

KIZZI'S SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN BUSINESS



Includes
The Future of Women-Led Businesses:
2025-2035 Outlook

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Kizzi's Successful Women in Business 2025

Produced by Kizzi Magazine

Kizzi's Successful Women in Business 2025 is sponsored by

A Woman's Bible

Visit: www.awomansbible.com

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and Shawn Willis

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Originally published in 2015 as Successful Women in Business

This revised edition is published by Athena Publishing 2025

www.athenapublishing.com



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"We may encounter many defeats, but we must not be defeated."

-- Maya Angelou



Kizzi's Successful Women in Business 2025 Features:

Emma Beckett, Maria Costa, Lara Stallbaum, Jyoti Sheath, Lynda Wilkes-Green, Arita Bains, Dr Beth Godwin, Zoe Price, Ivy Ash, Lucy Herron, Esther Partridge-Warner, Lizzy McDowell, Fiona Wylie, Michelle Niziol, Jennifer Read-Dominguez, Dr Patapia Tzotzoli, Liz Crow.

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Introduction

This year marks a remarkable milestone: the tenth anniversary of *Kizzi's Successful Women in Business*. When we first launched this book series in 2015, I could not have imagined the extraordinary journey it would take. Over the past decade, this publication has grown into far more than an annual volume. It has become a trusted resource, a platform for authentic voices, and a record of the determination, resilience, and vision that women bring to the world of business.

As publisher of *A Woman's Bible*, *Kizzi Magazine*, *Kizzi's Business Game Changer Magazine*, and *Kizzi's Health Journal*, I have had the privilege of telling stories that matter — stories that shine a light on innovation, leadership, and the courage to think differently. But *Kizzi's Successful Women in Business* holds a unique place in my heart. It was born from a simple but powerful idea: that women's experiences, insights, and achievements in business deserve to be recognised, celebrated, and shared as a source of knowledge and inspiration for others.

Looking back over the last ten years, it is clear that this idea has struck a deep chord. The women featured in these pages are not only entrepreneurs, executives, and leaders in their fields; they are also teachers, mentors, and changemakers. Each has faced challenges — personal, professional, and societal — and found ways to transform obstacles into opportunities. Their stories reflect resilience in action and remind us that success is never a straight line.

What makes this book important today, perhaps even more than when it first began, is the cultural and economic landscape in which we now live. We are in an era of rapid change — from technological disruption and shifting work patterns to broader conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion. In such times, the wisdom of women in business is not optional; it is essential. Their perspectives offer clarity, balance, and innovation at a moment when the world needs all three.

Over the years, I have seen how readers use this book. Some turn to it for motivation at the beginning of their entrepreneurial journeys. Others use it as a reference point when faced with difficult decisions. Many see in these pages not just role models, but a community — a reminder that they are not alone in their struggles and ambitions. That, to me, is the true power of this work. It is not only a collection of individual achievements; it is a collective resource that grows stronger with every edition.

As we celebrate this tenth year, I am struck by how the stories within resonate across generations. The lessons shared by these women are timeless: perseverance in the face of setbacks, the importance of authenticity, the courage to follow one's convictions, and the responsibility to lift others as we rise. For every reader, these accounts offer both practical strategies and deeper inspiration. They remind us that success in business is never measured solely by profit or recognition, but also by impact, integrity, and the legacy we create for others.

This anniversary edition is also a chance to look ahead. The next decade will bring new challenges and opportunities for women in business. Artificial intelligence, sustainability, and global interconnectedness are already reshaping the ways we work and build enterprises. But the qualities that have carried the women in this book to success — resilience, creativity, and vision — will remain constant. I hope that future editions will continue to document these qualities in action and inspire new generations of readers to pursue their ambitions with confidence and courage.

To the women featured in this year's edition: thank you. Your willingness to share your journeys — the victories as well as the struggles — is a gift to every reader who picks up this book. Your candour ensures that *Kizzi's Successful Women in Business* remains authentic and grounded, rather than idealised or abstract. To our readers: welcome. Whether this is your first encounter with the series or you have followed us since 2015, I invite you to approach these pages not only as a record of success, but as a toolkit for your own journey.

In these chapters, you will encounter strategies for building businesses, insights into leadership, reflections on work-life balance, and lessons in resilience. But above all, you will encounter stories of possibility. These stories remind us that even in the most uncertain of times, it is possible to carve out a path defined by purpose and passion.

