WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PODCAST

Episode 25

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Host: Annemarie Cross

Annemarie Cross: You're listening to Women and Leadership Podcast, episode 25.

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Hi, I'm your host Annemarie Cross, brand and communication strategist also known as "The Podcasting Queen." Welcome to another episode of Women In Leadership Podcast, the podcast that empowers you to reach you full potential.

Now do you need a new personal image for your social media profile or maybe you're in the process of creating your speaking and media so you need to update your professional image. Before you do, you need to listen to today's show. My guest today, she is a maverick magician who makes personal banding and images irresistible. Joining on today's show is award-winning visual branding strategist and photographer, Zahrina Robertson.

Zahrina has photographed international entrepreneurs and many of them I'm sure you've heard of- Ita Buttrose, Tim Ferris, Taki Moore, Matt Church, and Dale Beaumont. She is passionate about creating photos that have people. People who look at you going wow! Because she understands that an image defines a person's brand and believes those first few seconds well they are vital.

And on today's show she is going to share her wisdom with us including why authenticity is essential when it comes to your visual brand and capturing what she calls your X factor. She'll also be sharing key elements of a magnetic brand. You want to make sure you got pen and paper handy to take down all these wonderful notes as well as how to use imagery to connect with your client.

So welcome to the show, Zahrina.

Zahrina Robertson Thank you for having me, Annemarie. It's a pleasure and what an intro. Thank you.

Annemarie Cross: I'm really very excited to have you on the show because all of our listeners are very passionate about personal branding, authenticity and so on. And you bring a little of expertise that really will help people take their images, their visual images to the next level which is so important isn't it? Because so many of us are very visual and now when you look at social media and how we put our first foot forward is really capturing that image and there are great images and then there are not so great. So it's great to be able to share some of your wisdom.

So when we're thinking about authenticity, I mean it's essential when it comes to visual branding and capturing your X factor. What are some of the reasons that you really get behind this?

Zahrina Robertson It's because I guess over the years, I've photographed some international superstars in the business game. I've really realized that it's more than just a photo. It's really about the magnetism of that person that really is the mystery X factor. What I really love is about the mindset. It's all about that and that's why I've understood that your authenticity is essential to your personal brand and

showing that in imagery. But it all starts from mindset. It's all understanding that we are as individuals, we have the potential to go forth and be really congruent in what we say who we are and what we stand for so that we are confident and we attract the people we want to include in our circle or out our circle, our business longevity. So I took a long time, a long while ago to realize that. But for me it starts with my story.

My story was that I've done all the brides and the bridezillas and the weddings and the baby's running around the park. I mean running after them with my camera. I did all that but what I really realized is that I was looking for more meaning in my work and my work is evolving and then I had my son and he's 8 years this year and I really realized that the change that was happening out there for myself was inner. It was all happening inside and it was mindset and authenticity. It was all this sort of churning of who do I want to deal with in business? Who am I going to attract? And then the big thing was how am I going to attract them?

And then social media came out and it was like oh gosh not another thing on my plate to know about. Do I really need to know about this? And I thought oh gosh, I dragged myself to a Facebook seminar a while ago and I went oh, do I have to? But I did and I haven't looked back. And what's being keyed to the success is being authentic in my brand what I say, what I do, how I do things. But then on top of that is the results. It's the product of what my heart sings with and that's the imagery that I work with and produced. So far from what you actually as a business owner and the women out there that are listening is that what you do and what you produce is great and is your gift but making sure that you live in your giftedness is really key to your success and swing and you can always go

outside of that. That's fine. But stay to your key belief which is your gift, what you're really really good at.

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So I really questioned myself earlier on in business. I said you know if I'm not going to be a good photographer, I will be very very honest with myself. This is years ago, a long time ago. That if I'm not good at what I want to do, I will give it up. I will give it up. I will ask honestly to the people around me, am I doing a good job? And is this what you like? And questioning the end customer about my end product. This was ages ago. It's when I took the jump off the cliff when I did photography and it was a hundred years ago. But what happen is the light bulb moment happened was when people said your work is great and it was like the feedback I need to believe in yourself. So what I would like to say to a lot of the business women out there is that your authenticity, your mindset, it's all so so key to your success. But if you can actually believe in yourself and what you do and how you going to go about doing what you love and your giftedness that is going to sing more praises for you for your belief in yourself and your messaging and your magnetism out there than anything else will.

