

WOMAN WHO HELPED TRANSFORM CHEVY INTO WHAT IT IS TODAY



Dannielle Hudler was hired as advertising chief in Chevy's ad agency department in 1985. In 1988, she found herself in the option of having to force the company to view her as one of them. Hudler was given the choice to fly with the wives of the men on the management board at Chevy. She told them "no," that she did not want to fly with the wives; she wanted to go with the men. She did, and through that tenacity, Hudler embraced her role as the only women in management with Chevy, even when she could not go out to lunch at "men only" grills.

Hudler ultimately changed the way advertising was done at Chevy by showing the company how to appeal to women. She gained the respect of her top-level male co-workers by consistently proving her worth time and again. Before she arrived, Hudler says the bulk of Chevy's advertisement showed "either in the passenger seat or in bikinis across the hood of a Corvette." Hudler wanted to make the company's image appealing to women and she did it with a combination of humor and hard work. Her innovative approaches included adding purse nets and fold-down trays.

Chevy has shown smart thinking by adding women to their workforce because, at the present time, women make up over 39 percent of new vehicle purchases, according to the Advertising Age's Special Chevy Report. In 2001, 28 percent of women were making new car purchases, according to R.L. Polk & Company. Marc Bland, product strategist and multicultural lead at R.L. Polk and Company says, "Women are where the growth of the market is coming from, and it's an area that automakers should pay attention to."

Candace Haag, formerly Robbins, did not dominate in a world filled with more women that work in marketing. She started at Chevy in their truck division in 1988. At that time, she learned the ropes by working with a bunch of men. She ran the truck division's advertising department from 1988 to 1990. Candace and Dannielle Hudler made a deal, about how they would handle the men. They agreed to only disagree while behind closed doors, according to Haag. On her path to success in a male-dominated field, Haag got by because of her motto that "being average wasn't good enough. You had to be the best."

She learned to shoot loaded guns and hunt quail with the men. She kept up with some; even beating them on many occasions. Haag felt her greatest achievement happened when she received a standing ovation after the unveiling of her advertising campaign that went head-to-head with Ford. According to Hag, she did something to make a male-dominated work place friendlier for women.

At the present time, there is an even ratio of male to female employees working as marketing executives at Chevy's ad agency, Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, according to Melissa Nelson, an account director for the car company.