Ten years on, the mission of *Kizzi's Successful Women in Business* remains unchanged: to give a voice to women whose leadership and creativity shape the future. Yet with every edition, that mission grows richer and more urgent. I am proud of what this book has achieved and even more excited for what lies ahead.

It is my hope that as you read this edition, you will find not only inspiration but also a renewed belief in your own capacity to create, to lead, and to thrive. Let these pages encourage you to take risks, to pursue your ideas boldly, and to embrace the setbacks as stepping stones toward growth.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Here's to the next decade of celebrating, learning from, and standing alongside successful women in business.

Kizzi Nkwocha

Publisher, A Woman's Bible, Kizzi Magazine, Business Game Changer Magazine, Kizzi's Health Journal

Emma Beckett, Fortitude 17



1. What inspired you to start your own business or pursue your current career path?

As a child, I always had an entrepreneurial spirit and ambition in some form, so curating and founding a business was likely something that was always on the agenda for me; subconsciously, at least. For the longest part of my childhood, adolescence and even into adulthood, my dream and primary objective was always to become a professional footballer. Playing at the highest level domestically and internationally overtook every other ambition and desire of mine in life and was my favourite daydream until I was perhaps 24-25 years of age. At that stage of life, I swallowed a vivid moment of clarity where I realised that even if I were to reach the echelons of women's football, the salaries on offer to my generation weren't substantial enough to sustain financial independence so at that point, I started to think about engineering another career; one in parallel to my sporting commitments.

My best friend from home was, at the time, beginning to forge a successful career in the world of technology. As it happens, that was the inspiration I needed. From thereon, it was very much "if you can't beat them, join them" – so I self-taught and became a tech consultant. After 6 months of experience training in software solutions and the art of quality assurance (QA), I launched my first company and became a contractor.

2. What have been the biggest challenges you've faced in your career, and how did you overcome them?

Being a female operating in two male-dominated arenas - football and technology - comes with its challenges. Running and growing a business will always throw up obstacles to overcome; there's a reason the word "Fortitude" is central to my company! It's testament to an ever-present reminder that resilience and perseverance are always called upon when it comes to business, and in turn, life. Much of being a CEO of a startup company includes firefighting. Even with the best will in the world, your day can devolve from a place of structure into one where resolving critical issues for clients or supporting staff members in a moment of need is the norm. For me, I love the opportunity to deliver under pressure.

3. Can you share a pivotal moment or decision that significantly impacted your business or career trajectory?

One pivotal moment in my life that truly adjusted the trajectory was losing one of my longest friends unexpectedly. That turning point was something that made me evaluate what was of the utmost importance to me in life: family, friends, being as successful as feasible across anything I turned my hand to – the list goes on. I've been fortunate enough to be dealt many lessons throughout my business career (and in sport, too) – many critical challenges that have dictated the direction of our company – but in terms of the most poignant and powerful moment in my life, losing my friend shaped much of my professional career.

4. What strategies or principles have been instrumental in achieving success in your field?

Self-belief, authenticity and self-teaching: these facets have been tremendously advantageous in my professional pursuits. Don't alter your fundamental and rudimentary core values to bend to other people's narratives, and always listen when people speak to you. One of my favourite ways to learn about the world is to be inquisitive and seek out conversations with individuals different to you. The world is full of incredible people and I have caught many a break and opportunity from meeting people where fate and chance feature.

5. How do you maintain work-life balance or integrate personal priorities with professional responsibilities?

Candidly speaking, incorporating a healthy work-life balance is certainly not a way of life that comes easily to me. Gratefully, growing up in a working-class family has encouraged me to be incredibly self-seeking and relentless in my pursuit of achieving the heights of any potential I have, but that does come at a personal price. When I was still playing professionally and cultivating a startup and actively hiring staff, I didn't prioritise my health. To my own detriment, I was taught a great lesson in self-care, because my zest and drive for my professional career wasn't matched in how I centred my own health: socially, emotionally, mentally or physically.

6. What advice would you give to aspiring women entrepreneurs or professionals?

Even some of the people closest to you may subconsciously let their fears and limitations project onto you. Be unapologetically driven when it comes to your passion, vocation and career. Understand what is non-negotiable when it comes to your success and, opposingly, what may act as a restriction when it comes to career fulfillment. Expect times of loneliness, when deadlines may encroach on real life and late nights become a regular occurrence, or when associates may not always understand the lifestyle you lead. Everyone runs a business for their own reasons, be them financial, freedom-based or because they're entrepreneurial in spirit. Lean into that innate feeling and every challenge you encounter becomes surmountable; you just find a way.

Three things I've learnt from this chapter

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