

IN THE COMMUNITY

AN “EASY-BAKE OVEN” FOR LEADERS

HOW THE DR. NANCY GRASMICK LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE SHAPED A RISING LEADER AT PINK DOG DIGITAL

Gina Ramsey, founder of Pink Dog Digital, has a very memorable metaphor for the programs of the Dr. Nancy Grasmick Leadership Institute.

“As a kid we had a toy, the Easy-Bake Oven,” explains Ramsey. “Putting Coral through the Dr. Nancy Grasmick Leadership Institute’s Professional Leadership Program for Women was like putting a cake through the Easy-Bake Oven. She had all the right ingredients; she just needed them to come together. After she completed the program, she emerged as this amazing and confident leader!”

Coral Norman was the employee whose transformation so amazed Ramsey. Today, Norman is thriving as the director of digital marketing of Pink Dog Digital, which helps clients grow their digital footprint through strategic online brand-building. But there was a time when Norman’s leadership journey had stalled.

“I had a bit of a hard time coming back after my pregnancy. I dealt with prenatal depression and postpartum depression,” shares Norman. “It was a challenge to thrive in both aspects of my life. I needed more resources, so that’s where the Institute really helped me.”

“We had to have a really hard conversation where I told her, I need you to get better than this,” says Ramsey. “I know you’ve got the capacity, but you don’t have the self-confidence. There’s something going on with you that is stopping you from being who you have the potential to be.”

Ramsey decided to invest in Norman’s development by enrolling her in the Professional Leadership Program for Women, a unique four-month experience where a cohort of women engage in workshops and experiences designed to give them the tools to thrive and impact their organizations in powerful ways.

Ramsey’s investment paid off.

“I cried the first day of the program because of the power of the women that were in the room and just how strong it all felt. It was just kind of amazing,” Norman shares. “It helped me reduce my issues with imposter syndrome. I knew that Gina wanted me to be the future of her company and eventually take over the company, but I struggled with confidence in my skillset. I realized in the program that I was doing a lot of self-sabotage because I didn’t feel like I deserved it or belonged in that role. The Grasmick Institute really allowed me to feel like I belonged in a room with women who had the same feelings as I did, had the same misgivings that I did, and were able to overcome those and be those strong, amazing women I looked up to. Plus, I realized I could be that for somebody else.”

Ramsey is thrilled to see Norman become the leader she always knew she could be.

“Like I said, the Easy-Bake Oven! She went in as one type of person and emerged totally transformed!” raves Ramsey. “Erin [Moran] is a world-class facilitator and knows how to bring out the best in people. The program gave Coral the ability to be vulnerable yet gave her a strength she never had before. I think that surrounding Coral with other people who were going through some of the same struggles she was going through in a safe space where they could share experiences helped her see that she’s not alone and has the power to excel. Before, she didn’t have ownership of her work. But today, Coral is my exit strategy! I trust her completely with my company!”