

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PODCAST



Episode 44

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Annemarie Cross: You're listening to Women in Leadership podcast brought to you by Microsoft Surface. This is episode 44.

Hi, I'm your host Annemarie Cross branding communication strategist also known as the podcasting queen. Welcome to another episode of Women in Leadership podcast – the podcast that empowers you to reach your full potential.

Have you ever looked at what your competitors are doing and thought how on earth can I ever possibly stand out from what they're doing and offering? But what about if your competition starts to copy you, what can you do then. Alli Price is our guest today. Alli is the founder of Motivating Mum helping mums, achieve their business dream.

Alli inspires. She educates business mums through her Biz Mums Clubs across three states with affordable services. She also hosts two charity events per year, as well as her annual brilliant Biz Mom Awards and Conference.

On today's show, Alli is going to share how to deal with the competition and being able to run your own race. How to go far with little money, as well as some key strategy on looking out to your customers your clients and stuff to help you build a strong business. Welcome to the show, Alli.

Alli: Thank you for having me, Annemarie.

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Annemarie: You've set up and run your own awards and your conference. How many years have you been doing that for now?

Alli: Gosh, I think this year coming up would probably be the fourth year.

Annemarie: Wow. Yes and I know that it's such a successful award, event and conference cause I've been to another of those. My goodness what it takes to organize such an award, event and a conference. It really is something else, isn't it, to organize some of those.

Alli: Yes. You definitely need attention to detail if you're going to be doing something like this. But definitely the benefits of it far outweigh the time that I had to put in. And obviously as each year goes it does get easier because I can just repeat stuff as oppose to having to start from scratch again which is always good.

Annemarie: Yeah. Absolutely. Now you've also set up your mommy mentoring festival and you've been getting loads of amazing mentors on board as well. So tell us a little bit more about. What's the mommy mentoring festival?

Alli: What that is basically I get like high profile or successful or success women in business to donate mentoring sessions to the mommy mentoring festival. Then we put them all up on the website. Everyone can look at them and people can bid \$4 for an entry into the draw to win a mentoring session with that person.

They can enter as many times as they like. They can try and keep their odds in their favor by bidding loads for one person or they can put multiple bids on many people. Basically at the end of it, it's all drawn and sort of regular everyday months get sessions with people that they probably never would have gotten

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mentoring with particularly for \$4 and then all the money goes to charity as well. It's a charity fundraiser.

Annemarie: That's fantastic. Congratulations. You've been in business for ten years, and of course, through that time you have helped loads and loads of mums who are in business so congratulations. Ten years is certainly a milestone.

Alli: It is. Once I got over the whole "oh my god I feel business old" as well old just in general, once I got over that and actually someone reminded me that most people don't get pass through five years in business then I was like yes this is a great milestone. I'm happy that I've achieve and I'm actually going to actually celebrate it as oppose to just mopping around feeling old in pretty much every area of my life.

Annemarie: Well I'm older than you so look. You know I think with the years comes a certain level of wisdom through experience and so forth and I'm sure that you're able to pass that on to clients. I think back I mean my kids, my youngest is now 21. She'll be 22 next year and I started my very first business when actually when I was pregnant with my third.

Actually, I had one and then I was pregnant with my second and so my kids have grown as my business has grown too. I think back to goodness just juggling children and young kids and a business I don't know how many mums do that. I don't know how I did that either. But then you have things such as competition, being worried about what other people are doing, and all that kind of stuff can really stop us from growing the business, taking the business to the next level.

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Let's dive in and talk about how to deal with competition and being able to run our own race. Cause I'm sure many of us can relate to this.

Alli:

They absolutely can and that's one of the reasons why I really like talking about this topic because I do, you know, have it brought up on a very regular basis. It's not so much just people are worried about competition, that there's nothing to worry about. A lot of the time they are experiencing things that are quite intimidating or difficult like potentially people are copying things they're doing or you go on your competitors Facebook page and you're doing the same things as you.

It can be extremely difficult and challenging in those situations, let alone just being worried about the competition in general. It really does eat away at many women soul even cause they get so consumed by it. Before you know it they're checking their competitors Facebook pages everyday or they're checking their product pages to see what they're doing now or listening to podcast that they're doing because they're so taken up with this competition and what these people are doing to them.

Really at the end of the day what I'd say to people is there may be some situations where you can potentially get some legal and open advice. Like for instance if they're really just copied the wording on your website and it's pretty obvious that they have, there's certainly things you can do there to stop people from doing that.

