

## Elizabeth Sobol's Story

Written by Angela Newman

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Elizabeth Sobol studied piano at a very early age and thought she would grow up to be a professional musician. At the age of 13 she was studying classical piano at the North Carolina School of the Arts. When she finished the high school level of musical training, she added non-musical education and completed her Bachelor's in Art.

*"I started out imagining that I would be a classical musician. And that is the path I followed until I was about 20 at which point I realized that I did not have the talent - nor the fortitude - nor the single-minded focus that it would require. When I was a junior in college I ended up having the tremendous luck of meeting two very impressive women from New York - one a promoter and one a publicist - through whom I learned that there was such a thing as a career in music management. The idea that I could spend my life working around artists, nurturing them, cultivating their careers, and living in New York - was a life-changing revelation for me. I found a way to get myself to NYC and obtained an internship in a classical music management company. That move was the beginning of a long career in a field that has ended up being the perfect environment for me - combining my passion for the arts with business and management challenges."*

Elizabeth began her career as an intern at IMG Artists, was later promoted to talent manager and booking agent, then climbed her ladder farther to Senior Vice President and Associate Director before reaching the position she currently holds as Managing Director for IMG Artists for North and South America. It's not often that success is seen to such a great extent as it is for Elizabeth by staying at one company for so many years. Many times the opportunities for advancement are only found by moving from company to company.

During her tenure at IMG Artists, Elizabeth has successfully managed several artists and has had the pleasure of seeing their talents emerge to be recognized and honored. One such artist, Joshua Bell, received the Avery Fisher Prize in 2007, the highest honor a classical artist can receive. In 2002 she signed a group of Cuban musicians based out of Miami and

within days Elizabeth had booked them to perform before a crowd of over 10,000. She loves bringing people and ideas from different worlds together. She is very proud of the work she produces that unites different cultures, genres and artists together to create amazing experiences for so many.

At times her schedule can be very demanding and challenging with all the travel and responsibilities a position like this requires, so what keeps her from giving up when the going gets tough? *“I suppose it is because, having come from an arts background, money has never been the source of my inspiration and drive. Music and literature - and their importance in the world - are the passions that drive me. And therefore, they are the things they keep me going when things get tough. Great art can bring great joy and a sense of transcendence that can take you out of the frustrations and challenges of the moment and remind you why you are here.”*

With all of her success, one might assume she has set goals to climb each rung of her career ladder, but Elizabeth does not think in terms of goals. For her the word goal does not resonate, *“it feels like something fabricated and fairly insignificant. It also presupposes an outcome - which can be limiting. I prefer to think in terms of paths and discoveries.”* She feels pretty much the same way about networking. *“The word networking has the same effect on me that the word goal does. It feels fabricated. Of course, I go to events or meetings where I think I might meet a particular person I need to meet. But I have a hard time setting out to interact with people on the basis that we can each get something out of the other. But I have found over time that the most rewarding and productive relationships often come up unexpectedly and out of the blue: someone you met on an airplane; or someone you sat next to at a concert.”*

Elizabeth may not have set goals to reach the success she has enjoyed over the years, but through consistent meditation she has been able to achieve self awareness and feels that *“self-awareness is probably the single most important factor in living a fulfilling life, personally and professionally. So when asked where she sees herself if 5-10 years from now, she said, “Remember, I don’t believe in “goals”; certainly not planning my life ahead by 5 or 10 years. I know that within 5 to 10 years, I want to be doing less, having more time to read, hike, and garden. I would love to have more unstructured time, in a big country house*

*with a huge library. I want to have time to volunteer to teach kids the pleasures and magic of reading. How all that might play out, I have no idea..."*

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