Wine Australia

AUSTRALIAN Grape & Wine

Australian Wine Industry Gender Equity Toolkit

CASE STUDY

Leadership and mentoring link to effective role-modelling

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Mentoring, whether formal or informal, is a powerful tool in any workplace.

Both formal and informal mentoring serve an important purpose. Each has its own pros and cons, and a strong mentoring culture should ideally include elements of both.

With formal mentoring it's essential to have clearly defined goals and realistic, measurable outcomes. Structured mentoring offers accountability and enables outcomes to be measured, which is especially valuable. However, informal mentoring is also important. In some roles, it's about creating space for someone to have an outlet or someone to talk to, a line manager or experienced colleague for example, especially when someone feels they're not yet at the skill level they want to be.

That said, not everyone can or should be a mentor. It's important to be selective. A mentor needs to be someone who not only brings experience but can also connect meaningfully with the mentee. It's essential that the mentoring relationship has a sense of synergy and mutual respect. Pairing people together without considering compatibility can be counterproductive.

Leadership is a learnt skill

I don't believe leaders are born. There's a lot of development and training involved.

A good leader can be male or female; it's not about gender; it's about the skill set. Key leadership qualities include resilience, determination, empathy and the ability to empower others. When it comes to women in leadership, it's crucial to give them the tools and mechanisms they need to succeed. These are what help them get a foot in the door and build the foundations for strong leadership.

Being a good leader is not about what I can get out of a situation. It's about what I can get out of my people. Leadership is about growth, development, empowerment and creating an environment where people feel safe and heard. It's not just about being warm and fuzzy, though.

Some leaders flounder because they lack a defined set of expectations, standards and values. People need to know what you stand for. If you asked anyone 'what Brigid always talks about', they'd tell you that it's about respect. That's because I'm consistent in reinforcing those values and expectations.



More businesses are starting to realise the benefits of good leaders… they're seeing it reflected in performance and in the bottom line. Female leaders get it. We can multitask, and we bring a high level of empathy to the table. We're used to stepping in, organising and saying, "let's work through this and find a solution."

Leadership and mentoring lead to effective role-modelling

Some might refer to mentors as role models, but in a professional capacity, mentoring goes beyond that. It's a mechanism that everyone should consider engaging with.

It's exceptionally important to have women in leadership roles. These women can serve as sounding boards for those coming through the ranks, offering their wisdom, experience and guidance for younger women building their careers. We need to actively tap into those resources, because many of these senior women have had to work much harder to get where they are. I'd like to think that what I'm doing now, the path I'm paving, will make it easier for the next generation of women.

Whether it's for younger colleagues or my own daughter, the goal is the same: to create an environment where women don't have to face the same challenges I did.