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# ED magazine

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## PLATINUM SOLUTIONS

Whatever your processing needs —  
whether it's better rates, better  
service or a new bank —  
***Miriam Ramos has got your back***

PLATINUM SOLUTIONS



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# PLATINUM SOLUTIONS

## The Platinum standard for credit card processing

**Miriam Ramos** of Platinum Processing knows the stigma the gentlemen's club industry faces in the eyes of the financial world. From day one, she's fought banks and credit card companies to destigmatize this industry and its relationship with those key financial institutions.



**ACE**  
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**M**iriam Ramos picked up the phone. On the other end was her bank, informing her that her business was no longer welcome — as a result of taking a check from a gentlemen's club for processing equipment.

The next day, she marched into the bank, closed all her accounts and from that day forward, began establishing relationships with banks all around the country so she could provide not only herself, but every client in need of help, with the contact they needed to open an account without fear of being shut down.

Gentlemen's clubs, meet Miriam.

Ramos represents Platinum Processing, a credit card processing firm that handles a vast array of businesses. Within this context, Ramos handles gentlemen's clubs and has been handling them for two decades.

"There are many, many industries that do a high volume in processing," says Ramos. "But this one has my passion because I hate discrimination. It's not fair what happens to them.

"It's an industry to be proud of," Ramos adds. "They do legitimate, honest business. They're hard working, they are some of the most diligent business owners in the way that they take credit cards. They know what they're doing. I'm proud to support them, I really am."

In addition to her boundless zeal for her processing crusade, Ramos also points to availability and history as critical components to her success.

"She really cares about her clients," says Joey Bien, owner of Treasure Clubs. "It's unbelievable, the service you get from her and her company. It's amazing. We used two other processors before we found her and you can't compare them. She's so incredibly helpful. She's honest-to-God great."

### **Giving the industry a fair shake**

Originally hailing from a creative background, Ramos found credit card processing afforded her more time in one place.

But, the processing industry wasn't without its warts.

"When I came into the industry, it wasn't an easy industry for me to break into," she says. "Part of it is the resistance to change because so much of what I had to say before was what club owners had heard before. However, I found that I could also make a difference. I could bring in big business and I could bring in small business, and I could even the playing field so everyone can have the same opportunities to enjoy the same rates and the same type of service."

It didn't take long for Ramos to see the marginalization the gentlemen's club industry can face in the fiscal world. She was working with one of her first accounts some 15 years ago, a multi-unit club owner. Ramos was looking at his statement from his then processor.

"I was appalled at what I was seeing," she says. "I couldn't believe he was paying those rates. I asked, 'Do you realize what you're being charged?' He said, 'I do, but I also know it's really hard to get a credit card processor.' I said, 'But, why? Do you have a strong history of chargebacks? What's the problem?' There was nothing, other than the fact that his industry was viewed as a negative.

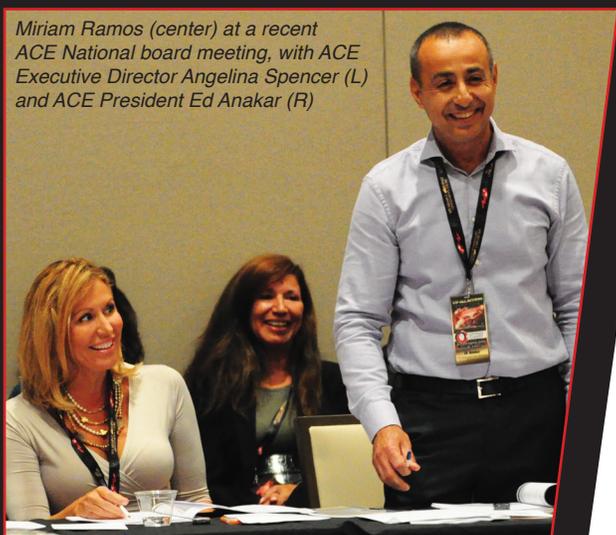


*Miriam Ramos*



Joey Bien

**S**he really cares about her clients. It's unbelievable, the service that you get from (Miriam) and her company.  
- Treasure Clubs owner Joey Bien



Miriam Ramos (center) at a recent ACE National board meeting, with ACE Executive Director Angelina Spencer (L) and ACE President Ed Anakar (R)

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"When I became aware of that, doing the research and learning more about the industry, I just wanted to help them," Ramos adds. "They often incur rates higher than necessary and unfairly so."

"Another benefit I am not aware of any other processor offering is Data Breach Protection," she continues. "All business owners are required to be compliant, but that's it. Other than not experiencing heavier fees, what's the reward for being compliant? With us, we offer clubs true data breach insurance that covers them for \$100,000."

