



SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN BUSINESS  
- CORAL EDITION

*Edited By Jacqueline Rose*

*Successful Women in Business*  
*Coral Edition*

Edited by Jacqueline Rose

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*Oral Edition*



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*Don't conform to others expectations – no one ever made a real difference doing the same as everyone else.*

***Urszula Kelly - Push Through Those Difficult Times***

*Business success doesn't have to just be about climbing the corporate ladder. With a little innovation, you may find your business growing not only higher but deeper and wider than you've ever imagined.*

***Miriam Dervan - Innovation And Diversification In Business Growth***

*There is no need to be afraid of failing.  
Just continue, learn from it, and keep going. Never stop.*

***Dr Sabine H. Hoffmann - The Power of Purpose***

*Finding even better pathways to outcomes that are bigger than my own skillset has been a fundamental component in my business success*

***Madelaine Cohen - Success And Being Of Service***

*Balance is different for every person, just like every baby and child is different, every business has different needs and more importantly every mum and parent is different.*

***Rachel Allan - Achieving A Balance***



***The Thought Leaders Who Contributed To This Book:***

*Miriam Dervan - Innovation And Diversification In Business Growth*

*Urszula Kelly - Push Through Those Difficult Times*

*Dr Sabine H. Hoffmann - The Power of Purpose*

*Katja Forbes – Bossing Is Easy, Leading Is Harder*

*Madelaine Cohen - Success And Being Of Service*

*Bree Stedman – Turning Negative Head Talk Into Fuel For Success*

*Rachel Allan - Achieving A Balance*

*Talita Ferreira - Keeping My Feminine Identity – Being Authentically Me*

*Junko Kemi - From The Boardroom To The Catwalk*

*Lorena Öberg - From Self-Doubt To Self-Accomplishment*

*Rosie Shalhoub - Embracing Rosie*

*Emma Coleman - From Nurse to Holistic Skin Specialist*

*Judith Treanor - Success: Profit Or Purpose And Personal Fulfilment?*



*Catherine Craig –Starting A Business With No Money*

*Christine Khor - Create the Life You Want\_*

*Sandra Yeow - 4 Lessons on How to Increase Success Rates for Any Start-up*

*Roberta Perry - Building Relationships And Getting Free Press For Your Business*

*Suzi Chen - Curating Your Success*

*Linda Stewart – More Than Just A Salon*



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## Welcome To Successful Women In Business

### Coral Edition



Women entrepreneurs are rarely satisfied with the status quo: Instead they strive to build the world in the way it should be rather than abiding by a system that's potentially archaic or outdated.

During the course of researching this ground-breaking series we have come to realise that breaking down barriers for women in the workplace is key to success for companies and for countries.

That's the message we hope you will pick up from this book. When more and more women are seen at the top of organisations and running high growth technology businesses, the more this will be regarded as the standard and a perfectly normal, and logical, path to choose.

Starting a company, or managing a company through a period of transition and growth, can be a riveting roller coaster of emotions with tremendous highs and at times, difficult lows. But despite the challenges, many women have risen to become leaders and influential figures in their respective areas. *Successful Women In Business Coral Edition* recognizes and celebrates the outstanding contribution made by individual women to their businesses and, in many cases, their local communities.

The business leaders profiled in this book are of various ages, social backgrounds and industries. However, the one common thread which unites them is that they dared to believe. And, in believing, they made the seemingly impossible a reality. Their individual stories tell of the challenges we all face: uncertainty, fear, discouragement, hope, commitment and yes, that indefinable, illogical and yet all-consuming belief that we will succeed against all odds. These are real-life individual stories of success that I hope will also encourage you to believe - and to make that difference.

*Jacqueline*

Jacqueline Rose, Lovely Silks Publishing





## Innovation And Diversification In Business Growth

When I sat down on my first day as an entrepreneur, I couldn't begin to predict the journey I was about to embark on. I did, however, know two things: mdevents was going to fill an important role in clinical trials, and growth would be at the centre of its story.

Ambitious as I was at that point, I couldn't have imagined 14 years later I'd be the CEO of several limited companies, all under the mdgroup umbrella.

A combination of ambition, innovation and keeping a keen eye on gaps in the market has allowed me to take my life science-specific event management company and develop a diverse yet coherent range of high-quality business services, trusted in both the pharmaceutical and corporate fields.

### **Why Diversify?**

Diversification can be an unnerving concept for new entrepreneurs, as it is easy to see it as a sudden leap - a process in which a company breaks into an entirely new market, and builds a new product from the ground up.

In my experience, it can be far less daunting and more rewarding to look at diversification as an opportunity for innovation, taking the added value that your business offers and giving it room to grow into a complementary venture of its own.

That's not to say diversification is ever entirely without risks - but so too is keeping all your eggs in one basket, and depending entirely on a single industry. If you've entered the business arena with growth as your goal, finding innovative ways to develop your products and services into multiple markets can offer you a measure of stability in the long run.



