

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PODCAST



Episode 5

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Annemarie: Hi I'm your host Annemarie Cross welcome to another episode of 'Women in Leadership' podcast. The podcast that empowers you to reach your full potential whether you're already in a leadership role, or maybe you are an aspiring leader. Now joining me on today's show is Career and Leadership developer Pam Mc Donald. Pam is passionate about helping people to have better work experiences, and her advice to people is follow your skill, identify your passion and interest as this is the best way to achieve true career satisfaction, as well as also helping you deliver better workplace outcomes. Now Pam has worked with a variety of blue chip Australian, and international companies, helping them to do what they do better. And on today's show Pam is going to share why working hard on its own is just not enough to succeed in the world of work, or to be considered personal career success, or factors to workplace success that have worked for Pam as well as others. As well as one strategy that will help us overcome the come inaction due to self-doubt. So welcome to the show Pam.

Pam: Thank you Annemarie it's a pleasure to be here.

Annemarie: Over the years when I speak to women about career success and positioning themselves for promotion and even leadership opportunities one thing I often hear them say is "my goal, I'll keep my head down, work really, really hard so I get noticed for my achievements" an unfortunately this is not the best approach. So Pam why is working hard on its own not enough to succeed in the world of work or be it considered personal career success?

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Pam: I think Annemarie probably you and I and potentially a number of our listeners today have already tried that strategy and found that it just doesn't work.

Annemarie: Mhmm

Pam: You put your head down, you work hard, you work 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, a 100 hours a week, and because your head is down no one is noticing you. Work is getting done but it can be taken advantage of, or it's just assumed that you're comfortable doing that and sitting there where you are.

Annemarie: What would you say to someone who has recognized "O okay that is what I have been doing, I want 2016 to be better for me", what are some things that you would share with her to start doing, as well as obviously working hard?

Pam: I think the first thing that I would say is Congratulations! For noticing what you've been doing, because it hasn't been working.

Annemarie: Right

Pam: The next thing I'd say is and this I'm linking to those four factors that you mentioned earlier when we think about our success at work, particularly in terms of looking around, who gets promoted. Sure they are the people who deliver some results but they also do three other key things that take them above and beyond just working hard.

Annemarie: Yeah

Pam: The first one of those is that they usually have a really good reputation, they're known by the right people and everybody has a consistent way of referring to that particular person. It's almost like they've got their own personal brand perfectly set.

Annemarie: Yes

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Pam: The second thing that they do is that they can usually build really good rapport with other people. Now some people call that the schmoozing or the networking and I laugh as I say that. These are the people who have the knack for actually establishing a connection with other people whether it's in person or online. They've just got that rapport, glitz and glam working well.

Annemarie: Yes

Pam: And the fourth element of that is really about how they manage those relationships, we can be a bit cynical and say "oh yes they're the people who cultivate the right connections" but you know what, when you're working hard and when you're delivering results, those results need to be seen and felt by the right people

Annemarie: Mhmm

Pam: And that's where those relationships become really, really critical.

Annemarie: I totally agree, so Pam let's just dive into each of those points a little bit deeper, because I think for people who have been working really hard I'm sure that they've got so many great outcomes and success stories to share that no one in the organization, and particularly key stake holders in the organization aren't aware of the successes and the strengths, the value that people can bring to the table, it really, as you said goes unnoticed, so let's talk about personal brand, how would you define a person's personal brand.

Pam: To me Annemarie, that's encapsulated in the phrases that other people use when they think about you. So the phrases, if I think about my personal brand "passionate" is a word that pretty much comes up constantly, because I'm known for being passionate and energetic about what I do. Now that can be taken a couple of levels down in terms of, alright is someone's got a passion that implies that they'll be interested in developing and continually developing their skills without care and that they'll be reasonable to deal with, so it's important to understand how others are talking about you, do they describe you as a

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hard worker? Or do they describe you as a dynamic contributor to the business? Because when we're thinking about the results that we're achieving, I also feel that it's important to get back a little bit and do some analysis and some thinking about, alright where are those results going to have an impact? Who is going to be positively affected by the results and the outcomes that I'm achieving?

