

7 Ways to Brand Yourself as the She-Hero You Are

Career Development



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The world has changed, and we need to get on with the time. Everyone has a personal brand whether they are aware of it. Women especially are so externally focused that things that benefit us personally and professionally are left at the back burner. This session will focus on how women can build their brands for professional success.

On June 3, 2024, the ACC Foundation hosted the Global Women in Law & Leadership virtual programing where in this topic was discussed in detail by four leading ladies:

- *Theresa Chikwendu*, Head of Department, Corporate Transactions, MTN Nigeria Communications Plc
- ***Stephanie Shack***, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Continental Realty Corporation
- *Debbie Hoffman*, Visiting Assistant Professor of Law, Cleveland State University College of Law (former CLO)
- ***Emily Griesing***, Co-owner and Chief Strategy Officer, Bossible

We explored the importance of personal branding, especially for women in the professional landscape. The discussion covered:

- The power of personal branding for career growth:
- Strategies for introverts to build strong personal brands:
- Building a powerful network, and;
- Leveraging social media for professional success.

The below is a high-level summary of the discussion amongst the panelists:

1. In understanding personal branding — Personal branding is about defining who you are and what you stand for. It's the unique combination of skills, experiences, and values that sets you apart. It helps you to do the work before you enter the room.

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2. In building your personal brand, take time to reflect on:

- Your career, achievements, and the lessons you've learned;

- Your key strengths? What values drive you? Clearly articulate your career goals and the impact you want to make. This vision will be the guiding star of your personal brand.

- Summarize your unique value proposition in a concise statement. This should highlight your expertise, passion, and what makes you different.

- Ensure that your online presence, professional interactions, and personal life consistently reflect your brand.

3. **Networking extensively** — Networking is not just about exchanging business cards or adding connections on LinkedIn. It’s about creating meaningful relationships that can open doors to new opportunities. **Approach networking with an open-mindset and with a sincere interest in others.** Authenticity builds trust and creates lasting connections. Listen more than you speak. Understanding others' needs and perspectives can lead to mutually beneficial relationships.

4. **Introverts and networking** — Introverts need to recharge their batteries to avoid networking burnout. As an introvert, you can view personal branding as something that you have to be deliberate and intentional about so long as you are being authentic — online and offline. **However, in building your personal brand as an introvert, be clear about your objective — *your why?*** Your why will serve as your anchor on tough days.

5. **Participate in conferences, webinars, and networking events in your field.** These gatherings are goldmines for meeting like-minded professionals. In addition, become a member of industry associations, online forums, and LinkedIn groups related to your field. When you become a member of an association, don't just pay dues but volunteer, take on leadership roles, raise your hands for the speaking opportunities. **Be visible in the association.** Add value by always thinking value creation and value capture. Be proud of your accomplishments. Make that post celebrating your accomplishments and wins (big or small).

6. A mentor can provide invaluable guidance, support, and insights based on their experiences. Don't hesitate to reach out to someone you admire. Share your knowledge and experiences with others**. Mentoring not only helps others but also reinforces your expertise and strengthens your network.**

7. **Using LinkedIn to make an impact** — LinkedIn is a powerful tool for personal branding and networking. Here's how to make the most of your LinkedIn profile: Use a high-quality, professional photo. First impressions matter. Post articles, updates, and insights that reflect your knowledge and interests. Send personalized connection requests to people you meet or admire. Explain why you want to connect. Regularly engage with your connections by liking, commenting, and messaging. Building relationships requires ongoing effort.

> First impressions matter.

Becoming the She-Hero you are is about embracing your unique strengths, building meaningful relationships, and leveraging digital platforms and social media like LinkedIn to amplify your voice. By crafting a strong personal brand, nurturing a powerful network, and optimizing your LinkedIn presence, you can unlock new opportunities and inspire others along the way. Remember, the journey to becoming a She-Hero is personal and ongoing. Stay true to yourself, be open to learning, and continue to evolve. The world is waiting for the impact only you can make. Embrace your power and let your She-Hero shine!

Join ACC

Theresa Chikwendu



Principal Consultant, Legal & M&A

MTN Nigeria Communications Plc

Theresa Chikwendu is a distinguished and award-winning legal professional whose career is marked by a proven ability to navigate complex corporate transactions and drive strategic legal initiatives within one of Africa's largest and most influential organizations.

As Principal Consultant, Legal & M&A at MTN Group (**JSE: MTN**), my role involves providing critical legal oversight for M&A, and business development initiatives, ensuring robust legal frameworks that align with MTN's strategic objectives and international best practices. She was previously the former Senior Manager and Head of Department, Corporate Transactions at MTN Nigeria Communications Plc (**NGX: MTN**), where she helped the company structure and negotiate its most complex commercial transactions ranging from financing, mergers & acquisitions, and project finance transactions. She provided strategic leadership to the business on legal and business issues ranging from corporate transactions, general commercial transactions, stakeholder management, project management, and related matters.

She holds an LL.M Degree from Harvard Law School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. Theresa's hobbies include reading, travelling, and she is a big advocate of mentorship. She runs a weekly LinkedIn column known as "***Diary of an Inhouse Legal Counsel***" where she is building a global community for in-house lawyers focused on becoming better strategic business advisors. She also has a collaboration with the African Corporate & Government Counsel Forum on a column titled – ***Legal Insights with Theresa Chikwendu, A monthly Digest for In-House Counsel***.

She is the visionary and convener of the ***#YoungerMe Nuggets Series,*** an initiative committed to empowering the next generation of young legal professionals and law students from underrepresented schools/backgrounds with the tools they need for career success globally. She served on the 2023 Annual Meeting Advisory Board of the Association of Corporate Counsel. She is also on the leadership of the International Legal Affairs, and Small Law Department Networks of the Association of Corporate Counsel.

You can learn more about her here - https://www.linkedin.com/in/nkeonyeasua-theresa-chikwend