

When to get your

ALPHA

ON...

Five women at the top of their game share career advice to help you get to the top of yours

Research has found that "being a woman" is the single largest reason for the gender pay gap in Australia*. Add that disgraceful finding to the fact that the ratio of women to men on corporate boards and in executive leadership roles around the country actually *declined* between 2006 and 2008**, and it paints a pretty grim picture for women in the workplace today.

However, despite the odds, many talented and downright inspirational women are rising above the challenges and making their mark in the workforce. We spoke to five successful ladies who are kicking some serious career goals in their respective industries. Here is their advice to you...



The SUCCESS COACH

Rhondalynn Korolak is an author, an international speaker and the managing director of professional coaching company Imagineering Unlimited. She is also a master practitioner of neuro-linguistic programming, a clinical hypnotherapist, and an expert in business acceleration, leadership and mental toughness.

What's your take on the saying, "Nice girls don't get the corner office"? This is an interesting question because I don't aspire to a corner office. For me, it's about being the best at what I do. I don't care where my office is ... I'm never in it, anyway. I prefer to be interacting with clients or speaking in front of groups. As for all the nice girls out there, they can have whatever they want. People do business with people they like. If you're not a nice person, you may get a corner office, but you'll never have the success or respect because others will never think of you as a true leader. **Often young female employees are "too nice", worried they'll appear pushy if they fight for what they want. When do they need to "get their alpha on"?** If you don't back yourself, who will? It's not about being pushy – it's about being committed to do whatever it takes to get the results that you say that

you want. She who is committed will find a way to make her desired outcomes happen. It's that simple. My advice is to get clear and focused about what it is that you want in your career and, more importantly, why. Once you have determined your "why", I believe you can then bear or withstand any "how". Personally, I've never struggled with motivation or worried about getting my "alpha female on". I have a very strong "why" and it drives me in everything that I do. **What one piece of advice can you share with Cosmo readers that you believe will help them in their careers?** Figure out what it is you do better than anyone else in the world – and then do it. There's no sense being a copy of someone else – no matter how interesting or successful they are. For any person looking to achieve a goal, the key to real success is to be exactly who it is you desire to appear to be (in the eyes of others). ▷



The NETWORKING EXPERT

Emma Isaacs is an entrepreneur who started her first business at the tender age of 18. She is now the CEO of Business Chicks – the largest community of women in business in Australia.

What has been your biggest career hurdle to date, and how did you beat it? Being such a young person in business and knowing that my peers had way more experience than I did. I combated that with humility, and by always admitting that they knew more than I did.

What's your take on the saying, "Nice girls don't get the corner office"? It's true. Women need to learn to communicate directly and purposefully. Being "nice" doesn't get us far. We're taught as we're growing up that girls are "sugar and spice and all things nice", and we carry that through to the workplace.

Often young female employees are "too nice" in the workplace, worried they'll appear pushy or ballsy if they fight for what they want. When do they need to "get their alpha on"? It's hard to believe but research shows there's still inequality

of pay between genders. It's important to know your worth and ensure you're rewarded equally for that.

What one piece of advice can you share with Cosmo readers that will help them in their careers?

Don't wait to be asked for opportunities. Have a think about how you want your career to pan out and then go for it. Get well networked.

Best advice for working with men? Be yourself, but remember to be direct and forthright. Don't assume the back foot. Sit forward at every meeting you attend. Understand that guys communicate in numbers, so when pitching or presenting to them, avoid wafty words and fluff – give the hard facts and get to the point.

Best advice for working with women? Be supportive. Understand that they're more inclined to feel through issues (a generalisation, but usually true). Never compete. Never gossip.



The YOUNG GUN

Shereen Mitwalli is the managing director of 21st Century Recruitment. By 21, she was earning over \$100,000 in a sales role, and by 24 she started her own finance recruitment company.

As a managing director, what do you wish your employees knew that would make your job easier? Being "resourceful". You can't have the answer to everything. Being resourceful is something I train my staff to be, so they don't need to rely on myself or others to seek answers.

What's your take on the saying, "Nice girls don't get the corner office"? It depends on your interpretation of "nice girls". For the nice girls who don't stand up for themselves, and allow others to push them around constantly – I would say the comment is very true. You don't get anywhere in life if you don't stand up for yourself. Ambitious women are strategic and 100 per cent focused on their outcome, so if you're serious about

achieving success, make sure everyone around you knows it. Letting people know that you're serious about your career, and you aren't at work simply for the [money], can show this.

Often young female employees are "too nice" in the workplace, worried they'll appear pushy if they fight for what they want. When do they need to "get their alpha on"?

Appearing too pushy is looked down upon in many companies as it's a sign of being "high maintenance" – which no employer wants to see. The secret is balance. Be strong enough to make a point and achieve it, but be a "pleasure" to deal with. I have been described as a "feminine ball-breaker" which made me laugh, but ultimately I had to agree.

