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# Meet Kelly Alvarez Vitale of Strategic Philanthropy in Fort Lauderdale

VoyageMIA



Today we'd like to introduce you to Kelly Alvarez Vitale.

**Kelly Alvarez, let's start with your story. We'd love to hear how you got started and how the journey has been so far.**

Upon graduating from FSU, I accepted a position with the American Heart Association, where I raised \$1,000,000 during my time there. However, I quickly saw a need that companies could make their communities better by aligning their giving with causes that met their business goals and impacted their communities and launched

what is believed to be the first corporate philanthropy consulting firm in Florida in 2011.

Despite being knowledgeable about nonprofits, I had no idea how to start a business. So I bought a book titled, “How to Start a Business,” and began the process. As the daughter and granddaughter of Cuban immigrants, when things got difficult, I would always say, “my grandparents who didn’t speak the language, were not college educated and didn’t have the contacts in the country started a business and succeeded. So failure is not an option.” In fact, it took less than nine months for the company to become profitable and it has been profitable ever since.

**Overall, has it been relatively smooth? If not, what were some of the struggles along the way?**

I once saw a documentary about Pixar and one of the quotes that stuck with me was, “it took ten years to become an overnight success.” People on the outside think it looks easy. But they don’t see the behind the scenes.

One of the biggest obstacles at first was trying to explain what I did for a living. Since it was a new space/industry I was creating, it didn’t fit a certain box. It wasn’t marketing. It wasn’t advertising. It wasn’t public relations. I really had to nail my elevator pitch and make it easy enough for people to quickly understand.

When asked what I do, I often tell people that I get hired by companies to give away their money to nonprofits. This normally peaks people’s interest and then they begin to ask a lot of follow up questions. Which is what I want.

**Strategic Philanthropy – what should we know? What do you guys do best?**

**What sets you apart from the competition?**

Strategic Philanthropy was one of the first corporate philanthropy-consulting firms in the state and has now become a very specialized niche.

Strategic Philanthropy has helped clients serve 360 nonprofits and awarded over \$2 million in sponsorships. Strategic Philanthropy has shown companies that it is not

solely about the dollars, but that companies can impact their communities through in-kind donations and volunteer programs. Through programs it has put in place, our clients have donated \$1.8 million of in-kind donations and logged over 14,000 volunteer hours, which has had an additional estimated value of over \$420,500 to directly benefit the community.

We've had the pleasure of working with major brands in South Florida and every single business opportunity has been a referral. We stand by the quality of work that we do and want companies to feel as if we are a part of their team. We are extremely proud of the reputation we've built with our clients and nonprofit partners.

### **So, what should we be on the lookout for, what's next in store for you?**

Entrepreneurs often times get caught up in wanting to grow the business – at all costs. And while we've grown year over year, our focus this year is to offer a good quality of life for our employees.

We want to continue our great work, but also make sure our employees have the opportunity to have a balanced life – however they define it. We want the work we do to be a part of them, not all of them. Because we know that happy and healthy employees, help you succeed long term.

### **Contact Info:**

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