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Panel Feature

2016 Women Winning in Business Panel

Only 14.6 percent of women occupy executive positions in their companies.

At Pacific Business News' Women Winning in Business event, some of Hawaii's top female executives explored the issues facing women in the workforce, sharing their own personal experience in overcoming challenges and finding success.

Kelly Hoen, general manager of The Modern Honolulu, moderated the discussion between panelists Christine Camp, president and CEO of Avalon Development Co.; Kat Lin-Hurtubise, owner of Gourmet Events Hawaii; Unyong Nakata, senior director of development of the UH Foundation- University of Hawaii at Manoa Shidler College of Business; and Shelley Tadaki Cramer, vice president and general manager of Saks Fifth Avenue Hawaii.

The panelists shared advice for fellow businesswomen on how to have the courage to get a seat at the table, and explored the keys to being successful: having passion, authenticity and the drive to get to the top.

Kelly Hoen: Aloha everyone! I think it's always good to understand where we sit in the world so I wanted to share some statistics. Women are 50.8 percent of the U.S. population. They earn almost 60 percent of undergraduate degrees and 60 percent of all master's degrees. They are 47 percent of the U.S. labor force and 59 percent of the college-educated entry level work force. Here's the interesting part: Although women are 52 percent of those holding professional level jobs, only 14.6 percent hold executive officer position — the C-suite position. I wanted to see if that statistic has changed, and it hasn't changed much. Far more are in the entry level to middle management positions but the CEO level is very low.

The women here today have really gotten to that level and they are part of the 14.6 percent.

The first question I want to throw out to our team here is what steps do you believe you should share with women to get to that C-suite position?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: The most important thing is passion. When you have passion for your career, everyone feels it, it just comes naturally. Another big component is your voice. If you don't have a voice, nobody is going to hear you.



TINA YUEN PBN

From left, Unyong Nakata, Kat Lin-Hurtubise, Kelly Hoen, PBN publisher Tammy Mencil, Shelley Tadaki Cramer and Christine Camp.

Unyong Nakata: Nothing can replace hard work. It took a mentor to take me aside and have the tough conversation, and told me to stop stepping out of the picture and finally be seen for the work I was doing. It wasn't comfortable, but I started to put myself in the picture. I had worked so hard to put together the details that lead up to that one big moment, and then I wasn't putting myself in the picture. When you are working really hard and you have the results to back it up — because there is no substitute for hard work — put yourself in the picture. Take credit in a respectable, humble but appropriate way.

Christine Camp: Nobody knows what you want until you ask for it. When I took jobs, it wasn't about the pay, it was about the work that I was going to do. I wanted the type of work that would make me a much better developer in my field. Have the courage to know your worth and ask for the job. When you come out of your own shell, it takes you to a whole new level.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: I agree; it is so important to speak up. There are so many women in my company with great ideas and they hold their tongue. And I tell them to speak up, because they have something to offer. When you know you have something to say, speak up. Even if you make a mistake, you will learn. I have a lot of doubt, but I speak anyway, because it's in my gut and it's the right thing to do, and something magical happens when you speak your truth.

Kelly Hoen: What are some of the roadblocks you faced as you went through your journey to get where you are today?

Christine Camp: I am in real estate development, so I deal with a pretty much male-dominated industry, though it is better now than it was 30 years ago. The roadblock was the little nuanced things, like male-oriented conversations that I was intimidated by and didn't know how to join in. I had to realize that it should never be a pity, woe-is-me thing, but something to recognize and overcome, so I put myself out there. I have worked harder to ask for things and reach out for the things I care about.

Unyong Nakata: It's all about perspective and how you look at those roadblocks. You have to let your work, and your values stand for itself. If you don't try to be anyone but yourself, then people will respect you for being who you are.

Kelly Hoen: What is the importance of mentors?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: I have never asked someone to be my mentor, but I believe in organic relationships between people you look up to and connect with. I try to learn from other individuals, whether it's something that worked or didn't work, and I use that experience to build my own.

Unyong Nakata: My mentor was really important to me, because she was the one who told me to toughen up. She said you're really tough, but with some people you are a doormat, and that is enabling you to feel upset at times in a work setting. I needed someone that I respect to tell me what I knew, and it helped me change and build boundaries with people that were affecting me in that way. It takes somebody who cares about you in a genuine way to give it to you straight and help you grow as a person.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: I look to subject matter experts in finance, marketing and HR to help me understand different aspects of the business and help with key components of my company.

Kelly Hoen: How important is it for us to be mentors?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: It's one of my top priorities. I identify people in my industry and help them work through their plan. It's not just about the job, it's about what they want in life.

Christine Camp: As women leaders, we have a responsibility to identify people who need help. When I see people who are doing great work but need just a bit of a nudge, those are the people that I reach out to. Being a mentor is about telling it like it is and helping them see their own value.

