



Raymond A. Mason School of Business

WILLIAM & MARY

LEADERSHIP & BUSINESS PODCAST

EPISODE 32: JANICE MIN – CAREER ADVICE FOR YOUNG WOMEN

Ken White

From the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. This is Leadership & Business. The weekly podcast that brings you the latest and best thinking from today's business leaders from across the world. We share the strategies, tactics, and information that can make you a more effective leader, communicator, and professional. I'm your host Ken White. Thanks for listening. Well, this past weekend, William & Mary in the Mason School of Business hosted the Women's Leadership Summit & Stock Pitch Competition. Hundreds of women, both professionals, and students, gathered to network and share career advice. One of the keynote speakers was Janice Min, who leads two of the most powerful and prestigious news brands in entertainment media, the Hollywood Reporter and Billboard. Under her leadership, the organization has strengthened its reach in print, online, and social media, as well as in television and live events. After addressing the attendees of the Women's Leadership Summit Min sat down with us to share some of the advice she gave to the young women in the audience. Here's our conversation with the President and Chief Creative Officer for The Hollywood Reporter-Billboard Media Group, Janice Min.

Ken White

Janice, welcome to Williamsburg, College of William Mary, in the Mason School of Business. It's great to have you here.

Janice Min

It is great to be here.

Ken White

How was? You just had a wonderful presentation to a packed house in Brinkley Commons. How was that?

Janice Min

It was great. I love speaking to groups of students, and this happened to be all women here and all women in finance, and I was, of course, chuckling to myself when I sat down. I said to the person next to me like everyone here is wearing black, and then she's like it's

businesswomen. They all wear black suits. There were a few people who broke out of the mold and wore grey. But it was definitely a group of serious-minded women. I like that.

Ken White

Absolutely. There's a culture in this building, right? Yeah, well, you gave a talk, especially to younger women, with some sort of guidelines that you've come up with throughout your career, and I thought maybe we can talk about those.

Janice Min

All right.

Ken White

The first one you said is nobody is ever going to reward you for just working hard.

Janice Min

Yes. Okay, so, like a lot of the women who are in the room there today with us. I was born a nerd. I am a total nerd. I grew up feeling pretty confident I was smart, and one of the things that happens when you get your first job is that people will use you for that. People will sort of spot the person who is oftentimes a woman who will be given all the work because they know A she'll do it. B, she probably won't complain. And so, at my very first job, when I was at my first magazine job when I was at People magazine, they gave me every assignment. It was I was just completely dumped on, and the thing is, when you're young at that age, you feel like, oh well, I have to prove I can do it. And so you do it all, and you think you're going to get rewarded for that, but the fact is when you are the person who gets all the work, and you're known for the person, they can put all their drudgery on they will just give you more. And you know, I still remember distinctly being the person sitting there at 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. at night in the offices in New York, and it's deserted. It's a ghost town. I'm sitting there with, you know, a few more hours of work to do, and everyone else is out to dinner and going to the movies. And that is not a sustainable way to live. But it's also not a way you move ahead.

Ken White

Right. But as a young person, you're probably thinking this is good for me; I'm learning.

Janice Min

Sure.

Ken White

You're falling into that.

Janice Min

I feel like I became a very good writer through the constant repetition of just honing the skill over and over again. So I'm not going to say that that was a bad experience, but I'm really glad today I'm not still in that same experience.

Ken White

Second thing you shared being the idea person is more valuable than being the hardest worker.

Janice Min

Yes. So one of the things, when you are a student, you really feel like you put your head down you, work hard, you get an A, you know you did well. In organizations, it's very different when you're out in the quote-unquote real world. And when you are the person who can pack 100 boxes an hour, for example, that's great. But the person who can invent the machine that packs 300 boxes an hour is the one who will get ahead. And that's a very sort of basic analogy to creativity, but there are things that I think it could be particularly female and or to sort of more understated males in the workforce. You will sit there in a meeting and be terrified when you start out or even not when you started out. You'll be terrified to speak. And I always had this nagging feeling when I started out well if I if my idea were so good someone else would've said it by now. And so you sit there, and you sort of sit on your hands, and then sometimes you even do silly thing where you email your idea after the meeting, and that's just ridiculous. And I really firmly believe that the people who and I do it myself now that I am a boss. You always remember the people who give you good ideas, you never remember the people who don't, and I've never seen a person who is not an ideas person move ahead. It's not the person who decided that they needed to log in 80 hours a week alone.

