

# The roadmap to entrepreneurial success: powerful strategies from the top for building a truly successful business

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Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of any burgeoning economy. It takes the innovation and passion of hard-working trailblazers to bring new and exciting ideas to the table. However, starting your own venture can be quite daunting, especially when the economy is topsy-turvy, and things seem uncertain.

“One of the topics that will be covered at this year’s Standard Bank Top Women Virtual Summit as organised by Topco Media is the powerful strategies that helped the speakers to build truly successful businesses from scratch,” says Ralf Fletcher, Topco Media CEO.

Don’t be afraid to aim high. After all, Google wasn’t built in a day! Here are 5 business success tips from leading women entrepreneurs who will be addressing the over 8000 confirmed delegates at the upcoming virtual summit:

## 1. [Don’t borrow – sell your skills!](#)

Margaret Hirsch, co-founder and executive director of Hirsch's Home Stores in South Africa, encourages entrepreneurs to steer clear of accumulating debt in the beginning if at all possible.

“My advice to entrepreneurs is to never borrow a cent. Sell your skills, in the beginning, to get yourself money. What we did at Hirsch’s is [that] we started small and ploughed every cent back into the business for many years,” she said in an interview with *How We Made it in Africa*.

## 2. [Keep learning and developing yourself](#)

Ms Hirsch also advocates for learning and developing yourself as an entrepreneur on an ongoing basis. In fact, in an interview with *Good Things Guy*, she revealed that she used the lockdown period in 2020 to finish her MBA at 70 years old!

## 3. [Find your target demographic where they are](#)

Eva Mwai, Regional Director for the East Africa North Star Alliance in Kenya, is a passionate advocate for the health rights of children and women and has received several national and international recognitions for her role in social transformation, advocacy, and promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights of women.

In an interview with *Grand Challenges Canada*, she explained how their organisation makes their services accessible and provide quality healthcare to mobile workers and the communities they interact with.

“We deliver our public health services through converted sea containers, which are strategically located along transport corridors. Of course, there you find so many people who move, including sex workers. And that is our concern. Sex workers in Africa are highly stigmatised and discriminated upon. So what we do is to hit the nail on the head by going where they are if they cannot come where we are.”

## 4. [Share your resources for the greater good](#)

Sodfa Daaji, founder and executive director of the African Legal Think Tank on Women’s Rights, recently joined head of Editorial for Topco Media, Fiona Wakelin, to discuss her 28-year journey within the Women’s Rights space on a very illuminating podcast.

One of the key takeouts from this session was that data need to be shared between female entrepreneurs in order to empower one another.

“Women-led research efforts are so important in order for women to gain access to all the information and data they need. This way, simplified clusters of data can reach women (especially those facing increased marginalisation) who lack access to educational resources.”

## 5. [Pursue the things you want – don’t wait for it to come to you](#)

In the lead-up to last year’s Standard Bank Brave Conversations Conference webinar, Jenine Zachar, head of Enterprise and Direct Banking for Standard Bank Group, shared her view on why women make great leaders. She stated that women in leadership positions are taking great strides by pursuing the things they want in their jobs in careers, instead of waiting for it to come to them.

“The key is confidence in all your resources and abilities, not just those presented on paper. The big challenge is to keep our perspectives top of mind in conversations at the corporate level, and also among family and friends, so the mindset shift can happen. Be resilient that change will come,” she explained.

These are just a few of the insights on entrepreneurial success these inspiring women have to share. There is a lot more where that came from!

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