Unyong Nakata: Building a meaningful network is so important, and one of the greatest ways you can do that is through board service. It's the best way to build meaningful connections and for people to see who you are and what you stand for.

Christine Camp: I agree, and there is a huge need for younger generations to step up and be on a board.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: Being on boards has also helped me figure out how to get it done and how to delegate. I don't believe in balance; I believe in a full life.

Kelly Hoen: Do you think the work-life balance has become easier for women?

Christine Camp: I think it gets better every generation because of changing perceptions. Men, husbands and partners are participating more in family life and are just as involved as women, which makes it easier for women to work more.

Unyong Nakata: There is no balance, it is just what makes sense for you. It's really in your hands, you get out what you put in.

Kelly Hoen: What was the best business advice you have ever received?

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: I was recently introduced to open-book management, which is a really cool way for your employees to know what is happening. A lot of company owners get nervous about that, but I have found it to be liberating and empowering for our staff. We have had record month-after-month results since we implemented it 18 months ago.

Christine Camp: It is about finding your worth. When I started my company 17 years ago, I didn't know how to price myself. I started out as a consultant, and when I was raising money for my first projects, one of my clients told me I was underpricing myself. After that advice, I began to price myself at what I was worth.

Kelly Hoen: Do you have any advice for business women new to Hawaii?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: Educate yourself on the culture. Hawaii is definitely a different beast. Having been away on the Mainland for 18 years, the culture is completely different here. It's a family environment, and you have to connect with people and learn about the culture before beginning to implement your business strategy.

Christine Camp: Hawaii is unique because it's a small place. We have 1.2 million in population, but it is a small place. You have to play the long game. Whatever you do, do it in a way that in 10 years, people will respect the way you have worked and treated people.

Unyong Nakata: It doesn't matter which gender you are, the way you should behave in business is the way you should behave all the time. It takes a long time to build a reputation, but it is very quick to fall.

Kelly Hoen: What is your legacy, and what do you want to be remembered as?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: Authenticity. Everything I did and said came from the heart.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: Consistent excellence. Not perfect, but excellent.

Unyong Nakata: My integrity.

Christine Camp: The message I want to leave behind is the lesson that you can come from nothing and find success. You can be nothing and choose to learn and choose to be better and not focus on the victimhood of it. Don't ever give up on yourself.

Kelly Hoen: What are your favorite apps for productivity?

Unyong Nakata: My favorite to-do app is called Wunderlist.

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: LinkedIn is great for networking and connecting with everyone.

Christine Camp: Facebook helps keep up with business relationships, though the lines are getting blurrier between business and personal.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: We just started using Zipwhip, which is a mass texting system, and it has been fabulous with efficiency.

Kelly Hoen: How did you know it was the right time to transition from a corporate environment to running your own business?

Christine Camp: You can crunch all the numbers you want to, but you're never ready unless you're ready. I realized I was ready after the colossal failure of an \$800 million acquisition project, and when it failed, I knew I was ready for the next big leap.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: I felt stuck in my position as the director of a nonprofit, and I wasn't sure what I wanted, but I knew I wanted more out of life. One morning, I abruptly gave my 30-days notice, and that was the jump off the cliff. For me, that worked, because I had to figure it out fast. I discovered that I loved to do events, and I started my company. It took me about a year to build my business and figure it out, and I wanted to quit so many times, but I made it through with the support of my partner.

Kelly Hoen: What are you doing in your company to motivate your staff?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: Every day, we have a meeting where we recognize the top performers and give credit where credit is due. We make sure to support the back of house as well as the front of house and bring everyone together with what is and isn't working.

Kat Lin-Hurtubise: It's important to recognize people and give everyone a place at the table. We have huddles and give shout-outs to exceptional workers, which does wonders for morale.

Unyong Nakata: I would say that I try my best to be happy and positive and learn what motivates each person. I also try to listen and ask questions, so I can personalize the way I treat each individual.

Kelly Hoen: This last question is an interesting one, because we are all working with a millennial work force: What is the best way to lead and manage the younger generation of workers?

Shelley Tadaki Cramer: From my perspective, millennials want to know the "whys." They want to know why they are doing what they are doing. Performance increases when they understand why they are following the direction we lead them in.

Christine Camp: I think millennials are getting a bad rap. The millennials on my team are so hard-working, they just need a bit of flexibility. I have been very impressed with their performance. The way I motivate my

entire team is sharing with them the vision and making them understand why they are there.

Kelly Hoen: At The Modern Honolulu, 95 percent of our workers are millennials, and I absolutely love it. Our workforce is very project-based, and I found that that motivates our workers. I have also learned that the new four years of loyalty is 18 months and that's OK. We have to be flexible as well in the way we think of leadership and the changing workforce.