

THE GREAT LEADERS

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Innovation, Partnership, Impact and Sustainability Leadership

When a girl is **Supported**
she can do great things.

Diversity and Inclusion drive
Entrepreneurship and
Innovation.

That's what the Space
Ecosystem provides to
Women around the Globe.

CELEBRATE SDGs :

**Global Founders Council Summit
2022**

Gearing up for growth
opportunities in the
Netherlands



Nidhi Banthia Mehta

"Women are multipotentialite species and that makes us unique. We can do so much with equal perfection in everything we undertake".



Nidhi is a serial entrepreneur from Silicon Valley to Singapore to India who has built two companies and sold them. Her current venture is a social enterprise focused on women Entrepreneurship to empower women to have financial and economic independence, reduce the gender inequality in the workforce and give them a sense of self-worth and dignity. She has a mission to train and convert 10k homemakers into business women by 2032. She also has a project on refugee entrepreneurship for women to empower them, train them and help them launch their own business so they can become economically independent and contributors to the host country GDP and live a life of dignity and hope.

She is an MBA graduate and recipient of the Niti Ayog award for Top 100 women transforming India. She has received the distinguished Women's Economic Forum Award of "Iconic women creating a better world for All" for Transforming Leadership" and is the 1000 Women of Asia Womenovator Award recipient for 2021.

Nidhi is a recognised growth strategy and marketing consultant for women-led startups and a TEDx speaker on Entrepreneurship.

She has, and continues to engage as a Business consultant and mentor with UNWomen entrepreneurship programs, Government of India's women Entrepreneurship incubators, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy for Administration, AWEspiring and StartUp Oasis. Nidhi is also a guest faculty for Entrepreneurship subjects. She is a published author, Yoga practitioner and a Mentor, Educator and evangelist for Refugee Entrepreneurship and Women Entrepreneurship.

Nidhi has a certificate in Entrepreneurship from ISB Hyderabad & HarvardX. She comes with an entrepreneurial experience of 20 years and two years of work experience with McKinsey & Co. She quit her job in 2002 to follow her passion for health & wellness and incorporated BollyBeatz in SiliconValley in the USA and sold it in 2005.

INTERVIEW

How do you balance work and life responsibilities?

I adhere to a calendar and I am strict about my personal and family time. I don't schedule any appointments or consulting work during out of office hours.

I am a multipotentialite. I love to fuel my interests and different areas of passion. I'm an exotic cooking enthusiast and I cook meals for my family out of joy and love, I love reading and I am a published author, I am a yoga practitioner and a TedX speaker. I am a mother of two wonderful children and two dogs. My passion is to travel around the world and I have been fortunate enough to manage it all seamlessly with my time management skills and prioritising my personal time as I do with my professional work.

I also have my in laws living with me who are aged and I take care of them. What helps me a lot is the eco system I have created of house help and of a good network around me that enables me to manage everything at the top level.

I also love to engage with friends and meet them so all of this is my life together and not one can be substituted for another's.

Who inspired you and why?

My mother has been my inspiration. She was the first working business woman in my family and I saw her balance her work and her home so wonderfully without any stress or complaint. She created something so big out a small startup. She was a self learner and she learn't the tools of how to run and manage a business and she seeded that in me too.

Another inspiration for me has been Oprah. She inspires me and her work for women and girls has been a guidance for me. Her words and books uplift me and show me light when I'm stuck. My sister also is my inspiration. She always helps those in need and her selflessness and dedication towards helping others has always inspired me.



What are some traits you think great leaders possess ?

Authenticity
Self worth
Compassion
Giving
Hardworking and diligent
Lead by influence and not authority,

Always have time for the work that needs attention, they delegate and empower others to lead and learn, they listen intently and allow others to come up with solutions, they create abundance for all, they are socially empathetic to their employees and the society, they promote gender equality and give opportunities to all, they know how to pick talent and hone them into diamonds from the rough, they inspire with every talk and action, they are about others rather than themselves and they believe in innovation and change to make this world a better place

As a female leader, what has been the most significant barrier in your career?

Changing the mindsets of the women I work with and making them believe in themselves and uplifting their self-esteem .

I work with women and I see their skill sets and abilities so clearly and what they are capable of achieving but unfortunately they self doubt so much that a lot of my energy goes into counseling them and making them believe they can do it, that they are capable and they are good enough.

Breaking the barriers of the society of how women are perceived to be just at home and not following their professional aspirations ... That's a continuous struggle but also a way to bring in the much needed change

What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?

Always believe in yourself and your capabilities and have a high self worth. You are capable of managing so many fronts together. From your home to your personal interests, your parents , family and your professional aspirations and do it with love and confidence because you can.

