

Didi Discar



"It Can Be Done"

— *Carling Communications' Mantra*

Birthplace: Long Beach, California

Marital Status: Married

Children: Mikaela

Occupation: Principal/CEO, Carling Communications

Years in Industry: 20+

College: University of Southern California

Who is your mentor and how did he or she impact you?

My father, Santos Discar – Sanny. The results of his influence are that I always try to choose the most righteous thing, even if it doesn't benefit me. On top of that, he taught me how to depend on myself yet recognize when I need the help of others. My father taught me to appreciate all that I have.

What is the biggest obstacle you have overcome?

Misperception. When I was starting out in the pharma industry as a young woman, I knew there would be a perception of me as soft or clueless that I would have to fight against. Even today, I have to fight against being taken lightly. On the flip side of that, now that Carling is established and successful, I have to ensure my employees are not just trying to appease me as the scary boss, but are acting in the best interest of the company. So I'm constantly having to push through these shifting misperceptions.

How do you stay fit?

Running. I'm not the greatest in the world, but I'm disciplined. Running helps to give me a psychological cadence and is a great stress reliever. It also has given me wonderful friendships outside of the pharmaceutical industry, which helps remind me that I also have a life outside of my career.

What is your favorite quote?

"Never ascribe to malice something that can be explained by stupidity." A client recently shared that quote with me, and it stuck. Women in business get a lot of boneheaded comments. You have to understand not to take those things personally. The people saying those things aren't mean or sexist; they're ignorant. Don't be a victim; laugh it off. You have the upper hand now because they've revealed their ignorance.

With this knowledge, you can feel fortified in your position and discern between real adversity and simple pettiness.

How did you get started in the industry?

I was working on a master's in biomed and having an awful lab day. A friend who had just finished grad school and was working as a pharma sales rep came for a visit. She seemed fabulous – nice clothes, company car. And I thought, "Well, if that's what I'm going to end up doing, I might as well get started." I put in a resume at Wyeth-Ayerst. They received more than 1,000 resumes for the three positions they had open in Southern California. My background as a biomed student made me stand out from the pack, so I was able to land my first pharma job.

What three adjectives best describe you?

Persistent, joyous, grateful.

Favorite movie?

The Shawshank Redemption.

Who are your personal heroes?

My parents. They came over as immigrants from a third-world country – individually – knowing no one and having nothing to their names. From that, they were able to find each other, get married, and raise four children. They gave us a life where we did not want for anything, and they instilled in us the value of hard work and patience.

What are your goals?

I want to pass on my legacy. I want to be an example of what you can achieve in the world – to my daughter, to my family, to my colleagues. I want to be proof positive that it can be done. Our lives do not have to be either/or. We can have success in anything and everything that we put our minds to.

What is the best part of your job?

Getting to work with the people at Carling Communications. We've gathered more than 80 talented individuals – and counting – into a single culture, and we've created a place where humanity comes first. People do good work, are satisfied in their jobs, and generally enjoy working with each other.

What one little thing always makes you happy?

The quiet, generous gestures people make when no one else is looking.

What was the best present you ever received?

A grand piano. It was from my dad. I came home from school, and Dad said, "Put down your bag, and put on your shoes." He took me to a piano showroom and had me pick out my favorite. It's at my mom's house to this day.

Didi Discar is Principal and CEO of Carling Communications, 2550 Fifth Avenue, Suite #150, San Diego, CA 92103. She can be reached at 619-269-3000 or Hello@carlingcom.com.