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But as far as taking your ideas for a product or copying the different type of services that you've just launched but maybe they've named it something different in situations like that there's actually nothing that you can do. The only thing that you can do is just completely ignore them. Don't let them win by giving them even another second more of your time, of your energy.

You just got to keep focusing on what you're doing and running your own race. Because they're going to win if you're spending all your time focusing on them and they're doing their own thing then you're not doing what's right for you. A lot of the times I do find that it is affecting mom's business decisions. For instance they're choosing to withhold information or withhold product because they're scared that people are going to steal it. But at the end of the day that's only going to affect them anyway.

There's nothing to say just because there is someone out there copying you if you're doing your own thing and representing yourself as who you are then you might be getting that business anyway. So there's no point holding back just because you don't want somebody else to take what you've done.

Annemarie:

Yeah. You know I've had situations thankfully not recently but I remember when I was just focusing on the career industry one of my colleagues and I don't think she ever knew this because we didn't have too close a relationship. She copied stuff off my website and I could tell because when I did a property's check there was my business name and all that kind of stuff.

You know I could have as you say could have let that affect me but I just continued on and it really allowed me to step forward and go you know what, I need to play a bigger game. But just recently my daughter who has got a very

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successful personal training and nutrition business she said these things. She does a lot of strategizing around what she's going to share on social media and how she's going to put it, post and so forth. Some of her competitors just copy that and she quite often rings me and says mom they've done it again.

I said you know what, no one can copy you, your personality, the special things that make you you and around your signature brand. They can copy a lot of the other stuff but how you deal with the clients and the conversations and all that kind of stuff, they can try and copy you but they can't capture the essence and that is often what really separates us from everybody else.

Because people want to do business with us because of the way that we make them feel, how we do our business, the experience that we create and I think that that's such an important insight to share, isn't it. Because those kind of things, the real important things, can never be copy because no one is who we are in the makeup of us, our personality, characteristics, all of those things.

Alli: That's right. If you're holding back because of a competitor or ultimately if you're attacking other people even if you're just depending yourself, you're only going to potentially affect how people see you and your business. So at the end of the day, it's just not worth it.

Annemarie: No.

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Alli: I've just recently had a situation where unfortunately someone was able to get a trademark in the same class as me in the same industry with pretty much the same name. So legally I can't do anything anyway. You know what. The last time I

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looked at that business was probably three months ago when I first found out about it and we obviously looked legally to see what we could do and found out it was nothing. That's the last time I've looked at that business.

Because at the end of the day I know there's nothing I can do about it so I'm not going to focus on them. I'm not going to see what they're doing and how potentially they might be doing things better than me and freaking myself out because it's just going to put me off my own game. So at the end of the day, I'll keep on keeping on and just trust that I do the best I can do and that's how I'm going to at the end of the day with the clients that I want to meet.

Annemarie:

Yeah. I think that's such a key insight. I know I've had a couple of colleagues that over the years sent me things. This is what someone else is doing. I just kindly said to them. You know what. That actually is a distraction for me and it actually ruins my own creativity and coming up with ideas. So if I need to go out and do a little bit of research there's some key areas that I will go to and often that's not around the competitors or what they're doing.

But people in other industry that are really respect and take what they're doing, how can I make this my own and often we can get some great ideas. But I think absolutely. If we get so fixated on looking at what other people are doing, it takes us off our game and it doesn't allow us to show up and be the best us that we know that we can be. Great, great insights and I think certainly can support people who are in situation that we've just talked about.

Let's talk a little bit more about how to go far with little money. Because I know so many mums in business who maybe in this situation can certainly learn.

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Alli: So the first thing and one of the sort of things that I love to do particularly when I was first starting out was bartering. I think it's such an underrated way of being able to get things done for your business because at the end of the day we always have things that we can swap.

It might not necessarily be our business skills that's were swapping but it might be something else. When I first started out I would barter with people and swap things and even though my business isn't copyrighting I'm good at writing and so sometimes I would write something for someone in return for them doing for me.

Annemarie: Yes.

Alli: Or you know you might be a great cook and the person might not want anything from your business but maybe you can say you probably really busy, here you go. Let me cook you a meal a week for the next four weeks to swap for that thing that you're offering me. So I think with bartering I think it's a great opportunity for getting things for your business and not paying any money, but also remember to think outside of the box. It doesn't have to just be you swapping your business skills for someone else's business skills.

And then the second one is that, and this is something that I do a lot is I really try to create big events because big events get big returns. If you're on Facebook everyday and you might be chatting to people and putting up post and you might get a couple of people visiting your website each day from Facebook, if you developed a big event like for instance my mommy mentoring festival then obviously during that three weeks that I run it, I have people coming across in their drawers checking, reading about all the mentors, seeing who they are, picking the ones that they want.

