



ANITA BORG INSTITUTE
FOR WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY

TechLeaders

Realizing Your Vision Workshop

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Overview

TechLeaders: Realizing Your Vision, ABI's leadership development workshop designed to grow the next generation of technical women leaders, held a workshop in New York City. Fifty-two technical women participated, from a variety of leading companies such as Juniper, Sun, ATT, Google, HP, Medco, State Farm Insurance, and Goldman Sachs. Participants shared their challenges and goals, and learned from senior industry leaders and from each other. The workshop was facilitated by Cindy Goral of the Anita Borg Institute for Women and Technology. [Download her slides.](#)

Panel: Leading with Passion

A panel of senior technical women from industry shared their personal stories and advice on passionate leadership. Highlighted here are some the key points from each panelist. For a more detailed summary of this panel discussion see the blog post [TechLeaders: Realizing Your Vision @ Google Manhattan](#) and [download Kim's slides.](#)

[Kim Perdikou](#), Executive Vice-President of Juniper Networks:

- Lead with passion rather than drive.
- Kim says, "Passion is when who you are and what you believe in connects with what you do."
- Be true to yourself; be authentic.
- Take risks; be unconventional.
- Successful leadership is about being a motivator, a communicator, and a decision maker.

[Katharine Frase](#), Vice President of SWG Business and Technical Strategy at IBM:

- Katherine's motto: "if you never ask, the answer is always no".
- It's not how you balance family and work; it's why you do it.
- Keep learning to avoid becoming stale: "When you can do your job in your sleep, it's time to change!"
- Being a manager and being technical are not mutually exclusive!

[Linda Bernardi](#), CEO of ConnecTerra Inc.:

- Linda says women are not "diversity" – we are 51% of the population!
- Creating your own opportunities.
- Go in and influence.
- Carry the power inside of you.
- Let go of fear; there is nothing to be gained from fear.

Presentation: How to Break Through Barriers

[Gabby Silberman](#), Senior VP and Head, CA Labs, shared a senior technology leader's perspective on breaking through barriers. Highlighted here are some the key points from his presentation. You can [download his slides](#) and also find a more detailed summary of his presentation in the blog post [Breaking Through Barriers at TechLeaders](#):

- Always have a plan. Every day, move toward achieving that plan.
- Learn how to say No.
- Look for mentoring opportunities.
- Always stick to ethical behavior. This means speaking up.
- Build things to last.
- Your work is as good as others'. The difference is in their ability to "sell" it.
- Perfect your "pitch".

Gabby also shared some of his principles of good management:

- Work for your team.
- Manage your managers.
- Present facts as facts and ideas as ideas, and put those ideas in context.
- Keep an eye on the bottom line.

Key Learning from Day 1

From the blog post [Learning from Day 1: TechLeaders @ Google in Manhattan](#), here are some of the key points workshop participants said they learned from the first day:

- If you do not ask, the answer is always no.
- If you don't exceed your authority once a week you are not doing your job.
- There is a difference between drive and passion.
- It's okay if some people don't like me - or if people like me one day and not the next.
- Most barriers are self imposed.
- Get allies before presenting your ideas.
- Visualize where you want to be and work backwards with a plan.
- Let go of fear - or embrace it to make it useful for you.

Panel: Moving Your Vision to Reality

A panel of senior technical women from industry shared their perspectives on how to break through barriers to make your vision a reality. Highlighted here are some the key points from each panelist. For a more detailed summary of this panel discussion see the blog post [Insights from the technical track: TechLeaders Realizing Your Vision at Google Manhattan](#).

[Linda Knippers](#), Distinguished Technologist at HP:

- You do not have to manage in order to lead.
- Articulate your goals to your management; make sure there is a match between your goals and theirs.
- It's okay if not everyone likes what you do.
- It's okay to change jobs. Make sure there are leadership transition plans in place; train your backup.
- Don't be afraid to turn down an opportunity if the job is not right for you.

[Jen Fitzpatrick](#), Engineering Director at Google:

- Make sure the vision is clearly articulated, crisp, and short.
- Get buy in for your vision.
- Articulate the path leading to your vision.
- Do not get distracted from your vision when priorities are changing around you.
- Be explicit on what you need from other people to achieve your vision.

