

# Women IN BUSINESS

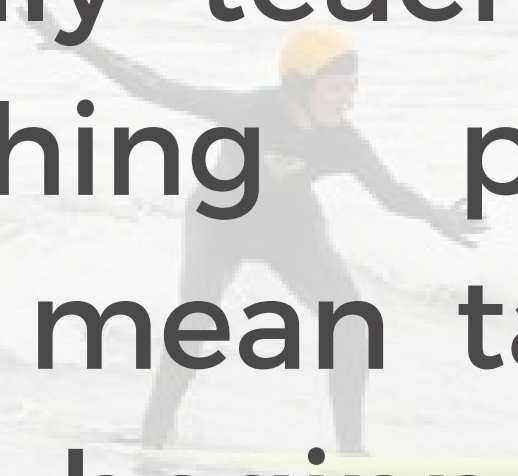


**LEXIE  
HALLAHAN**

NW Women's Surf Camps

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR LINE OF WORK AND WHAT GOT *you* STARTED?**

"This is my eighteenth year of professionally teaching surfing and coaching people. By coaching, I mean taking them from their beginner skills to their intermediate skills so they can really be on their path of surfing."

A person in a wetsuit and yellow cap is coaching a surfer on a yellow surfboard in the ocean. The person is standing on the surfboard with their arms outstretched, and the surfer is also on the board. The background is a bright, overcast sky and the ocean surface.

# WHAT WOULD YOU TELL *your* YOUNGER SELF?

"I realized that everything I have done really led me to this point. Every part was essential in giving me the skill set that I needed in order to be a Director and to lead a unique and diverse program, like NW Womens Surf Camps. If I hadn't had any one of those parts from the time I started to work at age fourteen, I wouldn't have reached this point in my life and success in business. It's important to have confidence that what you have to offer others holds unique value and worth. Many times, when I was going through the process to where I'm at now, I didn't know if I had enough skills and experience, that I could do it. An example to show what I mean is when I met a wonderful woman world traveler and adventure author, Thalia Zapata, back in the early 90's. She was taking women around the world on women's retreats, which was unusual in the 80's and 90's. Now it's so common. Thalia was on to something back in the 80's with her retreats and books about them. I was managing Cleanline Surf Company at the time when she came to me one day and said:

“Lex, you should be taking women out on surf retreats sharing surfing, yoga, and taking them to wonderful places.”

At that time, I just didn't feel confident enough to launch retreats. I was thirty years old and even though I was running a successful surfing business, I just couldn't see myself having enough skillsets to be able to do what she was talking about. So, having more confidence in you and being willing to take a leap. What you have and what you're offering to the world is very valued and desired. This lack of confidence might be more a women's thing than a man's. We are still living in a man's world, I hate to say it, but we are."



# WHAT PIECE OF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE HAS HELPED YOU IN *your* CAREER?

"Know your strengths, talents, and your weaknesses, then reach out to others that have a different skillset and talents than you. When I was starting NW Women's Surf Camps, I had this epiphany when I was working at Cleanline, where I'd seen over the years women and girls coming through the shop with their boyfriends, dads, husbands who would get new boards or rental gear, but not the women. Being one of the original women surfers here in Seaside, I would ask the women and girls:

**“ Why aren't you going to try surfing? ”**

And there were excuses like the water is too cold and aren't there sharks. I kept seeing this trend at the shop and thought what was missing was surf instruction for women. I don't know about you, but as a woman, if I am going to try to learn rock climbing, I want a skilled instructor to teach me. So I asked a couple of my lifeguard surfing friends to coach a couple of days of lessons with me for local women and girls. We had a dozen women and teen girls each day. So the teen girls show up with makeup and talked about boys, some had their moms join them, and there were a few 20 and 30 something. After the first day's session, the second day, the teens show up with no makeup, not talking about boys but about becoming surfer girls, and the moms were sharing with us that this is one of the first times they have connected with their daughters doing something they both could learn together. It gives me goosebumps each time I share this experience. The group is paddling out on their own, catching waves and riding into shore while they root each other on. I get this visceral feeling- it's the only time in my life I've ever had a true epiphany, where it felt like the sky opened up and the sun's rays came shining down on me. The Universe called me to begin the path and journey of teaching women to surf. I was witnessing empowerment, connection, and transformation that I was able to facilitate for them. I realized then and know now that my talent and strength is teaching and coaching surfing."

# WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE FUTURE *women* LEADERS?

"I have a hard time giving advice to people because I feel like everybody comes from a different life experience. I think one of the important things is to polish up your management skills of organization, communication, delegation, and collaboration. So before you start your business, have a solid business plan, and having thought it out, make sure you've polished these skills.

Take a Small Business Management course that will teach you organization and management skills. It will also teach you about business communication and how to delegate to your staff so that you're not doing everything and wondering why they're standing around while you're doing all the work. Start with the business space that you feel is manageable. With small debt to start, grow your business to the point where you've got them standing out on the sidewalk wanting to purchase what you sell or offer. Be mindful that you need money to start up your business, but don't put your business in so much debt that you're wondering each day when am I going to hit the breakeven point and start earning profits. Grow your business organically and sustainably."

# WHO IN SEASIDE THAT IS A WOMAN IN BUSINESS INSPIRES *you?*

"**Mary Blake.** She used to be the Sunset Empire Parks and Recreation Director for about 25 years. She's been a mentor to me since really early on. I met her in 1989. She's one of those women that has great vision and she's not a person that ever says:

*“ Oh, there's no money in the city budget, so we can't make that happen.”*

She would always find a way to make it happen. She sees something that needs to be created and she knows the focused work and steps needed to make it happen. Mary knows how to assemble really talented people together to make it a really successful project that you're doing together. I worked with her for a lot of years in getting the Seaside Skateboard Park built. We worked on it for almost 16 years. Most people would have given up on it because it took so long. After knowing her a number of years, one day I met with her to discuss my surf camp business idea. I wasn't quite sure how to begin it or if the name focused on women was too specific and niche. Mary completely saw my enthusiasm and calling to offer it and supported me in starting it and to keep the focus in the business name what my vision really was...a camp program to teach women and girls how to surf in the Pacific NW. So grateful for Mary Blake!"