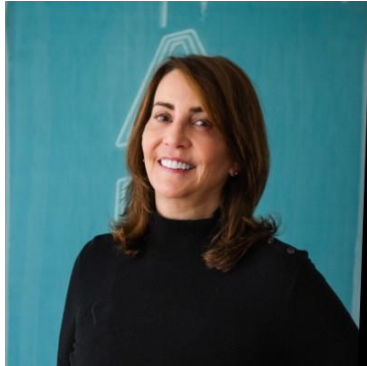


Power Profile: An Interview With a Woman Who's Changing the World of Promo

Lisa Bennett, Promo Veteran & Global Multi-Line Rep



Company Overview:

Company description: I work with suppliers in getting their products to market from both the U.S. and the EU. I work with industry suppliers to grow their sales in the industry. I am also the co-administrator for the largest social media group in the industry with over 16,000 members.

How long have you been in promo?

You could say that this industry is in my DNA. I was quite literally born into the promotional products business; my parents launched their distributorship from our family basement in Michigan when I was a baby. By the third grade, while other kids were learning long division, I already understood coded pricing, which frankly served me better than long division. As the business scaled and graduated out of our basement, I stayed on, mastering the glamorous entry-level jobs of packing boxes and sorting the recycling.

My formal career began post-college as a sales representative for A.T. Cross. After I rose through the ranks and moved to Chicago, the entrepreneurial itch took over, and I transitioned into an independent multi-line rep. I still live in Chicago and, in addition to running a small business, I am still responsible for the recycling.

Who are your industry role models?

I have been incredibly fortunate to have the mentorship of some of the sharpest minds in the business. Early on, Lou Weisbach, the legendary founder of HALO, was instrumental in helping me build the strategic blueprint to launch my own business. Later in my career, Trina Bicknell, chief revenue officer at HPG, became a vital

touchstone. She continuously offers the kind of high-level leadership, career acuity, and sharp motivation that keeps me aligned and forward-thinking.

How do you define success?

Success is the luxury of waking up every day to a job you genuinely love doing. Every industry has its friction points, but ours is uniquely populated by brilliant, creative, deeply entrepreneurial people who are passionate about their work.

I also make no apologies for being motivated by financial reward. The promotional products industry is one of the few career choices where direct effort correlates to financial growth. Monetizing your hard work isn't just a byproduct of success; it's the scoreboard.

How do you stay motivated and continue to grow?

I am inherently driven by the next challenge. New opportunities are my fuel. If you ask my peers, they will tell you that networking is my superpower. I have never shied away from a cold call or an introduction, because I view every stranger as a future client or partner. Growth happens at the edge of your comfort zone, and I am comfortable there.

What do you see as the biggest challenges and opportunities for women in the industry?

The beauty of this industry is its low barrier to entry and high ceiling for financial independence. If you can sell, you can thrive, regardless of who you are.

However, the glass ceiling shifts the higher you look. The most pressing challenge is the stark lack of female representation at the board level and within executive C-suites. The talent pool is overflowing; the next step is ensuring qualified women aren't just in the room, but actually seated at the decision-making table.

What advice would you give women entering this industry?

First, find your circle. Surround yourself with people who challenge you, teach you, and demand excellence from you.

Second, practice strategic patience. This is a relationship-driven industry, and relationships do not happen overnight. You have to front-load the effort long before you see the revenue.

Finally, become tech fluent. Don't just adapt to new technology – master it. If you become the resident expert on the latest digital advancements, you make yourself indispensable.

What inspires you outside of work?

I find inspiration in the people who keep me grounded and sharp: my family, my close circle of friends, and the exceptional colleagues I am fortunate enough to work with daily.

What is your personal motto?

“Work with confidence, purpose, and a healthy sense of humor.”

What would you tell your younger self?

Channel your energy into execution, not anxiety. If you keep your head down and outwork the room, the success will follow. Ignore the noise, ignore what the competition is doing, and just keep moving forward.