

SDI

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Joint Women's Leadership Symposium

Challenge

Susan Davis International (SDI) produces and manages the annual Joint Women's Leadership Symposium (JWLS) under the direction of the Sea Service Leadership Association (SSLA). JWLS is an annual conference that brings together women in uniform, groundbreaking leaders and officers representing nations from across the world. Attendance has ranged from 600 during times of budget cuts to more than 1,700, establishing the Symposium as the largest gathering of women in uniform around the world. The challenge has been to grow the conference in stature and respect within the Department of Defense, especially among military women in the United States and in foreign nations. Additionally, multiple years brought sequestration challenges; however, strategic communication and outreach assured that JWLS could continue to host the annual event.

Solution

SDI has worked with SSLA to grow JWLS into a global conference by securing presentations and discussions by and with distinguished military and prominent civilian thought leaders. SDI has secured speakers such as former Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama, Tina Tchen; former Secretary of the U.S. Air Force Deborah James; Olympic Medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey; General Ann Dunwoody, who is the first female four-star general; First Miss USA and military veteran Captain Deshauna Barber; Gayle Tzemach Lemmon; author of Lifetime TV's "Army Wives;" and Geena Davis, actress. In addition to securing well-known speakers, SDI selected the venue and collaborated on conference theme.

Results

In 2018, SDI was instrumental in attracting nearly 1,200 military women from 20 countries to attend JWLS and increased sponsorship by 300 percent. We also created a Veterans Transitioning Seminar prior to the conference underwritten by sponsors. More than 40 companies and veteran-owned organizations had booths to offer information to veterans, military members, and their spouses.



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