

Keys to Success: Advancing Your Career for Working Women in Baseball

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1. **Self-awareness**
2. **Self-branding**
3. **Building a network**

Over the past 20 years, I've had the opportunity to coach and consult with some outstanding leaders, many of which have been women. Whether at the executive level or just starting out in their careers, there are some specific keys to success that I've observed that separate successful leaders from those who aren't as successful. I'd like to talk with you about 3 keys to advancing your careers and enhancing your life. I think these are essential when you work in any field, particularly a non-traditional one like baseball.

The ***first key to success is self-awareness***. Self-awareness is the capability to recognize, understand and monitor your thoughts, feelings and intentions. When you are self-aware, you understand yourself and how your behavior affects others. Some of us are more self-aware than others. When we aren't self-aware, it sometimes takes a life crisis to point out our blind spots – loss of job, a marriage ending or a bout with cancer are all examples.

As you move up in an organization, one of the biggest reason people fail is lack of self awareness. Yet this is one area that I believe woman have an advantage. Research shows that women are more likely to be self-reflective. The challenge is often making the time to reflect with so many competing demands. Review your day and try to helicopter over it from a higher perspective. Don't get caught up in the details but recall how you were feeling in certain situations and what your intentions were. Also make sure that you aren't "stuffing" your feelings. Overtime, keeping your feelings checked without being aware of them can build up and erupt in inappropriate ways like overreacting to someone's comment or losing your temper. Get some feedback from one of your peers to get another perspective on how you might be coming across. Pay attention to the feedback you are getting from others.

The ***second key to success is self-branding***. Building a personal brand is all about knowing your strengths and applying them in what you do. Your brand becomes a way to distinguish yourself in your organization. In my book, ***CEO Road Rules***, I interviewed a woman named Jan Alpert who started out in a male dominated business. She went from front line employee to eventually becoming president of LandAmerica Financial Group which grew to about \$3B during that time. Jan felt that her success came from taking on roles and projects that others didn't always want to volunteer for. Her personal

brand in the company, what she was known for, became that of someone you could count on to take on roles others wouldn't and do them well. As she took on new roles and tasks, she always made it her practice to find and coach someone to be her successor in whatever position she held. Jan developed a reputation for getting things done and developing great talent. Equally important, she really loved coaching others and found fulfillment in that part of her work.

Your brand is something that distinguishes you from others and aligns with who you are so it's important to be clear about what type of work is purposeful for you. What excites you? What are you passionate about? How can you build that into what you are currently doing like Jan did with developing others? Take a moment to think about these questions and don't judge your responses. Another important question to answer is: What you would like to be doing in your career that you haven't had the opportunity to do yet? When you take that personal passion and link it up with something that brings value added to the organization, you develop a brand and a reputation for success.

The ***third and last key to career success*** that I'd like to share is the importance of building a network that supports your growth. You can do this in a variety of ways. For the past five years, I have facilitated and coached a peer group of CEOs that run technology-driven companies. The group helps each other get clarity and weigh choices that individually, none of the CEOs would see in the same way. The proverbial switch goes off when the CEO presenting his or her issue understands the situation from a new perspective. I recall one time when the CEO presenting a business issue was projecting growth to be flat over the upcoming year. He was about to go onto what he thought his bigger issue was when one of his peers said, "Wait a minute - why are you assuming that your company won't grow? Your intention will dictate what happens so if you plan to have a flat year, just give up and play golf."

Organizing a group where women in baseball come together to support each other's goals could be a great way to build a network. Each group should commit to keeping what goes on in the group confidential and each member can share their dreams and goals as well as issues they might be facing to get assistance and new perspectives. Meeting on a regular basis where the group serves as a support and a board of advisors can really enhance your career success.

In closing I'd like to leave you with two thoughts. The first is from Will Rogers who once said, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there." So it's important to act. And the second from author and transformational thinker, Mary Anne Williamson, who points out that, "Our deepest fear is not that we're inadequate, but powerful beyond measure." Know how powerful you are - you can make a real difference in each other's lives and careers!