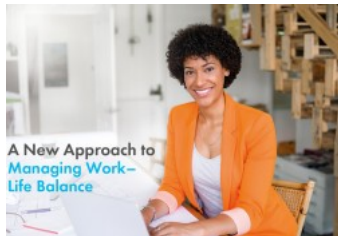




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Secrets to Success

October 8, 2018



It's no secret that IAW members are an accomplished group of professional women, with many of them owning their own businesses.

So, since October is National Women's Small Business Owners Month, we thought we'd ask a few of them to share their advice and insight about running a successful company. Some of these members have been in the same business for years, others are just starting out and others were inspired to make a major career change.

From career coach to travel agent to healthcare professional and more, the members we're highlighting have forged successful careers in diverse industries using their own unique skills and talents. As you read their stories, you'll learn how they've stared down obstacles and never let the naysayers deter them from their goals. Instead, they persevered and took chances. And through it all, they've relied on their networks, often turning to other IAW members for support and encouragement because here's another secret: when women work together, there's no stopping us!

Kelly Bates, Founder of Travel Souly



For years, Kelly worked as an Executive Assistant where the bulk of her responsibilities was researching, planning and executing travel arrangements for CEOs. In 2017, she learned she was being laid off. She was unsure of her next step, but with the encouragement of her then soon-to-be-former boss, she decided to parlay her expertise. Soon after, TRAVEL SOULY (<https://www.travelsouly.com/>) was born!

Her secrets to success? "There aren't any," Kelly said. "Success is not something handed to you on a silver platter, nor does it happen overnight. Success is earned! It's that simple." With that said, she does offer some advice: don't be afraid to fail, use it as a motivator; work hard and focus all of your energy on succeeding; stay positive; visualize your success and then make it happen; don't get too far ahead of yourself, especially financially; be selective, don't say yes to everyone who reaches out to collaborate; be patient; listen, observe and learn; celebrate your accomplishments and never stop believing in yourself.

Kelly admits that when she first started talking about starting up TRAVEL SOULY, those around her expressed doubt but today, she said, "I no longer see the doubt in their eyes." Her company is a success and she readily admits that IAW has provided her with a positive support network. "The women I have been interacting with are eager to help," Kelly said. "The webinars have been beyond educational, and I find myself learning about topics I never even thought would have had an impact on me and my business. IAW wrote a press release, which I shared with my social media networks. The response that generated was unbelievable! Almost instantly, my posts were being shared by the people in my networks, which lead to referrals and new business."

Ashanti Middleton, Host and Creator of Taste & Toast with Ashanti Middleton

Inspired by her younger brother to pursue a career in the entertainment industry, Ashanti created Taste & Toast with Ashanti Middleton (<https://ashantimiddleton.com/optin-22173938>), a food and drink review channel she hosts. Ashanti promotes her show through her website (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1GkNrjm2ZUz0kMZGwZJOlg>), YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1GkNrjm2ZUz0kMZGwZJOlg>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/p/Be4JLZ9nt1t/>).



Asked to reveal her secrets to success Ashanti was more than happy to share what she's learned along the way. It is important, she said, to do tons of research. "Look up your competitors and people in your field that have succeeded and failed," Ashanti said. "Ask, what did they do good? What did they do wrong? How can you do it differently and perhaps better?" Other secrets Ashanti shared are: Learn from your mistakes and allow them to help you grow; be willing to accept feedback, even if it hurts a bit; and always remain humble.

Ashanti cited the number one secret to her success is growing her network. "Growing your network is key to growing your net worth," she said.

Jennifer Schuck, President of Caption Pros



Her dream was to be a Legal Secretary but on the advice of a high school teacher, Jennifer enrolled in a court reporting program at a local business college. She eventually embarked on a successful career as a Court Reporter. She later transitioned into captioning and in 2001, founded Caption Pros (<https://captionpros.net/>), where she and her team provide real-time captions for the deaf and hard of hearing at live events, for television broadcasting, and in classrooms and boardrooms. She has gone on to win numerous industry awards.

When asked about her secrets to success, Jennifer said being authentic, never pretending to be more than you are, is important. "I may be a small business but I'm honest about what I can offer," she said. "This instills trust and confidence with my clients." Empowering those around you is also one of her secrets. Jennifer credits the hard work and professionalism of her team with helping her to be a success. "I'm only one person," she said. "I need ten of me to get everything done so I empower the rest of my team with the skills and knowledge to give clients the same great experience at every single event."

