

LOOKING BACK ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



International Women's Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women around the world. It's a day of reflection, but also of action.

As I look back on my career, it wasn't one role, manager, or piece of advice that helped me advance. It was a collection of many things, and I share a few hoping to inspire leaders on their own journey.

The early years were about finding my passion. I focused on assignments that interested and challenged me intellectually. It was a series of decisions based on evaluating what fueled my desire to learn and work hard. Through these decisions, I found my love of distribution.

With an established sense of direction, my focus shifted to people. I carefully cultivated relationships with clients, peers, and competitors with diverse backgrounds and skill sets to create a network—a network to draw on and avail myself of in navigating the industry, business decisions, and my own career.

Today, I make a conscious effort to foster strong relationships with stakeholders—those I serve and those I need. Winning the hearts and minds of your stakeholders is critical to building and executing a successful business strategy.

While my approach has evolved at various points in my career, there are a few constants:

- Be an inclusive leader, actively listening and fostering an environment where, regardless of title or reporting lines, people buy in to and feel ownership of the business plan.
- Have a talent mind-set and be committed to mentoring and coaching people. Know the industry "talent map."
- Be an active manager of your career. If you sit and wait to be tapped, you may miss an opportunity that's right for you and your firm. Make your career objectives known and ask for the positions you want and deserve.

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Kimberly LaPointe
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