She explains that data breach is not just having a system being hacked, it can be essentially any single fraudulent transaction or compromise of information, based on technical or human error.

### Beware the "introductory rate"

Ramos knows processing representatives will claim better rates for gentlemen's clubs — those she has deemed "starter rates" — for a short time.

Sooner or later, the rates go up, the representative who took the club's application is no longer in the industry or with the company and they can't get to them directly, or they're stuck with a toll-free number, which may be located in the same building as the processor ... or in another country.

"It's all over the place, there's no consistency," bemoans Ramos. "That's the difference with us. We are consistent. We are privately owned. We're all under one roof. So if there's an issue with your service, you can deal with that person one on one. I can make things right for them by having that access."

"The one thing that you can ask any client that works with me — ask them if they've ever had service like they get from me and each and every one will tell you the service I provide, they've never had before," says Ramos.

Service is one thing. Effective service is a game changer. And the latter makes a world of difference when counting lost profit. According to a 2019 article from chargeback website Chargebacks911, fraud will cost merchants upwards of \$25 billion a year by 2020.

"That's a lot of money being lost," says Ramos. "The service has been provided, the drinks have been served, the food has been eaten, but the money is now gone. So it falls on that club owner to have to pick up that loss and that adds to their losses."

Ramos says she clocks in a 97% success rate, chalking up the other three percent to human error.

"I go to another level with chargebacks," says Ramos. "It's not just sending me a receipt and a copy of the driver's license or the credit card. It's not just that. It's explaining what happened. I will help you write a cover letter to Visa. It's educating that club owner in taking the proper steps while running the transaction to mitigate chargebacks. It's not just sending in the receipts, there's more to it. And that's why I win."

### Personal touch

When asked if her contagious affinity for processing actually makes a difference on the technical side of things, Ramos answers as kindly as possible in the affirmative.

"It makes all the difference in the world," says Ramos. "Your relationships in any industry are what make the difference, your reputation. We don't just support the gentlemen's club world. We

support a lot of different industries, we're recognized by a lot of different associations."

It's that collective power from various industries that bolsters Ramos' case, both ways. Club owners see she can back up her word, while the other industries take stock of the credibility bump Ramos offers the clubs.

"What helps us to have a louder voice and helps us to get (clubs) the rates they deserve, the recognition and the service is by them coming together and supporting us in the way we support them," she says.

It's no shock gentlemen's clubs are often labeled as high-risk businesses. But Ramos explains that while it is an uphill climb, clubs can take steps on their own in the right direction.

"It seems to have become a regular occurrence for a club owner to receive a call informing them, 'You have two days to find yourself a new processor,' and the reason normally is because the application wasn't taken properly in the beginning," says Ramos, a comment that comes from experience. "They're listed as a bar, a restaurant, a nightclub, anything and everything except a gentlemen's club. I don't do that. There's no reason to hide it.

"Often, my clients will call me — whether it's a new or existing client — saying banks they've had long-term relationships with no longer wish to do business with them," says Ramos. "They're given a very short amount of notice to find another bank for their operating accounts. I will, and I can, find another bank for any of my clients. And it doesn't take me long."

Having worked with gentlemen's clubs as long as she has, Ramos has been able to help many owners in unusual circumstances process in a way that allows them to do business without these concerns.

"You have to understand what your client experiences in order to run their business effectively," she says. "Knowing what they experience, the hurdles they face, helps me to know how to help them, especially when it comes to chargebacks. It also helps me to know how to negotiate and help them get the rates they get from me."

Ramos explains this point about her relationships as she gets up, ready to mingle at the Association of Club Executives (ACE) meeting at the most recent Gentlemen's Club EXPO at Planet Hollywood in Las Vegas.

"The people she deals with and her company understand we're legitimate businesses that work really hard," says Bien. "We're entitled to our money. We're not ripping guests off. And she fights for that."

"Rates aren't everything," she says cheerfully. "Rates are wonderful — that helps (club owners') profitability. But it goes above and beyond that. You have literally thousands of processors that call you or want to work with you. I don't think — and if there is I haven't met them — there is any processor out there that has the relationships, the passion and the ability to bring you the service, the rates, the consistency that I do. It's understanding (clubs) that allows me to work harder for them or work the right way for them. I know how to help them."

**For more information, please visit [merchantservicesforyou.com](http://merchantservicesforyou.com) or call (216) 543-4983. Platinum Processing is an ACE National Preferred Vendor.**



**T**here are many industries that do high-volume processing. But this one has my passion because I hate discrimination.  
- *Miriam Ramos*

