

By Dr Marina Nani & Laura Amherst

## The World Needs More Powerful Business Women

*Tineke Rensen on how to create a better reality for woman in business.*

You might have heard that Dutch women are the most beautiful women in the world. We went behind the scenes to find out how they become powerful business women. Last year we sponsored The Wintrade Week in London and I've met Tineke Rensen who was a keynote speaker. What struck me while listening to her wasn't necessarily her elegance, even it was difficult to ignore it, but her beauty within. Tineke was talking about learning from men how to work together, how to focus, how to do goal setting, how to stick to a plan, how to budget and focus on money without losing your femininity. At that point I realised that she is a woman on a mission, and we have to work together to help more women become powerful business women.

We followed Tineke Rensen for almost a year now, and since she launched three chapters of the Powerful Business Women's Network in Zurich, London and Amsterdam. She kindly agreed to be the cover girl for Sovereign Magazine and share not only her story with our readers but her vision for a world that needs more powerful women who own a successful business.

[www.powerfulbusinesswomensnetwork.com](http://www.powerfulbusinesswomensnetwork.com)

## Tineke's Story

I am the first-born child and have a younger sister. We had quite a hard upbringing and did not have a lot of money, as my dad suffered an injury on a moped that left him unable to work for many years. He started drinking and our home life was very turbulent. Despite this, I have great memories of my childhood. My main passion has always been sports. I started going to a gymnastics club that opened in my village and when I was 12, I had the opportunity to go to a club in another city and develop myself as an athlete, but my parents did not have a car and felt too proud to ask for any help. I found out from a young age that you can only depend on yourself to achieve something. I remained at the gymnastics club and was still very talented. I won many competitions but was never able to break through to the national level, and it was there that that particular dream ended.

As I got older and had to choose what I was going to study, I chose to study sports teaching. The main reason why I started to study sports was that I wanted to become a gymnastics trainer. I decided if I could not become a national champion myself, I would train other girls to become one. Back then there was stiff competition; about 80 people got chosen out of a thousand each year! Everybody told me not to try, but there was nothing else I wanted to do, so I applied. I got through a few rounds to the lottery, but I was not good enough yet to get a place. I heard about the rule that when you apply three times and every time you have to go to the lottery that they give you a spot, also because that shows determination. So that was my plan.

As I moved from middle school to higher education, it was challenging, and I had to study a lot. I was only there so I could wait for my third time to apply, and the second time I also made it through, and I got a ticket to start.

And so, I was 17 and I had to move out of my house, and I felt like it was the biggest achievement ever; I had a chance to start a new life. When I left, my mum filed for divorce and I found out she was only staying for me and my sister. Mum moved into shared accommodation, and it was a rough time, as I started the challenge of a new life and not having the safe haven I always had, to go back home to.

I studied sports for three years and learning many new sports and skills. During my internship in recreational sport I went to the Belgian Ardennes to do outdoor and survival sports, such as rock climbing, white water kayaking and abseiling. It was a life changing experience. I learned what real friendship was about, and the couple that ran the white-water kayaking became my role models. I kept going back for trips until I passed my exams and officially became a sports teacher. I soon realized that I could start to make money through my skiing and kayaking.

I started working and while I was not paid much, I did get to spend five months of the year outdoors skiing.

When I was 29, I applied for the national team mogul skiing in The Netherlands and I was selected. My hope of becoming a national champion was renewed. I was invited to compete at the Dutch Championships hosted in Switzerland, and I had high hopes that I could become a champion. The track was very difficult, and I ended up falling and breaking my thumb, and had to be transported home by ambulance. It was such a sad day.

Whilst this was happening, I was teaching outdoor and survival sports for a company in Luxembourg but I decided to leave because of the safety standards. I then started my own business. I initially bought five kayaks and I strapped them to my roof, and I used to take people to Belgium. When the business grew, I took friends of mine to instruct alongside me and we had a great time. I







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was discovering how to find clients on my own, but got some help with bookkeeping with a mentor, who I learnt a great deal from.

My business grew steadily, and, in the summer, we started moving everything to Italy. I sold my programs to the tour operator that I was working for in the winter as a ski guide.

I never realized I was doing something extraordinary. I was doing business in multiple countries employing people. I was just doing what I loved with people who loved it too.

