



WOMEN, NETWORKING & SOCIAL CAPITAL

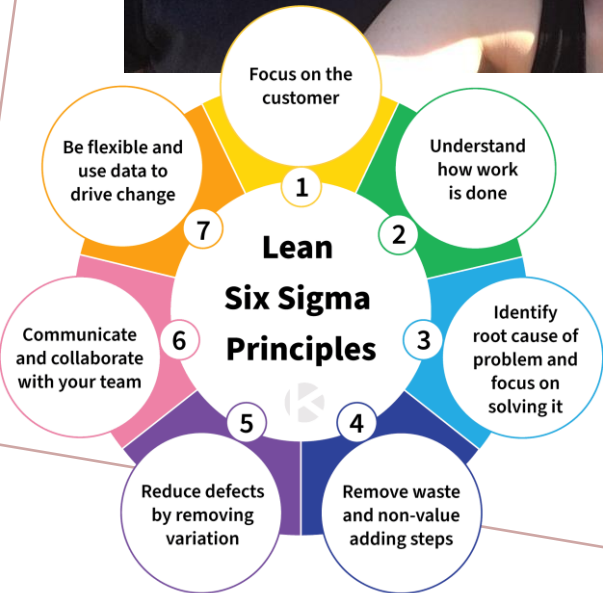
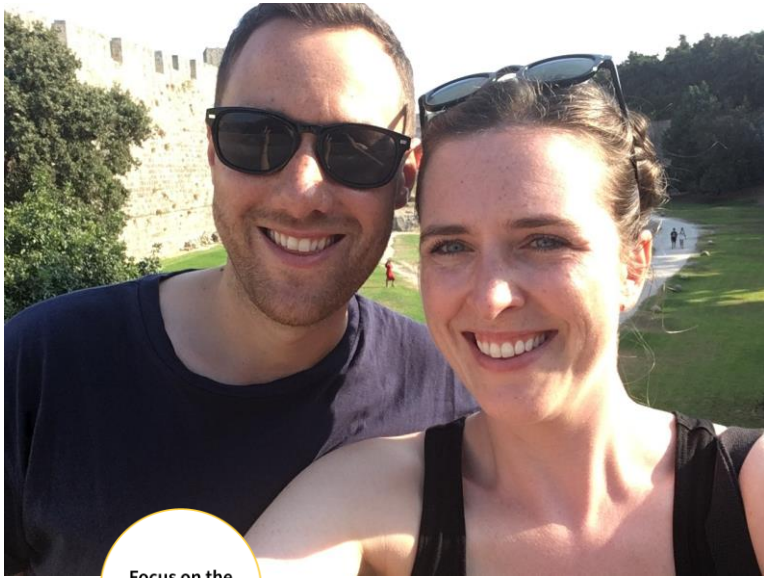
SYNDEN GRIEVE – 27 MARCH 2023

AGENDA

- Introductions
- Research focus and what motivated me
- How are women's networks structured?
- The challenges we face
- Women's work arounds
- How does social capital & networking help women tackle challenges?
- What this means for you?



SYNDEN GRIEVE PROCESS SOLUTIONS PROGRAM MANAGER & WELL VP FOR EMEA



‘OUR SOCIETY IS, TO A
DEGREE, SEXIST, AND NOT
JUST AT ITS EXTREMES’

RESEARCH FOCUS

I wanted to understand how female entrepreneurs in Scotland's technology industry build their networks using social capital – and ultimately if this helps them succeed.

Social capital definitions

Sociability, social networks, cooperation, interpersonal trust and connectedness (Sapleton, 2009)

Social capital and networking

Impact the way people work together, creating trust, reciprocity and cooperative environments (McGowan, Cooper, Durkin & O'Kane, 2015).



WHAT MOTIVATED ME?

- During the pandemic, women have experienced greater economic and social impact than men. The initial 2020 calculation was that it would take women 100 years to achieve equality has now broadened by a further 32 years.
- Women are often seen as a missed economic opportunity and constantly compared with men which can be largely unhelpful
- Personal involvement, I work in the travel-tech industry, I know from firsthand experience that the tech industry is a male dominated environment
- I was interested in how networking and social capital operated in this space

HOW ARE WOMEN'S NETWORKS STRUCTURED?

