

MARKETING

## Brands must offer feedback, ask questions to bolster female leadership

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*Brands must offer frequent feedback and ask women what their goals are. Image credit: LinkedIn Sales Solutions*

By KATIE TAMOLA

NEW YORK Engaging in a culture of feedback, authenticity and persistence is imperative for women who want to be at the top of their field.

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During a panel at *Luxury Daily's* Women in Luxury eConference on June 16, moderated by Mickey Alam Khan, editor in chief at *Luxury Daily*, women executives shared their experiences as well as beliefs on how brands can assist women in attaining leadership positions. Leaders across sectors are optimistic that industries are moving in a more diverse, equitable direction.

"It needs to start from the very beginning to have this uplifting moment," said Anne-Sophie Stock, U.S. vice president, Core Bubbles at **Moët Hennessy USA**, New York. "And I think what has started, cannot be stopped.

"To me, it's normalizing seeing women at the top for my team, for my daughters," she said. "So I think we are heading in the right direction."

*Women in Luxury 2022 was produced by Luxury Daily*

From the top

Panelists agreed that over the years, women have become more represented in leadership roles and that this will continue.

For businesses to successfully pinpoint women who will thrive in leadership positions and in turn help the company meet its goals, brands must look to feedback.



*Employee feedback has become more important during an era of remote work. Image credit: Mot Hennessy*

Organizations must go above and beyond to offer employees feedback, ultimately fostering women to be the best they can be at their jobs, highlighting strengths while identifying points for improvement. Frequent check-ins and constant feedback are crucial.

Peer and mentor programs can also serve as immensely beneficial.

"We do have to be a little bit more intentional about checking in," said Steele Marcoux, editor in chief at Hearst Magazine's *Veranda*, Birmingham.

"One thing that we've started this year, and this is frankly more of a Hearst-wide initiative, is pairing people with a sort of buddy throughout the organization," she said. "Such programs have enabled us to bring in new hires more quickly into the Hearst culture as well as exchange good ideas, shake things up a bit."

When looking to appoint female leadership, brands should also be open to both internal and external hires. Identifying what works and who thrives internally is beneficial, as is being open to new ideas and attributes from new candidates.

Women already in leadership positions should also be seeking out other women within their organizations and asking them about their goals.

Asking women where they see themselves in five to 10 years and what their most prominent professional aspirations are can go a long way. Learning about individual goals, values and areas for growth is also crucial.

It is also imperative to lead openly and effectively. Fellow employees are often watching female leadership to witness and take note of how they lead.



*Brands like Hanky Panky are looking to foster more diversity. Image credit: Hanky Panky*

Whether male, female or nonbinary, with a quiet or prominent leadership style, an internal or external hire brands must welcome and encourage their employees to be who they are, their most authentic and strongest selves. This is how leaders emerge.

"Sometimes people don't want to be me," Moët Hennessy USA's Ms. Stock said. "But if you want to be me, you need to voice it.

"And I think there were some times I would have wished in my past that somebody would have asked where are you going to be in 10 years?"

## Seeking diversity

Brands are increasingly looking to diversify their workforces. At the same time, consumers are increasingly curious and passionate about how a workforce looks and how products are represented.

Cond Nast is holding itself accountable with new goals founded on creating equitable and inclusive recruitment, retention and talent development approach.

Last year, beauty group Este Lauder Companies announced an Equity and Engagement Center of Excellence (COE) division in line with its commitment to build greater equity and representation throughout its business.

The Equity and Engagement COE is led by Nicole Monson, who the company appointed as senior vice president of the division ([see story](#)).

"We work hard on our education," said Brenda Berger, CEO of [Hanky Panky](#), New York. "We work hard on learning and understanding, and certainly in also our visuals as we really changed the landscape of how we represented women in our images, and that's everything from size inclusivity and diversity and extending on-page as well."

Acknowledging that work remains to be done in hiring more female executives, and fostering more diverse workplaces everywhere, remains beneficial.

"All the work is not complete, of course at this point, but we are working to have more diversity and more inclusion at every step of our ranks," said *Veranda's* Ms. Marcoux.

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