

Women at Work: Five Tips for Success

by Bill Poston



Recently, I had the great privilege of addressing the [Innovate, Achieve & Mentor Conference](#) on the campus of Monterrey Tech. The event was designed to address the opportunities and challenges for women in technology-related fields.

I was a little intimidated by the invitation as the only male on a nine-speaker agenda. The title of my talk was assigned to me by the ladies in the Kalypso office in Monterrey. I was to talk about, “Women at Work: Five Tips for Success.” No negotiation. I had to come up with something smart to tell one hundred women that are either in college or recent college graduates. After affirming my belief that women already run the world (at least my world), this is what I said:

Tip #1: Your work should make you come alive.

Strengths are not things that you are good at; strengths are things that make you feel strong. Just because you may have a knack for writing software doesn’t necessarily make it a strength. Define your path and spend your days doing work that energizes you. The traditional definition of a strength can leave you tired and miserable. Come alive.

Tip #2: Proactive leadership is a clear differentiator.

Take control of yourself, your calendar and your role. Do not let other people define your priorities. We spend too much time doing things that are “good to do” without recognizing the costs. Understand that you are always saying no to something, even when you say yes, you are saying no to all other alternatives. Own your days and control your time.

Tip #3: Fight for what is right.

Approach situations and negotiations with a balance of courage and consideration for the other party. With many women in business, there is tendency to play the role of peace keeper. The ability to empathize is strong, but too often that leads to less-than-optimal outcomes for you. Courage is the willingness to find a solution that satisfies your needs without giving in.

Tip #4: Be trust-“worthy.”

Trust is the best social lubricant. Understanding the factors that enable trust in all relationships gives you an advantage. Credibility, reliability, interpersonal skills, and a selfless orientation are the foundations of a trust-based relationship. Knowing these factors also helps diagnose a lack of trust you may have in others. Trust makes all our interactions and business dealings smoother.

Tip #5: Understand value and money.

Many successful technical professionals and even great tech entrepreneurs do not know the basics of finance. Love and money make the world go around. Learn about money and learn how to estimate the true value of things, including your contribution to your employer and your “great” business idea. Being able to manage money makes your life easier.

I hope that these tips were helpful. They received enthusiastic applause, but then again, these women are very polite.

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