

## WORK EXPERIENCE KYLE DAVIS

# 'You build it and I'll do the talking'

Kyle Davis, partner and co-founder at Arizona-based aerospace marketing agency BDN, reveals how her desire to work in aviation goes back to childhood and why being a woman in a male-dominated industry has helped her

## What drew you to aviation?

I think the seed was planted early on. I vividly remember the thrill of my first flight. I was five years old and decided then to become a flight attendant. Ultimately that was not the path I chose, but in many ways I stayed on course because today my work connects me with aircraft every day. And it's exciting. I've been involved in projects ranging from a helicopter fly-in during Super Bowl XXX, to a Hollywood movie premiere, to flying with the US Border Patrol. It's been a dream come true to be part of classified aircraft development projects, to witness first flights and to have a front row seat on history in the making. I have had so many great experiences but I feel like I'm just getting started.

## Tell us about your career to date

I am a born communicator who wrote stories as a child, earned a degree in journalism as a young adult, and became a newspaper reporter at 24. I was an editor at McDonnell Douglas before I turned 30 and spent 12 years writing for marketing and PR purposes, working with a team that won international, company and corporate awards. In 1999, I co-founded BDN Aerospace Marketing and our first client was MD Helicopters. Today we are a recognised leader in aviation communications, representing a range of large and small defence and commercial companies. As an entrepreneur and a female businessperson in a



Davis co-founded BDN in 1999 with MD Helicopters as its first client

male-dominated industry, I'm proud to say that I have helped elevate the quality of communications in the industry.

## What has been your most challenging role to date, and why?

In addition to being a working mum, my most challenging role has been as a marketing professional in an industry where quality communication is not always a top priority. Engineering is everything. So we spend billions developing innovative, game-changing products, then promote them as an afterthought. This is still rampant in the industry, though it is getting better. This is such an exciting industry, but we don't always promote it in ways that capture that excitement. For the past 15 years,

**"This industry spends billions on developing innovative, game-changing products then promotes them as an afterthought"**

we've worked to show the world that engineering great products is not enough. They have to be marketed with the same level of care, creativity and professionalism. "If you build it, they will come," is a myth.

## What has been the highlight of your career?

I'm not sure I have had it yet – but there have been moments when I thought it couldn't get

any better. As a journalist, attending a White House correspondents' dinner held special meaning, and naming innovative products and technologies like the Sikorsky S-97 Raider and SB-1 Defiant have been points of pride for our team. Every creative breakthrough or "Aha!" moment keeps us energised and is always incredibly exciting. But I think my relationships with colleagues and other people in this industry have been the most satisfying and enduring – it's like a second family.

## What do the next 12 months hold for BDN?

We want to continue trailblazing. We were one of the very first to specialise exclusively in aerospace marketing – now others are following suit. Today, unprecedented access to new technologies, media, channels and data have fundamentally changed B2B marketing, and we are early adopters of these new techniques that give our clients targeted and measurable marketing. The next 12 months promise to be exciting and challenging, filled with a level of change and growth that I simply could not have foreseen a decade ago. ■



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