[Linda Bernardi](#), CEO of ConneCTerra Inc.:

- You will not realize your vision alone.
- Mentoring is the most significant thing you can do in your career.
 - A mentor will help you see things that are holding you back.
- Network deliberately, i.e., never network without a purpose.
 - Plan out the people who need to meet to get where you want to be.
 - Be deliberate in expanding your reach so you are not just meeting with people you are comfortable with.

Leading Our Own Breakthroughs

Notes from the Leading Our Own Breakthroughs breakout sessions on day two.

Networking

Challenges

- Breaking the conversation
- Not assertive/introvert
- Networking outside my group or company
- Networking up
- Being deliberate
- (Feeling that networking is) sleazy and self-interested

Solutions

- Don't fear rejection
- Practice "nice talking to you"
- Join a group
- Technical women's networks, alumni associations, professional groups, boards
- Give yourself a goal, e.g., 20 minutes, 5 business cards
- Follow up when you travel

Articulating a Vision

Challenges

- Where to be in 1, 3, 5 years?
- Vision for team but not for self
- Prioritization of problems
- Societal recognition of perceptions/problems that prevent women in leadership
- How to articulate when the environment is changing?
- How to figure out the right direction, or when change is needed?
- How to get enough information/resources?
- How to set the vision at the right level?

Solutions

- Get buy-in for each stage of your plan (1, 3, 5 years)
- Get buy-in on the *right* problem
- Articulate the fundamental things you're excited about
- Break your vision into steps and focus on the next challenge
- Spend some time focusing on a career goal instead of personal goals

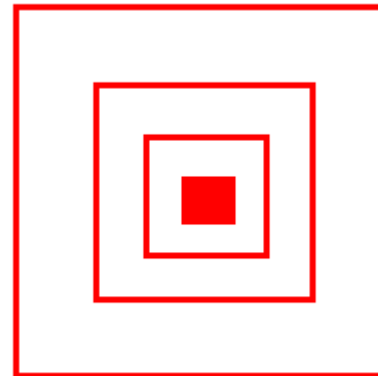
Influencing Without Authority

Challenges

- Influencing individuals who don't report to you
- Communicating/influencing managers and upper level people
- Navigating how/where to find or make influence/change
- Finding the right motivation (carrot/stick)

Solutions

- Shift focus of your goal
- Jump in and get dirty
- Bring them to the light bulb moment
- When influencing individuals who don't report to you:
 - Set context frameworks together
 - Work to get more influence
 - Vision can be small
 - What makes people tick
 - Give people a choice
 - Be clear, direct, enthusiastic, authentic, passionate
 - Find their motivation
- When communicating/influencing managers and upper level people:
 - All of the above, plus ...
 - Talk to them one-to-one
 - Communicate up
 - Get managers to work together
- When navigating how/where to find or make influence/change:
 - Make partnerships
 - Talk to power that be about streamlining process
 - Be clear in organization about processes and doctrines
- When searching for the right motivation:
 - Give people a say, control, ability
 - Set context for decision making
- Use *ALL* of the tools in your toolbox



Increasing Visibility

Challenges

- Personal visibility
- Team visibility
- Being visible remotely or virtually
- Communication style
- Feeling invisible in meetings
- I don't golf!
- Raising visibility outside my group

Solutions

- Manage up
- Identify what is important to others
 - Put together processes that show value of team, e.g. QA, operations
- Take credit for your work
 - Make sure your manager knows what you are doing
 - Know the metrics they are using to measure you by
- Get on a more visible project
 - Understand importance to company
 - If there is a financial impact to your work, articulate it
 - Communicate the impact of what you are doing
- Breakdown silos
- Threaten to "shut down" for the day
- Find out who are decision makers or influencers in the company and become more visible to them; this is not necessarily your management chain
- Do a presentation on your work:
 - Brown bag tech talk
 - Invite other groups
 - Create a forum if one doesn't exist
- Get a mentor
 - Find a mentor in the head office
- Work on networking within company
- Leverage your alumni network
- Get videotaped to see how you are perceived by others
- Own being the only woman in the room — you *are* visible
- Pick up the phone and ask for what you want
- Have your elevator pitch
- Find a common activity — even if it's not necessarily your interest — football, golf, gym
- Meet face-to-face
- Get formal time on agenda ahead of time
 - Remind them of your name a lot
 - Ask for a videoconference and zoom in on your face