Ken White

We know how important communication is you sort of referred to it there. Your number three tip was listen.

Janice Min

Yes, people so underrate listening. Listening is just probably the most valuable skill anyone can have, both as a human being and in your own personal relationships. But in the workplace and I made a somewhat embarrassing confession in there, and I don't think I'll say it for this podcast, about how many of the editing The Hollywood Reporter I went to the Oscars and of the eighth best picture nominees I've seen an embarrassingly small number of them yet I have a whole staff who covers those movies. Talks about them in meetings. I could sit there if you turn this podcast into a podcast about the best picture-nominated movies. I could talk about them with you, and you would never think I hadn't seen some of them. And it's the amount of information you can glean. You can't be an

expert in everything. You have to count on other people, the people you work with, to tell you what's going on. And some of the best ideas come from listening to your staff. So way back when in the early 2000s, I was the editor of this publication called US Weekly that was struggling to make a name for itself, and it eventually did. But I remember there were moments, and I'm not saying this because there are journalists out here who want to think about reality television but using as an example of how you find ideas from your staff. There was a reality show called Newlyweds on MTV, which some people thought was, you know, the scourge of the Earth, and other young women loved. And I remember the first day that it came out on MTV. The day the morning after it premiered on MTV, the women in the office, who were largely young women in their 20s, were talking about the show. Oh my gosh, you know it's so silly and this and that I like her for this reason, and she didn't know the difference. She thought that Chicken of the Sea was chicken, not tuna. And there were all these things that they kept talking about, and I and I couldn't actually get the morning meeting going, and I remember that moment. And you know, I was trying very hard to be the business of being first on identifying different celebrity and trends in entertainment. And I'm like, Let's just go for it. Let's offer this woman a cover and with her husband. And that was the first magazine cover Jessica Simpson ever had. And she became a billionaire. I did not. But it did. It was one of the things that put Us weekly on the map, and you know, time and again, you know I have never watched a Jessica Simpson reality show. I have never watched The Bachelor. I have never watched American Idol. I can't believe I'm saying these things on a podcast, but they are stories that I've put on covers. And that was really based on my skill that I could that I knew I have, which was developing stories out of just listening to people and understanding what the story was. So this is just a roundabout way of telling you. Telling people, though, that you know companies spend millions of dollars on focus group testing and research and product analysis, you know, competitive studies but sometimes the biggest and best answers are sitting there right in front of you if you listen to people. Listen to your sister, your mom, your brother, how they talk about the way they bank, the way they grocery shop, what they wish they had the meals on an airline. You will learn everything about the market just from keeping your ears wide open.

Ken White

Excellent advice. Number four, don't apologize for being ambitious, even though everyone will want you to.

Janice Min

Yes, this is probably a little more of a female problem. I think men largely are ambitious, and they wear it on their sleeve, and no one faults them for it. I think the idea of an ambitious woman is probably still somewhat threatening to a lot of people and also something women apologize for all the time or try to conceal, and so when I was a writer, my first magazine job the one at People magazine and I got promoted and to be a senior

editor and I you know I remember saying to my boss who I loved and she was a woman probably in her late 40s early 50s at the time, and I just said you know what. Because I'm a very type A person and I said don't give me the baby sections to edit; I want the real sections, and you know she loved that, but she probably loved less a few years later when I believed I was very confident I was doing more and better work than the people I reported to, and I said you know I would really like to be promoted again. And one of the things she said to me was, you know, some of these people have worked here decades to get in that position, and you know, I'll never forget one of the other things she said to me was, you know how long it took me to get this job. And I just felt like, well, I would like to be in a different timetable than that and some of it. I wasn't angry. I just felt like, okay, so maybe my time here is done, and I will find another job, and that will happen at times in your life like sometimes you will just have we all just know when it's time to move on. So you know, I think there is part of the good girl syndrome that a lot of you know A girl students have, which is I'm not going to break the rules. This is how it's gonna go, but sometimes you need to get ahead.

