



The Daily Brief Podcast: Vivi Zigler Looks Back on Four-Decade Career

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“Over the course of a four-decade career in television, entertainment and media, Vivi Zigler has made a point to wear a lot of hats. In fact, you could say that’s her thing.

"I don't think I set out consciously to say I'd like to do six things at once but I do tend to get bored easily," said Endemol Shine North America's president of digital, brand and audience development on the eve of her retirement. "Playing any one of the instruments is one thing but making sure all the instruments play together is far more complex. I find that connective tissue, those parts that overlap, the cross pollination, more important now than they've ever been. That's when you can completely affect something."

She learned that lesson early, having gotten her professional start as the afternoon news director at KVEC-AM San Luis Obispo when she was just 20 years old and a new graduate of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. The college required its students to do 240 hours of an internship in their chosen field of study before they could graduate. Zigler managed to convert those hours of free labor into her career.

She also learned early to talk to everyone she could to pick up new information

she could incorporate into her professional arsenal. While working at KVEC, she would be out in the field covering stories as a reporter and she would often find herself working with the news director of the local TV station, who also reported stories.

"He would say why don't you come over and learn how to shoot, learn how to edit," Zigler says. "I quickly became very enamored with production and loved it."

Her radio career morphed into a TV career, and before long, she was named station manager of the local NBC affiliate. From there, she made the jump from market 113 to 13, moving to Seattle to head marketing and advertising at KING.

"The concept of doing multiple things and growing within a company was such a fortunate position for me to have been in but then it was time for me to do something different."

While at KING, she sat on a committee of NBC affiliate marketers who offered feedback to the network on its various shows and products. That put her in touch with John Miller and Vince Manzi, who were then running the NBC Agency, and they ended up bringing her on board.

"When they were expanding their affiliate advertising group, I got a call from the network and I couldn't say yes fast enough," she said, jumping on the chance to move back to Los Angeles and be closer to home.

Over a 19-year career at NBC, she did everything from affiliate marketing, to network marketing, to helping with the launch of cable network Bravo to overseeing scripted programming. In 2006, she was given oversight of a new division called NBCUniversal Digital Entertainment.

"There was a lot of trial and error, a lot of literal technical testing. It was a very iterative process - taking everything you knew and combining it in new ways. It was fun, exhausting and exhilarating."

In 2012, she moved over to Endemol Shine to serve as president, Shine 360° and digital. In March 2015, that title changed to her current one. Over the past year and a half, she has spent most of her time developing and launching new syndicated magazine Page Six TV in concert with 21st Century Fox, the New York Post and Twentieth Television. In that role, she's been able to draw on all of the experience she's gleaned over her entire career to turn the show into a multiplatform play.

"I do have a gut for television stations having worked on that side for 16 years but I also know enough to know that things change," she says. "Don't just make what you think [TV stations] want, ask them. It so pays off, if you give them what you need when they need it. That dialogue, although it's very time consuming, is priceless in terms of understanding and honing what they want and what they

will use."

In this interview with PromaxBDA Editorial Director Paige Albinak, Zigler talks about her 40-plus year career in television and media, tells lots of stories about launching series such as ER, The West Wing and Queer Eye for the Straight Guy, and offers valuable advice on career-building.

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