

Conversations

with *Elisa Padilla*

**Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer
Barclays Center and the Brooklyn Nets**



Most workdays for Elisa Padilla begin at 5:20 a.m., when she leaves her home in New Jersey, stops for coffee and drives 32 miles to her office. She enjoys the quiet early-morning hours, because the rest of her day is as jam-packed as the event calendar for the hottest venue in Brooklyn.

A native of Newark, N.J., Padilla was first drawn to sports marketing, and the idea of creating an emotional hook with consumers, during her senior year at Centenary College. Her first job was as a marketing assistant for the New York Knicks, where she worked for a woman named Pam Harris, then the team's director of marketing. "I remember being 22 at the time thinking, 'I want to be her when I grow up,'" Padilla says. Harris became a role model, and mentor, for Padilla as she made her own name for herself in the field over the next 20 years.

Padilla wanted to learn all aspects of the marketing field, so she branched out, making career stops at Disney, Nickelodeon, HBO Sports and AT&T. In 2010, she landed her dream job, the director of marketing for a sports team. The Nets hired her 18 months before their relocation to Brooklyn, and she was tasked with rebranding the team. While researching and planning the move, a colleague sent her a video which happened to include a remix of Jay-Z's track, "Hello Brooklyn." A lightbulb went on, and she wrote the phrase down on a post-it note that she stuck on a Kleenex box. Her brainchild turned into the award-winning marketing campaign that introduced the Nets to their new borough in 2012.

"My main goal is I want to continue to be a game-changer," Padilla says. "I want to continue to make a difference."

Leadership style: *"I like to empower my team, the people I work with day in and day out. I see the world one way, and everybody else on my team, every single one of them, sees the world differently. Being in a leadership role, you have to be open to listening. Just because you're the boss doesn't mean you are always right. I learn from my team every single day."*

Best advice received: *"I am one of six kids, and my parents instilled in us that education is going to help you succeed in this life. I remember my mother telling me, you could get fired from a job, they could steal your lunch, they can steal your personal belongings. But no one can ever take your degree from you. My education and what I've invested in myself can never be taken away."*

Why it's important for women to help women: *"For me, it is about paying it forward. There was one woman who inspired me and mentored me, and my dreams were based on her career. If I can make that impact on one person, then I have done a good job."*