



## The Daily Brief Podcast: SPE's Kasumi Mihori on Creative Courage

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"It's always the most fulfilling to see a light bulb go off in someone's head," says Kasumi Mihori, vice president, creative, Sony Pictures Entertainment. She's referring to her role as a mentor this year in PromaxBDA's Executive Mentorship program.

Straight out of art school, Kasumi founded her own agency and began doing work for clients. Since then, she has held creative leadership roles at organizations including Troika, Turner Studios and now, Sony Pictures.

Daily Brief Contributing Editor Kareem Taylor sat down with Kasumi to hear her story. She talks the lay offs that led to her founding her own company, the inspiration behind becoming a mentor and finding the courage to figure out if you're on the right path.

**DAILY BRIEF:** How did you get this job?

**MIHORI:** I was tasked to be brought into Sony Pictures to build an internal agency model, much like I did at Turner in my previous life.

What does your day look like?

At the Creative Center, which is what the internal agency is called, we're tasked to service a number of constituents with Crackle, our [over-the-top] streaming service, being one of them. We launch ten originals a year, both theatrical and series. We also service all of the on-air promo needs for the three domestic networks. That's Cine Sony, Sony Movie Channel and Get TV. And then we also do global branding work for the corporate communications global marketing group. That entails a complete revamp of all of the SONY linear channels. That's about 100 networks that we're in the process of launching in the next two years.

You once talked about "We're all on this quest for artistic fulfillment." Has that been your motivation into becoming a mentor in PromaxBDA's Executive Mentorship program?

It's always the most fulfilling to see a light bulb go off in someone's head, and be able to give back and inspire someone else. To help them succeed and set people up for success is a privilege. The mentorship program through PromaxBDA really allows a much deeper connection because it's a year long, so you really get to know your mentee and hopefully they get to know you as well. You really have an opportunity to guide somebody. That, to me, is super inspiring. It's a learning process on both sides, so there's always growth. When I see somebody grow or when I have an opportunity to grow and then the art reflects that inspiring point of view, it's very fulfilling. It's addictive.

When you talk about 'addictive,' one of the first times I met you a couple years ago was at a PromaxBDA mentoring event at the conference. You've been involved for some time, are there mentors you've had that fired up this passion?

Early, early on when I was designing television stations in New England, one of the GM's at the time really allowed me a ton of freedom. He absolutely believed in the creativity and process and was one of the most enthusiastic clients I've had to this day. I won a whole bunch of regional Emmys with that station. And then Promax Golds, and that's what started my career at Pittard Sullivan. I owe everything to that person. He was the epitome of 'you don't have to be a creative or understand the creative process to be able to appreciate it.' He had a love of the arts, and our work was able to reflect that. That combination is rare. There are very few clients who can wholeheartedly trust and appreciate and take that leap of faith. When they do, that's the work that is revered that all of us admire.

Who is your mentee and how do you communicate?

She moved late last year to Los Angeles. Her name is Hieu Gray, she used to be a writer/ producer at CNN. We have a lot of people in common. She moved

to Los Angeles, so it's nice because she can actually come to the Sony Lot and we can have in-person meetings. Currently, she's on a different career path, she's into filmmaking and storytelling and doing a lot of festivals. It's different from the mentees I've had in the past who are currently working in the industry. She's interested in strategy, and that thought process. It's been an interesting road so far.

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