Annemarie: Yeah

Pam: And when you link that to the relationships that exist within the organization, that's often one of the quickest ways to rapidly shift your positioning from being known or potentially ignored as the quiet achiever who sits in the corner. When you start mapping how the work that you do positively affects or eases the problem for a couple of key people around the organization you will notice that your star will begin to shine much brighter very, very quickly.

Annemarie: Yeah and I think what people don't recognise particularly when it comes to creating and developing your personal brand, is that people will be talking about you even if you haven't done that with purpose, if you haven't really identified ok what are some of the key strengths what is the experience that I exude when other people work with me for instance you've mentioned the example of being passionate. People do talk about you and so if you're not there with an intention of creating that reputation, you leave that to others then, to define what they think your reputation is, so it really is very much being in control of that and creating that experience that people really do start to talk about you in a way that you want them to talk about.

Pam: Oh Annemarie I could not agree more with you, that is such a beautiful insight and I can think about a lady that I worked with a couple of years ago, who was very much on that treadmill, of working really hard and feeling really frustrated, because she wasn't really getting the promotions that she felt, that she deserved and I was working with her as her coach and we were going through a few different things and the power of a coach and someone who is outside your personal space, is that we can identify those things and ask a question in terms of, well okay if you've been working really, really hard and sadly you've

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had some illnesses that you haven't been able to shake because of that, I mean think about when you get the cold or the Flu, you don't take time off and rest properly, it tends to linger for a lot longer. And so then what people might be noticing about you is that you're tired all the time or that you seem to have the sniffles and that's the image of you that they then hold in their mind, and that's actually nothing to do with your work but it's to do with their impression of your approach to your work. And this young lady that I was working with, I asked her the question and said well if you've not been able to shake this illness, and you've been saying that one of the things that's really important to you is to be known as being reliable, how well do you think you're doing on that front? And it was as if the veil had lifted for her and she said "oh my goodness I've dropped the ball on that one haven't I?"

Annemarie: Yeah

Pam: And so we focused on that reliability, but it is very much about, as we start 2016, setting that intention and being conscious about what is it that I want to be known for?

Annemarie: Yes and I think in our actions and in our interactions we need to be mindful about what we do, what we say, and how we approach the workplace because that very much can impact positively and of course negatively, on our personal brand as we saw on that beautiful example that you shared. So talking about the other, one of the other points that you mentioned about having the skill to really build rapport and I love the term that you used, the schmoozing, the networking, getting out there and for some people absolutely the whole "I don't schmooze", but building relationships within the work environment, particularly with the key stake holders and this is one thing that I read constantly last year, and I'm sure that this is something that you found too. Men are really good at networking with other key stake holders so when opportunities come up key projects, because they have taken the time to develop the network and the relationships, the know who all I can trust for some of these key stakeholders, guess whose name comes to the fore when the project comes up, and of course it's the key, you know the key stakeholders think of well Bob or Jim or whoever, so women, we're good at building relationships too, but maybe not

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necessarily relationships with some of these key stakeholders. The people who are already working at higher levels in the organization. What would you say to a woman who recognizes okay if I was to do an audit, if my network within the organization and even outside the organization, what are some key things that she should start doing in 2016?

Pam: One of the main mantras that I would say is to recognize that your network is associated with your net worth.

Annemarie: Yes

Pam: So the quality and the calibre of the people that you're connecting with will have a direct influence on your success. I think I'd also say to another woman and this is one thing that we women are gifted with naturally. We do actually network well, we socialize, we connect other people, we are wonderful connectors. The difference in the way that men approach networking is that they are very business oriented in their networking. So my main piece of advice for a woman would be leverage your strength of connecting and go into it with that intention about forming strong business connections and it may change the dynamics of the conversations that you have. So rather than having more of a social orientation and getting to know the person, you may actually be having a more business oriented networking conversation, which is where you get to know the work and the results of that person and at the same time they get to know you, your work and your results.

