

## Women in Leadership Seminar Highlights

June 29, 2012



**Topic:** "Leadership in an Orange Apron: From Cashier to President" featuring Ann-Marie Campbell, President – Southern Division, The Home Depot Store Support Center



Her Story:

Ann started with a job at Home Depot when she was 18 as a cashier. She says that who she is today and who she was then have reconciled on a good path. Back then, Home Depot was a very male-dominated company. She had fun and did a good job at what she did.

Her first promotion was to a part-time head cashier. She quickly was moved up to head of the paint department. This was a pivotal moment in her career. She was now balancing the yin and yang between gender and doing a good job. The day before she began in the paint department, she heard from a colleague that there was a bet being placed on her -- \$20 that she would fold. The day she started, there were no guys around in the department, so she unpacked pallets of paint for three days. On the fourth day, she woke up for work and hurt so bad that she could not move. She picked up the phone to call out, and instead, she decided to roll onto the floor, push herself up, and go to work. At work that day, one of the guys in her department told her that she had now earned their respect, rather than demanding it, which she could have easily done. He said they now wanted to do everything they could to support her.

Two years later, she was promoted to assistant manager. She soon became pregnant and kept it secret from her coworkers as long as possible. Finally, she told her manager who said, "Why the heck did you go and do that?" At that time there were not many women with children in leadership roles. Ann-Marie did not back down, not because there weren't that didn't mean there could not be. This is where she says that you have to understand your journey and who you are. Don't get locked down on the negative things; stay focused on the positive.

She was quickly promoted to Store Manager and then District Manager. At this point, she had two children, both boys. One day as district manager, she went into her office and sat down and cried. Struggling being a mom of two kids under 3 and running one of the most difficult districts in the company Ann-Marie wanted to be done with it all. Her assistant overheard her and called the division president. The Division President and RVP flew down and spoke with her. They told her, "Too much is in front of you now. You are the only female district manager. You can do this job and pave the way for other women. We believe in you and will always support you. Don't underestimate how big of a role model you are for others". True, she was the only black woman in this position in a very non-diverse field. Sometimes you need affirmation that all the blood, sweat and tears is worth it and she needed that then.

Ann-Marie decided to remain in her role. Her husband, a chef, took on the lead parenting role. She had decided that she was going to do this and never looked back. We are role models and other people are looking. Ann-Marie continued to work all over the company to get where she is now.

## 5 Key Leadership Points:

1.) Don't focus on the short-term – focus on the journey.

It's all about how you navigate the curves and speed bumps that make the difference. It is never smooth sailing.

When Ann-Marie moved to the corporate office, she wondered why.

Her success is due to detours she took along the way, but didn't like.

This is where she gained her success factors, in the corporate suite.

Sometimes moving horizontally is more important than moving vertically.

The journey may come with detours that help build you.

2.) Network with a purpose.

There are three key people that help you career-wise:

**Mentors** – who you can have an open, candid conversation with; they help you feel good and provide support.

**Champions** – remember your name through repeated interactions

**Sponsors** – help you get to the level that you want to get to (these are the people that make those decisions)

\*\*Champions and sponsors help move/elevate you.

Networking both internally and externally is so important; this is how you get to be where you want to be.

3.) Be bold, be you!

Be the best you not the second best someone else.

She was promoted because, "I am me." Step into yourself.

Be confident; don't sit in a meeting and not add value.

4.) Leadership is Action.

It is not about sacrifice, it is a choice. She is a much better leader because of the choices she made. She chose her kids and family instead of another move to another place. At his high school graduation, her son said, "Mom, you did good". Do your best with a heart full of love, contentment and happiness.

5.) Go out and just have fun.

60-70% of your organization really wants to help. Work with the 70% because you can get a lot more out of it. Leverage your supervisor. You have to do the work – go out and get it!

You can't always be a formal mentor to all, but don't look at someone's title and think it won't happen.

Take control – you own it!

Ann-Marie went back to school for personal development.

## 4 Things Drive Leaders:

Results Orientation

Communication

Ability to spot/adapt to talent

Self-development (always learning)

Life is a continuous learning journey. You have to be relevant because things are always changing.

## Questions:

*What are your biggest motivators?*

She wants to get a seat at the table so that she can change the trajectory of decisions and will not be discarded.

She has credibility points and can help people

*How can women better self-promote/network?*

Ann-Marie likes to collaborate, but she e-mails her team after each meeting and tries to promote the great job that her team does.

Women are newer to the corporate world and less comfortable than men – you just have to step in there!

There is a difference in male and female managers interact with their team.

Leadership is action – you have to go and ask for it. This puts ownership on others. You have to go back and tell them when you are ready.

Clearly articulate the value that you bring to the table.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

As an introvert, Ann-Marie makes sure her networking has a purpose and only tries to go to 1-2 events per month. She is an introvert who tries to exhibit extrovert behaviors.

More organizations are looking for insights of women.