Annemarie Cross: True. And I think when you're talking about the Facebook and the images that we share so frequently on line, the fact that you can-- There's an art. There's a real art to be able to capture an image of someone that really express that core, the essence of who they are. They can go through a whole personal brand process and be able to identify some of those key things yet the image that is portraying them out to their world, to their ideal client is not capturing that message. They

can be that disconnect out there so it is a really skill and art to be able to capture that.

Zahrina Robertson So I'll tell you one thing over the years that I've been photographing everybody that stood in front of my lens has a personality, personality archetype and I call them personality brand archetypes. In my new book my *Magnetic Branding* book, I have dedicated a massive section in the middle to your style, your personality, who you are, you're the caregiver, you're magician, what's your motto, your goal, your strategy and then your weakness, your core desire, and then your clothing that suits your brand and working at your greatest fear and your talent and what you're really might be quite good at. But I have really realized and honed in on this that your archetype starts with your mindset and it works on evolution step by step so I started really thinking about this. This is why my book, *Magnetic Branding*, took 4 years to come out is because I put a lot of thought into producing 300 pages of gold and goodness to help people, women particularly on understanding who they are what they stand for before they even go and put themselves out there in business.

Annemarie Cross: That's right. It's key.

Zahrina Robertson And what's happened is that sometimes we go out there and go oh, the phone's not ringing. Why am I not connecting? Why do I feel like I'm talking to someone and they're not thinking the same as me or they're not getting me or they don't understand my offer and they don't understand my business and things like that. All of that comes from (a) knowing who you are as your personal branding archetype, wearing what's congruent in your branding images and then really

singing the praises of what you're really good at in the marketing and the branding of you online.

Annemarie Cross: It is absolute key. So let's dive in to talk about some of the key elements that is so crucial when it comes to creating and then communicating your magnetic brand.

Zahrina Robertson There's a lot and it goes over a lot of different facets but if we want to talk about key elements definitely, I'll go through my principles because that's quite key in understanding what I believe. And that's number 1, developing and taking the time to understand your mindset because you will not make-- you will always have blockages in business in your brand moving forward if you don't get your mindset correct. And that's understanding who you are, what's your message. And that first impressions aren't everything. They are everything. So it's important to really harness yourself. Where do you want to be? How do you want to be seen? What do you want to be known for? It's so important to understand these key pillars because we can't go ahead in business wishy-washy and going trying this and trying that and then you get unfocused and then bang! You have no business.

Annemarie Cross: If we're not clear on those key areas you just mentioned Zahrina, how on earth our ideal client supposed to get clear or understand our message.

Zahrina Robertson Exactly.

Annemarie Cross: You can see why people get overwhelmed and confused if we're confused. So very very important to get clear on those areas.

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Zahrina Robertson It's important that congruency happens when you are really nailing your perfect avatar to come to you to pay you money. It's very key. And you know I'm going to say this but profit is not a dirty word but I do believe that when you really hone in on who you are tapping into and who you really do want to deal with, it's important. So I decided a long time ago I wanted to deal with entrepreneurial women, women in business, women in leadership, thought leaders, speakers, authors. Why? It's because my mind-- I come from a corporate and marketing background. It's because I truly believe those people rock my socks. I love the thought processes of people and I love those conversations we have with them or I have with them. So what happened I just realized that you know what if those people are rocking my socks in a mindset way, I'm going to be photographing them and that was what was the biggest push for me and that still is forever going on forward. So that was my number 1 thing was my--

Annemarie Cross: Can I just jump in before you do--

Zahrina Robertson I'm sorry.

