



MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

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As a woman leader in the Federal Government, what is one piece of advice you would give to aspiring women who seek to attain senior leadership positions?

Don't be afraid to compete with your male counterparts for senior leadership positions. Women can also be thought leaders. That is, despite your current grade or position in the organization, widen your sphere of influence by becoming a subject matter expert or "go-to" person in your chosen field. For example, even though I hold Master of Public Administration and Master of Business Administration degrees, attaining the Certified Government Financial Manager credential helped me more favorably compete for senior leadership positions. Still, having credentials is not enough. Becoming a thought leader often requires volunteering to tackle challenging, high-profile assignments for which there is no precedent.

How has EWG played a role in your professional development and growth?

One of my mantras is, "It's all about relationships," and EWG is a great forum for networking. EWG has also provided me some wonderful professional development experiences, such as the annual leadership summit and workshops on writing effective Senior Executive Service Executive Core Qualification (ECQ) statements. Before attending the workshops, I never realized the shortcomings in the ECQs I had previously written. The women in EWG have been very supportive and I always strongly recommend that my mentees join the organization. When I joined, I opted for lifetime membership and it is one of the best investments I have ever made.

Who has been a significant mentor or role model for you, and why?

There are two people that come to mind when I think about mentors/role models and—oddly enough—they are both male. I cannot name them herein, but I can disclose that one of them was my mentor at the Noncommissioned Officer Academy in Bad Toelz, Germany and the other one was my mentor at Army Management Staff College at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Both individuals helped me earn distinguished leadership awards in typically male-dominated professional development schools. They encouraged me to stop avoiding the limelight and start showcasing my talents for problem solving and leadership. It was from them that I learned that being a leader does not depend on one's position in the organization or one's gender. One is a leader when others willingly follow them. As former Secretary of State Colin Powell wrote, "The day [your staff] stop bringing you their problems is the day you have stopped leading them. They have lost their confidence that you can help them or concluded that you do not care. Either case is a failure of leadership."

About You

My career began in the U.S. Army where I learned to either lead, follow, or get out of the way. Adhering to this leadership philosophy helped me become a financial management executive, and I served at several well-known Federal Government agencies. Although I received numerous accolades for spearheading financial management system improvement projects, my true passion lies in coaching, mentoring, and fostering professional development. Which is why I believe my most significant accomplishment was creating a financial management career roadmap and collaborating with my peers at U.S. Customs and Border Protection to create an in-house training and development program.

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