

# Be a first class woman, not a second class man

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I had the pleasure of attending Management Today's Inspiring Women in Business event at the start of this month. The day consisted of over 10 different speakers, a one-to-one interview, as well as multiple panel discussions in Edinburgh's International Conference Centre.

Leadership was a key theme throughout the day, as well as inclusion and diversity. I learnt that we often throw inclusion and diversity together as if they are the same thing, whereas they are in fact very different entities. During one of the panel discussions it was mentioned that organisations often head down the tunnel of diversity, but then they fail to be inclusive. Therefore, one of my biggest learnings from the event was simply the difference between

these two – as Julie Ashworth explained, “diversity is getting everyone around the table for dinner, whilst inclusion is getting people to dance”. Diversity is always going to be the easier of the two (simply sending an invitation), whilst inclusion which is the harder task is where you see real results. Who doesn’t want to see a dancefloor full of people having a good time!

As well as Julie (who I’ve had the pleasure of meeting before) my personal top speakers of the day were the following. In no particular order!

- **Kezia Dugdale MSP** – former leader of the Scottish Labour Party
- **Jeanette Forbes** – founder of PCL Group
- **Dame Cilla Snowball DBE** – chair, Women’s Business Council and former group CEO, AMV BBDO
- **Danielle Brown MBE** – double Paralympic gold medallist, professional speaker and inclusion champion
- **Christine Armstrong** – author of *The Mother of All Jobs*

I especially enjoyed Cilla’s *Top 10 Qualities of Great Leadership*. Having been at AMV BBDO for over 25 years, Cilla explained that she’s been exposed to many leaders who’ve ranged from awful to outstanding, so here are what she believes are the top qualities from the great ones:

1. They love customers/ clients and their colleagues
2. They are game-changers (they have a vision and they “take people with them on the journey”)
3. Results are of personal pride i.e. they are not just good from a business-perspective
4. They build great relationships over time which exist & remain even after people don’t work at the same firm or company
5. You’ll notice that they take on big workloads but you never see them crumble

6. They have values & this is often shown in the projects that they take part in outside of work (e.g. volunteering or mentoring)
7. They are clear, consistent & confident
8. They listen & ask questions
9. They tell the truth
10. They are kind

Kindness was the biggest one that stuck with me after the event. She explained that leadership is often confused with dictatorship. However, in her experience kindness always wins. She used the age-old expression, “People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Cilla’s talk was also my first experience of anyone specifically calling out the leaders below you in the ranks. Everyone always associates leadership with those at the top of the organisation and her view was that not enough time is spent focussing on the “leaders below”. In her opinion, these guys should take up the majority of good leaders’ time. At MediaCom, we have recently launched an “interactive wall” where MediaComers are encouraged to add ideas & suggestions about potential initiatives relating to our Business Strategy that they’d like to see implemented across the agency. I have therefore made it my mission to add an initiative idea about supporting & nurturing these leaders at MediaCom who are not yet at the top of the organisation.

Given that it was an event all about Inspiring **Women** in particular, I’d like to end this article with a quote from Jeanette Forbes to all the women reading this article –

“Remember to be a first class woman, not a second class man”.