Annemarie Cross: That's fine. Because I wanted to pick on something that you mentioned because it is absolute gold and in case someone has just missed this, you've really taken time to define who it is that you want to work with because you just love working with them. It really connects with your why which means as you're working with your ideal client, the energy, what you are creating just takes everything to the next level for you and for the client. So a message for someone that's working with clients that things, I have to wait for this person or that person or whatever. Maybe it's time for you or an indication.

Zahrina Robertson Shift.

Annemarie Cross: Go and have a look, who are you working with, have you really defined your avatar and are you working with your ideal client because you bring that passion to the relationship and there's a certain energy, a certain pizazz. And in your industry, you want to capture that so you can imagine if you're working-- well vice versa, if you're working with a photographer that's going okay, can you stand over there. Something like that. That's not going to inspire them, tell them to really bring their authenticity out.

Zahrina Robertson I love it. We don't want to be beige, ladies.

Annemarie Cross: No.

Zahrina Robertson We do not want to be beige. We want to have pizazz. We want to have magnetism. Rock it, baby.

Annemarie Cross: That's right. What's the next--

Zahrina Robertson I seriously believe my gosh you are so on the money, Annemarie. Because I absolutely come out like some magician truly. I am a magician in my avatar but I come out and I really knock the socks off these people when they come into my natural light studio. I don't deal with electronics and I can't stand having. So we have a dance and it's so magnetic that the people that come into my studio are so absorbed in being hypnotized by me that they walk away that I don't even want to walk away. They just want to hang out.

Annemarie Cross: I don't know what just happen but I want more of that.

Zahrina Robertson And they go whoa! Whoa! What happened there and then they see the images and they go oh my and outcome the tissues and outcome the crying and they say,

Zahrina what you've done for me is oh god words like you've elevated me to another level. You've seen inside of me. You've captured who I really am. You've captured my confidence, my clarity, my conveying my certainty. You've actually captured who the hell I am for my business and who I want to be seen as and that is gold. But do you know what I do? I do that all within a blink of an eye. A blink of an eye. It's amazing. It brings tears.

Annemarie Cross: That's so masterful. That's your mastery coming through. And it's so important because you're creating the environment, the atmosphere that allows these incredible women to shine to allow their brilliance, their brand to come forth and you'll edit to be able to capture that. And it takes a certain level of energy and expertise and mastery to be able to support someone in doing that because we can be a little bit afraid as soon as someone points a camera at us. It's kind of like for some people and being able to be really nurtured through that in a fun and really empowering way. I can imagine it's really really fun session to work with you.

So Zahrina, what would you say would be the next key element?

Zahrina Robertson Principle number 2, we're going to make it real. So I do want to make that I believe in making your brand look real, be real but you're going to have to understand that not all photographers are the same. In fact your visual brand, your visual brand needs to sing all sorts of elements about who you are, what you do, what you stand for and why the hell you're doing it. And so there's a lot of essential ingredients and understanding or working with a great photographer that really does understand you as a woman and a person and your mindset to

actually go forth with that person and not waste time because we don't have time on our side. You know?

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My perfect avatar is probably about 35 to 50 and that is the gap of the women who are reborn who've come from corporate who are on a mission, a mission to make it change. They might be coaches and authors and things like so but they really want to get away from corporate and really stand in their own light and their own business and that is gold and those type of women (a) are on a mission. So they don't have time. So it'll be like probably a lot of your listeners that they need to have and make sure that their brand sings the praises of them very fast, very quick, concise so that the people that you're serving look at you and go yeah, I want to deal with this lady. I can see the depth of what her offer is and her value is in her eyes. Because the truth be told really we're making it real is the truth is in your eyes and if you don't have that in your imagery, you just not going to cut the mustard for the competition that is biting at your heels and I believe in this because this is a big message. I'm going to do a TEDx talk and I'm really putting out there and I am really going to nail that and I really believe that it's all about your eyes.