Ken White

Know what you don't know and be totally fine with that.

Janice Min

Yeah. You know. I have I probably had a hard time in my life as a younger woman needing to always be right. And my husband, who I met in college before we got married, maybe sometimes even now, anytime I would say I was wrong about something, he'd say like he always make the joke wait, get off the tape recorder. You know this is history being made. You know, it was it I didn't like being wrong, and part of that is being a perfectionist and or having that sort of smartest girl in the room, or you know, the smartest boy in the room syndrome where you have to know everything and I remember always feeling maybe I was a slight failure if I didn't know everything like that how did that person know something and I didn't. How did I miss that, you know? And it could drive me insane. And now you know one of the things that you one the things that really makes people good leaders. I believe firmly is the ability to bring in smart people into your fold and people who are smarter than you. And oftentimes, most times, the smartest person in the room is not the leader of the organization. If the person who exhibits leadership skills and knows when to when to say really, I this is a skill I don't have. How do we hire that skill? How do we bring some other form of expertise into our operation and then really empower those people to do it? Give credit. You know. Yes. I think just no one can be good at everything, and the person who knows how to build that organization it's like a jigsaw puzzle. The person who knows how to fill in those parts is the person who will win. That is what I believe.

Ken White

Well, when you talk about that, I think of it's an old movie now from the late 80s early 90s broadcast news.

Janice Min

Yes.

Ken White

And Holly Hunter is the producer, and she knows everything.

Janice Min

Yes.

Ken White

And then she fully believes that and her boss says to her it must be horrible being the person who knows everything. She says yes, it is.

Janice Min

It's a burden on her.

Ken White

Yes, I do know everything. He was scratching his head, and she believed she knew everything and had to in that role.

Janice Min

Well, you know, it's interesting, you know, one of the knocks I often hear on people in various industries someone who just had a meeting with someone or doesn't necessarily care for someone in business. One of the knocks they will often say first is, well, you know that person has smartest person in the room syndrome, and it makes you not want to engage with that person because it's so unproductive a lot of that person's time is spent fulfilling an ego-driven wish to seem like the best.

Ken White

We'll continue our conversation with Janice Min on advice for young women in business in just a minute. Leadership & Business is brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. If you're looking to improve your leadership and business skills the Center for Corporate Education has a terrific program scheduled for April the certificate in business management. It's a five-day program that covers strategy, accounting, operational effectiveness, communication, and leadership. A great program for the professional who

lacks an MBA. For more information, go to wmleadership.com. Now back to our conversation with Janice Min on career advice for young women.

Ken White

Item number six seems like it could be targeted more toward leaders and bosses, but you share this with up-and-comers, and that is be generous with your praise and friendship without agenda.

Janice Min

Yeah, I think that's a really hard thing sometimes when you're starting out. You feel competitive. You feel like you know that person who I think I might like is a threat to me because they might want the same thing I want, and most of that is typically invented in our heads, and sometimes that other person will get the job you want or will move ahead before you do. But largely, it's, there is a big missing, I think, an undervalued part of conducting yourself in life and in business of building loyalty, and some of that is, you know, A, just being a good person but you know be really just being sharing and giving of yourself. And one of the things I do often is you know you will do public praise in a meeting instead of public humiliation, which goes so much further, which doesn't mean you let transgressions pass. No, but. And then part of it is, you know, I remember just that, you know, a few weeks ago after the Oscars, I took out some people from staff who had worked very hard in the Oscars issue. I took them out to a spa and to lunch, and one of the people in that group said to me no one has ever done this for me before. Like, thank you. And there is a sense that money buys loyalty that you give someone a raise, they are loyal to you. That is just not the case. Giving someone a raise maybe buys you more time before they eventually up and leave. It's that sense of loyalty that you can't fabricate you cannot. People really want to feel like you have their back and that they will, in turn, have your back. And there are countless times in my job where being an editor. There are difficult situations you get into every time. Nobody is ever going to like 100 percent of what you write. And so, you know, I got often get incoming calls about people stories, and you know, largely, I'm on the staff side, and that goes a long way. Like people, you know if they think when a bullet comes, you're gonna duck under the table. They will also duck under the table. Likewise, so it makes a huge difference.

