



MERCHANT STRATEGY

**SHARON J. MERCHANT**

## **SUMMARY**

Ms. Merchant brings 30+ years of public and private leadership experience as a Member of the Florida House of Representatives and President of her consulting practice, The Merchant Strategy, Inc. (TMS). TMS provides clients with governmental relations and business development services. Ms. Merchant provides expertise in the following areas:

- Government Relations, Public Relations, Media Relations, Strategic Planning, and Crisis Management
- Federal, State, and local political, community and business contacts
- Experienced negotiator for economic development and growth management
- Indepth knowledge of Florida's budget, transportation infrastructure, water issues, telecommunication business regulation, agriculture and growth management

## **RELEVANT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE**

### ***The Merchant Strategy, Inc., President***

***2003-present  
(Incorporated September 2007)***

- Assists businesses to compete effectively to win public sector contracts
- Introduces clients to both elected decision makers and business leaders
- Lobbies elected officials to persuade them to introduce, support, modify, or kill legislation
- Provides public involvement for large impactful public projects
- Certified S/WBE Palm Beach County, SBE City of West Palm Beach, SBE Palm Beach County School District, SBE SFWMD, MBE State of Florida, DBE FDOT

### ***Equipment Rental Service, Inc., Vice President***

***1993- 2017***

- Supervise and manage 10 employees
- Provide business development and customer retention efforts
- Sign all releases of liens, handle all legal matters, including W/SBE and MBE certifications
- Manage all major purchases, with inventory exceeding two million dollars
- Determine all Profit Sharing contributions, investment strategies and distributions
- Implemented a computerized billing system, created first brochure and the employee manual, outsource overdue accounts, and work with police and insurance to recover stolen property
- Created a state of the art security system including cameras, electric fencing and other proprietary measures

**City of West Palm Beach, Public Involvement Consultant**

**2003**

- Created a public outreach blue print to ensure public involvement prior to the start of a new project
- Resolved long standing bad relations between city and county employees, FDOT staff and road builders
- Represented the Mayor at traffic construction related meetings to monitor progress
- Initiated a project to provide a master calendar / timeline for all road closures throughout Palm Beach County. Found the appropriate program to collect the data and convinced our partners (FDOT, Palm Beach County, other municipalities, and both public and private utilities) to cooperate
- Created brochures and other collateral materials to give the public specific information on road closures and immediate access to the supervisor of each project
- Implemented a policy on press releases requiring a template to ensure that all pertinent information is given to the Public Information Officer and that all information is distributed in a timely manner
- Created checklists and monitored compliance to ensure that the new policies were adhered to

**The Mitchell Group, Vice President**

**2001-2003**

- New business development, recruiting new clients such as WO and Unico
- Lobbied issues, successfully positioning our clients to win contracts on issues such as life insurance, cameras at red lights, janitorial services, where to build a Costco, and new residential development
- Worked with city, county and state officials and senior staff building long term relationships for clients

**Florida House of Representatives, State Representative**

**1992-2000**

- Chaired the Appropriations Committee on Transportation and Economic Development for the first Republican Speaker, two years later Chaired the Committee on Juvenile Justice. Served as Vice Chair of the Utilities and Telecommunications Committee, while in the minority, co-authored deregulation legislation of the telecommunication industry. Chaired the Palm Beach County Legislative Delegation, Vice Chair of the FL House Republican Caucus. Served on the following committees: Regulated Services, Community Colleges and Career Prep, Water and Resource Management, Commerce, Rules and Calendar, Transportation, Business and Professional Regulation, Judiciary, and Tourism and Economic Development
- Worked with local and federal officials to keep United Technologies high-wage jobs in PB County
- Got \$40 million dollars appropriated for adding lanes to SR 80, a major east / west corridor
- Held three domestic violence conferences, *Behind Closed Doors*, to boost public awareness, provide a forum for professional accreditation and to raise money (\$43,000+) for shelters and other programs
- Resolved constituents problems with state agencies, reported on items of interest to all cities in the district before and after session. Spoke to hundreds of business, government, charitable and service organizations

**Representative Marian V. Lewis, Legislative Assistant**

**1985-1992**

Lewis hired Merchant to assist her in providing excellent representation with a no non-sense approach to public service. District 81 stretched from northern Palm Beach County out to the Glades. Responsibilities included constituent service, office management, research, speech writing, and drafting legislation.

## **AFFILIATIONS**

- South Florida Fair, Director
- Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Member, Past Regent
- Economic Forum Palm Beach County, Member
- Forum Club of the Palm Beaches, Member
- Executives Association of the Palm Beaches, Member
- Council of Community Leaders, Founder
- Palm Beach County Historical Society, Member
- The Leroy Collins Public Ethics Academy, Member

## **PAST AFFILIATIONS**

- Discover Palm Beach County, FL (*formerly the Convention and Visitors Bureau*), Board Member
- Florida Tax Watch, Board of Trustees
- Associated Builders and Contractors, Member
- Republican Club of the Palm Beaches Federated, Member
- Republican Executive Committee, Committee Woman
- Grassy Waters Preserve, Not for Profit, Chair
- National Association of Women Business Owners, Member
- Executive Women of the Palm Beaches, Member
- Women's Chamber of Commerce, Member
- The ARC of Palm Beach County, Director
- Pine Jog, Director
- Seminole Booster Association, Booster
- National Association of Women in Construction
- Big Brothers Big Sisters, Big Sister
- Florida Defense Conversion and Transition Commission, Ranking Republican Member

## **AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

- Palm Beach Gardens Medical Center Recognition for Service on Board of Directors 2018
- Six-time winner, Florida Chamber of Commerce Roll Call Award - Top 40 Legislators, 1993-1998
- Executive Women of the Palm Beaches Women in Leadership Award 1999
- The Nature Conservancy Legislator of the Year Award 1999
- Florida Police Chiefs Association Legislative Award
- Gulfstream Goodwill Industries, Inc. Award for Dedication to Persons with Disabilities (1st ever given)
- Florida Association of Women Lawyers Legislative Leadership Award
- Association of General Contractors of America Appreciation for Outstanding Service
- National Organization of Women Legislative Perseverance Award
- Florida Library Association Distinguished Legislator Award 1998
- Association for Retarded Citizens Legislator of the Year 1995
- Republican Caucus Champion for Economic Development Award 1994
- Florida Sheriffs Association Leadership Award 1994
- Florida Economic Development Council Legislator 1994

## **PERSONAL**

Merchant resides in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. She graduated in 1986 from Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida, with a BS in International Affairs.