The ADVOCATE



Romilly Madew is the CEO of the Green Building Council of Australia. She works

nationally and internationally with industry and all levels of government.

What's your take on the saying, "Nice girls don't get the corner office"? Nice girls can get corner offices – nasty girls won't get the respect in the long run. It's all about being proactive in your career; being ambitious without being ruthless. Being a nice girl did not hold me back. **Often female employees are "too nice" in the workplace, worried they'll appear pushy if they fight for what they want. When do they need to "get their alpha on"?** Plan ahead. If you're turning it on in a meeting, know that you have the support before the meeting to take the approach you are taking – or you'll surprise people. Also, don't put anyone down and don't seem aggressive – it's about being assertive, and there is a difference.

What one piece of advice can you share with Cosmo readers to help them in their careers? It's about presentation – how you look, dress, speak and communicate, both verbally and in writing. Dress for success, and don't overdo it with hair, makeup and cleavage. The women who are taken seriously look the part.

Best advice for working with men? Be yourself, and don't allow them to bully you. Most of my mentors have been males. Understand how they work, and don't try to be one of the boys. Also, learn how to network.

Best advice for working with women? Don't tell them everything about yourself. Women can be good supporters, but they can also be women's worst enemies, so be discerning.



The **ENTREPRENEUR**

Kelly Baker is the founder and managing director of gift delivery service Edible Blooms. It won the 2009 Telstra Small

Business of the Year Award.

What has been your biggest career hurdle to date, and how did you manage to overcome it?

When I was starting up Edible Blooms, people had little faith in the concept and it was difficult finding banks and landlords that were willing to take us on. I made the decision to invest my life savings to start up the business and in the end it worked to my advantage. When the global financial crisis hit, we sailed through it without the burden of debt and growing repayments.

What's your take on the saying, "Nice girls don't get the corner office"?

I don't agree with that saying. I often tell my staff that they will "catch more bees with honey than vinegar". I find people want to really help you when you're a good person, but there is a difference between being nice and being a pushover. Always be polite, but assertive. Don't back down when you believe in something. And, as for the corner office, you shouldn't have to compromise your values for your ambition.

What one piece of advice can you share with Cosmo readers to help them in their careers?

A quote by [Canadian ice-hockey player] Wayne Gretzky really motivates me: "You miss 100 per cent of the shots you never take." I encourage all young women to get out there and face their business idea or career challenges head on. At Edible Blooms, it's written in our company policy that it's OK to make a mistake – we just don't make the same mistake twice.

Best advice for working with men? Don't ever try to emulate a man's behaviour – be true to yourself. Women bring a lot to the business table that men typically don't, such as communication, organisation and empathy skills. Embrace your strengths and allow yourself to stand out as a woman in business.

Best advice for working with women? I have seen women encourage and support one another in the workplace, and I have also seen them compete with one another. My only advice is to work to your strengths while supporting other women that are working to theirs. **Caelia Corse** □

"Don't back down when you believe in something. And, as for the corner office, you shouldn't have to compromise your values for your ambition..."

COSMO COLUMNIST

A ^{MONTH} day in the life

LAST MONTH IN THE OFFICE...

OK, so don't panic, but this is my eighth column, meaning I only have two more to go. Here, have a tissue. I'll do my very best to console you by letting you know what I've been up to this month.

Firstly, did somebody say *SATC2* fever? I'm sure you've all seen the movie, and with a complementary pass from Roadshow Films, so did I. I gave the Yaris the task of finding a non-existent space in the car park. Luckily, it fits pretty much anywhere, meaning I was able to enjoy the movie. And I loved it. Sky-high heels, amazing (and slightly outrageous) clothes, and a crazy adventure or two: is it a cliché to want to be Carrie Bradshaw?

Aside from coveting the life of a fictional character, this month has also been filled with vox pops, another chance to play in the fashion cupboard, and, of course, working on my article. It's called "Is it ever OK to..." and you'll find it (alongside some handy etiquette tips) in the You, You, You section!

As for what's coming next month? Well, let's just say I'm working on my biggest article yet, and am in the process of learning how to juggle interviews with about six different people. I love a good challenge. Until next time...

My pass to see *SATC2*!



Perfecting my Cosmo look is easy in the Yaris.



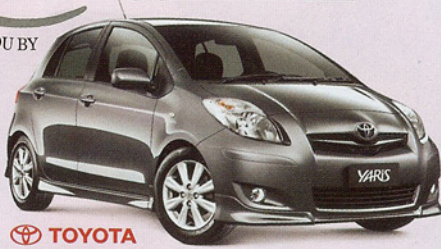
Here, I'm falling in love with the Yaris... even more...



Jane xo



COSMO's Columnist



TOYOTA
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