Annemarie: And I think also too as women we can be very humble, which is a great quality to have as well as you said leveraging our skills and our strengths, sometimes we just don't ask or we don't put our hand up, and I think having that intention, building that connections, getting you know that conversation of a met approach of the business, and letting them know that hey these are some of the key areas that I would love to contribute to, if there is a project coming up, I would love to be considered for that sometimes we assume that through our conversation, that someone will know that yes we would love to be considered, but we haven't actually asked, so we need to go in with the ask.

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Pam: Oh completely and I think it's also, coming back to that it's sort of it's almost a confidence issue or a habit issue that we women have, is that we're much more comfortable asking on behalf of someone else than we are asking on behalf of ourselves and that's why it's such a delight seeing so many women who are stepping forward and engaging with a mentor, whether it's a formal or an informal mentor. So if we're thinking about women who work within medium to large size companies, when you're identifying those key stake holders it may be really, really worth your while to establish a good solid connection with one of those key people, engage them almost as your mentor because if you can encourage them to see you and your full worth, when they recommend you for a project both you will then be seen in a brighter light and so will they, because they will also be enhancing their reputation about finding and identifying talent, within the organization and you yourself will actually get a new deeper reputation for the results that you achieve, not just the input and the work that you do.

Annemarie: Hmm and what you've just said there is such a key step, it's an intentional step, and how often and you might have heard this with some of the clients that you're working with, people will say you know that person in the workplace, she is always so lucky, her name always comes up, but in actual fact if we were to have a look at what she had been doing for the last month, for the last 12 months, or even 18 months. Her whole approach has been very intentional, she's been networking, supporting, sharing, you know connecting and building that. So a lot of these people that we see having their names put forward for projects and other special promotions and stuff in the workplace, there has been a lot of intentional action put into place to get her to that place.

Pam: Absolutely I remember I used to work for a very large organization and I put myself forward to participate as an interview panel member for a scholarship. The company was very generous in supporting people who'd been disadvantaged, and so I got to meet a couple of the very senior executives who normally people in the lower levels of the organization just didn't get to meet, an also was involved in a very generous and amazing program so it was a delight personally, but professionally about six months after that program had finished there was one of those all companywide town hall meetings and this

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senior executive was walking through and he was good and he would say hello to people and smile, because he was aware that they all knew who he was, and as he approached the group that I was in , he was smiling and nodding to people and then he looked at me, made eye contact with me and said " Hi Pam how are you?" and kept going to a man , because it was a very male dominated workforce, every person in that group that I'd been talking to turned to me and said, "how does he know your name?"

Annemarie: [Laughter]

Pam: And it was all because of that project that I had worked on. Now he didn't give me any extra attention, there was no direct promotion or anything that came from it, but the thing that he acknowledged me and he knew me by my name did wonders for my reputation and then that of course had its own ripple effect as well.

Annemarie: Great example absolutely. Talking about managing relationships, I mean you have said that women, we're natural connectors, lets really also bring in the business side of things as well, leverage that. What would you say, would be some good tips and advice to share round, how we can really start to effectively manage our relationships in 2016?

Pam: I think it's important to know what it is that you yourself are looking for and also have some interest in what the other person is looking for. So if you're in an organization and you're within an administration team and you'd like to be promoted to be the manager of that team, get to know the person who is the current manager of the manager of that admin team and identify the challenges they might be having and get to learn their language and the results that they particularly focus on, because then when you have a conversation with them, you can actually start drawing linkages between how you might be a solution to a problem that they are having, or how the results that you have already been achieving may already be contributing quite significantly to what they'd be looking for in that admin manager role. So it's about that planning and that understanding of what you yourself need, but also what somebody that you might be working for and delivering to might need and looking for that match of language.

