

High-Heeled Success founder teaches women how to conquer business world

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BLUE ASH - The “glass ceiling” describes an invisible barrier that keeps women from reaching the highest echelons of the business world despite their qualifications. The phrase originated in 1979 after feminists prompted millions of young women to pursue jobs that had been off-limits to their mothers.

While Kay Fittes of [High-Heeled Success](#) agrees the glass ceiling still exists, she believes some women must shatter some internal glass ceilings first.

“Young women think every door is open to them now, and that’s true,” said Fittes. “But a year

after they start a new position, they realize that men who started at the same time and for the same salary are moving up more quickly and getting raises.”

This disparity exists because many women haven’t learned how to resolve conflicts in a positive way, stick with the issues and not take things personally.

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Kay Fittes, founder of High-Heeled Success.
Photo provided

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Although women don’t have to act like men, Fittes believes women can earn more respect, influence and money by improving their personal and professional esteem, verbal and nonverbal language, and presentation skills.

To help, Fittes has presented more than 2,500 keynotes and seminars to more than 50,000 women nationwide. Through individual counseling, she helps women deal with career-limiting issues such as perfectionism, over-commitment and lack of focus.

Become a more dynamic presenter

Because companies value dynamic presenters, Fittes believes women who become dynamic presenters gain a competitive edge. No matter how great your content is, you can still fall flat if your presentation style isn’t energetic and engaging.

On Sept. 19, Fittes and Tammi Ector of [Pink Collar Savvy and Chic](#) will present a full-day seminar on “Steps for Dynamic Delivery.” It be held at the [Crowne Plaza Cincinnati Blue Ash](#). The instructors will show women how to overcome self-sabotaging body language, control their voices to inspire the audience, and bring fun and energy to their delivery.

Learn from Fittes' experiences

Today Fittes earns accolades as a speaker. The program director for [Dress for Success](#) in Erie, Pennsylvania, praised Fittes for her keynote address: "Kay wowed a crowd of almost 700 women and a few good men. Her energy and enthusiasm were explosive!"

But everything Fittes teaches today comes from her own rough start as a businesswoman and a harsh critique from a would-be client.

For several years, Fittes had used her background in mental health to help a psychologist train newly promoted women executives in male-dominated corporations.

"These women didn't have serious mental health issues, but they were stressed out to the max," recalled Fittes. "It wasn't as if their lives were dysfunctional. Their lives weren't just as wonderful or as functional as they wanted them to be."

After launching her own training business for professional women in 1990, Fittes couldn't figure out why she wasn't getting more clients.

One man she called on gave some candid feedback: "You can't articulate your offering. You can't tell me why my company should hire you. And you're scared to death. You're shaking in your shoes."

At that point, she had an epiphany: "Yes, I know my content and how to train and how to speak. But I really don't know how to function as a businesswoman."

So, she immersed herself in studying the rules of business and sought advice from successful people. One adviser observed that perfectionism was keeping Fittes from her goal of publishing a book.

"I learned perfectionism at my mother's knee and passed it on to my daughter," admitted Fittes. She wants to break this cycle in future generations.

Fittes believes women today face more pressure to be perfect than ever before. Women are expected to have fascinating careers, look like ultra-fit models, cook like gourmet chefs, and be super-supportive mothers, wives, daughters and volunteers.

Take charge of your reputation and career

When women set boundaries and resolve issues in more focused, positive ways, Fittes said they take charge of their careers with confidence and credibility. Otherwise, a woman can get a reputation as an uncooperative complainer or a meek, passive worker who can be taken advantage of.

Fittes encourages women to adopt communications skills that have served men well in the workplace for generations. She acknowledges that men can also learn certain workplace skills from women. And when that happens, Fittes believes, "We will have the best of both worlds."

For those who can't attend a High-Heeled Success seminar, Fittes' book "Achieving High-Heeled Success: 50 Ways For Career-Oriented Women to Succeed" is available for purchase.

Tips for achieving High-Heeled Success

- Speak concisely. Extraneous words and phrases can detract from the power of your statements.
- Eliminate "I think" and "I feel" and start sentences with the subject. Your emotional response isn't what counts at work.
- Master presentation skills. Excel in small meetings and large formal presentations.
- Make your bosses look good. Help them get their ideas implemented.

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