

SAGE Network: Lessons from Women in Business

BY [Andre Wayne- Guest Blogger](#) Posted [May 11, 2022](#)

Globally, women have become engines for economic growth and the continued drive to achieve gender diversity in enterprises is of critical importance to improving business outcomes. In fact, the number of women in management positions has increased over the past 20 years, and today Jamaica boasts the highest proportion of female managers in the world. Though women may still be under-represented in business, they have increasingly overtaken men in terms of entrepreneurial endeavours, despite the many setbacks they may face. Sagicor Bank's Women in Business series on [SAGE Network](#), highlights the expertise, challenges and successes of women at the top of their game in Jamaica. "Having to interact with players and stakeholders in the industry, sometimes they look at you and they think that because you are a woman and because you are young, you don't know what you're talking about," shared Lacey-Ann Bartley of Bartley's All In Wood. "The way I overcome that is making sure that, as my dad instilled in me, that I am twice as good and I invest a lot of time in knowing the information regarding my industry and I do my job with integrity," Lacey-Ann said.

While much progress has been made, women remain underutilized despite representing a dynamic and capable pool of talent. "In the field of law, it is competitive, hence the reason why I've tried to go into these different areas," said Dr. Velma Brown-Hamilton, attorney at law and managing director of Caribbean Legal Suites, Law College of the Americas and Centennial Legis Solutions. "Because as a woman in business, there are some people that just prefer to deal with males in the legal field. Traditionally, it has been a field for men so of course we women have to prove ourselves and to show that we can in fact do as well as the men," Dr. Brown-Hamilton shared. Even though Jamaica exceeds other countries of the region in female labour participation, creating avenues for more productive and more substantial female entrepreneurship is one of the many ways by which women could become economically empowered and contribute to the transformation of the Jamaican economy and society.

Creating these avenues will not only help women, but also society in general. High rates of entrepreneurship can create new jobs and boost a country's development. Capacity building for female entrepreneurship development in this regard is thus considered a key strategy in achieving the multifaceted development objectives in Jamaica. Entrepreneurship empowers women to be their own boss and pay their own salary, defining how they want to work and making the balance of career and family life easier. "People tend to ask the question, 'you're so busy, how do you find the time to do everything that you do at home?' Especially as a female, you think that you cannot do it, you are told you cannot do it alone but I blank that out of my mind and I said to myself, 'I can do it', with God's help I am going to do it, and that is what I have done," Dr. Velma Brown-Hamilton said regarding balancing entrepreneurship and motherhood.

Running their own company also offers the opportunity for women to collaborate with and hire other ambitious, like-minded women, fostering a new generation of women in leadership roles. It presents a path for women to close the pay gap and rise to leadership positions, on their own terms. Lacey-Ann Bartley also shared what she considered to be other keys to success. "Some persons would say passion is also important but I would counter to say discipline is just as important as passion. Because if you're not disciplined, you won't be able to master yourself and without self

mastery, you can't master anything else." she said.

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