

Women Navigating Their Career in a Business World



With the advent of Women's Day and having the privilege to listen to a plethora of powerful women and their inspirational messages, I thought it appropriate to deliberate the importance of women navigating their career scape and reaching the heights they aspire to.

Looking at the backdrop of women successes globally, Fortune highlights some of the most powerful women in business such as Marilyn Hewson, Mary Barra and Sheryl Sandberg to name a few. Forbes further goes on to say last year was a groundbreaking year for women in business. Notably Sheryl Sandberg was named the No 1 most powerful business women.

In our South African landscape names such as Maria Ramos, former CEO of Absa Bank and Transnet comes to mind.

With only 5% of CEO's in the Top 40 JSE listed companies how can women navigate the business world and aspire to leadership positions as some of the women mentioned above.

As an executive coach, having journeyed with aspiring leaders to leadership positions, key themes always arise, such as visibility, T-Skills, emotional intelligence, reinvention, etc.

To navigate questions and ideas that come up from the key themes above, we work with one of my tools the GENOS Emotional Intelligence Model. The tool covers six competencies; self-awareness, awareness of others, authenticity, emotional reasoning, self-management and inspiring performance.

Unpacking this model in the context of the journey of progression in their careers has been a valuable exercise.

I have briefly unpacked the model in the context of the journey of progression in your career below;

Self-awareness; Women need to invest in understanding themselves better in order to master their own lives. One of the assessments I use here is the PDA (personal development analysis). Through a simple, precise and scientifically validated methodology, the PDA describes and analyses the behavioural profile of individuals, identifying their talents, motivators, strengths, agility, self-control, self-confidence and job matching. Knowing this about yourself gives you the opportunity to know your strengths and play to them. Understanding and knowing the contribution you bring to a role and your unique skill set which will set you apart.

Awareness of others; From the point of growth in your career and understanding the concept of awareness of others, gives you the ability to learn to adjust your style so that it fits well with others. Engaging and accurately viewing situations from others perspectives. Giving you an added advantage of accurately anticipating responses or reactions from others which will set you up for success at that boardroom table.

Authenticity; Understand yourself by knowing your limiting beliefs will enable you to work at them and still be your authentic self. Sheryl Sandberg notes in her book “Lean In” that women have internal barriers and external barriers.

By working on your internal barrier of limiting beliefs you can still come from a place of authenticity at the boardroom table.

Emotional Reasoning; Demonstrating this competency a woman can gain an expansive view on situations. I often coach around the area of visibility and relationship building and women tend to be great at relationship building but not for the reasons of being visible and leverage. Women can still be their authentic selves if they use emotional reasoning to understand their context, system within which they work and to use relationship building as opportunity for growth by leveraging such relationships whilst still being authentic. Strategic, focused networking will set women well on their career trajectory. Key is to ask for guidance and employ a mentor.

Self-Management; Set a plan for your professional life and personal development. Be someone who strives for continuous learning. Put yourself in uncomfortable positions by putting your hand up for stretch assignments or difficult tasks. Remember you will grow your confidence and visibility through this. It is good to take risks (calculated).

Inspiring performance; The last of the competencies I am going to unpack but so very important. Women need to encourage women peers and subordinates to aspire to develop and grow. Sponsor and mentor women in your workplace. If its in your capability, help facilitate other women’s development and afford them the opportunity to advance their careers.

I am an advocate of work-life balance which means different things for different people and in different stages of your life. By understanding your context, your season, your responsibility, your values, you can

then take action to move toward your ambition.

Should you be a decision maker in HR, L&D and are looking to develop or update your succession management model in terms of job matching and to identify competency gaps and implement the required development plans for your aspiring leaders, then reach out to us on the below detail. Let us partner with you to allow your employees to grow and reach their potential.

Alternatively, if you are an established and / or emerging women leader who wants to embark on a journey of self-discovery and fast track your career and / or business growth, engage with me on the below details so you can gain clarity of intention and make correct choices congruent with your authentic self using our PDA Tool.

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