

# ANGIE SMITH

CEO, InVision Communications

## Thriving & Growing with Determination

InVision Communications, a stalwart in the event marketing industry, recently made a strategic move marking the culmination of an organizational transformation and succession planning initiative aimed at propelling the company's ongoing growth and enhancing its performance in the ever-evolving landscape of audience engagement. The company appointed industry leader Angie Smith as its new CEO.

Angie's appointment as CEO signals a pivotal moment in InVision's journey as it positions itself for accelerated growth in a dynamic events landscape. This journey began nearly three years ago in 2021, when CEO Rod Mickels and CCO Drew Hagen introduced the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), making InVision a 100% employee-owned company. Simultaneously, a new executive leadership team assumed day-to-day operations. This transformation empowered the leadership and employees to shape InVision's future success by driving innovation, streamlining workflows, implementing best practices, and reimagining client solutions. The ESOP also involved forming a Board of Directors, which collaborates with leadership to chart the company's strategic course. Today, InVision thrives and stands ready to ascend to the next level.

"After a storied thirty years, the founders of InVision sold the company to its employees. Together with the board of



Angie Smith,  
CEO



directors, it was decided to focus on being the agency of the future, hence bringing in a new CEO, and I have the absolute pleasure of having been their final choice,” says Angie. “Our focus is to continue to foster an agency that has allowed its employees/owners to build careers they love, with a strong emphasis on giving back to communities and, most importantly, helping our clients create the world’s most engaging experiences that drive audiences to action.”

### **Driving An Organization**

InVision is a full-service audience engagement agency, moving people to action through integrated experiential, design, digital, and communications campaigns anchored in strategy, creativity, and technology. Angie’s 25 years of invaluable experience in event marketing and leadership to her role, having most recently served as Head of Experiential and Field Marketing at Atlassian is

like the icing on the cake. Her career includes notable tenures at industry giants such as Cisco and INXPO. Notably, Angie’s background comes from the brand side. Her appointment signifies a strategic shift in InVision’s approach to client business, rooted in campaign-driven event marketing strategies that will undoubtedly enhance audience engagement programs for InVision’s Fortune 100 clients.

Angie learned a valuable lesson 15 years ago: always finish the job. There were many things in her life that she started with great intentions but got sidetracked and didn’t quite finish. Soon, she realized that sometimes the path changes, but she never quit. “I think success is about being agile and sometimes changing directions, but always being intentional about those shifts and changes,” explains Angie. “Don’t not finish! I think my success is because I have had a lot of failures. As a student of life, I have taken all those lessons in failure and opportunities

to grow, pivot, and change directions. Success isn't a destination; it is a journey that never ends for all of us. Don't quit. Be better every day."

### Becoming A Leader

Angie drives her inspiration from various places and people. She was introduced to dancing and music as a child, and today, both are still key inspirations in her life. As a young adult, she was introduced to many inspirational humans and started paying close attention to them. "I am a self-proclaimed hype girl, and anyone who can walk into a room with a great attitude, with a hunger to work hard and discipline to not give up is someone I am willing to follow and clap for, over and over!" elucidates Angie. "I am inspired by my resilience, tenacity, and drive to not let all the people who didn't believe in me, who wouldn't promote me, support me, or look past what I look like on the outside. I am humbly proud to straighten any crown on someone's head, including mine."



## As A Female Leader, I Believe My Ability To Be Relatable Is A Special Tool In My "Toolkit"; It's A Strength I Wield Purposefully, A Sword I Should Never Discard

Not every human is meant to be a leader, but Angie is different. She has had the most challenging relationships in her career with other female leaders and strongly believes that for centuries many women haven't been put on equal levels with other genders, which has created incredible challenges and hardships to overcome. "However, I have noticed that when you show up as a female leader with a mental attitude of caring deeply while challenging directly, it is highly valued, respected, and appreciated," she states. "I truly care about how I make others feel after working with me. As a female leader, I believe my ability to be relatable is a special tool in my "toolkit"; it's a strength I wield purposefully, a sword I should never discard."

### Creating A Bright Future

InVision stands at an inflection point, primed for future success. Its mission is to be the best audience engagement agency to work with and for. Simply put, Angie wants to wake up and show up the best she can every day. "Today I may only have 75% of my A game, but my team and everyone around me can count on me giving my best of that A game, and tomorrow is a new opportunity," adds the pioneering leader. "I have been telling the team I am "drinking from the proverbial fire hose" in my first 60 days here. It's true! And guess what? The water tastes super sweet around here."

Two vital qualities of InVision that are also its most significant achievements are Culture and Clients. The company has been successful in creating a culture where people can be themselves, build careers, learn new skills, celebrate one another, give back to the world in significant ways, build work colleagues that eventually become family, and now, as employee owners share in the agency's success, profits and impact on the future. As for clients, the company has clients who have been loyal to them for over thirty years. Their needs over thirty years and the new brands InVision onboards each year are drastically different. "We focus on relationships and turning those into solving profoundly complex business challenges around creating experiences that engage, inspire, and move audiences. When you put people and clients first over profits, magic happens," she says. Angie's goal is to begin a listening tour. As a first-time CEO, Angie wants to understand, listen, and incorporate as many brilliant ideas as possible because those ideas culminate into great success. She wants to actively listen and comprehend her surroundings and create space and grace to make a thriving company that has the potential to transform itself tremendously.

For the near future, Angie and her team want to concentrate on breaking through the shackles of old systems and creating a new version of InVision. She also wants to develop the company into an environment that thrives. "I have been handed an incredible opportunity with deep roots, and I intend to water it, nurture it, and care for it like my own. As one of the 168 employee-owners, I know we can continue our success and thrive like never before!" she states. "I consider InVision's secret sauce to be ingenuity. This is clearly one thing that has led to InVision's success. It's something that a company needs to provide space for. Encourage innovation and a culture of taking risks and the learnings and gains that come with that!" rro