

BBDO KNOWS

**GET DIVERSITY
SMART**

*International Women's
Day - Embrace Equity*

Embrace Equity

This International Women's Day, the theme was "**Embrace Equity**", which prompted debates around how we were doing, with many remarking recent events meant we had taken steps backwards not forwards. The most common narrative was how far we still had to go. IWD is a time for discussion and learning, and always offers a stage for the most inspiring talks by the most remarkable women.

On this International Women's Day, we were fortunate enough to attend a series of global events hosted By BBDO and Omnicom. The stories and lessons were heard all highlighted the importance of perseverance, resilience, and belief. Here's what we heard:

SELF LEADERSHIP - MOUNIRA LATRACHE

Our world is changing faster than ever before. The unpredictability of global crises is overwhelming us. Many of us feel battered and bruised after the past 3 years - we've been hit by one event after another, with little time to regroup or reflect. The world has fundamentally transformed in the past few years, and yet we haven't, our leadership style hasn't. Transformation is different to change, transformation means that what was available to us before no longer is, we have to mourn what no longer exists. But this is also an opportunity for self-transformation, an opportunity to change ourselves and our teams for the better. Mounira Latrache, Co-Founder of Connected Business spoke at BBDO Group Germany and Omnicom Media Group Germany's IWD event to explain how we can skilfully negotiate unpredictable, challenging times and create meaningful change in our workplaces.

Self-leadership is the first step towards transformation, said Mounira, with this transformation resulting with us taking back control. Self-awareness is key. The more self-aware we are the more we can respond, "emotional intelligence is the new gold standard". Simultaneously, we must work towards understanding our purpose:

“Understand who you are as a person, who are you beyond your role? Beyond your job?”

*- Mounira Latrache,
CEO and Co-founder, Connected Business*

Purpose provides us a compass for when the hurricane arrives. Finally, we must put everything we have learnt together and embody this transformation.

HOW TO BRING PERSONAL RESILIENCE - MARIANNE HEISS

Marianne Heiss CEO of BBDO Group Germany's, talk on female leadership and personal resilience delved deeper into the concept of resilience, Marianne defined resilience as the ability to recover quickly and treat oneself with greater care, even in difficult situations. It enables us to adapt to changing environments and use them for their growth and development.

Developing resilience is a lifelong skill that can be learned and practiced. Marianne highlighted several factors that contribute to resilience, such as having a positive attitude toward life, maintaining a healthy diet, engaging in physical exercise, practising inner contemplation, and planning for the future. She also noted that personal resilience is closely linked to leadership. Resilient leaders are better equipped to navigate crises and manage uncertainty, allowing them to emerge from difficult situations stronger and more effectively. They can rely on their competencies, even in times of crisis, and use them to lead themselves and others in a forward direction.

“A crisis redefines kindness, creating a tougher, more courageous stance.”

*- Marianne Heiss,
CEO, BBDO Group, Germany*

Marianne's personal journey offered valuable insights into how resilience can be developed and was a privilege to hear.

TRUTHS ABOUT WOMANHOOD - CLEMMIE TELFORD

AMV BBDO hosted Clemmie Telford, Author, Content Creator and Creative who spoke on the “Truths about Womanhood”. As Clemmie noted, being a woman is a continuous process of growth and change. Women must constantly reinvent themselves to adapt to new circumstances. She emphasised that the moments where she struggled the most were the ones where she did not accept change.

“I show my scars, but not my wounds on social media.”

*- Clemmie Telford,
Author, Content Creator, Creative*

Furthermore, Clemmie talked about the issue of comparing ourselves with past and imagined versions of ourselves. Women tend to be their harshest critics, and this self-comparison can be a significant source of stress and anxiety. Another essential aspect of being a woman that Clemmie touched upon was the importance of knowing our worth.

Finally, Clemmie discussed the challenge of balancing work and family life. She acknowledged that women cannot have it all and must make difficult choices. She shared how, like many working mothers, she struggled to find the right balance between her career and spending time with her children. This trade-off is a reality for many women, and it can be challenging to navigate.

“Use motherhood as a badge of honor.”

*- Clemmie Telford,
Author, Content Creator, Creative*

Overall, Clemmie’s talk provided valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of womanhood. Her honesty and willingness to share her experiences made the audience reflect on their own lives and the challenges they face.

MENOPAUSE AWARENESS - LAURA SHUCKBURGH

In another session hosted by AMV BBDO, Laura Shuckburgh, Menopause coach and founder of Marvellous Midlife talked about managing menopause and your career. Menopausal women are now the fastest growing workforce demographic however, in western society menopause is often hidden with feelings of stigma surrounding the subject. This has potentially significant consequences for employees and employers, women are leaving the workforce because they struggle with some of the effects and feel they are not supported by their employers. 4 in 10 menopausal women have considered quitting their jobs, said Laura.

This session explored the menopause as a key workplace issue, looking at how we can demystify this natural phenomenon, provide support and change the narrative on menopause embracing the transition as described beautifully in Chinese medicine as a 'Second Spring'.

“Midlife is the perfect time to make changes to ensure the next half of your life is on your terms. It is your time to re-emerge and step into who you really are”.

*- Laura Shuckburgh, Menopause Coach,
Founder of Marvellous Midlife*

The physical side of menopause was discussed including encouragement to change terminology from the negative 'symptoms' to more neutral 'signs'. We looked at key steps for self-care and increasing confidence. There was an interactive discussion around workplace adjustments and what specifically we can do at our BBDO offices. The session concluded with a safe environment to talk about menopause openly, without embarrassment. Flying the flag for the younger women in the workforce coming up behind those already in menopause.

REFLECTIONS ON INTERSECTIONALITY - MAYLIS DJIK

The final AMV BBDO event of the week presented Maylis Djik, a transformational coach and consultant, born in Ivory Coast, who discussed her personal journey through the life stages of childhood to womanhood. She candidly discussed the challenges she faced and importantly the different identities she created at school, at home and on the streets of London. She explored intersectionality as a tool for creating more inclusive cultures at work, by understanding and supporting each other through intersectional allyship we can feel empowered and create safe spaces for people to show their vulnerabilities.

“Intersectionality is just a metaphor for understanding the ways that multiple forms of inequality disadvantage sometimes compound themselves”.

*- Maylis Djik,
Transformation Coach and Consultant*

Maylis discussed how the copying mechanisms that we've created from our life experiences, come to bear in the workplace. We heard how many marginalised women use the 'Swan analogy' to describe how they are often feeling at work - calm and in control on the outside but madly swimming under the water inside. The notion of 'bringing your whole self to work' is a concept that is often expected of us, but do we actually adhere to this? How easy is it to do this? And can we really handle and hold space for all the identities that we hold. What we're really asking individuals to do is to remove their masks, remove the facades they've put up at work.

REFLECTING ON IWD 2023

Any opportunity to learn from other women is a privilege, our heartfelt thanks to our AMV BBDO, BBDO Germany and Omnicom agencies for hosting us. The debates were honest and open and in the spirit of staying curious and learning, we took a huge amount from each conversation.

ABOUT BBDO KNOWS

BBDO KNOWS is a planning resource for the BBDO network.

BBDO KNOWS offers thinking, strategy, insights, and inspiration on key categories, key themes and consumer segments.

If you are interested in learning more about the way BBDO thinks please contact **BBDO Knows** on bbdo@bbdoknows.com

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