



Nancy Gendimenico

## The Transition Network

### New York, New York

*“I don’t think I could have imagined how my corporate experience could add value to a nonprofit in my early 30s.”*

I spent my 35-year career in retailing, brand licensing and marketing of apparel and various consumer goods. I was always a builder—initiating a spinoff business in the children’s division at Bloomingdales, to extending global brands such as Hanes and Champion into other product categories while at Hanesbrands. Throughout my business career, I focused on delivering results: sales, market share and profitable income. Planning happened years ahead of product launches and understanding consumer behavior was vital to success. Though lead times were long, we also had changing strategies and tight deadlines to get the right goods to market.

About six months before I left Hanes, I went to an event at Pace University. A panel of former corporate executives talked about their non-profit work and the amazing things they were doing in their communities. Some had been Encore Fellows. I found it inspiring and decided to look into Encore Fellowships. As I awaited the right fellowship match, I also worked on a graduate degree in creative writing (which I’d begun while still in my Hanes job) and started a consulting practice. Then in 2016, I was introduced to The Transition Network.

The Transition Network (TTN) supports women over 50 years old in transition. We help women explore what’s next. They may be leaving professional careers and considering another job, entrepreneurship, or

volunteering for a worthy cause. Change is external, it happens throughout our lives, whether it's work related, involves our health, family or relationships. But transition is internal and happens over time, perhaps not always in line with a plan. TTN provides the support, connections and resources to over 2400 members in 13 chapters across the country.

What interested me was the organization's mission and the opportunity for growth, given the demographics of an aging population. I learned about the structure, the chapter model, and what was needed by the chapters. I brought my operations and marketing skills and worked closely with the Executive Director on determining where I could best add value, and targeted chapter growth and increasing awareness for TTN. I met various members, chapter leaders, and board members and saw firsthand the work and time our mostly volunteer organization has put into TTN.

I've developed a content strategy for our Facebook pages, Twitter and Linked In, and have trained our chapter leaders on the use of Facebook, the platform most used by our members and age cohort. This powerful medium, along with our website, keeps members updated on TTN activities throughout all 13 chapters and our national membership.

I also got involved in building our Chicago chapter. This included developing two Chicago events, from securing speakers, to finding a venue, to promoting the events in the Chicago community. We now have a strong volunteer committee, some who are experts in the aging field, and are closer to finding the right leader. My other projects included advising the ED and board of directors on the latest advocacy and lobbying rules for non-profits, based on attending several webinars and programs. We recently kicked off our 2017 Annual Appeal and I'm excited to be involved in creating the campaign. I get to use my writing skills daily for social media and the website, and recently interviewed and wrote an author profile of a member.

The scale was the biggest difference coming from a \$5+ billion company to a much smaller organization where I am one of three staffers. Another is the organizational governance and non-profits' focus on mission versus profit. I've also learned to slow down and be more patient, from constantly moving in the business world at 190 miles per hour, to a less accelerated pace of decision-making in the nonprofit world.

The Encore Fellowship has been very gratifying. I've brought many skills I've developed over 35 years to TTN, and I'm glad to contribute in my current role. I don't think I could have imagined how my corporate experience could add value to a nonprofit in my early 30s.

I've enjoyed meeting the other Encore Fellows and we are still in touch. The Encore webinars and town halls have provided relevant information for the work I am doing every day. I'm grateful for the learning, networking opportunities, and the ability to contribute in the social impact space.

I also enjoy working part time so I can pursue my other passions such as writing, as well as volunteering as an advisory board member at Indigo Africa, which empowers women artisans in Ghana and Rwanda. Since my fellowship ended in June, I have stayed on part-time in Marketing and Operations and I'm glad to continue the mission of The Transition Network.