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## Women in Print and the Path to Empowerment

**Print is amazing in many ways, but one of the most impressive is its staying power. Great business empires have been brought to their knees by simple yet innovative changes, but print endures, even in the age of smartphones and social media. And as print progresses, so too must the face of the industry; print still needs to go further, particularly when it comes to making sure women are encouraged to embark on successful careers in the print industry and empowered to climb the leadership ladder.**

Empowerment begins with seeing yourself represented – that’s where organizations for women in print come in. These groups provide incredible opportunities for women in all stages of their careers, providing mentorship, networking, and the chance to be part of a community, sharing business strategy, leadership insights, as well as discussing challenges, successes, and goals with like-minded people.

### **Luckily, I’m not alone in this mission**

My organization, [Girls Who Print](#) was founded by [Mary Beth Smith](#) in 2009 as a LinkedIn Group. Since 2011, I have been helping empower the women of print with information, resources and open knowledge sharing with a focus on community building that has resulted in more than 6000 global members. I’m very proud of Girls Who Print and what it represents, especially to students who are entering the industry and can tap into this accessible, online resource for anything and everything print, marketing and sales related.

Luckily, I'm not alone in this mission – women in print around the globe are answering the call and stepping up to lead. I reached out to two phenomenal organizations and asked them about the work they do, and to share some advice.



### Women in Print UK

The most recent organization-putting women on the industry map is [Women in Print UK](#), founded by [Rosie Whitelock](#) of Bonacia Ltd. Rosie (see photo above, together with her husband Carl Whitelock, Production director, and David McGinlay, Sales Manager at Muller Martini United Kingdom) was born for a career in print, having grown up around the industry thanks to her family business. She feels “print chose her”, and believes she was always destined to lead Bonacia. Now, her fate also lies in empowering other women in the industry to make their mark.

Rosie explains: “We started Women in Print at the end of 2018 after the print awards season. After attending these events and reading industry publications, I noticed they were heavily male dominated. We wanted to start a group that would allow women in print to come together and support each other. We would love to see more women at print events and on the pages of publications. So far, we have held two networking events and presented the first ever [Women in Print UK Award](#) These events have brought women together, and we’re building the supportive network we’re striving for.”

Rosie’s belief in the abilities of her employees is a key facet of her leadership. She says: “I’m very laid back in my management style and like to give people as much autonomy as possible. This works really well with most but can be tricky for those who are not really self-motivated.” As the leader of an organization for women in print and advocate for the next generation of women in the industry, what advice would she offer her younger self? “It would be to believe in myself a bit more. Self-doubt has held me back over the years and I should have had a little more faith in my own abilities early on.”

### Women in Print Australia

On the opposite side of the earth, [Natalie Taylor](#), National Sales Director at IVE Group, heads up the New South Wales chapter of [Women in Print Australia](#). Natalie became involved with the Australian organization after being asked to serve on a panel at a Women in Print Australia event. Natalie says: “Being part of group that supports, encourages, and motivates women is just so rewarding. We meet once a year and map out our events, potential keynote speakers for the year, and we set a focus on topics that can help educate our members. It could be

building your personal brand, the art of conversation or negotiation, confidence, resilience – all things that can resonate to the audience. We are so lucky to have these events here and I am honoured to be part of it all.”

Like Rosie, Natalie feels chosen by print, and growing up print magazines were a personal passion that allowed her to „search, find, and dream“. From work experience at a local newspaper to an apprenticeship in graphic prepress, the rest is history – „I was hooked in the print industry and have never looked back!“

### **Women have more empathy in their approach to communication**

When it comes to leadership, Natalie believes women’s differing approaches to management is an advantage, explaining: “I think women have more empathy in their approach to communication. I am a good listener and have strong intuition and empathy. I let people talk and encourage them to share their views and opinions – I think it’s critical in teams to have a safe space to share. Trust is really important in my leadership style – that goes both ways, the team and I need to have a mutual trust, and if that is broken it’s really hard to get that back.”

If Natalie could go back and give her younger self some advice in regard to stepping up and standing out for career advancement, she says: “Say YES to yourself and make the opportunity happen for yourself vs waiting to be asked. I am big believer of making the opportunities you want to happen.”

### **The first step on the path to empowerment is just a click away**

As for my advice for my younger self it would be to take advantage of continuing education programs that were offered by advertising agencies when I first started working. Since it was right after college the last thing I wanted was to go back to school, but I believe it was a missed opportunity looking back now.

While there is some sound advice to take away from this article, more help is at hand if you seek it out. There are ready-made communities of female leaders and mentors online, ready to help you advance in your career, share ideas and knowledge, and provide a solution to challenges that have almost certainly been lived a thousand times by other women. The first step on the path to empowerment is just a click away.

Girls Who Print has partnered with [Printing Industries of America \(PIA\)](#) to create the Women’s Print Mentoring Network, which matches women in the printing and graphic communications industry with their peers as mentors or mentees. [Go to](#) to find out more and join.

*\*[Deborah Corn](#) is the Intergalactic Ambassador to The Printerverse, providing printspiration and resources to print and marketing professionals through her website, [PrintMediaCentr.com](#). She has 25+ years of experience working in advertising as a Print Producer and now works behind the scenes with printers, suppliers and industry organizations helping them create meaningful relationships with customers, and achieve success with their sales, social media and content marketing endeavors.*

Your

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