



MIRS Headline: More Than One Shark On Mackinac Island

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Business executive, reality TV star and Mackinac Policy Conference guest speaker Mark Cuban wasn't the only shark present on Mackinac Island this week. Michigan's District 10 Democratic congressional candidate **Diane Young** said her non-profit work has included advising business owners on multiple "shark tanks."

Young joked that one of them was called a "dolphin tank" to make it sound nicer, but her role was more-or-less the same: to advise women on their business strategies and help them develop a pitch to present before a panel.

One woman she coached started a software company, Young said, while another developed a natural hair care product. Young's job was to help them attractively present their business plan.

"If you're watching 'Shark Tank,' you don't have very long to capture someone's attention," Young said. "With any business, you have your elevator pitch."

Young said she worked with two programs for several years, and all the candidates she coached placed in their respective competitions.

Her strength with entrepreneurs was to take the messages they wanted to disseminate and condense them into something that the average person would be interested in, Young said.

She learned this skill through her career as a financial planner in New York in 1989.

But this skill in packaging will now translate to her congressional campaign, Young said.

"Being able to take those complex things and make them as simple as possible is important because your constituents are busy," she said. "They have their lives to live. They don't want to worry about that, but they want to know."

Young said the best and most interesting parts of her job in financial planning are the ones that revolve around working with people, which has also helped during her campaign thus far.

"Obviously, fundraising is going to be important," Young said of the months ahead. "But (Congressman) [John JAMES \(R-Farmington Hills\)](#) had lots of money and barely won, so money is only going to take you so far."

Having the base be excited about you, having the energy to pull it off and having the field strategy to execute your plan are what will really matter, she said.

So far, the response from her base has been very positive. Young said she's received early endorsements and has visited many different pockets within the district, receiving widely positive responses.

Young said she's also been in communication with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC), though they made it clear that they don't endorse in a primary.

“But they’re willing to provide the same services that they can provide to any of the candidates in the primary,” she said, “so they’ve been very engaged with us since Day 1.”

Young added that her decision to be the first Democrat to announce in MI-10 was a strategic choice that put her out ahead of the pack.

“We need to get in there early and start fundraising and putting the team together,” she said, “so that’s why I jumped in.”

Though Young ran for Michigan’s 36th State House seat in 2016, losing to incumbent former Rep. Peter **LUCIDO** with 28.16% of the vote, she said that experience isn't like her congressional campaign.

Young said she put her name on the ballot because no one else stepped up in the 70% Republican district.

“I knew I wasn’t going to win, but I wanted to shine a light on some issues,” she said. “With the fact that I was able to raise as much money as I did, and how much engagement I had and how many people were really supportive, I don't think I would have done anything different.”

Besides the makeup of the district, with MI-10 more competitive, Young said the biggest difference she’s noticed during her congressional campaign is the national interest in her race.

When you’re running in a state House race, the only people involved are those directly surrounding you, she said, and maybe lobbyists who are interested in something that would need your vote.

Young said she’s now experienced calling people all over the country and gaining their support.

When asked how she plans to structure her campaign, Young told a story of her career in New York financial planning. At that time, she saw how women were disenfranchised and discouraged from participating in finance.

She said as a woman in finance, she was put on councils and workgroups, “and they treated us like a segment or a target market.

“We're not a target market,” she said. “We're 51% of the population.”

Young said she started her own company in 2004, with the goal of changing the entry point into a typical household. In a traditional firm, the point of entry into the household and all the marketing is geared towards men, she said.

“It wasn’t that I ignored them,” she said. “It’s just that my point of entry into the household was her.”

Young said that experience has helped inform her campaign today, because “women do want change. They do need a seat at the table.”

Her goal? To have all voices at the table, including female voices.

Young said she has been exposed to the importance of including the whole community in community development through her business experience, as well as extensive non-profit work, including as treasurer of the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan, Paint Creek Center for the Arts, Inforum, the Rochester Rotary Charities Board, the Warren Symphony Orchestra and the Financial Planning Association of Michigan.

In addition to volunteer work, Young said she’s an avid trivia participant, even trying out for “Jeopardy!” once while living in New York.

“It was crazy,” she said. “They give you 50 questions, a little piece of paper, and then Alex (Trebek) comes up on the screen and you have three seconds to write an answer down.”