Ken White

You know you're talking in your talk. Before we started recording to younger women who are in college and starting out and I think of someone who reports to me.

Janice Min

Yeah.

Ken White

Who's very young, an entry-level new. She complements me.

Janice Min

Wow.

Ken White

And I think that is amazing the boss never gets right.

Janice Min

Yeah.

Ken White

Right.

Janice Min

Yeah.

Ken White

So for someone who so new to say hey, that was really great. Wow. Does that go a long way?

Janice Min

Yeah, it goes a long way.

Ken White

It makes you so mature.

Janice Min

Well, you know, even like it's so funny, even by the way, it takes a very confident person to do that right.

Ken White

Yeah.

Janice Min

Even coming off the stage. Well so I remember when we honored Oprah Winfrey a few years ago to breakfast in Los Angeles for the Hollywood Reporter and this is Oprah Winfrey who has interviewed everyone you know from state leaders to President Obama

to Rihanna whoever and she said universally when the person's done the thing they ask they would always ask her is how did I do. And she spoke about the value and validation that everybody needs validation. And so even when I'm in that room, and I just gave a speech to this conference of women here, the second I'm done, I'm like did they like it? Did someone like it? And I got nice validation, and I felt really good. And so just those basic human gestures of making people feel that they were valued somehow. They just can make all the difference in the world.

Ken White

Absolutely. Your seventh point was be courageous.

Janice Min

Yeah, you know most people are hard-wired to be safe. Right. And I think whether it's your family when you're growing up or in your career, your friends. People will often tell you to make the safe choice, and yet you don't know anyone in life who's succeeded without a level of risk that they assumed. So when I say be courageous, it can be very basic things in the office. Stand up for somebody you know and make sure that someone who hasn't gotten credit for a project gets credit. Give someone work who you think is good but is overlooked. You don't have to. You don't have to always conform to the office standard. Part of it part of the courageous part is telling your boss when he or she is wrong and not not in a disrespectful way but being able to disagree. I can tell you, as the boss now, I love when people disagree with me. The most terrifying thing is when people don't, and you think there's a culture of that. And the thing one of the things I hate hearing the most in the office is when someone says well, so-and-so didn't bring that up because they thought you would hate it or you know we never did that because they were sure you wouldn't like it or even the craziest things like you know we heard you hate the color or so we're not we didn't we don't do orange anymore or anything. Like things get invented.

Ken White

Yeah.

Janice Min

And you know, really, to think that there's some kind of chilling effect because people didn't feel courageous or thought I would be upset about something like that is pretty crazy, and you know, there's this very famous story in Hollywood about a woman named Dana Walden who is she now is the chairman of Fox Network's group which is FOX the broadcast channel and also the studio that produces such hit shows as Homeland and the People versus OJ and American Horror Story huge shows on television. And she got her start on her rise because she was at an off-site that Fox was having, and she was a publicist. And the discussion came up by from Peter Chernin, who was running Fox at the time, about how they could do better on certain things. And she spoke up, and she talked

about her opinion on certain shows and her opinion what they could do differently. And this person who was sort of unknown became suddenly known by Peter Chernin, and you know, fast forward she now runs she went from publicist to top executive. You know that that is that's an extreme example, but you could make those things happen for you every day.

Ken White

Wouldn't have happened if she didn't speak up.

Janice Min

Absolutely.

Ken White

Yeah. And your final point, which is a great one and really resonates. I know with younger people, and I hate to generalize, but millennials often talk about this, and that is, work on your personal life just as hard as you work on your professional.