Jennifer cites her IAW membership as being key to growing her business. "With the valuable membership, I gain strength from women empowering other women," Jennifer added. "IAW's webinars and networking opportunities reiterate my secrets to success and keep me moving forward with building my business."

Precious Williams, CEO of Perfect Pitches by Precious

Ever since she was a very young girl, Precious had the gift of gab. At the age of 16, she was already a professional speaker and by her 20s, speaking professionally became her career. After winning 13 national elevator pitch competitions, she founded Perfect Pitches by Precious (<http://www.perfectpitchesbyprecious.com/>). Known as the #KillerPitchMaster (<https://twitter.com/PreciousWEsq/status/1016655696757166081>), Precious now helps women entrepreneurs and others find their voices.

Precious has a few secrets she believes has helped her find success as a business owner. First and foremost, she said, don't be afraid to be different. "This will help people remember you for standing out from the masses of average, random and ordinary," she added. Passion also important. "Your passion equals your profit center," Precious said. "With passion and dogged focus, there is nothing I cannot do once I make up my mind." And, she said, be sure to take action daily. "If you have a dream or goal, break it down and take action towards the goal or dream every day. Little steps lead to massive action."

The connections Precious has made with other IAW members have gone a long way to helping her find success. "My IAW membership has led other successful women entrepreneurs and corporations to seek out my pitching and presentation services, influenced others to see me as the expert in my industry and given me the credibility to stand on my accomplishments and achievements as the #KillerPitchMaster (<https://twitter.com/PreciousWEsq>)," she said.



Joy Thomas, CEO of Daisy's Love



Joy had a successful career as a Senior Executive in the Information Technology sector of the Telecommunications industry. But in 2015, she walked away from that position to start her company, Daisy's Love (<http://www.daisyslove.com/>), a residential home care service agency. She was inspired to take this entrepreneurial leap because of the sudden death of her beloved mother, Daisy. Devastated by the loss, Joy nevertheless turned her grief into something positive and has built a company that honors her mother's tireless work as a healthcare provider and provides quality care for the elderly.

"This company is built upon five guiding principles, which all come from my mom: hope, faith, charity, excellence and joy," explained Joy. "The secret to my success is having an inner passion that motivates me to want to love on the elderly community like no other. I am driven by the desire to keep my mother's legacy alive by doing what she loved to do, which has ultimately been embedded in the core of who I am."

Joy credits IAW with offering her the opportunity to meet with and connect with many other professional women who have contributed to the success of her business. "IAW has given me an amazing platform and a phenomenal network of amazing women from all genres who have helped me to grow and be better for my clients and their families," she said. "It has been an organic evolution of unwavering love and support at all levels."

Elena Ashley, Owner of Ashely Consulting & Training

When Elena was laid off in 2015 from the large database company where she had worked for many years as a Consultant, she was "thrown for a loop." But she persevered and soon after, started her company, Ashley Consulting and Training (<https://ashleyconsultingllc.com/>), a full-service business intelligence/data management services firm.

Here are Elena's secrets to success: "Stay disciplined. Make those sales/follow up calls. They always seem to make it to the bottom of the list – put them on the top and get them done every day," she said. Tenacity, she said, is a "key ingredient for a successful business and career." Always have a back-up plan and "always be ready to pick yourself up, rinse and repeat!" Working smart and hard is another of her secrets. "Put in the hours and learn something new every day," Elena said. "Work smart, know your strengths and hire someone else to handle your weaker skills. Being successful at business means being a smart decision maker, putting in the work and knowing you can't do everything yourself!"

Finding success as a woman in a male-dominated field is never easy so for Elena, having the support of other IAW members is important. "IAW has helped me be more connected and helped me develop relationships with women who I have never really had in my professional life," said Elena, who is President of the Sacramento Chapter. "IAW now provides me a platform to reach out to women in both a personal and professional capacity and continue to grow."

Let's Grow Together!

It's hard enough to get ahead professionally, so why go it alone? IAW will connect you with the support, resources and guidance you need to get ahead. Click the button below to learn more.



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