

# Member Profile

## An Interview with WCD Member Dr. Joyce Roché

By Judy Macdonald



**Dr. Joyce Roché** has been a pioneer in corporate America, as well as in the boardroom. As the former CEO of Girls, Inc., a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to inspire girls to be strong, smart and bold, Joyce created programs that provided a valuable

foundation for future personal and professional growth for young women. Joyce's earlier career included senior executive roles at Carson Products Company and Avon. Her current boards include: AT&T, Macy's, and Tupperware Brands Corp.

**Q1.** Your career path began with several marketing roles at Avon, Revlon and Carson, Inc. which progressed to the role of President at Carson in 1996. Tell me how that background has helped you as a board member.

*I believe that having board members with different backgrounds and experiences significantly improves board deliberations and leads to better conclusions. Therefore my experience in Marketing (understanding consumer dynamics and issues like branding) and my operating experience of running large businesses and having overall operating responsibility for a company has helped me to be a fully contributing member of the board and hopefully add a different perspective to the dialogue.*

**Q2.** Your first independent board seat was in 1997 at Southern New England Telecommunications Corp. Can you describe the journey you took to achieve that position?

*I of course was interested in becoming a corporate board member, but I can't say that I had a defined*

*plan to make it happen. I think the most important thing for me was to make a name for myself in my field of consumer marketing and therefore get on the radar screen of search firms and companies.*

*Initially I had an inquiry from a search firm for a board position for a consumer products company about a year before the approach for the Southern New England Telecommunication board opportunity. I didn't get that board position, but a year later I was approached by another search firm about the SNET board. I was very interested in this board because telecommunications was an industry I had become fascinated with when I left Avon and in fact almost secured a senior position at another telecom company. Telecom was an industry that was going through great change after the breakup of the Bell system and individual telecom companies were now faced with competing for consumers, so marketing was very important and I thought it would be fantastic to get into the industry at this stage.*

**Q3.** Currently, you serve on the boards of AT&T, Macy's, and Tupperware Brands, and have formerly served Dr. Pepper Snapple, Anheuser-Busch and May Department Stores, all consumer products companies. What is your opinion on the impact of disruptive technologies and new business models on consumer brands and how are your various companies approaching such dynamic changes?

*Every industry is being disrupted and none more than those in consumer products. AT&T is far from the telecom company I joined in 1997. It is now a communications company and soon will be a media, telecom and entertainment company. I believe the disruption began with the smart phone and the iPhone was the leader in that revolution. All of a sudden consumers were able to access data and entertainment wherever they were. This has led to more and more devices and the convergence of communications and technology. I am happy to say AT&T was the first company to bring the iPhone to*

market and has been on the leading edge of this revolution.

*At Tupperware, where the majority of our business is outside the US, we have seen the pace of change on a global basis staggering. Direct marketers used to have a long first mover advantage in developing countries but globalization has dramatically shortened that lead as consumers learn about and adapt to new things quicker than ever before in our history. Tupperware was aggressive in putting together a 2020 group of its global market leaders and began creating, testing and sharing new ideas across the globe. Tupperware recognized it had a unique advantage as a company since it utilizes a relationship based selling method to offer innovative, premium products (it is definitely not your Mother's Tupperware) in an experiential way to consumers around the world. Nothing could be more relevant to today's consumer wherever she is.*

*I don't have to tell you about the disruption in the retail industry, there is an article everyday about this. Consumers have shifted their buying habits to shopping more and more online and for more and more things. Millennials became more interested in buying experiences rather than things. Consumers, especially millennials, became very comfortable with renting rather than buying and on and on. Macy's moved to an omnichannel strategy very early in this shift and made significant investments in its e-commerce business, but the pace of change has been unbelievable. We are attempting to make our bricks and mortar stores more enticing to today's consumers through unique offerings and experiences (research has shown that the majority of people are still interested in shopping in stores) and we are better integrating the digital world with the physical world. Macy's is testing a number of different shopping strategies and seeing a great deal of success in these pilots. We are committed to scaling the most successful efforts quickly and to continue to evolve with this fast evolving consumer.*

**Q4.** In your amazing memoir, *The Empress Has No Clothes Conquering Self-Doubt to Embrace Success*, you discuss that you struggled with "impostor syndrome". Given your accomplishments in corporate America, this is a surprise to me and many others. Can you describe what impostor syndrome is and why it impacts so many successful

women as they rise up the corporate ladder and how they can overcome it?