I met my husband through whitewater kayaking, a Dutch man who I met in Turkey with some friends, but he did not become a part of the business as it was not making enough money for the both of us, as there were dry periods during the winter months and I had little income.

I became pregnant and had to employ an admin co-worker because I wanted to work less. So, then I felt like a real business owner because somebody depended on the income I provided. When my first daughter was born, I soon had to move my office out of the house, and I rented a new place. I started to build up more equipment and eventually had to rent a bigger space.

My business grew steadily every year. I had no loans from the bank, and I could always grow with the money I could put back into the business. In my last year, we were at 5 locations in the summer and 25 people were working for me. I felt very proud.

In the meantime, Freestyle Kayaking was born!

Having such a young child did not deter us, she came along on all our trips. We would camp in the wild and we'd bathed her in a bucket, we slept in the together in a campervan and when she was sleeping in the pram near the river, we would train. I have truly wonderful memories of those times that I will always cherish. We drove all over Europe to compete in competitions and I became better and better.

It is no wonder that when they started a national team of this new sport I was elected. And I remembered my old dream of becoming a Dutch champion. Would it be third time lucky?

When we had the Dutch championships in France, I was very excited. I was the oldest competitor, and the only mother and the rest were young girls, but my mindset was the best and guess what, I became the national champion at 38 years old!

### *What inspired you to create your business?*

My first business was in outdoor sports and I decided to sell it after 22 years as I was not growing anymore as a person and wanted a new business challenge. I started to learn an array of skills in entrepreneurship such as online marketing, public speaking and social media for businesses.

After a while, I started teaching business owners to help them to grow their business.

I loved working with men because I always had been a tomboy, but I faced some challenges where I was not taken seriously, and I switched to working with women. I soon found out that women were keeping themselves small in business for a number of reasons, and I challenged them too much as I saw through their excuses.

But I was not growing my business the way I wanted, I was not happy with my income and was not achieving my goals. And I was not used to this at all.

I was having problems marketing and selling myself and was still having problems with mentoring women. My personal coach asked me the question one day, "Is it possible that you avoid the feminine part inside of you?"

Could my coach be right?

In my opinion what I saw from women was weak and I did not want to be weak.

Could it be that what seemed weak to me, was being realistic? That what I called excuses was being self-aware? Did I need to be so harsh on myself all the time and believe that failure was not an option?

But I did have a huge advantage. I had learnt to focus, to do goal setting, to stick to a plan, to budget and focus on money too. I practiced thinking fast and implementing quickly, and

to go through the fear instead of listening to my insecurities. I realised that a lot of business women were not as successful as they wanted to be because they lacked these skills, and I found that there were certain ways that women liked to work that worked against more traditional business models, yet were very valuable, such as working together, keeping everybody involved and not only being focused on money! And then everything changed for me.

I encountered many powerful and successful businesswomen who had integrated the masculine and feminine very well.

When I stopped seeing businesswomen and the way they do business as being less successful I could start to help them, and they accepted my help.

I also saw that life was lonely for many of these strong and powerful businesswomen.

They did not have many role models, and they had to find out their own way, like I had to do for twenty-two years. And I thought what a waste of potential. Why not create a way where they can all meet and where they can support and help each other?

So, I started the Powerful Business Women's Network where like-minded women can meet online and at monthly meet-ups. We now have three groups: in the Netherlands, in Switzerland, and in the United Kingdom.

### *What problems are you solving?*

I work with business women who have reached a plateau. I help them learn new skills, and I mentor them to implement new strategies, but most importantly I am a soundboard for my women. No matter how successful they are they can still be insecure because they feel the pressure of making the right decisions for everyone involved.

I also help them to learn the

typical masculine skills without having to use the masculine behaviour.

It is such an eye-opener for my clients when they can see that their beliefs about business are driven by masculine behaviour and rules, which are not serving businesswomen at all.

### *How does it work?*

I coach, train and mentor them one on one and I often zoom in with specific trainings on various matters where women can grow their business.

I love to serve women. I believe in helping them grow their businesses so they can impact a lot of people.