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I get a lot more traffic for that event and that event doesn't actually cost me any money to run. It really just meant I had to sort of think outside the box first of all for an idea that was going to sort of get some good attention. And then the second thing when you're putting together these big events is just making sure that you're making sure there's something in it for everyone. So that way people want to be involved.

For me obviously the mentors, the high profile mentors they're happy to be involved cause it's only half an hour of their time if they donate one session. Plus they get to say we're a part of their charity event which is always good for them. Then I obviously got the mums being involved in bidding because it's only \$4 to enter and they can win session with these amazing people so they're happy.

And then what I do is I also make it a charity event so again the mentors are happy to be involved. The mums are happy to bid because all the money is going to charity and then the charity also wins as well. And then I win because I get the hits on my website, an increase exposure for my business. So that's another thing that I try and do on a regular basis. I do that also with my awards and conference that's another one that doesn't really cost me any money to run.

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It's obviously cost time. But in return I get people coming to my website to enter for the awards then they're finding out about my business and maybe they might come to other things that I do and so on and so forth. So those are the two sort of things I really do to try and get as much focuses as I can without spending too much money.

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Annemarie: I love the way that you've shared those because obviously they've really worked well for you. Just one thing on the bartering that I mean some of the women in business who I know have done that there's some really great stories. One of the things you might do this quite naturally but I thought let's share this.

Sometimes what can happen is you need to be very clear up front the expectations and the deliverables and what they are. Because sometimes what I've heard can happen is that you might have put your forward and completed your expectations and what you were delivering and then the other person not so much. So really want to have some firm things in place, even time and all that kind of stuff and when things are done.

Have you had or heard of some experiences and therefore put things into place to ensure that both parties can walk away from that bartering relationship happy and content that what was promise and what is expected has been delivered on.

Alli: I definitely think it's a really good thing to do. I haven't had to do it myself but that's only because I tend to do it with people that I already sort of know anyway. So obviously there's that I can trust thing there. For instance, if I was putting something on a Facebook group saying I want to offer this and I'd like to share this in return. If it was somebody that I didn't know then absolutely I would be putting those parameters in place to make sure that everyone is happy at the end of the day and things are delivered in time.

Annemarie: Also too talking about the events and if you are looking back on some of the things that you might not have done starting out what would you say a few really important things. I mean obviously the win, win, win. Everybody needs to have a win to ensure that everyone buys in and to continue to support whatever event

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you're putting on. But are there a few other things that you've recognized early on gosh this needs to be put in place to ensure that this even, this charity is delivering what I hope for all parties.

Alli: That's a tough one. Only because I've been quite lucky. I just tend to decide go this is what's going to happen and this is how it's going to work.

Annemarie: I think because you've got a real skill of planning, having milestones in place, all that kind of stuff. So people really do need to step back and make sure all of the things are in place to ensure that it runs smoothly.

Alli: Definitely. I think they do. I think at the end of the day though, I mean I definitely had some people that let me down. But at the end of the day I think sometimes that's just going to happen anyway. It almost doesn't matter how much you put in place to ensure things don't happen.

Like for instance let's say for the mentors when the sessions have been drawn I send them a letter that has all the information about the mentoring and this is what they should be doing, etc. etc. Every year maybe I've had one person come back to me who had been mentored by someone who had a bad experience like the mentor just really talked about try to sell them on to their course or something even though that is written in my information as this is not to happen.

So like for that there's really nothing more I can do to try and make sure that doesn't happen. But I do do is I make sure that I always follow up on all of the mentees afterwards to see how it went and get some feedback from them and obviously make sure they've even had the sessions cause sometimes mentor missed the information to say this is who you're mentoring.

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Because I've got that system in place where I'm checking in and getting feedback I've been able to say those people who had a bad experience, I'll do an hour with you as well then and you know. Let's right this. I think following up is really really important cause at the end of the day you can't always make sure everything goes well but you can follow up and catch things if they haven't gone well.

Annemarie: Yeah. Very very important. So finally let's just talk about some of the key strategies that you have found have worked really well for you, your business and maybe even some of the clients that you've had to look after our customers, our clients and our staff.

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Alli: Well definitely one of the ones that is like my favorite thing and this will obviously apply in different ways to different people, definitely your certain type of business owner. But I love to tell my clients and my customers and my staff and everyone how much I love them like all the time.

