

Women in Aesthetics: Michele Franklin

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The Groundbreaking Original Series from Industry Vet Wendy Lewis

Wendy Lewis

Get to Know: Michele Franklin

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HOW DID YOU GET YOUR START IN THE AESTHETICS FIELD?

My journey in the aesthetics field began with my first sales role at Allergan where I served as one of the original Business Development Managers covering eight states in the South. Despite lacking direct sales experience, I had a strong background overseeing Dermatology practices. Incorporating cosmetics taught me the value of transferable skills and a willingness to learn. I also spent some time in my career as a coach for executives.

My reasoning for getting into sales with no previous experience was by following my grandfather's mantra, 'Everyone is in sales because you sell yourself every day.' I spent 11 years at Allergan, then Bausch + Lomb, and after that I started consulting in the aesthetics industry. My next venture was a position at Kythera®. Then along came Bob Rhatigan, and he invited me to come to Merz, and I am still there after seven years and counting.

WHO ARE SOME OF YOUR MENTORS THROUGHOUT YOUR CAREER AND HOW DID THEY INFLUENCE YOUR MANAGEMENT STYLE TODAY?

I attribute my management style to influential figures like my husband, Art Franklin, who instilled in me the power of effective communication and the importance of integrity. Within the physician community, mentors such as Dr. Jean Carruthers, Dr. Pearl Grimes, and Dr. Steve Fagien emphasized the significance of maintaining integrity, class, and personal style that has had an important role in my career growth.

Some of the other role models I learned a lot from include David Pyott, Elizabeth Sandoval, and Tom Albright, all of whom played a pivotal role in shaping my leadership approach.

When I look to the present, it clearly has been Bob Rhatigan, CEO of Merz Aesthetics. I have known Bob for most of my career in aesthetics and I find him to be regarded as trustworthy, respectful, kind and has a willingness to help others. Above all, he strives to do the right thing even when faced with challenges. There are numerous colleagues within Merz Aesthetics and global key opinion leaders in the aesthetic industry, through their own leadership styles that has a direct impact on my own leadership/management style.

On a personal level, I also draw inspiration from my mother's independence and strength, as well as my grandfather's dedication to public service. They taught me to honor and respect everyone for who they are and their contributions to collective well-being.

HOW DO YOU THINK YOUR COLLEAGUES AND TEAM WOULD DESCRIBE YOU AS A LEADER?

I think that my colleagues and team members would see me as a strong leader who has high standards for myself and for others and is supportive of organizational goals.

I once thought that having very high standards was a potential negative, but I learned to recognize that aligning with my personal values necessitates setting and upholding these standards, albeit with a continuous effort to balance personal expectations with those of others.

If I had to define my superpower, it is that I am looking for the best in people and what can validate them. I think that having a growth mindset and understanding the best in people has defined the behavior that I want in life. I feel that I have accomplished something that is meaningful to me.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PET CAUSES AND/OR PASSIONS?

I am very passionate about empowering women to pursue their aspirations and passions at any stage of life. I find great fulfillment in guiding women to rediscover their purpose and confidence, enabling them to achieve their goals with freedom and self-assurance.

I believe that the aesthetic industry offers many opportunities for women to rise to the top, and I have been fortunate to work with some of the most successful and dynamic female executives in the field in my career.

I have a genuine interest in getting to know people and what is really important to them. My passion to connect has allowed me to open myself and world up to so many people and cultures through my work travel. I am a better person today because of all the people that have enriched my life through their own stories and our connected stories.

WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU OFFER WOMEN WHO ARE RISING STARS IN MEDICAL AESTHETICS?

My advice for aspiring women in medical aesthetics is not to let fear hinder your pursuit of your dreams.

I advocate patience, kindness, preparedness, and embracing the journey towards success and fulfillment. Fortunately, the medical aesthetics field today offers many opportunities for women to achieve their goals and passions, which is not always the case in other industries.

I have always strived to mentor talented women to meet and exceed their goals. The sky is the limit if you work hard and stay true to your own course.

NAME A QUOTE OR QUOTES THAT BEST DESCRIBE YOUR PHILOSOPHY.

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." – Maya Angelou



Wendy Lewis

Founder & President of Wendy Lewis & Co Ltd, a strategic marketing communications group in New York specializing in the aesthetics category for over two decades. Her textbook, *Aesthetic Clinic Marketing in the Digital Age From Meta to AI*, is in its second addition (Taylor Francis).