

Interview: Five questions to five women...

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Five women at Daimler AG talked about what impressed them most about Bertha Benz, what professional challenges they face, what tips they would like to give young female career starters, the significance of success and failure in their professional lives and their personal motto.

- Britta Seeger, Member of the Board of Management at Daimler AG responsible for Sales Mercedes-Benz Cars
- Renata Jungo Brüngger, Member of the Daimler AG Board of Management, responsible for Integrity and Legal Affairs
- Susanne Hahn, Director Lab 1886 Global
- Adi Ofek, CEO Mercedes-Benz Research & Development Tel Aviv Ltd.
- Juan Zhou, Head of Public Relations and Communications, Beijing Mercedes-Benz Sales Service Co., Ltd.

What can we learn from Bertha Benz?

Seeger: Sometimes we women have to take matters into our own hands in order to change something.

Jungo Brüngger: Bertha Benz was a pioneer. She knew that one has to approach things boldly,

even if success isn't guaranteed from the start.

Hahn: In order to achieve a breakthrough in new areas we have to carve out unconventional paths, push the boundaries and dare to make an unconventional move. But above all Bertha Benz showed us that courage has nothing to do with

gender. All this no less than 30 years before women's right to vote was introduced in Germany.

Ofek: She knew what had to be done, and she made it happen. She trusted her abilities. She was practical. Resourceful. She identified what resources were needed for the task and found a way to deploy them. She had a great vision and she made it.

Juan: Always inspire and encourage the person you believe in to achieve their big or small ambition. Have the courage to do what you think necessary, right or interesting.

What is your greatest professional challenge?

Seeger: The way in which people meet their desire for mobility is currently undergoing drastic changes. We have set ourselves the standard of continuing to offer the most attractive products and services in the entire world – in as simple and service-oriented a way as possible, be that in personal contact or digitally.

Jungo Brünger: We at Daimler are shaping the mobility of the future – in accordance with the law and responsibly.

Hahn: As Lab1886 we develop new business models at high speed in order to prepare the Group for the future. It is a challenge always to think in the future and simultaneously to unite the visions with the here and now.

Ofek: Once my vision is clear, results are measured by how fast and effective I can get the vision to become a reality – across multi divisional teams.

Juan: For me, it is always hard to define what's next in my professional journey. However, flow with what comes along is not bad either.

What tip would you like to pass on to young female professionals? What is your personal recipe for success?

Seeger: For me it's important that we get to the heart of things in the team, make decisions and progress fast. Above all I find it important to be approachable and authentic: I let my team in on what I am thinking and feeling.

Jungo Brünger: Anyone who is open to new things will also develop personally. It's important to be courageous and to seize opportunities.

Hahn: Have the courage to realize your path and take it – believe in yourself and your strengths. That sounds simple, but it is a process of maturing personally.

Ofek: Understand your talents and your strengths. Celebrate it. Make sure your talents are realized. Remember that people will listen to you – but only if YOU yourself believe they should! Be brave. No one can stand in the way of someone that wants to do great things.

Juan: Hey lady, it's great to be ambitious, but please work really hard. That's probably the easiest way to achieve what you dream of.

How necessary is failure for success? And how important is courage in working life?

Seeger: Mistakes happen from time to time. It is important to recognize mistakes, talk about them openly, correct them and learn from them for next time. We should all have the courage to do this at work.

Jungo Brünger: One can learn from failures, because they always offer an opportunity to become better. Fear isn't a good advisor; innovative solutions require bold decisions.

Hahn: Failure is not an end in itself, the experience of failure is, however, essential in order to learn from it and grow. You don't have to make every mistake yourself; you can learn from the mistakes of others or the past.

Ofek: Life is about Learning. About Personal Growth. Nothing teaches us better than our failures. It drives us. It is because we hate failing

so much that we absolutely need in it in our lives. What guides me through difficult times is: It is not what happens to you that defines you. It is how you react to what happens to you that defines you. Every single person on this planet goes through challenges. When I go through mine – I go through it. Until I get to the target.

Juan: Failure is not necessary for success, but the ability to live with ups and downs is important. In professional or personal life, courage is the key. The courage to try something new, the courage to admit failure, the courage to take bigger responsibilities, the courage to accept and forgive are all important. Courage is one of the keys to invite more possibilities to life, professional or private.

Your personal favorite phrase/saying on the subject of success?

Seeger: Take every opportunity you have and dare!

Jungo Brünnger: I see it like climbing a mountain: Success comes to those who assess risks correctly, who persevere, and who are courageous.

Hahn: Innovations and success go best hand in hand and they are much more fun together.

Ofek: You can do it! You can only shine by being the best version of yourself. Challenge yourself. Believe in yourself. Courage. Determination. Caring for the best result for the company (and not my personal interests). Caring for the people I work with. Collaboration. Trust. - These values are my compass.

Juan: „Success is not final, and failure is not fatal. It is the courage to carry on that counts.”
Quote by Winston Churchill, taken from the movie “The darkest hour”.