In everything I do I try and put warmth out to them and you know that I'm always here for them. Whenever I email people I always finish up with something like where possible like I always say if there's anything else I can help you with, always get in touch with me. I'm happy to chat. Because I mainly work with women I don't tend to do this for men but for women we sign off with a kiss even if its women I don't know.

I really feel like that has really been great to me in that I do think my mums really do get how much I love and appreciate them. But also it really helps me attract a particular type of person and that is the warm loving generous person. That's why

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I don't to have a lot of problems cause I got this really amazing fantastic people in my life.

Annemarie: Yeah. So important. Once you get clear on that I think just a couple of things I note about that. I mean you're clear about your personality and how you really want to bring that approach into how you do business and you're consistent with that.

Alli: Yes.

Annemarie: I think consistency is really important and obviously is sprinkled all across the way that you work with clients and your dealings, your interactions which I think when done consistently really stands out. So people experience that and now that's just a key aspect of what you do and how you do business.

Alli: I do. I've never actually really asked them this particular question actually but I do feel like it makes them come back because they feel like they're appreciated. They feel like I am thankful for their business. I mean I've been to some events for instance where I paid the ticket and I went to the event and I stood there and one of them is actually run by four people. So there were four people in the room and not one of them came up and said hello to me the whole time or how are you or what do you do. I came. I listen to the speaker and I left and I was like wow. I felt so unappreciated then.

Annemarie: It's like wow I'm really important on your meet and greet list.

Alli: Yes. Exactly. So I hope that does actually play a part in having my mums come back and use me for other service and come to other events and stuff it's because they do feel like I appreciate their presence.

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Annemarie: Yeah. Fantastic. So one last word of advice would you have for people today?

Alli: I am a gut person so I'm like always always go with your gut. It's never steered me wrong ever. I really feel like there's a lot to be said for yes you can think about things and analyze things. But I think you get to a point where potentially you don't even know if you've analyze things so much you've like overanalyzed them.

Annemarie: Yes.

Alli: So check in with your gut and just what your gut is saying.

Annemarie: I have to agree. If I look back over times where things didn't quite turn out the way I expected there was this little niggling feeling and I just tended to ignore or you do the analysis around it and you kind of go you know what. Yeah. You look beyond that. It's I should have listen to that. So great, great last word of advice for people. So how can people find out more about you and more about the great work that you're doing?

Alli: Obviously on website which is motivatingmum.com. I'm also on pretty much every social media application known to mankind. The mains are Facebook which is MotivatingMumOz. Instagram's motivatingmum and YouTube there's actually lots of videos on YouTube which is Motivating Mums.

Annemarie: Fantastic.

Alli: That's just a few.

Annemarie: Great. We'll of course put all of those details, Alli, for you on our show notes annemariemcross.com/podcast44 and you can get all of those details. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

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Alli: Thank you so much for having me Annemarie, and also thank you for being involved in my awards and conference. Another great woman I had in my life so I'm very happy.

Annemarie: My pleasure. My pleasure. It's certainly an honor to do that. There's some amazing, amazing women out there. So can't wait for next year's award just to see who is entering. Yay.

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Now just before we finish the show, just a reminder. If you are struggling to get clear on your message so when you're at a networking event and you know how that microphone gets handed to you and you're blood starts to go quickly through your veins and your heart starts beating and you introduce yourself and what happens. You freeze and the words that come out just sound like a garbled mess.

Now imagine if you could turn that around so that when you speak you do so confidently. The introduction speaks directly to the heart of your customer so they come up to you at the end of the event and say we need to talk. Now if that's something that you've been longing to do I really want to invite you to consider coming to my upcoming breakthrough round table.

It is virtual so if you are located overseas that's not a problem. You can join in. So what are we covering? We are covering your compelling message and we're creating a compelling message that creates influence instantly in a noisy marketplace so you get noticed, hired and paid what you're worth by your ideal

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client. To find out more and to book your seat at this roundtable go to annemariex.com/breakthroughroundtable.

That brings us to the end of another show. I know that you have got lots of insights and strategies from Alli today especially if you are dealing with competition whether you're comparing yourself or whether your completion are a little bit scrupulous in their dealings, they're being copying you. So I know that you found that helpful.

If you haven't already subscribed to our iTunes channel go and do that because every week we got another amazing guest just like we did today listening to Alli. Annemariex.com/podcastitunes. That will get subscribed so you every week will get an email. It will get downloaded directly through to your smart phone device. Anyway have a fantastic week. Thanks again Alli.

Alli: Thank you.

[0:27:13] End of Audio