We are multipotentialite species and that makes us unique. We can do so much with equal perfection in everything we undertake. Don't ever let anyone tell you that this is not your work or forte. Everything is for you to explore and undertake. Empower others along the way, help others in every way you can, encourage girls to study hard and live their professional dreams. You can touch the lives of many and inspire, so keep doing so.





Do you experience resistance when you are leading men?

I have always been in a woman dominant workforce. I lean towards hiring women naturally and I enjoy working with women. But yes, I have faced some resistance especially if men are older than me and they don't want to take instructions from a younger woman, sometimes they judge you by the way you look or dress and think you are not experienced enough, they resist taking change in their stride, they find it challenging to see another woman colleague getting promoted against them. It's the male ego that becomes difficult to manage but I have always used empathy as a tool to communicate

What is your management style ? How do you like to communicate with your team?

I am a woman of collaboration and delegation. I like to empower my work force to go and achieve their goals relentlessly. I don't interfere and I don't micromanage. I steer and guide as needed, I teach when they need help, I encourage them so they can believe in themselves and remove their self doubt. As a leader my role is to empower my team, to understand what ticks them and motivates them and to nurture them so they can give their best into their role and grow the company with their heart and soul through self motivation. That's how I lead.

What was your organizational culture few years ago for women and working mothers? Do you feel the company should make annual efforts towards improving the culture for their cohort?

Being a woman myself I have kept working timing and conditions very cohesive for women and working mothers. I have never allowed any employee to work beyond set office hours, all women are allowed to work from home a few days in a month and especially during children's examination. Lunch is provided for and we work and eat as a team. Team outings are a way for work life and helping each woman become her best version is my goal. I also provide them with life coaching and counseling where needed and health insurance as well as financial advances for their family needs

Are there common threads from the backgrounds, experience and skills of current women leaders that future women leaders can learn from to inspire their own Global Goals leadership journeys?

The way to reduce gender inequality is to consciously create a workplace where we see good representation of all genders and that is encouraged from the top level to bottom. We need to have an empathetic work culture and conditions so women can foster and thrive in that culture. Good emotional conditioning, parity in pay scales, understanding a woman employees limitations and working around that to make her feel comfortable is the key.

We need to invest in their continued learning and development and help them maintain a personal and work life balance. As leaders we need to empower, nurture and create more women leaders

What actions can both women and men take to encourage a greater number of women to lead on the Global Goals from across sectors and industries, including business, government, academia, and civil society?

We need to be nurturing women and creating a support system for them so they can go and lead fearlessly. Men need to be supportive and encouraging at home towards the women in their lives. Women need to create a strong support system for other women around them so we can all lean in and help each other raise our families and children while living our professional aspirations.

We need to create awareness of the importance of a woman's role in creating a harmonious society and encourage everyone to be supportive to them in their endeavours. Men need to accept women as their equals professionally and by doing this we will set examples for our children and other members to follow and learn

Laura Brandao

"If all organizations allow flexibility and work-from-home options for working moms, they can be extremely loyal and dedicated because they treasure the fact that they can have a career and a great family life".

Ms Laura Brandao is the President, American Financial Resources
As an industry source of knowledge, positivity and passion, she radiates energy for bringing families home.

Launching the mortgage wholesale channel of business for AFR in 2007 as Director of Operations, Laura has gone on to become an AFR partner (2009), followed by Executive Vice President, and Chief Operations Officer. She now serves as company President.

For over 14 years, Laura has been the driving force catapulting AFR Wholesale to the top of Manufactured Home, One-Time Close construction and Renovation lending. Growing AFR into a national leader in specialized programs, she stays connected to the clients and families she serves, allowing her to develop new products based on market demand.

Laura serves as the Chair of Women with Vision, the Chair of NAMMBA's Visionary program and a board member of NAMMBA, she is a board member of the MBA-NJ and serves as the Chair of the MBA-NJ women's committee.

She is also a board member of Mortflix, the exclusive streaming service for the housing industry and she is the host of the weekly show "What's your Why Wednesday".

Among her many recent accolades, Laura was named a 2021 MPA housing industry Icon & 2021 MPA Elite woman, a 3-time Woman with Vision winner, a 2021 NEXT 2021 Powerhouse award, named a 2021 most influential businesswoman to follow in 2020, a 4-time Woman of Influence, a 3- time most powerful woman in Mortgage as well as a 2021 Most inspiring business woman making a difference, 2020 Most successful businesswomen to watch.

Laura is also a 3-time best-selling author of her book series, "Say YES Everyday" and a Telly award winner for her appearance on the Flatten the curve not the spirit Internet series.

