

Transforming with Dedication

TOP **10** **INSPIRING**
WOMEN LEADERS
OF 2023

Paula Warnstedt is an intriguing and successful Brazilian woman. She demonstrates dedication, discipline, patience, integrity, and leadership and approaches every challenge to make the most of it. Her success in business and life inspires others to improve.

Paula currently holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and a master's in business administration and is currently working on the EA certification. Paula has always worked in hospitality, starting at Sunterra Corporation, Followed by Fairfield Resorts, and then Wyndam Financial Services. Paula has always loved working with money and helping people. When she was hired by Circus Circus Hotel and Casino Las Vegas as a Financial Analyst, she loved the job but hated the later hours, working up to 20 hours going home and coming back for another 16 hours. However, that opened some doors, and she was appointed by the CFO of Circus Circus Hotel and Casino to help with an internal audit. The manager at the time liked her so much that she offered her a chance to move to corporate as an Internal Auditor. Paula was pleased. The hours were better, and so was the pay. Paula says, "Working for MGM Resorts International was an amazing experience. However, my heart was never in it". Paula liked managing money and helping people succeed. She left MGM to work for a private company out of Florida. It was her first position as a CFO, and Paula could see almost every aspect of the business. However, she decided it was time for a change after four years. That is when she applied for Born and Raised. She says, "At that time, I just wanted a staff accountant job, Monday to Friday 8-5. I wanted to be able to enjoy my family." After a month of working at Born and Raised, the owner at the time let go of the controller and promoted Paula to controller.

Born and Raised is a successful, growing chain of bars based out of Las Vegas, NV, with three locations currently open and the fourth location getting ready to open in the next few months. Success in business doesn't happen by accident; there must be a catalyst to keep the momentum of a small business going through hard times.



The determination and motor that drives Paula to succeed in business and allowed her to climb up the ladder is her Family. In her own words "My Daughters – Danielle and Jessica were the reason why I never stopped looking for success. I wanted to show them that we are strong, and we can do anything we put our minds to." She also moves on to credit her husband for her continued success; "My Husband – John, has always supported every insane decision I made professionally"

Paula has been that spark to not only keep the company going but to make it grow despite difficult circumstances. The past few years, dating back to 2020, have been difficult for everyone, and unfortunately, small businesses have been hit extremely hard. Born and Raised was no different. Faced with uncertainties and challenging questions such as, "When will we reopen?" or perhaps more frightening, "Will we ever be able to welcome another customer in?" The task of making it out of the pandemic and still having a business was daunting. Fortunately for Born and Raised, they had Paula Warnstedt as their CFO. Paula worked tirelessly to ensure the close in March 2020 would be temporary and that Born and Raised would still be in business when mandates were lifted.

Where others failed, Born and Raised not only made it out of the pandemic alive, but they even went from having two bars to now operating three within two years of coming out of COVID-19, and as mentioned earlier, working on their fourth location opening in a few months. Whether surviving COVID-19 or expanding while others downsize, Paula's fingerprints are all over this company's success. Paula has been the backbone of this company's infrastructure, from her relentless work ethic to her flexibility to maneuver through uncharted waters and come out practically unscathed. She is highly versatile, and no task is too insignificant for her.

"Born and Raised has revolutionized the Gaming Bar Industry here in Las Vegas." Paula quotes. "People aspire to be like our bars, the competitors come to our locations and copy our menu, try to replicate our décor and even poach our employees. They know we have changed the gaming bar industry in Las Vegas, and they want a piece of it."

PAULA WARNSTEDT



CFO at Born and Raised

Throughout her journey as an accomplished professional, Paula has experienced highs and lows. From being passed over for job opportunities or promotions because of gender and nationality, she has had to learn to deal with the world, make the best of the situation, and learn from every circumstance. She elucidates, "I have learned that I must work twice as hard as anyone else to be appreciated and respected, and that is still not enough. Sometimes, even when you are fighting for the right things, people will disagree with you because you are a female and a foreigner. You just have to remember that you earned your seat at the table, while some, well... they are just lucky to be at the table."