

HOW WOMEN CAN BUILD LEADERSHIP SKILLS

ADVICE FROM WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP



Successful women leaders develop personal leadership skills by blending technical expertise with emotional intelligence, proactive networking, and a growth mindset. The guidance that follows comes from successful women in leadership positions.

1. Build a Growth Mindset and Resilience

Embrace Setbacks as Feedback: Women in leadership suggest embracing failure to remove its stigma, treating redirection as a learning opportunity.

Step Out Before You're Ready: Successful leaders often “jump in” to new roles or assignments before they feel 100% prepared, recognizing that *confidence is built through action* rather than preceding it.

Amplify Your Achievements: Overcome imposter syndrome—and build team trust—by maintaining a “win list” or “failure resume” to acknowledge both successes and mistakes transparently.

2. Practice Strategic Networking and Relationship Building

Seek Sponsors, Not Just Mentors: While mentors offer advice, sponsors actively advocate for you when decisions are made. A sponsor uses their influence to highlight your value to others.

Establish a “Personal Board of Directors”: Build a diverse network of peers, mentors, and industry authorities who can provide different perspectives and help you navigate workplace complexity.

Practice “Climbing With, Not Over”: Foster a collaborative environment by celebrating the successes of others and elevating team members, which creates a stronger, more innovative organization.

3. Master Leadership Presence and Communication

Lead with Authenticity: Focus on being your “true self” rather than conforming to traditionally masculine leadership styles. Authenticity builds deeper connections and long-term loyalty.

Refine Your “Why”: Shift from being a manager (the “what” and “how”) to a leader by clearly articulating a compelling vision (the “why”) that aligns your personal values with workplace goals.

Hone Decisive Communication: Use powerful, direct language and avoid over-apologizing or using subservient phrasing (“I’ll do whatever you decide,” deferring to another’s opinion, deprioritizing your own needs, etc.) to ensure your competence is clearly seen.

4. Prioritize Well-being and Intentionality

Model Work-Life Alignment: Leadership is inseparable from personal well-being. Setting boundaries and prioritizing self-care prevents burnout and allows you to lead more effectively.

Be Strategic About Time: Ditch perfectionism and focus on impact over volume. Use the “8-8-8 Rule” (8 hours work, 8 hours family/giving back, 8 hours sleep) and related strategies to maintain a sustainable pace.