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Annemarie: Let's face it how influential you could be to someone and really start to build that connection and that relationship by being a solution, sharing a solution, be it a piece of technology, or whatever it is that you have identified could really support that other person, I mean if you really reach out your hand as support or give them something that really supports them in overcoming that challenge, that's really just going to speak volumes isn't it?

Pam: Oh completely, and it's such a powerful way of doing things and that fundamentally is the reason why my philosophy is about let's begin with the skill that I have, because that's the strongest platform and the most consistent way that I can naturally end with integrity, engage in those discussion about how I might be able to be a solution for someone because I know exactly what my skills are and we also say that we humans are wired to enjoy things, so if there's something that I'm good at I'm going to enjoy doing that because I'm good at it and the more that I do it the better I get. So it becomes this beautiful self-fulfilling and self-developing activity, which also then when we put it into that business context, well it's just going to have a delightful growth expansion and we're all going to be smiling.

Annemarie: Yeah I'll give you a classic example, and this is exactly what you're speaking about a number of months ago I was given a referral by my colleagues in the networking group that I am a member of and it was a great connection and through that I've built other connections. Now I remember that very first referral that I received from my colleague, so now I have an opportunity and I've got my couple of tickets to this really great event, and the first person that I thought I would love to say thank you to her for giving me that referral or that solution, and I reached out to her. So it really is a win, win all around so I cannot highly recommend the strategy that you've really mentioned, one thing that I do just want to cover and I think it's absolute gold and a few people might have missed this, you said when you approach that person, find out what their language is so that you can speak to them in a way that's going to connect to them. Talk a little bit more about that, because I think that's so important.

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Pam: Thank you, one of the things that we often do when we're engaging in a conversation is, we just lapse into a zone of being comfortable, which means that we approach something from our preferences, our experience and our habits, so if I think about people who; we often talk about people who have an orientation to be more visual, some more auditory and love sounds and very attentive to volume, and others are more tactile and emotional.

Annemarie: Mhmm

Pam: So if I'm a very visual person my language will be peppered with things like look, sight, colour, bright, dull, all those descriptors that actually paint you a visual picture. If I'm communicating with somebody who is more auditory oriented their language may be peppered with things that are more about how something sounds and whether that resonates and they may also be distracted by background noise.

Annemarie: Mhmm

Pam: So just as those preferences can come through in that simple lever of our language, so too can my preferences and my experiences in the type of work that I've done, so I've been; and I'll use my administration example again, so I've been processing accounts, when I'm talking to people about the work that I do, I'll be talking about the number of accounts that I've been processing each day, potentially about some elements about money that has been paid out, and I'll be talking about days of turn around and all those sorts of things. But when I take myself up to the manager's level, my manager might be much more interested in the overall cash flow position of the organization, and me talking about the detail of processing the accounts isn't actually going to resonate with that person, because their question will be "so what's the impact on the cash flow?" so if I can actually start framing my language in terms of "well when I'm looking at processing these accounts due, what I've noticed is that we seem to have had an increase in your income and a reduction in the amount of accounts payable this month." That's going to pique the attention of the manager much more quickly than me talking about the fact that or volumes have increased or decreased.

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Annemarie: Hmm

Pam: It can also be useful if you're thinking about changing to another organization, have a read of their annual report, look at the structure of their language, are they talking in a more formal or a less formal way than you normally do or your workplace does? Look at the terms in terms of how they describe their results, do they talk about bottom lines, do they talk about corporate social responsibility, if they talk community, or is it all purely about profit, bottom line debt, deficits, etc, etc. get that commonality of language because when we hear language that's similar to our own from someone else, subconsciously we think gee I'm much more alike with this person than perhaps I may have thought, and that's a really subtle key element, to building good rapport and establishing good relationships that commonality and consistency of language.

Annemarie: Yeah I love that and again its being intentional, you'll still achieve whatever goal or outcome, it's just how you deliver it, how you approach that person very much piques their attention because you are really using their language and that's certainly going to develop that relationship and that rapport far quicker. So Pam so many women and I'll be the first to put my hand up, because I've been there as well, we can so often become stuck because we've got that self-doubt "can I do this? No I can't" and you share a strategy that's going to help us overcome our inaction because that's where the self-doubt often has us, inactive. So what's that strategy that you want to share?

