIEVEMENTS AND INVOLVEMENT

One of Tammy’s regular positions is overseeing the Leadership Program at the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce. Leadership Greater Manchester serves area businesspeople with valuable instruction and networking, something that aligns with Tammy’s belief in the importance of quality education. She is “responsible for the nuts and bolts of the entire program.”

All of her leadership and volunteerism, both past and present, reflects the same passion for education and social responsibility. While she is humble and likes to stay behind the scenes, Tammy has received notoriety for her skills in New Hampshire and beyond.

She has been asked to be a guest lecturer on multiple occasions and received numerous public relations awards. Notable recognitions include the Clarion and Bell Ringer Awards for Crisis Communications, the Sabre Award for Public Affairs in State/Local Government, and the Bronze Anvil Award of Commendation from the Public Relations Society of America.

Tammy’s latest honors came from *New Hampshire Business Review* by way of the 2007 Emerging Young Entrepreneur Award and the 2009 Business Excellence Award for Excellence in Media & Marketing. Her work influences executives, corporate initiatives, major brands, statewide policies, and public consumers.

WHO SHE IS AND WHAT SHE DOES

Ironically, Tammy never wanted to be an entrepreneur, and she still does not enjoy the business aspect of Boucher Public Relations. Most of her growth is through word of mouth, and she remains focused on meaningful connections with long-term clientele. Her relational approach has made her a successful business woman, a loving mother and wife, a compassionate daughter, and a community leader.

“At the end of the day, I’m not going to be the person who says, ‘Oh, I’m glad it says *president of the company* on my gravestone,” she remarked. “I hope that it says I was a good person... I enjoy my work. I don’t let my work define who I am.”