**Kathryn Raaker's World**

**Kathryn Raaker**

Hi, this is Kathryn Raaker of Kathryn Raaker's World.

Our guest today is Kim Jones from Kim Jones Alliance, that's her company and she draws on her 25 years of combined corporate and C-Suite experience, coupled with her deep knowledge of leadership norms and best practices in the corporate world, to develop leading resources for women, who want to advance their careers and create maximum workplace impact.

She created the Kim Jones Alliance for individuals in companies looking to accelerate the progression of women in their work and careers. As part of this work, she partners with her clients to examine the structures that exist in their organizations and identify and implement solutions that create more equitable outcomes for women and other under-represented groups, whether they be through leadership development or culture change.

I want to welcome you, there's a lot more in your bio, but I can see that you really care about, not only your clients, but changing the structure. I pioneered in that structure as well, and I felt like I was a lonely soul out there in a male dominated career, in the careers that I had.

I want to welcome you to our show, Kim, it's such an honor and I'm excited about what you're doing.

**Kim Jones**

Thank you so much, Kathryn, it is such an honor to be here and I love having this conversation around women in the workplace and especially as we were talking before the show started with pioneers like you who set the pace for the work that we're doing now, so it's a it's a an honor to be with you today.

**Kathryn Raaker**

Thank you so much, I could tell you some stories about what I went through.

**Kim Jones**

I'm sure.

**Kathryn Raaker**

Financial world and also in the automobile industry, but I'm very short in stature, so I'm looking up all the time, if that makes any sense, but anyhow…

Why should I or any of my clients or anyone else hire Kim Jones Alliance? Especially for my company or my clients that are looking for opportunities?

**Kim Jones**

It's a great question! So just a little bit of background on me, as you mentioned in my bio, I came up through the corporate world. I spent 25 years in various positions, ended my career as a senior executive in the IT space and was charged with doing a lot of big transformational programs, which was made more challenging for me because of some of the dynamics that I faced as a woman in a male dominant field.

Things like biases around my competence to lead, my competence as a woman in Tech and so forth. When I left my job it was really with the intent of increasing the representation of women in male dominated fields, so that they could have more influence and impact and achieve better balance and parity in these organizations.

Where we are now in the workplace post Covid is really interesting. Organizations are looking at everything now like their leadership, the skills of their leaders, the cultures they have, the kinds of employees that they hire as well as how they retain them over time etc.

It's really a challenging time, because we're seeing so much churn, that's happening in the workforce, with the great resignation turning into the great disengagement, and now quiet quitting and all of those those factors have led companies to take a hard look at how they are building their cultures and cultivating their leadership skills to try to build very high-performing work organizations in the 21st century.

What my company specifically focuses on is how to produce cultures, how to build cultures that are more inclusive and allow people to achieve their highest potential, to be engaged, to be inspired, so that those companies are able to benefit from that and we also see the the folks that are in these organizations able to contribute at their highest capacity in a way that they are leveraging their strengths and their capabilities and where all workers can thrive regardless of demographic, gender and those types of things.

So hiring me and working with my organization really brings forth the experience that I've had in the corporate world, coupled with training that I've since had in coaching and cultural anthropology to understand the power structures that exist in companies and how those need to be looked at in a way that can start to build those inclusive leadership styles and cultures and companies.

Now at this post Covid time that we are experiencing so much disruption, disengagement and churn in the workforces. Companies who do that will win the talent war, which we know is, probably, one of the biggest indicators of success in terms of how companies progress, grow and perform.

**Kathryn Raaker**

How do you elevate women in business? More significantly than the usual business coach or trainer, because I've had business coaches and you probably did it one time, so what's the difference?

**Kim Jones**

I think a big difference is the fact that I've actually lived in these environments. Many coaches come up through and they're great coaches they're the kinds of coaches I had as an executive also in my role, prior to me venturing out on my own.

I was divisional CIO for Farmers Insurance company, doing some very large transformational work. I had my own coaches as part of that work and I found that many of them came up through fields like organizational psychology.

Many of them had worked in HR spaces and they weren't necessarily as familiar with the kinds of environments that clients have to navigate on a day-to-day basis, so with my experience I actually navigated the kinds of environments that my clients are in so often times looking at things like how do the systems and the structures and organizations create specific challenges for the kinds of workers that companies are looking to attract from diverse populations.

