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Busting stereotypes, 'leaning in', playing to your strengths – there's a new way to be a success in business. The likes of Sheryl Sandberg, Arianna Huffington and Marissa Mayer fought convention (and battled sexism) to thrive in their careers. We've gathered their smartest advice – and added some from other inspirational women in business – to power you into 2015

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU WISH YOU'D BEEN GIVEN?

"Stay in your lane." You were hired because you bring a certain expertise. Try to resist putting pressure on yourself, trying to learn it all from day one. It's human nature to feel insecure about everything you don't know. By staying focused on your core competencies you'll be able to contribute much sooner, add greater value long-term, and enjoy it more, especially in the early days.
Angela Ahrendts, senior vice president of retail and online sales, Apple

"Embrace tough assignments. Nobody notices when you do an easy job well. It's far better to challenge yourself by raising your hand for the toughest assignments and work to solve problems that no one else has been able to."
Indra Nooyi, CEO, PepsiCo

"Put yourself forward, and claim your victories – keep score. Don't wait for approval from others; write down your achievements and don't be too humble to share them."
Charlotte Beers, former CEO, Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide



FROM LEFT: Charlotte Beers; Angela Ahrendts

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HOW CAN YOU FAKE confidence?



'Learn how to breathe when you're in meetings - people don't breathe in the middle of intense conversations. Make a conscious effort to slow your breath and take in oxygen - it helps you to relax and feel in control.'

Bobbi Brown, founder, Bobbi Brown Cosmetics

'Once, while pitching to a room full of men, I blurted out, "I don't know how I feel to be presenting to a room of male chauvinist pigs." It just slipped out, but they all started laughing. Let the spontaneous part of yourself get you in trouble - you can apologise later. Go for outrageous and unusual - that's faking it till you make it.'

Charlotte Beers, former CEO, Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide

'Discipline yourself to deal with shyness. For the first 15 minutes I always want to leave a party, so I will literally look at my watch and say, "You can't leave until time X. And if you're still having a terrible time by then, you can leave." By this point, I've usually gotten over the social awkwardness and am having fun.'

Marissa Mayer, president and CEO, Yahoo

'Think like a queen. A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is a stepping stone to greatness. So go ahead, fall down, then turn your wounds into wisdom.'

Oprah Winfrey

'Use your elbows. When sitting on a chair, place your elbows on the armrest and imagine a small bird could fly through the space between your body and arms. It sounds silly, but it stops you shrinking into yourself, giving you presence in a room.'

Adeline Ginn, founder, Women in Rail, and general counsel, Angel Trains



WHAT'S THE BIG SECRET TO WORK/LIFE BALANCE?

'Finding the right partner for you is very important if you want the same job opportunities as men. Otherwise it is impossible to be able to look after a young child as well as want to work like men do.'

Sheryl Sandberg, COO, Facebook



'Turn your devices off an hour before you go to bed, have a bath and get eight hours' sleep. Learn to "unitask" again. You are at your most effective when you're only doing one thing at a time.'

Arianna Huffington, founder, The Huffington Post



'As a boss, you have to set a good example. Inspire people to have balance by not just encouraging them but doing it yourself. If you feel the need to email at the weekend, put it in a draft and send it on Monday.'

Susan Gianinno, North America chairman, Publicis Worldwide

'Put aside the guilt. I think we're all genetically programmed to feel guilty for not giving total effort at work, or at home. If you give up the guilt, that's a huge load off your shoulders.'

Indra Nooyi, CEO, PepsiCo



'I was never defined by my working hours, but by what I produced. That's what we all need - to be respectful of the way people work best. Businesses have to think about the best way to retain talent.'

Nicola Mendelsohn, vice president, Facebook



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HOW DO YOU MAKE IT TO THE TOP AS A WOMAN?



'Coming into business in the late 1980s, I felt I had to conform to a female stereotype – no one wanted to be seen as 'the bossy girl' dominating conversations. Women who got ahead then did it in a brutal fashion. Give yourself permission to have your own voice and be your own person.'

Nada Stirratt, chief revenue officer, Acxiom



'When I talk about an ambitious woman, people say, "I bet she's a ballbreaker." That's why we have to work hard to break down those barriers. There's nothing wrong with being ambitious. If you don't do it, nobody's going to do it for you.'

Baroness Karren Brady CBE, vice chairman, West Ham FC

'A woman who wants to be a man is a waste of a woman. As female leaders it's our responsibility to create new rules and make changes that other women will benefit from - that we wish we had ourselves.' **Shelley Zalis, CEO, Ipsos OTX**



WHAT'S THE KEY TO BEING A good leader?

'Hire smart people and let them do their jobs. I know what my strengths are, but no one knows how to do everything. Look for people who are good listeners and good communicators. It's very important to make sure everyone understands the goals of the organisation.' **Anne Sweeney, president, Disney**



'Provide resources for people. Teaching them additional skills and giving them flexibility, noticing people working hard and showing appreciation are all almost as important as financial compensation.' **Susan Gianinno, North America chairman, Publicis Worldwide**

'Be authentic. Although we should all strive to learn and develop, the qualities and instinct that helped you grow your career in the first place are just as important when you're in charge.'

Anna Jones, chief executive officer, Hearst Magazines UK



WHAT'S YOUR MORNING ROUTINE?

- Regardless of what I'm doing, I get up at 5.30am and start with a cup of tea.
- I get ready and make a double espresso to take with me before leaving the house at 6.30am.
- I drive to work, collecting my daughter on the way, to arrive at the salon at 7.45am.
- Breakfast is rye toast and Marmite, plus another cup of tea, and I'm ready to start my first client at around 8.30am.
- I have a fabulous Gyrotonic teacher, Dylan Elmore, who I see two mornings a week.

Jo Hansford, founder, Jo Hansford Salon



- 10 minutes' meditation.
- 30 minutes' max on hair and make-up.
- In the office by 8.30am.

Diane Von Furstenberg, designer

- On weekdays, I get up at 5am, grab some fruit for breakfast and get the train.
- I'm in the office by 6.45am so that I can leave at 4.30pm to pick up my children.

Adeline Ginn, founder, Women in Rail, and general counsel, Angel Trains