

Leadership Perspective

# Seven Points for a Successful Career

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When people see rugby on my resume, they are shocked. *The element of surprise can be fun, engaging and provocative.*



**A**lthough Kappa Kappa Gamma, the B.E.S.T (Business Excellence Scholarship Team) program and my job in the Department of Management at the Hankamer School of Business were formative, it was what I learned on the rugby field that has helped me navigate my professional life.

## 1 You are not expected to know everything.

I never played or watched a rugby match before trying out. I like team sports and went for it. Professionally, admit when you do not know something and then be proactive to learn it or identify the right people to help. Take risks, seek stretch roles and learn to navigate in ambiguity. When you come out the other side having accomplished something new, it feels good and builds confidence to do it again.

## 2 Embrace diversity.

Rugby opened me up to an entirely different group of friends. It also taught me that women can play rugby too! After graduating from Baylor, I went into technology consulting and often was one of the few women in the room. After my MBA, I got a job on Wall Street at Goldman Sachs. As a woman in finance, I see it as my responsibility to attract additional women to the field of investments.

## 3 Mentor, don't manage.

A good coach helps you succeed on the field. A great coach helps you succeed in life. As a manager, I look for the potential in my employees and strive to create opportunities for it to be realized. I look to create a culture based on trust, where feedback is direct and immediate. There is an authentic sense of accountability in a mentor/mentee relationship while management is purely focused on key performance indicators. Talent development is critical to drive future success.

## 4 Be a connector, not just a networker.

I played scrumhalf, the link between the forwards and backs. A connector continually thinks about giving back, recognizing one plus one equals three. A networker is coming at it through the lens of, what is in it for me, what can I get out of this relationship. Develop a mentality of “we” against “me.” Start now. Grow up with your peers throughout your career. I have been told my ability to connect with people is my superpower and my network is the result of years of bringing people together and watching the magic happen.

## 5 Sometimes you must be tough.

As a scrumhalf, I took on larger players in attack and defense. As a working mom, life can feel like a terrifying opponent coming for me. My plate is not full, it is overflowing, and that is daunting. I operate in a constant state of exhaustion. At any moment, a ball is going to drop. I learned to create a façade that everything is under control and to accept some days I am going to be a better employee at the expense of my family. Other days, I am a better mom and work will have to wait. It is a balancing act that I do not always get right.

## 6 Do not be afraid to get knocked down.

My career has had bumps but I got back up. Take criticism seriously but not personally and learn from your mistakes. Get your head back in the game. If you are lucky, you will have a few outstretched hands to help you get back on your feet. I keep a card at my desk my husband sent me after I lost a very large pitch. It says: “Keep your head up.” Take that disappointment and negative energy and redirect it to something positive that is in your control.

## 7 Be bold, be unexpected.

When people see rugby on my resume, they are shocked. The element of surprise can be fun, engaging and provocative. It can serve as a point of conversation. It is memorable. It allows me to share a bit of who I am and what motivated me to try out: I am a team player who is not afraid to put myself out there. 