Consider the classic and constantly developing analogy of home entertainment - while high street video rental brands such as Blockbuster have not survived the changing tide of digital entertainment, Netflix took a risk early on by branching out from their original subscription DVD rental service to an online streaming service that is now all but synonymous with the act of watching TV and movies.

This is just one example of how an innovative company can cross the dangerous waters of a saturated and, in this case unstable, market to find uncharted territory, ideal for your brand to grow as a distinct and unique entity.

Broadening your company's horizons may also lead to opportunities you had never previously considered, giving you the freedom to pursue products and services you are passionate about with the strength of an established brand behind you.

### **Innovation Comes In Many Forms**

Of course, your experience will vary significantly depending on the nature of your business and your goals for growth. Whatever it is you're offering, however, your diversification strategy will need to depend on meticulous market research and feedback from your current clients. That way you can confidently move into a new industry or market, knowing there's genuine demand for these new aspects of your brand.

Expanding your business horizons doesn't need to be as big as forming an entire sister company, however. It can be as simple as adapting your product for a different segment of your target audience. For example, if you offer a high-end product, consider whether there's a market for an entry-level version, relying on the trust built by your original product to appeal to a new market.

If you offer an online service, consider creating an app in response to the increasing demand for mobile services. It could be, like Netflix, your new product becomes so popular your initial offering gets left behind.

On the other hand, you could find yourself diversifying through related products and services. Once your clients have invested in your product or service, what do they need next? What would it cost you to offer them that next step as well?

For example, when we found that a lot of our pharmaceutical clients were requesting translation services for highly technical medical documents, we knew a separate, dedicated translation service would be a valuable asset for mdgroup. mdtranslation now delivers compliant translations in over 100 languages to clients around the globe.

Speaking of globalisation, diversifying your business doesn't have to mean creating a new offering from scratch - it could be as natural as taking a product or service that's at the top of its game in a regional market and adjusting it to appeal in a global arena.

Depending on your business's current market position and the level of risk you're willing to take, the options are unlimited when it comes to taking the leap. In order to land on both feet, however, you'll need to have a good feel for not only your current market, but those surrounding it.

### **Keep It Authentic**

My route into the world of entrepreneurship has been far from conventional. After discovering at an early age that I had no love for classroom learning, I never entertained the idea of doing a degree. However, far from holding me back, my life outside the world of academia is what prepared me for business success - and shaped many of the fundamental corporate values I still hold to this day.

From my very first job as a receptionist for a chipboard manufacturer in Dublin, I discovered an intense pride in paying attention to detail, going above and beyond to get things done the 'right' way.

When I started working for a clinical research organisation at the age of 20, I soon found this particular skill-set could add value to a brand far beyond the reception desk. After taking on the daunting task of organising the logistical arrangements for a high-profile industry event, I was asked to set up and lead my own events department within the organisation.

It was hugely validating to see how my attention to detail and talent for multitasking had inspired such confidence in the company they were willing to build an entire department around it. This was my first experience of a company seeing room for added value in their services, and filling the gap innovatively.

This authentic, organic process of recognising a successful service, envisioning a future for it, and then making that future happen has informed my business growth mindset ever since, giving me the confidence to seek out areas of mdgroup's ever-growing family of services that can be further developed into their own areas of expertise.

That early experience also inspired me to actively recognise and appreciate the skills of those around me, avoiding micromanagement and giving fledgling talent the room, the culture and the encouragement that it needs to reach its full potential.

### **Escape Saturation**

Starting out as an entrepreneur in the world of events, I soon realised that market saturation would keep me on my toes.

A saturated market is defined as one in which the value of a product or service in a marketplace has been maximized in its current state. It's important to note the latter part of that definition - while market saturation may seem like a negative, giving business growth a certain plateau point, it can instead be read as an opportunity to adjust your product and 'level up' into a whole new market area.

In many cases, saturation can come as a result of a company being *too* successful in a field, driving competitors to emulate its achievements, and then having no obvious way to progress beyond them.

That's what I found with mdevents - after a few years of leading the pack in the pharmaceutical events industry, we noticed other brands were catching up with us. Having quickly gathered pace in a niche environment, we had enjoyed a good few years as unrivalled leaders. In 2013, however, it became apparent that our offerings were at risk of becoming stale in comparison to the dynamic new companies that had sprung up while we were busy doing what we did best.

In order to achieve this, our first port of call was asking our clients what they most liked about our current service, and what they most wanted for the future. While as a business owner it's often possible to overlook key areas for growth, clients are a valuable asset in seeing potential development. Rather than making a guess informed only by market research and statistics, try talking directly from those who hope to benefit from your diversification.

From these invaluable conversations, we discovered a desire for a more customised 'white-glove' service in the pharmaceutical events industry, taking the bespoke options that we had pioneered, and developing them further into a new client-centric business model. We relaunched ourselves with the tailor-made factor at our core, and once again differentiated ourselves from the competition.

One of the things that most struck me about this change wasn't the increased ROI or the renewal of client interest - although those were certainly benefits. The most remarkable aspect of diversifying was the amount of energy that it brought to the team. Once again, we were playing to win, with a firmer, more fulfilled vision of the future. It's safe to say that we never looked back.