Staying Motivated

Challenges

- Feeling valued at work
- Feeling stuck
- Wanting a leadership position
- Manager is blocking progress
- Mismatched expectations about job
- How to get motivated to start big task
- How to stay motivated when work gets routine
- How to motivate others
- How to stay motivated when the fun is over
- How to motivate over multiple years
- How to stay motivated as you become less hands-on
- How to be motivated when you don't like the task
- How to motivate to leave

What Motivates Us?

- Seeing the influence we've had on more junior people or customers
- Finding solutions to technical challenges
- Solving a problem; putting a plan in motion
- Seeing clarify being achieved
- Checking things off the list
- Celebrating success
- Competition
- Praise
- Money
- Work ethic
- Positive people

Solutions

- Project aligned with creative flair as well as problem to be solved
- Utilize network to get unstuck
- Get a career coach
- Paper trail or conversations with managers
- Be direct with manager — consider leaving group or job
- Elevate a co-worker to lead project that is making you feel stuck
- Make proposal for role or project change
- Find out what motivates each team member: Career path, recognition, fun, challenge

Managing Time

Challenges

- Balancing face time at work/leadership responsibilities with distance of family
- Finding time to plan, time for self, energy for self
 - So not so reactive
 - Time to excel versus just maintain
- Prioritizing work assignments + family time + self time
- Boundaries and learning to gracefully say No
- Strategies for remote resource management
- Prioritizing work assignments to move up without sacrificing family time
- Balance work with family demands + self time

Work-Life Balance Solutions

1. Home life:
 - Outsource personal stuff (cleaning, laundry, driving kids, etc.)
2. Work life:
 - Co-manage work assignments
 - Mentor other staff to do heavy lifting and only provide guidance
 - Distinguish between urgent/important and urgent/non-important
 - Moving laterally versus up
3. Telecommuting:
 - Propose globalization/environmental impact of telecommuting
4. Get a third space to work (not home, not work)

References

Workshop presentations

- Cindy Goral's slides
<http://anitaborg.org/files/goralslidesdatadec2007.pdf>
- Kim Perdikou's slides
http://anitaborg.org/files/kimperdikou_abi_december_2007.pdf
- Gabby Silberman's slides
<http://anitaborg.org/files/gabby-at-abi-december-2007.pdf>

Related Blog Posts

- Realizing Your Vision: TechLeaders @ Google Manhattan:
<http://anitaborg.org/news/archive/techleaders-realizing-your-vision-google-manhattan/>
- Breaking Through Barriers at TechLeaders:
<http://anitaborg.org/news/archive/breaking-through-barriers-at-techleaders/>
- Learning from Day 1: TechLeaders @ Google in Manhattan:
<http://anitaborg.org/news/archive/learning-from-day-1-techleaders-google-in-manhattan/>
- Insights from the Technical Track: TechLeaders Realizing Your Vision at Google Manhattan:
<http://anitaborg.org/news/archive/insights-from-the-technical-track-techleaders-realizing-your-vision-at-google-manhattan/>

Notes from previous TechLeaders: Realizing Your Vision workshops

- February 6-7, 2007 at Intel in Hillsboro, Oregon
 - Archived workshop page:
<http://anitaborg.org/initiatives/techleaders/archive/realizing-your-vision/>
 - Workshop notes:
<http://anitaborg.org/initiatives/techleaders/archive/aspiring-techleaders-realizing-your-vision/>
- March 22 - 23, 2006 at Google in Mountain View, California
 - Archived workshop page:
<http://anitaborg.org/initiatives/techleaders/archive/aspiring-techleaders-realizing-your-vision-notes/>
 - Workshop notes:
<http://anitaborg.org/initiatives/techleaders/archive/aspiring-techleaders-realizing-your-vision-notes/>

TechLeaders Resources and Reading List

<http://anitaborg.org/news/resources/techleaders-reading-list/>