#### THE BLUEPRINT FOR A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MAKEOVER



[www.PowerfulBusinessAcademy.com](http://www.PowerfulBusinessAcademy.com)

I developed a model that I use during my sessions and this model is called the "Blueprint for a Successful Business Make-Over".

I have not met a woman in business yet who is facing issues I have not faced or that one of my clients has not faced. There is always a solution.

But it is not always me coming





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up with the solution when working with a client. I believe when we start working, a flow starts developing and synchronization evolves. And in these moments my client can come up with the best solutions herself.

If women first want to get to know me, they can also buy my book. "Maximum Business Growth for Women, 8 Secrets from a National Champion to Accelerate your Business"

<https://www.maximumbusinessgrowthforwomen.com/>

My business is called Powerful Business Academy. It is only for powerful business people and preferably women.

*Who are the people that could benefit?*

Serious business women who want to scale up and are willing to work on their business instead of in their business. Who also want to work on themselves? Because a business can only grow as big as its business owner is. My work is always about personal and business growth.

*What are the challenges to make the public aware of your work?*

To make them aware is not the issue, branding nowadays is very easy with free social media. But how to stand out and have my potential clients pick up the phone and call me is another story. I have various ways to find new clients.

1. I love to give presentations. Being on stage has always been something I love to do. To be able to reach out to as many people as possible at the same time and having a connection with them is amazing. (With email marketing I could reach so much more people, but I feel no connection with my tribe

when I send an email)

2. I also have a video funnel on Facebook, with a lot of videos. We target the businesswomen who have seen my videos and they will get an invitation to have a free talk with me. This is only for the very serious ones because I cannot talk to everybody who wants to talk to me, although I would love to. From every conversation I learn, and, in every conversation, I am able to contribute to a person's life or business. Both things make me happy

3. I have a very good online questionnaire for business women. <https://www.powerfulbusinessacademy.com/free-next-level-consultation/> It takes time for them to fill in the answers, but when they do make this effort, they will already get a lot more insight into their business and the challenges they are facing at the moment. And some of them I give a reward in the form of a free conversation with me.

4. And of course, I have a free download with exceptional content. I found out that in my country, The Netherlands, there was not much statistical information about how women do business and what their challenges are. I gathered information of nearly 400 businesswomen. All the questions are in a report what you can download here. <https://www.powerfulbusinessacademy.com/e-book/>

All these women will get recent updates about my work.

5. And now this Powerful Business Women's Magazine, with many powerful businesswomen out of my own network who share their stories. I am very proud of this beautiful achievement, where business women get the attention, they deserve in the business arena. Often

our businesses are not as big as those of men, and often we don't promote ourselves as much as men. But that does not mean that we are not out there. I advocate for bringing a new way of doing business where there is also a lot of attention for the feminine approach. An approach that is needed very much in the world nowadays.

*Who is one person you admire most and why?*

I am a big fan of Walt Disney. When my children were young, we travelled to the States to Orlando quite a few times. We visited the parks and went on many Disney cruises. It was always an amazing experience. Like making dreams come true and that is exactly their motto. 'If you can dream it you can do it.' That is my favourite quote from Disney. Together with the belief that you don't need to know exactly how you are going to achieve it, accompanied with the trust that somehow you will meet the right people at the right moment you can really achieve everything.

*Why do you believe it is important to be part of a women's network?*

Women have a different way of communicating than men. They also have a different way of doing business. They love to help others and connect, and they want to belong to something; they like to create together. Women go to a deeper level of conversation very quickly and we can talk about a variety of important meaningful things together.

*Why do you believe it is important for women to support each other?*

Women have a different way of doing business than men. So, we understand much better what works for us and what doesn't. Many of their businesses are too small to be noticed. So, women need a lot more help and support to grow their business because it is still a very masculine thing to scale up and grow. But we can too. And when we support and help each other instead of competing with each other or being jealous of each other or judging each other I am sure that much more female-owned businesses will thrive. And that is needed in the world because women have so many qualities to bring to business.

So, this is why women should support each other. We all agree we need more women in politics, we all agree we need more women in boardrooms. Well, I am a fierce supporter of having bigger female-owned businesses.

And I will do whatever I can to help achieve this.

Many women in this magazine are stepping up and are proud to talk about their business and their interesting stories, without bragging because that is not what women like to do. But we can be proud as hell too!

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