

Inspirational Lessons from Powerful Female Leaders

The journey up the career ladder often looks different for men and women. Globally, only 29% of all senior management roles are held by women – this number was the same across 2019 and 2020. While this is the highest in history, there's still a long way to go.

But the statistics are on the rise. There are 114% more women entrepreneurs than there were 20 years ago. Bearing in mind women receive just 7% of venture funds for their start-ups, this is an incredible feat. The global economy is relying on the flourishing female-owned business market, and a number of studies have proven them to be better performing than male-owned businesses.

The following female CEOs and leaders across a range of industries have shared inspirational lessons and shine a light on their experience and achievements.

Women face a number of challenges in their careers that their male counterparts do not experience. With the IWD theme last year being **#choosetochallenge** this year being **#breakthe bias**, it's vital to raise awareness of these different experiences and encourage more people to speak up against normalised inequality.

Jennifer Unsworth - Founder & CEO, [Tidy Tot](#)

Share your top tip for women aspiring to leadership roles:

Be true to yourself. Vulnerability and honesty are an asset in leadership; without them you will never be able to influence others around you.

Leadership opportunities cannot really be sought or delegated – you have to create them. Even the most junior of roles present opportunities to show leadership skills; it just requires finding a problem (and let's be honest – there are never shortages of those in business!) and guiding yourself and others out the other side.



Leanne Case - CEO, [Vzir Consulting](#)

Share your top tip for women aspiring to leadership roles:

Be you, be bold and be brave... But back it up with substance. Be yourself, never imitate even those you admire, instead make it your practice to learn, to be active in your own personal and professional development. Be clear about your strengths and weaknesses and develop both. Focus on your own development and on building a strong network. We all need support to achieve progression, but also learn by helping others! Seek mentors, people who you can learn from and sponsors, people that will champion you.



Lucy Aylen - CEO, [Never Fully Dressed](#)

Share your top tip for women aspiring to leadership roles:

Women tend to have more of a humble approach but should believe and be confident in what they have to offer. Women have something so special about them which they can bring to the table in leadership roles.



Lucy Aylen
Founder
never fully dressed

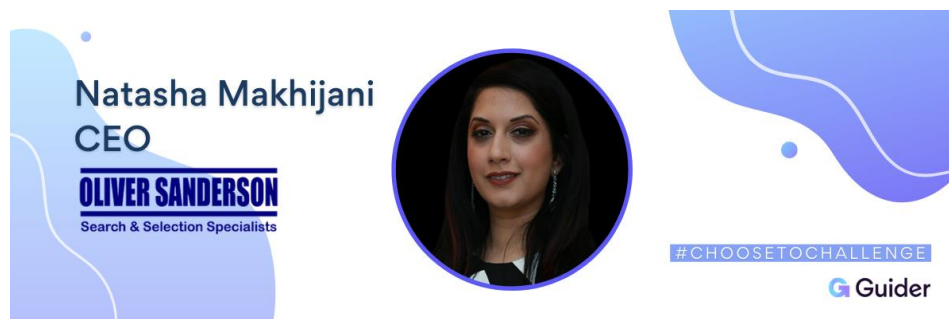


#CHOOSETOCHALLENGE
G Guider


Natasha Makhijani - CEO, [Oliver Sanderson Group PLC](#)

Share your top tip for women aspiring to leadership roles:

Believe in yourself. When someone tells you you can't, you can! But be open to constructive criticism - use it to learn and grow. Always remember, doubts and setbacks are part of everyone's journey - the road to the top is never simple! So be resilient, and never give up. I have been doubted in the past, but I used those doubts as fuel to fire me on to greater successes. You can do it too!



Natasha Makhijani
CEO
OLIVER SANDERSON
Search & Selection Specialists



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Karen Jackson - CEO, [Locala Community Partnerships CIC](#)

Share your top tip for women aspiring to leadership roles:

Never give up – work hard, be enthusiastic, be open to every opportunity and don't let anyone or anything put you off. But remember this is not blind ambition leading to trampling over people – always, always be kind.



Norma Gillespie - CEO, [Resource Solutions](#)

Share your top tip for women aspiring to leadership roles:

It's very simple, and maybe even trite – but just believe in yourself. You won't get everything right all of the time, or make all the right decisions. But you lose 100% of the races you don't take part in, and you learn more from failure than you ever will from getting things right. Leaders who act differently at work than they do at home are disingenuous and can quickly turn people off. Embrace your strengths and weaknesses, hopes and fears, triumphs and failures. We all have them. If you accept yourself, so will your staff and your stakeholders.

