

How Female Business Leaders Can Combat Prejudice And Inspire Greater Success



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Success as a businesswoman doesn't just finish with fame and fortune; for true success, you need to inspire and elevate other women in business.

By Kayleigh Alexandra



Micro Startups is a business community that celebrates inspiring startups and small businesses of all shapes and sizes. Whether you're a solopreneur or a startup making your way in the business world, we're here to help. For the latest news, inspiring stories and actionable advice, follow us on Twitter [@getmicrostarted](#).

In this post, we'll be looking at exactly how female business leaders can combat prejudice and inspire greater success; read on to find out how.

Be vocal: inspire others with your story

If you're a successful female business leader, one of the best things that you can do to inspire success is to *be vocal*.

You've got invaluable insight into the world of business. Whether you've launched a successful business on your own, front a team of hard workers, or made your first million by the time you were thirty, your experience is unique, which means you've got something very special to offer young female entrepreneurs.

Share your knowledge and use this to inspire others; tell your story and share your successes. It's also important to be honest: speak about your pitfalls, failures and how you overcame them. By sharing, you could be inspiring someone struggling with their startup after a marketing disaster or financial catastrophe — lifting them up and pushing them on.

How you decide to do this is up to you. You could write about your experiences on a blog or write a book. You could empower women by speaking at conferences. You could also host your own podcast; check out these [10 podcasts by female CEOs for women entrepreneurs](#) for inspiration.

Stay value-driven

Staying value-driven is vital to inspiring success in others and combatting prejudice. If you don't have some meaningful, sincere values at the core of everything you do, you will easily lose respect as your business's success grows.

Let these values guide you and drive you. After all, you started your business for a reason because you believe that you've got something valuable to offer the world — whether it's a revolutionary product, [driving social change](#), or a unique approach to an age-old problem.

This will help you to stay motivated and focus on what is important instead of becoming distracted by trivial matters or losing sight of what is really important to you and your brand.

Staying value-driven will also inspire and motivate others who admire your work, your attitude, and what you've achieved.

Be open to learning

Even the most successful female entrepreneurs will always have something new to learn. Your entrepreneurial education doesn't stop just because you've hit your first million or you're selling products in 50 countries around the world.

Running your own business is an ongoing process that involves broadening your knowledge, streamlining your operations and making your business the very best it can be.

This could be anything from learning about innovative new approaches to marketing, to switching the platform you run your business on (such as going from a traditional ecommerce model to a scalable, multi-channel platform).

This extends to making mistakes and learning from them. Ask any hugely successful entrepreneur, and they'll say that this is what helps you to learn and grow as a business leader.

[Be honest about your mistakes](#); we all make them. It's not the mistake that counts, but it how you rectify it and improve your process the next time around.

This is particularly important if you manage a team — you need to set a good example as a leader and inspire them. They won't respect you if you're unable to own up to your mistakes or pretend that they don't exist. Worse still, this approach will infiltrate your business's culture, resulting in a lack of ownership and your employees hiding their mistakes for fear of reprimand.

The best thing you can do is to be transparent and honest when faced with problems — ensuring that your employees are comfortable and confident when communicating their own.

Nurture your team

As a successful female business leader, you're in a position of power. If you have a team of staff that work under you — whatever the size of your business — then you need to use this power for good, and nurture your team.

Make sure that you treat them with respect and patience. Let them know that you value them and the hard work they put into the team; communicate well and train when needed. You want them to enjoy turning up to work, feel inspired by you as a boss, and most importantly, to *thrive* in the job that they're doing. This is how you're going to get the most out of them as employees, but also how you're going to impact their lives for the better too.

Taking the time and care to nurture your team will give you the opportunity to instill your brand values in them too. Each individual you employ is essentially a brand representative, so you want your values to align. They are representing your brand, but they will only do this to the best of their ability if they have a source of motivation and pride: an inspiring leader.

Your success will elevate them, which will, in turn, help them to go on to do greater things — either in your business or, when the time is right, outside of it; inspiring a new generation of successful female entrepreneurs.

Keep your bias in check

If you want to combat prejudice and inspire success as a female business leader, you need to be diverse, inclusive and fair.

You would think it would go without saying that to combat prejudice in the workplace, you need to keep diversity and fairness in mind at all times — particularly as most successful women in business have probably faced prejudice and unfair bias during their career progression.

However, [recent research](#) suggests that *both* sexes still consider women less qualified for leadership positions than men, and have an inherent gender bias against women in the workplace which can stall career progression.

Bias and inequality in the workplace are a paradoxical issue; for women to succeed as

leaders and influencers, we need to adopt traits typically associated with men — confidence and decisiveness and so on. Yet we simultaneously need to be “likable” and keep our “feminine” traits of being warm and friendly. It’s a hard balance to achieve.

Women in business are as guilty of these perceptions and stereotyping as men, so it’s important to keep your unconscious bias in check. Recognize harmful behavior and discrimination, and try to be as balanced and fair as possible.

These are just some of the ways that female business leaders can combat prejudice and inspire greater success. By keeping these in mind, you can ensure not only a great place to work, but will also inspire success in others — both inside and outside your business.