

Women supporting each other in business - a winning formula!

By [Miranda Lusiba](#)

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It is of outmost importance for women to support each other in business or other. The fight against the "Pull Her Down" (PHD) syndrome in both entrepreneurship and corporate settings is crucial.



Source: www.pexels.com

Women already face too many challenges in corporates or business – PHD just adds salt into an existing wound. The issues that will be the downfall of women in business include - in most cases - the unnecessary and toxic competition that ends up affecting the effective delivery of services to clients.

It's important for women to work past trivial issues like how pretty the other is from another, how well they dress and most importantly how good the other is at their job compared to the other. It's very important for all of us to realise that supporting each other is more beneficial than working against one another. Also, it is vital to collaborate by feeding off each other's strengths and complementing each other's weaknesses instead of the latter.



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Women are already facing a number of gender-related issues in corporate settings; and some of these are the same in the business space as well.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research - the top five gender-related issues in corporate environments include:

1. **Unequal Pay** – For decades, women have earned more bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees than men, yet women in the workforce still earn less than their male counterparts.
2. **Sexual Harassment** – this is an obstacle that many women face in the workforce – while different movements over the years have helped to shed light on this issue, little had been known about how women are subjected to this type of mistreatment, until now.
3. **Racism** – unfortunately, race seems to have played a major role in how women are treated and compensated in the workplace. The pay a woman receives has over the years varied depending on race and ethnicity.
4. **Women are promoted less often than men** – despite being more educated than men in some cases and the fact that women constitute nearly half of the workforce, they are promoted at work far less often than men.
5. **Fear of asking to be paid what they are worth** – Women often struggle with asking for higher pay in a job. While related to the issues of unequal pay, fear of discussing money is a separate issue that affects women more significantly than men. For women, negotiating pay is often viewed as being greedy and this leads to hesitation when it comes to asking for what they are worth in a workplace.

While I was going through this research, I realised that some of these issues actually follow us women well into our entrepreneurship years.

In corporate environments, we always had to work three times harder to convince everyone that we were just as capable as our male counterparts. This is why in most cases, before even thinking about starting our own businesses, we always felt that it is important for us to gain extensive experience in corporates and make our name known before venturing into the entrepreneurship space.

Our fear in most cases is that if we open our businesses without obtaining our qualifications combined with all our corporate credentials – we will not be taken seriously in the business space. We also worry that this might cause us not to be paid what we deserve for our services. Women who have over the years started their businesses with all the necessary credentials, still experience issues that include sexual harassment, whether it is subtle or obvious.



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Being professional, friendly and polite to some potential male clients is sometimes construed as being open to sleeping with the male counterpart to be able to secure that particular contract. Even if everyone involved in the process of pitching for a business contract knows that you deserve the contract based solely on what you are capable of and your past records of service excellence – the notion that women are prepared to sleep their way up still lingers in some people's minds.

Yes, I admit that I am not naïve to the fact that these kinds of things do happens in some cases – I would just like to make it clear though that there are a lot of qualified, hard-working, ethical and very capable women in SA.

This unfortunately highlighting some of the issues that young women who aspire to make it big in corporates or business will have to battle with. This is why I stressed earlier on the importance of women supporting each other.

As women, we are already dealing with too much - it really doesn't make any sense for us to also fight each other at every turn.

ABOUT MIRANDA LUSIBA

Miranda Lusiba is the Founding Director of Strangé Consulting - a boutique PR Agency specialising in Communications, Freelance Writing, Media Relations, Reputation Management and Media Training.

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