

# POWER PLAYER

**Local PR maven Pamela Raymond on starting her own business, planning posh events and attaining success in St. Louis.**

Interviewed by Cristy Miller

Photo by Jonathan Hanson

**CM:** How did you get your start in the PR business?

**PR:** My first experience in PR was doing industry public relations for a company that sold vacuums and sewing machines—it targeted trade publications but it gave me experience in the PR world. Then in 2004 I joined an organization called POW (Professional Organization of Women)—a nonprofit organization geared toward the empowerment of African-American professional women—and began working on their communications committee where I put together information to promote events and for news outlets.

**CM:** And now you have your own full-service firm, The Raymond Experience. Did you always plan on getting into PR?

**PR:** I originally went to school for business and got my MBA [at Maryville University], but I wasn't really sure what I was going to do with it. I fell into writing for a bit and thought I would be a writer, but after I did event planning with POW, people started asking me to do events and suddenly all these different avenues started to appear.

**CM:** What has been your proudest moment along the way?

**PR:** Getting my undergraduate degree. I failed out of Loyola University—twice. It wasn't that I wasn't able to do the work; I partied a lot—I was too young and wasn't focused. And when I decided to go back to college and finish my degree, graduating cum laude I might add, it was something that was very important to me.

**CM:** And now you throw some of the big events around town. What was the first event that made you think, “I should do this for a living?”

**PR:** Actually, there wasn't one event—what clicked for me was that I wanted to use my MBA in a way that my current company was not structured to accommodate. My first client was *Sauce* magazine, planning their “Sauce in the City” event in 2005, and after that, I got involved with Venus Envy and planned its 2006 Art Exhibition. In August of last year, I picked up Silverstone Communities-Midwest, a residential developer based out of Chicago, and Development Midwest, that's doing BLU CitySpaces downtown. She also works with Mambo Development, Bruce Development, West End Lofts and previously, The Syndicate and Park Pacific.

**CM:** Your company has grown so much over the last two years—what's your prime focus now?

**PR:** I recently created a division called The Raymond Experience that will offer services like leading focus groups and consulting from a branding and marketing perspective. The Raymond Experience is a niche firm that provides a high level of service to a targeted clientele



“I DEFINE SUCCESS AS CONSISTENCY... AND I'M SET ON BEING CONSISTENT FOR A VERY LONG TIME.”

list and allows me to use my background in consumer behavior to help my clients on how to approach consumers more effectively.

**CM:** What's your secret to business success?

**PR:** I define success as consistency. Consistency is putting out a good product with a stellar level of service, and that's what people remember. And I'm set on being consistent for a very long time.

*Pamela Raymond is the Principal of The Raymond Experience, a niche firm that specializes in public relations, event management, marketing, brand management concepts and focus group strategies (The Raymond Experience is a division of parent company Raymond Creative, LLC.). A native of New Orleans, Louisiana, Pamela serves as a board member for Caring For Kids, a non-profit that meets urgent needs of children and families in the family court system of St. Louis County and formerly served as a board member for Venus Envy. Her clients include Salon Priva, Masulla boutique, Mambo Development, InSight St. Louis and St. Louis Artworks. To learn more about The Raymond Experience, go to raymondexperience.com. Photograph taken at West End Lofts (4100 Forest Park Ave., Central West End, westendlofts.com)*