

## Five Secrets of Successful Women in Business

---



We all have those successful women we admire who seem to turn everything they touch into gold. I've had the opportunity to interact with a number of women like this during the past month to learn more about why they are so successful. Here are five secrets of success that I have learned from them that you can benefit from too.

1. **Be a problem solver.** According to Jeanne Voight, founder of MindWare, a company that offers brainy toys for kids of all ages, being a problem solver was a key to her success. She said, "I have the ability to look at the whole, find a solution, and then bring people along."
2. **Pace your career.** Most women, myself included, operate in over-drive in all areas of our lives. The same has been true for Andrea Walsh, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer at Health Partners. Her advice? "Pace yourself. It's okay to love your work but sometimes you need to make career changes and set limits." Why? According to Walsh, "You need to have something for the end of the day so you have something to give back to your family."
3. **Network like a man.** Madeline Albright once said that men spend their time networking while women focus their time on other things. In order to be successful, we need to focus our energy on networking. Deborah Hopp, Vice President for Publishing and Publisher of Mpls./ St. Paul Magazine at MSP Communications had this to say, "Women need to focus their time on networking. Just like men have the "old boy's club" we need our own version of the "old girl's club."
4. **Be a maximizer.** In addition to developing ourselves, we also need to be proactive in developing others, particularly those we surround ourselves with. Nancy Schuelke, Community Banking President of the west suburban metro market for Wells Fargo, applies this success tactic in her work at Wells Fargo. She said, "You have to fully develop people based on their strengths, not their weaknesses. That's been a key strategy for me and for Wells Fargo."
5. **Think on your feet.** A key to successful communication, collaboration and effectiveness under pressure is the ability to think on your feet. According to Toni Halleen, Founder and President of Fun With Law, and an Improvisational Comedian, "If you want to develop your ability to think on your feet, then learn to: trust your instincts, say "yes" to new and different ideas, and be an obsessive listener." Master these three skills for thinking on your feet and you will be well on your way to success.

In addition, most of the women I spoke with this past month felt it was important to be innovative in order to stay ahead of competition, and that it was critical to be decisive and take risks. If you are not already using these success tactics, pick one or two that you think would be most useful and begin putting them to work for you today. After all, we can all benefit from the secrets of successful women!

Regina Barr is a management consultant and speaker with a special passion for helping women achieve leadership success. Her consulting firm, Red Ladder, Inc., helps organizations and their leaders develop their full potential through strategic project management, executive coaching and training. Regina also helps companies develop strategies to attract, develop and retain women leaders. For more information visit [www.RedLadder.com](http://www.RedLadder.com) or [www.RedLadder.blogs.com](http://www.RedLadder.blogs.com).