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Influential Women

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SPRINT CENTER'S
TINNEN MAKES DREAMS
COME TRUE | **P. 36** |

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LESSONS LEARNED LIVING THE SPIRIT

INTERVIEWED BY BETSY LEE FRYE
PHOTO BY SUSAN MCSPADDEN

Brenda Timmen grew up in the box office.

Her mother, a ticketing agent, often took young Brenda to work with her. And thus her destiny was sealed.

From her early days spent working part time in the Kemper Arena ticketing office to her latest position as general manager at the Sprint Center, Timmen says she never once thought of doing anything else. Her career has taken her around the country, from Kansas City to Minneapolis and Los Angeles. Upon leaving Kansas City, Timmen went on what she describes as an 18-year road trip, during which she served as vice president of event and guest service at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. She was hired in 2006 to manage the Sprint Center.

Kansas City is home, she says. And she couldn't be happier to be back.

Timmen shares some lessons learned about...

COMING HOME

It was so hard for me to leave Kansas City in 1988. I really left with a heavy heart to go help launch the Timberwolves [professional basketball team] in Minnesota. I always said that at some point I'd come back to Kansas City. I love everything about Kansas City. I even love that it's 60 degrees one day and freezing the next. And to be able to come back after that 18-year road trip [while] Kansas City [was] revitalizing their downtown was the best thing ever. The Sprint Center is a huge part of that revitalization. It encourages people to spend time downtown.

BALANCING CAREER AND FAMILY

Some people ask me how I balance all of it. And I say it is a juggling act. It's juggling and never letting either one, family life or business life, hit the ground. In this industry we know no weekends, we know no holidays. So I'm always telling anyone who wants to get involved in this industry that it's more of a lifestyle than a career. To get involved you need to have that mindset.

THE CHALLENGES OF MANAGING THE SPRINT CENTER

It takes a lot of people to make the Sprint Center go—that's the big challenge. Tonight, for example, we have Neil Diamond. We know that tonight is all about Neil Diamond. But we want to make it special for people from the time they park their car to the time they get their soda [and] to the time they take their seat. It all reflects the same experience—their Sprint Center moment. They're coming for 100 different reasons. It could be their birthday, or maybe they are getting engaged. It could be the moment of a lifetime for them. And we at the Sprint Center are all a subliminal part of that moment. We have 700 people working here who are all very dedicated. The challenge is to get them all on the same page.

ENTERTAINMENT AND THE ECONOMY

I think the entertainment industry cannot be measured on the global economy scale. I mean, yes, our events are [fueled by] discretionary income, but I really do believe that entertainment and sporting events allow people time to check out, to get away from everything else.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

My advice would be to live the spirit of what you want to do and what makes you and your family happy. You don't have to choose between your family and your career. You can have it all. I wish I had the magic words to say, "this is how you do it." I think every woman has to figure that out for herself. But I encourage women to go for what they want. **CEO**

Working in the entertainment business means you are the busiest when almost everyone else is relaxing. So if you want to make a living in this business, you have to accept the job as a lifestyle and not just a career. That takes a mindset adjustment for many people. But that's the best way to make the job work.