I started my belief in all this when I was about 10 years old. I believed in the power of makeup and the power of the eyes and the power of makeup and I freaking love it. The transformation not just of makeup but how it makes me feel, how it makes women feel and it's just not just that. It's transformation. It's so deep of what I believe in that sometimes I get really emotional about it and what women we must harness our own selves to believe in ourselves to move forward

and capturing yourself in your mission. It's so strong and deep in me that some of us go I'll leave that for another day. I'll just lose another 10 kilos. I'm just so scared of the camera. I'll never do it. But what happens is that you're self-defeating yourself what happens within, deep within? You are saying messages to yourself about I'm not good enough. I'll leave it for another day. I'll leave it for another day that I don't make another buck. I'll leave it another day so another 10 or 20 people on LinkedIn will look at me and go well she doesn't look like I want to deal with her and they won't.

Annemarie Cross: Yeah, it's so true. It's so so true.

Zahrina Robertson And it's terribly sad, terribly sad.

Annemarie Cross: That's right. Because of each of have a mission. We have a mission and a purpose to get out there and our ideal clients are waiting desperately for us to help them to deliver the solution that they're struggling with and by not getting out there as you're saying these women you're not able to serve and support these clients. So yes get out there and do that.

Zahrina Robertson My mission is that I want everybody, everybody in my lens in front of me to be world class, world class no matter what so that their client say yes to them. Because I know guaranteed 150% every single client of mine that has come to me their businesses rocketed into stardom and they've gone on to do bigger and better things. Because they have believed in themselves once they've got their images and used them online and has nailed who they are and they're so proud of themselves from the inside out that they cannot go back to that person that came to my studio that goes shrinking violet, I'm not good enough. You know?

Annemarie Cross: Absolutely. Now I know you covered this in everything that you've been saying however just give us some more insights around once we have captured that essence of who we are that core values of what makes us so unique out there in our images. What are some ways that we can use that imagery to really help us connect on a deeper level with our clients?

Zahrina Robertson Lots, lots of touch points. In my book, I've got all the touch points and I'll give you a couple, the top three. So I would definitely be using your imagery on your email photo and that's really key and definitely get rid of the stalker photo on LinkedIn.

Annemarie Cross: It's like who's that.

Zahrina Robertson You know that wedding photo that we have and some people are holding champagne glasses they're still in their wedding gown. It was hilarious. And I see some of these ladies and people, men in their tuxedos with things like this, it makes me laugh. But in LinkedIn it's really key to get real, update yourself, look magnetic and nail who you are as a credible person in business who 300 people probably or 200 people a day are looking at you or even that. I get that all the time. I've got 6, 7, about 8 thousand people on LinkedIn and it's really crucial to be able to really put it out there of who you are as a business person, credible person in business because you've come so far. So the women who are listening today, we've come so far on the depth of who we are and we work hard, okay.

Annemarie Cross: Of course.

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Zahrina Robertson We have not worked hard, why would you disappoint yourself in putting out imagery out there that doesn't really nail the credibility of who you are as a

woman and your offer and your connection because the people-- If you're going to put out a photo that 10 years old, you're going to get people who like don't have the same mindset of where you've moved on to, people who are going to judge you and go yeah, you know, I just want to-- It's just happens. It's magic. That what you put out there in your imagery is going to attract no matter is really going to attract the type of person that you don't want to be dealing with if it's old imagery.

Annemarie Cross: Absolutely.

Zahrina Robertson But if you place imagery out there that's really magnetic, you're going to be really connecting with key people. So just for example like I get asked probably twice a week to do podcast in America. It's because people obviously researching and doing different things but it's my imagery that I put out there. It's my branding and how you use your imagery on. You know like your memes like Instagram. I mean on twitter and I'm on LinkedIn and I'm on Facebook. So having that all the same messaging and having your messaging of your business is key, your words. So mine is getting noticed 24/7 and hashtag as well. Use a hashtag as well, magnetic branding. But also use your imagery and key elements on Skype. Use your imagery on your book covers and your e-book covers that convince people. Use your imagery everywhere on your tips to people, your podcast and then your blog. Use different images by the way so we cannot in this dane age be showing your image or branding as one photo, the mug shot I call it. I know we don't do that anymore because people do business with people. People do business with the depth of you now. So the depth of who you are needs to be shown across different avenues, indoors, outdoors, personality driven, aspiration driven, fun, insightful, smart. You know? It's just going to cover all bases of your vibe.