*I define the impostor syndrome as the fear and self-doubt that causes people to question their abilities, even in the face of success, and to constantly search for external validation. People who suffer with the impostor syndrome find it difficult to recognize and celebrate their strengths and accomplishments and feel they constantly must prove themselves.*

*The impostor fear is driven by a feeling of not being accepted or acceptable to a group where you are different than the majority of the people in that group. For highly successful women this can occur as they move into higher levels of leadership and even today they still find themselves in mostly male environments as they get to the top echelons of companies. This causes concerns about not fitting in or feeling that others might question their ability to compete with the rest of the group who share more common experiences or backgrounds. This often makes women feel that they have to prove that they deserve to be at the table.*

*To conquer the impostor syndrome, I believe you must first recognize that it exist, but also realize that you are not alone, many people...women as well as men, suffer with the self doubt that is defined as the impostor syndrome. It is important to share your feelings with a trusted friend, mentor, partner, someone who knows you and knows your strengths and can help you see that you are able to take on a particular role or position. You should take an honest inventory of your strengths and weakness, not exaggerating either, then realize if you have a weakness, do something about, get a coach, take a class etc. don't let it overshadow all of your strengths and the experiences that you are bringing to a position. These things should allow you to see you do deserve your success...you do deserve your seat at the table.*

**Q5.** You are fortunate enough to serve on boards that have at least three women. Can you describe how diversity has made a difference to the board dynamic and how it has impacted the company as well?

*Diversity on boards brings a richness of experiences and expertise that result in better decisions. We all know the value of having people with different expertise on boards and who evaluate things with*

*different lenses. Well it is not just expertise, but different experiences and backgrounds that add to this richness. I believe women on boards often look at things somewhat differently and bring a different perspective, which leads to better decisions and all of our companies benefit from that.*

**Q6.** It's widely known that we need more women on public company boards, especially the S&P 500/Fortune 500 and those of that ilk. What do you believe can be done to increase the number of women? Do you believe in setting quotas or other legislative mandates?

*I don't believe we need quotas or mandates but we do need leaders (CEO's, Chairs and Chairs of Nominating and Governance Committees) who truly believe that there is benefit in having diversity on a board and are willing to be proactive in making it happen. We need to insure that women are on the slate for new director positions, for example when you are looking for a person with strong financial skills or digital marketing expertise, etc., you can find that in a woman candidate as well as male so why shouldn't your slate include both. Screening out women means screening out 50% of the talent in this country and when that happens our companies lose.*

**Q7.** You served as the CEO of Girls Inc., a national not-for-profit organization that inspires all girls to be strong, smart and bold. Based on what you witnessed with the young girls who participated in your programs, do you feel that we as a society are doing enough to breakdown gender stereotypes and bring about positive change? How can we as mentors help this generation to aspire to become executives, business owners, community leaders and even corporate board members?

*At Girls Inc., the mission is, Inspired girls AND an equitable society. That big AND is there because it is not enough to have strong, smart and bold girls if we don't have a society that is acceptant of that girl. While we as a country have made great progress, we still have a long way to go in that equitable society part. We all need to make sure that girls are given the opportunity to be whatever they desire to be and not give them overt or subtle messages that they are not good in things like math and science and therefore cause them to screen themselves out of lucrative careers. We need to expose them to role*

*models like women business leaders and demystify what it means to be in business. I always say, a girl will live up to your expectations no matter how high or how low they are... we need to make sure those expectations are high!*

**Q8.** How has being a member of WCD provided value to you as a board member?

*Every time I am at a WCD event I learn something of value that I can take back to my work on my boards. I have also met some incredible women who have provided insights on new businesses or fields that I was not that familiar with and this helps broaden me. In addition, it is wonderful to be with so many bright women doing similar things or dealing with similar challenges and having the opportunity to learn from each other.*

**Q9.** What advice would you like to give aspiring board members?

*Remember that distinguishing yourself in your day job is one of the most important things you can do, since that is what gets you on the radar screen. It is an honor to be on a board and when you are asked to join a company's board, realize it is because the company feels that you will add value so insure you are doing that. Take the position seriously, give it the time and thought that it requires and enjoy the journey.*

**Q10.** What do you do for relaxation?

*I love to spend time with my husband, my family and my friends. We enjoy informal gatherings when we just have the opportunity to enjoy each other's company.*



