

# Carole Bowen

## Destiny Calls

*With 15 years on the CRB Board of Directors, few people have done more toward the success of CRS than Carole Bowen. Her influence stretches far beyond that, however. Bowen's 30-plus years with WKIS/Miami produced a veteran seller, sales manager and general manager. Her career began almost by chance when she traded the occupation for which she'd trained for a career that ended up being a lot more fun.*

**My entry into radio was very much happenstance.** I went to William and Mary for accounting. I didn't like it a lot when I was studying it, but when I got out into the real world and found myself counting the contents of meat lockers and things like that, I realized it was absolutely not for me and started looking for something that allowed me to be more creative. I was at a boat show in South Florida and started chatting with someone at a radio station's booth. He happened to be the sales manager and told me they were looking for someone. He put me together with Dan Halyburton, who was then PD of WQAM-AM/Miami. I interviewed and got my first job in radio promotions. I didn't grow up thinking I was going to be in radio, but it seemed fun and interesting. And it certainly was *not* accounting.

**I caught the bug** and almost immediately enjoyed it, but there was a woman in the sales department who took me to lunch one day. She said, "Carole, you really need to start thinking about going into sales." There weren't a lot of women in radio sales at the time, but she said it was so great. "It's fun, you make all kinds of money and you just need to try it," she said. I started thinking along those lines and made that my next step. As soon as I did that I knew I was right where I needed to be.

**My first sale may have been** a country nightclub. It was called Club Dallas and the operators were notoriously tough. I'd gone over a couple of times and had them slam the door on me. The third or fourth time they let me in. I finally sold them and it was my first big success. I felt like I'd broken through.

**The best sales high is when** you have a vision of what will work for a client and you're able to introduce it, get their attention and convince them your vision is worth investing in. When you know you've sold them the right thing and are excited about executing it. There are highs when you get a big deal and it comes from nowhere, but nothing beats knowing you can move the needle for somebody, having them believe and buy into it.

**The personality trait that has served** me best is my curiosity. I'm very interested in learning about businesses, industries and people that I don't know anything about. And I've always loved learning about other peoples' jobs, workflow and companies. Because I was truly interested in what others were doing, I was able to understand what they needed and could become their advocate or consultant. I know that sounds like Sales 101 stuff, but I've always been that way, which is why I enjoyed the job so much. Learning so many different things kept me very interested.

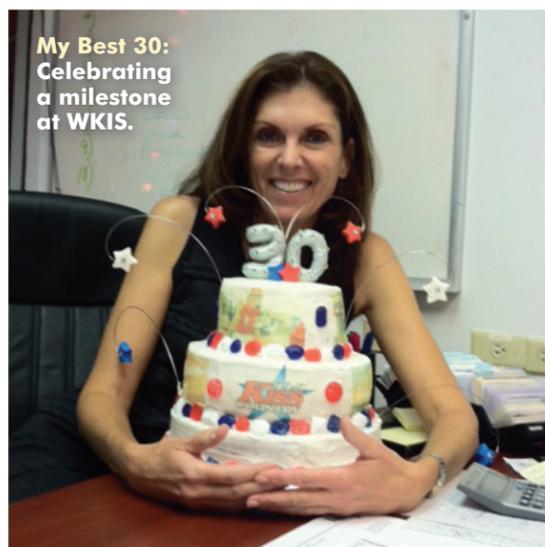
**When I first went into management,** I wasn't sure I was going to enjoy it. You're one step removed from the high of the sale; it's not yours anymore, but your teammate's. They make the sale. I wondered if I was going to get that really pumped-up feeling, but I learned that you really get it in multiples because there are so many on the team. And you're guiding, helping, coaching and mentoring. So the rewards are actually much greater than when you were doing it yourself. I also enjoyed developing teams and they taught me a lot along the way. And not just the more experienced ones, but the young ones. Millennials have taught me a ton. I would observe them texting, for example. At first I assumed they were just texting their buddies, but then I realized they were actually texting people who can move the needle! I learned how to use social media from them. They keep you current and relatable, which has been a great joy. And I love watching the young ones grow. So I give to them and they give back to me.

**My first job in managing a team** came in 1996. [WKIS] was acquired by Beasley and after a six-month or so evaluation period, they gave me the opportunity to become GSM. Years later I became GM, which gave me a much more



holistic view of the entire operation. Prior to that I had just collaborated with programming, but wasn't deeply involved in it. I learned a lot about how PDs operate and it gave me a broader depth of knowledge. I had the opportunity to interview some real top-tier candidates and hire a PD.

**I count Dan Halyburton as a mentor.** He's at the top of the list and someone who I'm still friendly with and admire. I still consult with him about career decisions and so forth. He's very smart and I love his analytical ability.



Another is Dale Donahue, who was GM when I became GSM. I was a little nervous when I got the job; concerned about making mistakes. I was constantly going to him and asking, "Is this okay?" and "Can I do this?" He finally said, "Listen, I put you in there for a reason. You don't have to ask me about everything. I trust you're going to do the right thing. And if you don't, I'll redirect you. Just go out and do it." I took that and applied it to the people I was managing and it's been a really good way to work. I also learned a lot from Bob McKay, who was PD for [WKIS]. The Beasleys – just generally the family management team – are also in that group. The people on the CRB

Board have been just as important. I've soaked in an awful lot from just being in the same room. I've been lucky to work with a lot of good people.

**Country music and radio** have been so exceptionally great for so long. The nature and history of the music and the way the industry operates has created a fan base that's very loyal and very marketable. It's a very desirable audience and one that responds and is loyal to advertisers, which is something that other formats do not have to a great degree. And there's a level of collaboration and fellowship among Country radio broadcasters that does not exist in any other format. The CRB and CRS are very indicative of that and you don't find the level of camaraderie, sharing and rooting for each other elsewhere. I don't know why it's like that, but it is and I'm grateful for it. It makes the experience of working in Country radio that much more wonderful.

**It's incredibly important for those coming up** in the industry – in any industry, really – to study constantly. By that I mean staying up to date with your market's business happenings, your networking and the industry as a whole. And success will follow if you're in it for the right reasons. If your heart's in it and you really love what you're doing, you will be successful.

**I'm now the Director of Corporate Partnerships** for the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in Miami. The skillset I developed in radio translated very well. I feel like if you can make it in radio, you can pretty much make it anywhere! Radio is tough, very competitive and very grueling, especially now. Our offerings are Broadway plays, ballet, opera and the symphony. It's different, but a lot of the same principles hold true.

**I was extremely moved by this award.** It's hard to describe, but I was very, very touched when I found out. I was extremely surprised and didn't really feel worthy. There are so many amazingly talented people who have contributed to the CRB and I have always considered it a privilege to sit in the same room with them. I'm not blowing smoke; I really mean that. I can almost get emotional about it. I've never been one to seek out accolades; I'm really more of an in-the-background kind of person, so it threw me for a loop. When you have people that you admire a lot and they honor you in this way, it's pretty overwhelming.

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