Annemarie Cross: Everywhere.

Zahrina Robertson And that's what I say is the elements of your magnetic branding.

Annemarie Cross: Love it. Love it. You did mention your book. How can people find out more about that? How can they find out more about you?

Zahrina Robertson My book is available on my shop. Really I'm excited about it. It is heavy 500 grams of gold. [Laughs].

Annemarie Cross: [Laughs]. I love it.

Zahrina Robertson And I'm telling you know it's worth every cent. I'm going to tell you it's stunning. It took me 4 years and it was full color and it took a lot of blood, sweat and tears. And as you can imagine being an author and I'm a writer is second to being a photographer in my giftedness people. So I just want to let you know I did a good job.

Annemarie Cross: You blended the photography and writing in one. Absolutely love it.

Zahrina Robertson Totally. And you can get that on my shop on Zahrina, Z-A-H-R-I-N-A photography dot com and it's on the shop.

Annemarie Cross: Fantastic.

Zahrina Robertson It's worth every single word in there and there's 30,000 words in there. It's 500 grams of heaviness, of goodness. So I really would love you to get a copy of that. but what I do want to provide you that is free and that you can take on the listeners today is my 7 top magnetic ways to attract the perfect client in your business and you'll find that log in on my homepage of zahrinaphotography.com

and you just with the links on the homepage near the top panel and you just put your email address in there and you get all that information and it's gold. It's really good stuff. So I'm really excited to share that with you and add value to all your listeners, Annemarie.

Annemarie Cross: Fantastic.

Zahrina Robertson Because I really I believe everybody can learn something a lot but being magnetic is a different level altogether.

Annemarie Cross: Absolutely and I think in this day and age with all of the wonderful pieces of technology that we can use, our ideal clients can often be global for many of us who work virtually which means there's a lot of noise out there that we need to cut through and so the images really do catch our essence and communicates the beautifully to our ideal clients. That's really what's going to stand out as our ideal clients are searching online for someone with our level of expertise.

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Thank you so much for coming on the show. My goodness, it's been fun and I can so see how many of your clients would just leave you session and go wow! That was just incredible.

Zahrina Robertson Yes. I want to leave you with one empowering tip everybody including you, Annemarie.

Annemarie Cross: Thank you.

Zahrina Robertson Is that the people who are doing it are doing it.

Annemarie Cross: Love it. Love it. So the people who are doing it are doing it. Let's be one of those people, people.

Thanks, Zahrina. Let's have another tip for everyone today.

Zahrina Robertson Thank you.

Annemarie Cross: So another inspirational tip to help you communicate your brand so you get noticed, hired and paid what your worth is by Seth Godin. Marketing is no longer about the stuff you make. It's about the story you tell. It's about the story you tell. A story that comes through in your imagery what Zahrina was saying today. It's about the stories that you are sharing on your blog post, in your introduction, in the story that someone sharing about you as you're going to deliver your presentation. It's all about the story. Have you captured the essence of who you are and the message that you want to share with your ideal clients. Now if this is something you're struggling with, let's talk. Register with one of my complimentary business breakthrough sessions over at AnnemarieCross.com breakthrough session, AnnemarieCross.com breakthrough session.

That brings us to the end of another amazing show. I am sure you'll agree you got lots of notes, please do go over and get a copy of Zahrina's book and reach out to her for sure. If you haven't already done so, go ahead and subscribe to our iTunes channel. The link is annemariecross.com/podcastitunes. Why do you want to do that? Well because you don't want to miss another amazing show just like today's show and by doing that every time we do launch another show you will be alerted. It'll get push out to your mp3 player. While you're over there, we would love for you to subscribe but also leave a comment and a rating. Doing that, allows us to get our message out into the ears of as many other ambitious

women who are up to great stuff. Otherwise I'll see you again next week. Have a fantastic week and make it a great one.

Bye for now. See you later, Zahrina.

Zahrina Robertson Thank you. Bye.

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