



## **Top Tips for Entrepreneurs – A Checklist**

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, Sonal Holland shared her go-to checklist for entrepreneurs – especially women.

I get asked a lot to share tips for how to kickstart a career, how to create a personal brand, and how to succeed, given how cutthroat the competition has become these days. Especially since my own story is one of a complete U-turn – from being close to the top of the corporate ladder at a NASDAQ-listed Fortune 500 multinational company at the age of 28, to choose to leave it all to become an entrepreneur in the nascent Indian wine industry – I seem to garner a lot of interest from self-starters who are charting their own career paths.

On the occasion of International Women’s Day, I wanted to share my go-to checklist for entrepreneurs – especially women. In our country, women still struggle with their careers, with less than one quarter (20.3%) of women participating in the labour force as of 2020. That figure may seem shocking but it just goes to further underscore my belief that collectively as a community of professionals, we need to actively encourage and support young women considering careers, giving them the right kind of guidance from the get-go. Here are some of my top tips, hewn from my own personal experiences:

1. Don’t always listen to people. The ones who don’t know you well often don’t care enough to mean well for you or may not be visionary enough to give you good advice. The first piece of advice I received from a senior member in the industry at the time was: “You are too young to try for a Master of Wine. You need to wait till you are older to try.” I’m glad I didn’t listen.
2. Identify your true mentor. Behind every success story, there’s true mentorship. Someone who can help you identify and realise your inner calling, and help you dream big. This person will be your biggest influencer. Recognise them and hold on to them tight. They are your angels and your guiding light as they will always have your back. And, you’re going to need them throughout your journey.
3. Invest in yourself. Be smart about the kind of knowledge and education that you invest in, for yourself. Remember that whatever you spend the time learning should come in handy across multiple aspects of your career. Choose accordingly. Doing this pays the best rate of interest and your personal brand is your most saleable asset. Invest in gaining knowledge, upgrading your skills, developing your creative talent and enhancing your image. That’s ultimately what businesses pay for. When you invest in yourself, a world of opportunity opens up for you.
4. Don’t waste too much time thinking; act. People spend too much time ruminating on ideas and miss the opportunity to execute in time. Speed is important if you are trying to pioneer a brilliant idea. Execute the idea and then work on perfecting it, or else you may lose out to someone who acts upon it faster than you. Ultimately, ideas belong not to those

to think it first, but to those who act upon it first. Procrastination is the mother of all disappointments. So, execute.

5. Have grit and self-belief. It is the ability to persist in something you feel passionate about and persevere when you face obstacles. It is important to stay on course, no matter what. Because, the best almost always comes after the worst. Failure makes you give up. Grit and self-belief tell you to dig in your teeth and persist. And those who persevere, see the rainbow.

6. Success is a responsibility. Achieving milestones in your entrepreneurial journey should act as reminders to start giving back in ways that are meaningful, progressive and relevant, helping the industry you're in to move forward. Your ultimate goal should be to serve the ecosystem of the industry and create solutions for the trade and its consumers, making that your larger purpose.

Sonal Holland is India's first and only Master of Wine ([www.sonalholland.com](http://www.sonalholland.com)). An educator and consultant, Sonal is the Founder Director at Vine2Wine Retail that operates specialist wine stores in Mumbai and Bengaluru ([www.vine2wine.in](http://www.vine2wine.in)).

<https://hospitality.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/speaking-heads/top-tips-for-entrepreneurs-a-checklist/81390032>