Janice Min

Yeah. Gosh, you know, you really can I just share this thing that Julianne Moore told us in an interview, and it struck me so much when I was when we interviewed her we did her for a cover of The Hollywood Reporter, and she relayed an anecdote how she was really unhappy in her 30s, and her professional life was taking off, but her personal life was not. And she said she told us I was lonely. I don't think I felt happy. I spent my 20s working hard and trying to get wherever there was, which wasn't really anywhere. It was just a job. And I really wanted a family. So she went and saw a therapist, and the therapist got straight to the point with her. The therapist said she must give her private life it's due, and Julianne told us in the interview. I discovered that was as important as my professional life. I didn't spend the time. I didn't invest. One thing I used to tell my women friends was there's an expectation that your personal life is going to happen to you, but you're going to have to make your career happen. And that's not true. You have to make your personal life happen as much as your career. So I think one of the most important things is, you know, don't like companies or you may feel loyal to your company. Companies are not loyal back to you. And that's a hard thing to accept when you are young or even when you're not young is that you've given so much time and you've seen a lot of heartbreak over situations like that. And so you know, go in with your eyes wide open about that when you start your career, no matter what. But separately make sure you have something to fall back on. And some of it is not even fallback prioritize you know find one of the things I said to the women in the room is find someone you love and find someone who loves you back. That is probably the greatest thing you will ever do in your life. And I, you know, I know Sheryl Sandberg has talked about this a lot. Make sure someone that person wants to be an equal partner to you because that is going to be what enables you to it

enables you to not lose your mind completely later if you choose to have children or even if you don't choose to have children don't you can't be subordinate to someone and have a successful career at the same time and separately if you want to have children. And I remember when I became the editor of US Weekly somewhat by surprise because my predecessor left suddenly when I was 33 years old, and at the time, I was trying to get pregnant, and I didn't stop. And so two months later, I had that super awkward moment where you just got the job, and you go in and tell your boss you're pregnant. But I look back now, and I've thought about it often. If I had stopped and said let me wait for a better time, there might not have ever been a better time. You could. In fact, no one has ever had a perfect time in their life. Where they say now is the time to have kids because it never fits in. And then you somehow fit it in. So obviously, there are financial, and you know, life circumstances that change all of that. But do what you want to have because you know one day you know think about your life. I like to tell people think about your life. If you didn't have this child, would you be happy? And I think that is a good way to ensure a level of happiness.

Ken White

And it's so nice to get up in the morning, and you can't wait to go to work. And it's so nice when work is over. You can't wait to come home.

Janice Min

Completely.

Ken White

To the people in your family.

Janice Min

Absolutely. And there's, you know, great thing that you know, I believe, and I'm sure a lot of people have heard it. If you want to get a project done at work if you want to be done quickly, give it to a working mom. Like there is no, I firmly believe it makes you better at your job and more efficient. And I do think women and women are natural born managers in some ways, and the ability to, I mean, the amount of stuff in my head at any one given time is sort of staggering. And kind of in the back of my head, know my schedule all day, and it's every 15 minutes are somehow booked with something, but it does make you it gets you organized in your thinking, it gets you organized in your goals. And it will move you ahead in all sorts of ways and not just at work.

Ken White

That's our conversation with Janice Min on career advice for young women. Min recently visited William & Mary for the Women's Leadership Summit and Stock Pitch Competition.

If you'd like to learn more about that event next year, visit Boehly Center at mason.wm.edu. That's B-O-E-H-L-Y center at mason.wm.edu. The date for next year's summit is March 25th, 2017. Well, that's our podcast for this week. Leadership & Business is brought to you by the Center for Corporate Education at the College of William & Mary's Raymond A. Mason School of Business. The Center for Corporate Education can help you get to the next level in your career with business and leadership development programs that specifically fit your needs. If you're interested in learning more about the opportunities at the Center for Corporate Education for you or your organization, check out our website at wmleadership.com. That's wmleadership.com. Thanks to our guest this week, Janice Min, and thanks to you for joining us. I'm Ken White. Until next time have a safe, happy, and productive week.