

Successful Women in Business

by Daniela Rocafuerte

"Lean in, speak out, have a voice in your organization, and never use the word 'sorry'." (Trish Bertuzzi)



Nowadays, women 's leadership is undeniably key to the covid-19 response and recovery since many of the countries that have successfully responded to the pandemic are led by women. However, also in business, women and their distinct leadership style, often are a success model.

Technology and innovation have transformed our world, how we work, learn and communicate. Digital revolution represents one of the biggest opportunities for women and girls to achieve personal and financial success. Currently, women-owned business continues to be the shining star in the current market. They are sitting side by side and establishing a position in a variety of industries, including publishing, technology, fashion, broadcasting and beauty.

One of the women who have overcome odds of society and serve as an inspiration for all those to follow is CEO Washington Post, Katherine Graham.

She was one of the first female publishers of an American newspaper and the first-ever female chief executive officer of a Fortune 500 company.

As Katherine directed the company the revenue grew by more than 1\$ billion, making her one of the country's most influential business leaders. Katherine had no idea of the challenges ahead of her but as stated in her autobiography "Personal History", "What I essentially did was to put one foot in front of the other, shut my eyes, and step off the edge". That courage led her to become the first female CEO.

Simultaneously, upset with the way the male-dominated business world functioned, Mary Kay Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, made a list of all the pros and cons she'd experienced while working for previous companies and discovered the "perfect plan" for a successful company. Kay told her people to rank life's priorities with God first, family second, and work third. With this as her life motto, she launched her company "Stanly Home Products" and became one of the most significant impressions of success. Mary sustained: "Don't limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you. What you believe, remember you can achieve."

Moreover, since January 2014, CEO of General Motors, Mary Barra, assumed her role as Executive Director of General Motors, an American automobile, truck and motor company. She is the first CEO of the most important automotive firm. Mary stated as crucial for a company's success: "If we win the hearts and minds of employees, we're going to have better business success".

Finally, Indra Nooyi, PepsiCo's CEO, the second largest food and beverage business in the world is considered one of the 100 most influential women on the planet by Forbes magazine. This woman's innovative strategies have been increasing her investment in research and development by 25% since 2011. She is known as the Iron Lady of Wall Street. "[...] The challenge of a leader is looking around the corner [...] and making the change before it's too late to make the change [...]" are some wise words by Indra that give us a sneak peek on how she achieved success.

These women represent a small percentage of the great women community in business. The one common factor among their stories is that success does not

come easy, especially during this male-dominated world. As the economic development specialist, Rosita Najmi, said: “Global economy still does not work for women and girls”.

Achievement goes hand in hand with difficulty and challenges. Women in 2021 still face many barriers in the pursue of success due to harmful gender stereotypes, economic issues, lack of support and unequal access to education and technology. These barriers are a huge burden on women and their families. The struggles we face are not just economical, technological or physical but human - the human system is broken.

When women achieve financial freedom, equality will follow. Today more than ever, it is important to stand for women in leadership roles to attain better governance, sustainable development and progress toward full gender equality in a covid-19 world. Women must never lose sight of the significance of small professional, social and individual struggles; they are a requirement for great things.