In taking this step, we not only created more room for ourselves to grow, but paved the way for future diversification and development. After all, once we gained a reputation as trusted partners who would work closely with clients to meet their unique needs, we found ourselves looking at the events market and the possibilities within it from a whole new viewpoint.

### **Meet Existing Needs**

When it comes to expanding your business, meticulously researching areas for future growth can be helpful at any stage. Even if you're not ready to diversify immediately, keeping an eye on market trends will help you make that leap when the opportunity arises.

However, sometimes the best pathways to successful diversification are the ones right under your nose. Take mdgroup's expansion into clinical trial patient services, for example: with a little innovation, what started out as an extra service turned into a business in its own right.

I established mdevents in 2002, with a particular focus on pharmaceutical meetings and events. As the work we undertook began to branch out into the area of clinical trials, I soon became aware of a growing need for patient centricity in all aspects of the industry.

After all, as far as many clinical trials go, patients are the researchers' closest and best-informed allies. Who better to explain what an illness feels like, and how a certain treatment improves the experience, than the person suffering from that illness? Nurturing a productive relationship between CROs, investigators and patients simply made sense.

The fact that supporting patients more closely could also retain participation rates and save our client's money in the long run only added to the certainty that we should include patient travel within our Life Sciences services.

Over the next few years, we realised assistance in traveling from home to the investigative site and back again was not only a helpful bonus, but a crucial aspect of the trial experience - particularly for patients in rare disease trials, or those with debilitating or degenerative illnesses.

We therefore expanded the patient-focussed aspects of our business into a bespoke patient support service, including flight and train booking, door-to-door transfers, and accommodation and meal arrangements - as well as home nursing solutions and an easy-to-use app for direct reimbursements.

Another key aspect of the service was communication - by making follow-up phone calls to the patients who benefit from our services, we are able to hear first-hand reviews of their travel experiences, ensuring that our services are tailored toward those who are most dependent on them.

With a focus on patient and client feedback, we found ourselves not only able to help ease the burden of clinical trial participation, but also discovered a whole new niche in the life sciences market that we, with our 15 years of experience in the industry, were primed to fill.

The end result was the birth of a new company under the mdgroup banner - Patient Primary.

If you're ready to seek out new directions for corporate growth, start from where you are. Ask yourself what you're doing well, and what you're being recognised for. Look at how you're adding extra value to your service or product, and how you can expand that added value into a whole new aspect of your business.

In Patient Primary's case, it also helped we were responding to a zeitgeist. With patient centricity becoming more and more of a buzzword in the pharmaceutical industry, we were able to provide a service that was of-the-moment and paving the way for progress across the industry. Research some key concerns of clients and competitors, then ask yourself how your product or service could respond to those.

### **Rebrand And Reposition**

One of the biggest challenges that affects the diversification process is the question of rebranding and repositioning your business so that it reflects everything that you can provide. It's no use offering a new product or service if what you can offer isn't apparent to the public.

In the case of mdevents, the move was a simple one. With the addition of Patient Primary, mdrecruitment, mdtranslation, mdtravel and mdtechnologies to our existing events offerings, we realised that we were no longer a single business. In fact, we had come to represent a group of services, appealing to a variety of business sectors, yet all promising the same high standards and global expertise.

We took on the name mdgroup as an umbrella for the different services we had diversified to offer. This is a name that will grow with us, carrying the industry expertise and trust associated with the mdevents brand and applying it to every area of the industry we become involved with.

With a new website in the works, drawing together all of our associated services into a single, user-friendly hub, we are actively re-envisioning and recreating the brand as we go along, ensuring that the name and image remain flexible enough for future growth - whatever direction that might be in!

## **Go Forth And Innovate**

Once you've decided you've reached the top of your game in a saturated market, the options are myriad. It's up to you to choose how you want to diversify, which markets you wish to appeal to, how much of a risk you're willing to take, and how to rebuild your brand around that new direction.

As someone who's become somewhat of a serial diversifier over the years, I can attest that a diversification-positive attitude can take your business from strength to strength, as long as you know your market, communicate with your clients, and work hard to maintain a competitive advantage.

Business success doesn't have to just be about climbing the corporate ladder. With a little innovation, you may find your business growing not only higher but deeper and wider than you've ever imagined.

*Miriam Dervan*





## About The Author



Miriam Dervan established mdevents in 2002 with a focus on pharmaceutical meetings, and has since grown the business from a one-person operation to an organisation with over 80 employees and offices in three continents.

Inspired by her experience of growing a multi-million-dollar company and the struggles and triumphs she has faced, Miriam has recently published "*To Be An Entrepreneur Just Get On With It*", a business guide and memoirs aimed at young people.

Through her book and the mdeducational foundation, along with visits to secondary schools and colleges around the UK and Ireland, Miriam hopes to inspire action and courage within budding entrepreneurs. This is a cause she is greatly passionate about.

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