Pam: My strategy is, first of all we have to recognise it, so congratulations on filling yourself in that moment of I really feel drawn to do something but I'm being held back by these fears. My strongest words of encouragement would be, find somebody that you trust, somebody that knows you in a work sense, and ask them if they believe that you can do it? And when they tell you that yes they do believe you can do it, then you take action based on their belief in you, because even if I'm having those moments of doubt of I'm not sure I can do this, when I have somebody who is a staunch solid supporter of mine who says 'I know that you can do this, I believe in you and I've got your back'. That actually fundamentally

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changes the way that you can look at things, and then what you do is you take some action and you achieve a result, you achieve success and then where you are is you are in a lovely position where you have the support of your trusted advisor, for want of a better phrase, and you also have your first piece of evidence that says I'm a success I can do this.

Annemarie: Hmm I love that I absolutely love that, and as you were sharing that, I can recognise a number of different occasions when a colleague has just reached over and said you know what "you've got this, you've got this, just go out and do it" and just through having their words of encouragement has certainly supported me" well if they think I can do it, they must have seen something that I have not yet quite recognized so I love that. So what's one last word of encouragement that you'd like to leave people with today Pam?

Pam: I would like to encourage us women to actually acknowledge the strengths and the gifts that we have, being successful is not about changing who we are as women, it's not about changing who you are as an individual and it's not about being or becoming like someone else, it's actually about taking those gifts and those strengths that you have, identifying where is the best place to put them to work so that they have that strongest and most effective leverage, and then going forward and doing what it is that you're here to do.

Annemarie: Thank you so much for sharing your insights and wisdom here today Pam. It's been such a pleasure speaking with you. How can people get in contact with you?

Pam: Thank you Annemarie it's been a pleasure being here. Look I'm obviously a person who is comfortable to have a conversation so I'm more than happy if people want to give me a call my phone number is 0438-843970 and that's obviously an Australian number or you can drop me an email at my email address which is pam@broadspring.com.au and I'll get back to you as soon as I can because my view is we've all got these strengths and gifts and wouldn't it be great to have people who delight in the work that they do because they are working in their skill area, and wouldn't it be great to be working in a

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company where everybody is actually working in their skilled area and happy in producing and then we'll get good company results.

Annemarie: Absolutely a win, win, win

Pam: Absolutely

Annemarie: Absolutely, so now it's over to you, Pam and I want you to join the conversation, so let us know what is one Aha!, I know you've had many but what is the biggest Aha! That you have had through listening to Pam sharing her insights and wisdom today and what is the action set that you are going to take within the next 24 hours, to get that moving as we begin 2016. So to join the conversations go to annemariex.com/podcast5 leave your comment there below the show notes and we look forward to reading them. So again that link is annemariex.com/podcast5.

So today's inspirational message is an interview tip to help you ace that interview and that's brought to you by our sponsor acethatinterview.com.au now sadly many aspiring leaders miss out on opportunities because of interview jitters, they've got the skills, they've got the experience yet their nerves prevent them from speaking about this confidently during an interview. So here are 'Three must do' interview tips to boost your confidence the next time you interview for your dream leadership role.

1. Get comfortable with speaking about your achievements.
2. Showcase your strengths by sharing your successes, your success stories.
3. Practice, practice and guess what practice, because if you do have an upcoming interview, you want additional support so that you can make the best possible impression check out acethatinterview.com.au for further information.

Now that brings us to the end of another episode and I hope that you will join me again next week.

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channel means that you'll be the very first person to learn about our new episodes and be inspired and empowered each and every week just like you were today by listening to Pam, and again that link annemariex.com/podcastiTunes and while you're over there if you want to leave a comment and a rating as well that would be super, super awesome.

So see you again next week and make it a great one.