So leveraging that experience, coupled with the fact that I am also certified in coaching and have a number of credentials with assessment tools and things that we use with clients, to really help ground them in how they can use their own unique strengths and abilities in these environments, that have dynamics that create unique challenges for women.

I do the coaching and the advisory consulting based on my business experience and then last, but not least, my training and cultural anthropology, which looks at the ways that cultures create the systems and structures that can make it challenging for people in non-dominant groups to succeed.

It’s a trifecta of education, that I provide around these systems that people exist within, so that they can select the right strategies to navigate within them, coaching to help them bring forth the strong mindsets that they need in order to succeed in their roles, and finally the consulting piece of it, based on my extensive experience in these environments.

That, I believe, is what sets me apart from the typical coaches out there. which bring different skills and experiences. Mine happen to be very specific to leading and building culture that support inclusive workforces 21st century leadership skills and elevate the standing of people in underrepresented groups, particularly women.

**Kathryn Raaker**

Tell us, in the short amount of time we have left, tell us about your first of its kind Academy for Women Leaders?

**Kim Jones**

I am so excited to be launching an Academy For Women in male-dominated spaces, who are either in leadership roles or are aspiring to elevate to leadership roles.

This program is unique in that it's looking at developing the skills that leaders need in this post covid environment, where some of the practices and leadership modes originate from times that were very different.

If we look at most leadership models, that are in place today, a lot of leaders came up through the 20th century, they may have some skills, that they learned, that no longer apply in this period of high disruption and disengagement, so one of the things the academy does is it helps leaders really hone the skills that they need for 21st century leadership.

Examples of that would include things like having a strong orientation around building flexibility in leadership to help bring and cultivate talent within their teams, that is specific to individuals. This supports data that younger generations are really looking for curated career paths that take into account their unique talents and abilities. That's not how we led in the 20th century, but that's still how a lot of leaders show up and it's not really effective for creating the kind of engaged and inspired work cultures that we're looking to build.

One thing would be having that flexibility, next is building empathetic leadership where we understand the unique positions of our employees and really can cultivate and support them in the whole aspect of their lives, beyond just their professional work.

Workers are also looking for stronger well-being in the work that they do, meaning that their companies are supporting their well-being beyond just their financial well-being, they're looking for things like physical and mental health, work-life balance, a more holistic view on what well-being means to those employees and then developing leaders as coaches.

All of this information comes from Gartner search that says that the Mandate for 21st century leadership is to have flexibility, empathy, focus on employee well-being and a coaching mindset as a leader.Most leaders don't show up that way.

What we do in the academy is we train them or we give them education on how to develop those skills.

Next, what we do is develop those navigation skills that women need in order to succeed. When they are the only woman in these fields, it can be very challenging and having those navigation skills is so critical. This helps women understand the playing field that they're on so they can choose the right moves in order to maximize and achieve their highest leadership potential.

And then we develop all kinds of tools around mindset, building confidence, dealing with impostor syndrome, building really strong networks, being able to do things like have difficult conversations, give feedback, be on stage, be visible, use your voice etc.

All of the things that were really successful strategies that helped me elevate my career ultimately to senior executive leadership.

**Kathryn Raaker**

So I need to know, where can people find more information about getting their company involved with you so that they can either find people to hire or get a better understanding of how to make their company grow in an environment that is sometimes male dominated?

Am I correct when I say that?

**Kim Jones**

Yes, they can find me on KimJonesAlliance.com. If they want to learn more about the Academy, there is a navigation at the top that can take them to get more information so that they can schedule consultation with me. It's all very user friendly and easy to navigate. And then they can also find me on LinkedIn, my handle is Kim Jones.

**Kathryn Raaker**

Thank you so much for joining me today on Kathryn Raaker's World. We've learned a lot about really helping women, especially helping them grow and make their careers a wonderful experience, instead of some of the things that we went through in my era.

Thank you so much for joining me, it was an honor to have you. Don't forget to go to KathrynRakersWorld.com or our radio show LetsJustTalk.com.

We'll see you soon, thank you!