

Industry Mentors

"As you grow your leadership style and preferences, know that you are also learning and developing yourself. Be curious, humble and courageous and advocate for your employees and your team. When you bring your team with you on the development journey, the stronger the individuals and the work will be."—Anna Bell, SVP Pet Consumer Marketing, Central Garden & Pet

"The pet industry is such a special place. We get to work with amazing people and enrich the lives of pet parents and their pets. By building strong relationships and always choosing to do the right thing for the right reason, we can all grow and succeed together."—Heather Hickey, SVP of Sales, ZIWI

"We're good at what we love. Follow the North Star of what you believe in so you can build a business you feel excited about every single day. If ever the business is going in a direction that doesn't feel right, change it. Operating with a strong set of values will help you remember who you are and what you set out to do."
—Jacqueline Prehogan, President, Open Farm

"First, it's important to identify organizations with values that align with your own. You'll feel connected and invested in the work you do, which will inspire you to put your best foot forward. Second, it's essential you understand your value and advocate for yourself when new opportunities arise while also recognizing the power of working as a team. Rarely has anyone risen the ranks without the synergy of those two together. Third, women are the main purchasers of consumer packaged goods and offer a unique perspective on best business practices and emerging trends. There is weight to our opinions and ideas, and we should feel empowered to voice them."—Stacey Osborne, President, Champion Petfoods

"Find a mentor, be an advocate, take up space and never be the smartest person in the room."
—Kelly Pye, Director Customer Experience and National Accounts, Pet Food Experts

1. Do everything you can to leave this industry in a better place, it needs the feminine light.
2. Follow and listen to your inner voice. Your intuition has a purpose.
3. Find a mentor. Since 1979, I have had the privilege of several mentors, whose coaching and teaching are instilled in my memory and heart. A contemporary mentor is Eileen Crossin, Founder of Quantum Potential, the mindfulness for business companies.
4. Face your weaknesses head on and surround yourself with folks who can help.
5. Be mindful of your purpose and all those who benefit from your work each day.
6. Visualize our objectives so they become very clear and manifested.
7. In the event you are not business savvy, find a way to learn how to write a business plan and read a P&L.
8. Network, Network, Network.
9. Remember women think differently than men, this difference creates the balance.
10. Be adventurous. Don't be afraid to activate your new ideas.
11. Smart women are not afraid to say they don't know or to ask for help.
12. Spend time with others with like-mind and heart—there is nothing more rewarding than being in the company of female entrepreneurs.
13. Be charitable, the rewards are far greater than money.
—Susan Goldstein, Co-Owner, Earth Animal

Advice for Future Leaders

"Pet is such a unique industry to be a part of because we truly function like family. Growing up in Minnesota, I always thought it was odd that no one ever seems to move away; that was until I moved away and found myself returning home. Pet is that way too. It's comfortable here because we have a shared set of values that runs deep. This makes pet an ideal place for women to thrive. Women often excel in building relationships and leading people with diverse backgrounds to achieve common goals. This is what pet is all about. We win by helping our pet parents be the best parents they can be, and they come to us with all variety of backgrounds and demographics. Women thrive here because we lift each other up to be at our best, and we keep pushing boundaries to ensure we are the best versions of who we can be every day. Never take for granted that the next best idea may be yours!"—Julie Maday, CEO, Independent Pet Partners

"Don't be afraid of AI. Utilize it. Understand it. Leverage all that it can do to help you scale your business and educate the audience on better pet care. It doesn't need to replace people, it should serve as a tool to make our jobs easier so we can do more and better."—Dianna Bailer, Chief Marketing Officer, EarthWise Pet

"As someone who has navigated the ups and downs of the pet industry, my advice to the next generation of women leaders is to remain true to your passion and values. For many of us, this industry is driven by a love for animals and a desire to improve their lives, never lose sight of that mission. Building a successful business or career in this field requires resilience, empathy and creativity. Embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and don't hesitate to think outside the box. Continuously seek knowledge and inspiration from those around you. Surround yourself with mentors who challenge and inspire you, and always be willing to learn. Remember, if you think you are the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room. Most importantly, believe in yourself. Understand that FAIL means, First Attempt In Learning. The only people that truly 'fail' are the ones that never tried to begin with. If you stumble, pick yourself up and try again until you succeed. Perseverance is key, never give up."
—Nancy Guinn, President, Dog Krazy

1. Stay Passionate and Purpose-Driven: Our industry thrives on genuine care and love for animals. Let your passion be the driving force behind everything you do, and always keep your mission at the forefront.
2. Build a Strong Network: Surround yourself with a supportive network of peers and mentors. These relationships are invaluable for sharing knowledge, seeking advice and finding encouragement during challenging times.
3. Embrace Resilience: Challenges are inevitable, but they are also opportunities for growth. Embrace resilience and see setbacks as stepping stones to success. Remember, your strength and perseverance can inspire others.
4. Stay Informed and Innovative: The pet industry is constantly evolving. Stay informed about the latest trends, research, and technologies. Don't be afraid to innovate and think outside the box to better serve pets and their owners.
5. Give Back to the Community: Philanthropy and community involvement are key. Whether through organizing events, supporting local shelters, or educating pet owners, giving back strengthens the industry and builds trust with your audience.
—Kat Donatello, Founder, Austin and Kat