- Goal driven - thoughtful and targeted approach
- Snowball effect
- Semi-organic
- Use existing contacts to build from
- Digitally supported

Enjoy networks that connect relevant contacts and that are welcoming and non-hierarchical

Prefer deeper connections through 1:1 discussions

Goals and objectives include wanting to share knowledge, building connections, accessing collaboration opportunities and gathering feedback

CHALLENGES WE FACE

- Time, effort and energy needed to network
- Experts sometimes have expectations of payment, even for a casual conversation
- Networks are full of invisible structures that require facilitation



GENDERED CHALLENGES WE FACE

Societal

Women don't fulfil the stereotype of an entrepreneur = young solo white man

Women 'qualifying' to be entrepreneurs (Ozkazanc-Pan & Clark Muntean, 2018)

Societal conditioning on 'normal' gender roles - women expected to be primary carer, household manager, worker and society does not support any of these roles. (Stewart & Logan, 2023)

Networks & Individuals

People seek out those like themselves

Unintentional hostile environment for those that don't fit the mold

Networks that benefit men, don't always benefit women in the same way

Some networks filled with hierarchies and jargon

Mansplaining

All-male spaces

Men not as collaborative

Financial Support

Women start business with 53% less capital (Women's Enterprise Scotland, 2020)

2% of institutional investment goes to women led companies in Scotland (Stewart & Logan, 2023)

Social enterprise issue - 'nice' businesses

Reactions

We normalize extremes and so our solutions become less bold and ambitious (Stewart & Logan, 2023)

1 in 5 of Scotland's entrepreneurs is a woman (Stewart & Logan, 2023)

Not many female role models

Hard to ask for favours from men vs women

Hard to find female talent and attain gender balance

CRITICISM & CONFIDENCE

- Women try not to be a burden, so it takes longer to ask for things and generally, a relationship is needed before they will ask
- Can struggle to ask for help if lacking confidence
- Can be too honest about where their business is financially / growth potential
- Can offer to give away too much – information or financially
- Labelled as not confident enough Then conversely too confident



WOMEN'S WORK-AROUNDS

Women tend to accept that society is formed around gendered constructs that negatively impact women And then get on with it.



Champions & Connectors

Women connect and champion women – this enables others to have a vested interest in you and your business



Women's Networks

Safe spaces where women can share challenges, with honesty, empathy and guidance creating deeper bonds and lifelong friendships



Hard Work

Overcoming bias - the hard work is left for women to do, so women push through with hard work and determination



Resilience

Develop strong coping mechanisms and creative practices to overcome barriers

HOW SOCIAL CAPITAL & NETWORKING ENABLE WOMEN TO TACKLE CHALLENGES

Using social capital and networking unlocks benefits and resources that help save time and money, provide learning, bolsters confidence and ensures people feel supported

TRUST

- Requires a leap of faith, but worth it
- Safe spaces to share challenges and gain emotional and business support
- Comradery and community through interactions

RECIPROCITY

- Giving back to the community via mentoring, information sharing and connecting others
- Genuine desire to help each other - want people to succeed

CREDIBILITY

- Networks provide credibility, shows you are well connected
- Introductions and connections are effectively an endorsement
- Being a connector builds your credibility too, validating your industry knowledge

NEW NORMS

- Creating safe spaces for discussion on difficult topics
- Shared experiences
- Learning opportunities
- Builds confidence

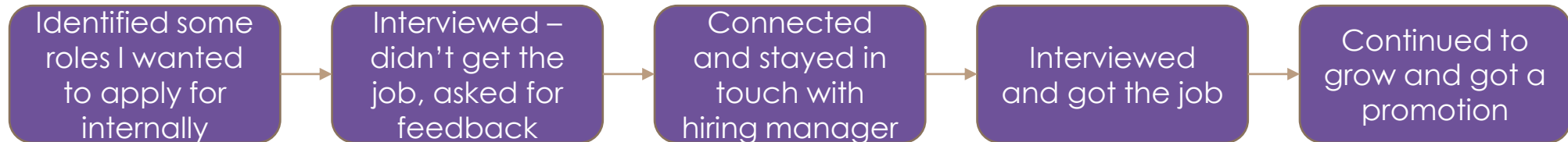
WHAT HAS THIS MEANT FOR ME?



Expand your network where you can

Open to new learning experiences

Connect and be open about what you want



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?



Personally

- Have confidence in what you have to offer
- Build your networks – expand and learn
- Ask for things – be direct and open about what you want
- Connect others
- Recognise women's extensive contribution and celebrate how they do things differently



In Networks

- Challenge hierarchies and create norms of inclusion and diversity
- Ask men to be champions, connectors and mentors of women
- Challenge men to educate themselves, removing the onus on women to 'fix' the problem
- Breakdown stereotypes for men and women – they go together
- Introduce I&D polices, unconscious bias training and open the discussion around 'bad habits'

APPENDIX

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