



Local Business

Support and friendship of women in business

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Long gone are the days when men were the only ones who owned businesses or were the main breadwinners.

Today is International Women's Day, and a group of women entrepreneurs in Bermuda are marking the global celebration of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women, by speaking about how they support and encourage one another.

A report from the Institute of Women's Policy Research showed that women are increasing their presence in the world of small-business ownership. The 2015 report showed that 29 per cent of US business owners are women, up from 26 per cent in 1997. The number of women-owned firms had grown 68 per cent since 2007, compared with 47 per cent for all businesses.

In Bermuda there has also been growth in the number of woman owning their business, with some owning more than one.

Amanda Temple, a photographer, art consultant and designer, and Alexandra Mosher a jeweller, started an informal group of women entrepreneurs who come together to support each other.

The idea was formed one evening when Ms Temple and Ms Mosher were talking about their businesses. As artists passionate about their jobs, they envisioned gathering a group of friends and fellow women entrepreneurs to share ideas and offer each other insights.

The idea quickly became a reality. *The Royal Gazette* asked some of the group for their thoughts on the challenges they have faced as women in business.

Lyn Winford, owner of Brand Evangelist, Billow & Luft said: "Depending on who is in the room, you don't always get invited to the table. Developing collaborative relationships is invaluable.

"You have to put sweat equity in the game. Touch everything, be aware of every detail, or else you will lose time and that is very expensive."

Meredith Andrews, a photographer and owner of Meredith Andrews Photography and Mermade Limited, said: "In my time I have had a few me too moments in the professional environment. Working in a traditionally male dominated industry has been challenging at times, but drives me forward.

"Over 10 years ago, when I worked at *The Royal Gazette*, I recall subjects asking me (picture me with a large camera hanging around my neck) when the photographer was expected to arrive. I explained I am the photographer and it took a minute for them to understand. But that was a long time ago."

When the women meet they share experiences and their goals, hopes, fears, and many more practical gems on marketing, accounting, social media and useful apps.

The group has expanded with a further 27 women joining.

Ms Temple said: "Getting together is a wonderful way to share, to be inspired and to learn from each other and they recommend that other women create groups of their own and get together to support each other."

The group of friends are involved in a broad spectrum of endeavours from art, advertising, photography and event planning to fashion, music and dance.

The Royal Gazette intends to feature other members of the group.

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