

Top tips for women in tech

 By [Lynette Hundermark](#)

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As a woman with more than 17 years of work experience in the challenging and constantly evolving tech industry, I have had my fair share of learning experiences over time.

These are my top tips for women keen to survive and climb to the top in this exciting and dynamic environment:

1. Follow your passion

I am truly passionate about what I do. The moment I stop feeling that excitement, I look for other areas in the field that are able to challenge me and keep my mind working.

2. Learn to integrate your work and family life

I don't like the term "work-balance" because, to be honest, it's not a scale. I hate the message portrayed by movies such as *The Devil Wears Prada* and *I Don't Know How She Does It*, where a woman has to choose between her career and her family. Your circumstances will change as you progress in life.

My advice is to roll with the punches and make the best of your situation. The best part of integration is that things change and you adapt. Just like integrating an API to an app, changes always have to be made and likewise with family, as your children become older and family life demands change, you learn to integrate the family and work facets of your life.



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3. Find a mentor

The importance of mentorship cannot be overstated. Identify a mentor who can support and invest in you. Senior managers will be more likely to take you under their wing if it is apparent that you love what you do and don't really see it as a job, but rather as a passion and growth opportunity. This attitude will make the process of seeking support easier.

4. Chat to like-minded women who are true role models

Although there aren't very many, you would be surprised at the response if you reached out for advice. The internet is full of so many awesome, talented women in the tech space who are constantly providing insights. However, choose your role models carefully based on the space you want to be in and find out how these women actually got to where they are. That is true of any role model or mentor actually, irrespective of gender. Sift through the public relations and hype and find

people of true substance, who you can identify with in terms of having similar backgrounds/family situations.

5. Work on your negotiation skills

Society and tradition has taught women to be thankful for what we get, but throughout my career I often found that some of my male peers were on a higher salary scale than I was. When I investigated further, I found it wasn't because they were more skilled than me but rather, because they don't meekly accept the salaries or increases they are initially offered. It took me many years to pluck up the courage to ask for more money, but once I built up the confidence and realised I was the best at what I did, my negotiation skills improved considerably.

6. Learn from negative experiences

Treat negative experiences as character-building episodes in your life and move on - quickly. While I've had really awesome mentors and managers, I have also had to deal with the unfortunate situation where I had the odd male chauvinist line manager who would question my authority. Those situations I have treated as life experiences (yes, there were tears) but at the end of the day, knowledge and passion always win. If anything, it made me stronger and helped build my confidence.

7. Fight your fear of failure

Women in particular, hate failing and this can be a career inhibitor if you are always afraid to take risks. As a business owner, I am continually learning how to manage this and to see failure as an opportunity. In the words of author Eloise Ristad, "When we give ourselves permission to fail, we, at the same time, give ourselves permission to excel".

To sum up, being a woman in tech is not easy but confidence in your abilities, the willingness to seek out advice when necessary and the seamless integration of your work and personal life are the stepping stones to success.

ABOUT LYNETTE HUNDERMARK

With over 15 years of experience in the tech, digital marketing and mobile solutions space, Hundermark co-founded specialist mobile solutions consultancy Useful & Beautiful. With a passion for developing mobile products that are aligned to business goals, Hundermark's appetite for keeping abreast of the latest industry trends is fast establishing her as an expert tech commentator and opinion leader in South Africa. Follow @lynetteeathony on Twitter.

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