

Laura Kohler – Believing in Better

Excerpts from "People, Product, Purpose" Remarks - UWGB

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It is truly a *combination* of product, purpose and people.

The business of what we do and how we do it, whether it is innovation, design and brand leadership, or proactively driving excellent customer experiences, is incredibly important. But truly, at the heart of it all, are the associates of Kohler. That's why our CEO's #1 imperative for growth is: "strengthen our culture, diversity, and talent."

Today, as an executive with 25 years of experience with one company, I have done a number of things to keep myself learning and developing:

1. I travel around the world of Kohler and meet face-to-face with our customers, media partners, NGOs and associates...I listen, ask questions, and learn about what challenges they face in their own terms
2. I have roundtables in those locations and also at our headquarters at least once per month with executives and associates
3. I am supported by a millennial project manager with the intent of understanding things from a different perspective and am working with 6 high potential young leaders on a reverse mentoring project
4. As often as I can, I speak to women's' groups all over the world, pulling their stories forward, asking them to share their voices, and turning their experience

and their expertise into strength and knowledge for themselves and their peers – including me.

But as it has always been, success in your career, and in business overall, still depends on:

- The quality of your work and your ability to get things done and be accountable.
- Your ability to engage and inspire those around you
- Bringing ethics with you each and every day
- Setting high standards for yourself. Support others in doing the same.
- And finally, being passionate about issues that matter.

As I reflect on my experience as a senior executive, a volunteer, and as a mother of three young women, I have a strong context to provide some encouragement to you:

- Focus on how you can bring value to potential employers and boards you serve on.
- Know what your strengths are. Use them.
- Lead your cultures with inclusiveness.
- Be the person who gets stuff done. Someone who people want to work with and is accountable.
- Build a portfolio of impactful experiences...sometimes the hard and lonely are the most formative.
- Seek out mentors – be a mentor.

- Adopt the concept of “lifelong learning” so you can stay fresh and be inspired by the world as it changes.

The communities that we live and work in, the strength of our schools, the health of our economies, and ultimately the character of our society will be shaped by you, your abilities, your passion and your drive.

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