

Theresa Cangemi: Evolving In Her Career, Evolving With WBOC

BY ALYSSA LAFARO | PHOTO BY CINDY BELL



When Theresa Cangemi first joined Women Business Opportunities Connections (WBOC) in 2008, the organization conducted business a little differently than it does today. “You would come have dinner, and listen to a speaker,” she explains. “Today, rather than center around a meal, they have networking time, a meeting, and then more networking time.” Just as the organization has evolved over time, so has Cangemi.

“When I first joined WBOC, I was working under the umbrella of one of the major Medicare insurance carriers as an agent. Eventually, in 2010, I decided to branch off into my own business, and created Medicare Made Simple,” explains Theresa, who offers Medicare Advantage plans, supplements, and prescription drug plans, as well as life and long-term care insurance.

“My business philosophy is to help a growing generation of baby boomers understand their options and handle their enrollment,” she explains. “I work with people ages 60 and up. You don’t qualify for Medicare until you are 65, but some people like to come to me to prepare for turning 65. I also work with veterans, and educate them on how to fill in the gaps for any coverage they aren’t receiving from Veterans Affairs.”

Before Theresa was so well-versed in Medicare lingo, she worked as a claims adjuster. “Part of what I did was handle auto accidents and commercial slip/fall accidents,” she details. “I would negotiate with the attorney on some type of settlement for the client.” Eventually, the company she worked for decided to downsize, and she was let go. During that time, she was contacted by a payroll company, which asked if she’d like to be licensed and trained in sales in the field of health benefits. “They, too, eventually suffered from internal changes, and I didn’t have a job there anymore. But I remember receiving a postcard in the mail that said ‘Sell Medicare Plans.’ I checked it out, made some phone calls, and decided that was what I wanted to do.”

It was when Theresa started considering owning her own business that she began to hear whispers of WBOC coming from all directions. “I honestly don’t even remember who told me about it,” she laughs. “I had heard about it from a handful of different people.”

Regardless of who spread the word about the organization, Theresa was glad she heard about it. “Not only does WBOC provide you with a whole plethora of women business owners that offer different services you can utilize,” she admits, “but women that you can laugh with, cry with, share with. They are willing to share successes and struggles with you, and help you through whatever situation you are going through in your own business. That’s what makes WBOC an amazing organization.”

Just as WBOC continues to evolve — like its consideration of starting a youth program called YWBOC — so does Theresa in her business. “I’d love to launch a seminar series later this year,” she explains, “that offers people something a little different and discusses topics like filling out DNR orders, the importance of a will, how to talk to the family about these kinds of topics, and more. Not only are we trying to raise our families and take care of them, but determine what’s going to happen with our own parents, too. That’s the conversation I want people to start having.”

The WBOC is a non-profit organization that has been empowering professional women in the Central New York area for more than 20 years. Its members are women business owners, women in business and women business start-ups. Syracuse Woman Magazine is a signature sponsor of the WBOC.