

**ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD ZIMBABWE NATIONAL
CHAPTER**



10 June 2020

Report

Personal Branding

On the 10th of June 2020, Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World Zimbabwe National chapter (OWSDZNC) hosted Ms. Odiline Kava popularly known as 'Vakoma'. She is the founder and managing consultant for Vakoma Bus World. She is well known for her gifting and skills in marketing, public relations, brand management, soft skills training and coaching and mentoring just to mention a few. She delivered a profound presentation which equipped women and man scientists and trained them to reflect on career growth process, self-positioning and personal branding creating a unique self.

Mrs. Polite Mukwada, OWSDZNC Committee member gave heart-whelming opening remarks. She gave a preview of the objectives carried by the OWSDZNC for the new members. She acknowledged the performance of women scientist giving special reference to Dr. Nothando Dunjana who attained her PhD in Soil Science from the University of KwaZulu Natal. She is one of the woman from Zimbabwe who have had the privilege to receive financial support from the OWSD PhD fellowships program. Her dedication and commitment during the Covid 19 pandemic period showed the power of a women scientist and that she can accomplish anything no matter the circumstances. She also highlighted that OWSDZNC has been greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic especially physical activities. This has made the organization resort to online activities which so far has been going on very well. The organization wishes to extend to other social media platforms such as Facebook and zoom to fully extend their influence during this period to other women in science out there.

The online presentation by Ms. Odiline Kava was a very eye opening, informative and interactive presentation. Her presentation quick started with a definition on personal branding. She explained that before touching on the topic of personal branding the audience should understand topics on professionalism and image which covers grooming, etiquette and deportment, business etiquette as it all contributes to personal branding. She defined personal branding as a secret sauce that can make an individual stand out and this will enhance your life. She highlighted that personal branding is for recognition and identity and brings out the quality in you. She explained that what an individual is known for will make a personal brand. Great first impressions (dressing, grooming,

eye contact, deportment, etiquette, networking relationships) communicate how an individual wants people to address them.

In relation to the above, Ms. Kava touched on grooming which she defined as personal hygiene from how an individual's hair look, nails if they are managed properly which she highlighted forms the basis of first impressions. She also highlighted on body odor and how to managed it if one cannot afford expensive perfumes. She advised women to use bicarbonate of soda mixed with water which can be used for armpits to reduce body odor. She also advised ladies to use cologne which can be sprayed on pulse points and behind the ears. For man she encouraged them to apply cologne on the chest and shoulders only. She also highlighted that deodorants are sprayed on the skin soon after a shower and the skin is still moist.

The presentation also addressed deportment which is the way an individual walks and talks as an element of etiquette. She emphasized that the right posture is a delicate balance of a straight back which is properly aligned with the head, with your chin high. Your feet are somewhat apart, stomach in and held, shoulders back and down, arms to the side. She also highlighted how a lady should walk, sit and social conduct that will build your personal brand. Dress etiquette was also an important matter she presented on. She explained colour code in teams of dressing. Colour's have a meaning and portray a certain image of oneself. Colour of clothes is also determined the occasion and environment. Black, navy and brown are good dark colour's for a slim look but should be worn according to the weather and occasion. Strong colours like red and orange can dampen other colours, so they should be used in small amounts. She also explained dining room manners in which an individual should follow given a formal set up etc. She explained how cutlery and napkin should be placed and how it can be used. She also highlighted the different type of glasses found on a formal table and how they should be used.

In connection with the above, Ms. Kava asked profound questions which helped the members have a self-introspection answering questions which addressed identity (who am I, what do I represent and values I want others to see? and what I symbolize). Loving who you are will also help an individual build a brand. Even if an individual has a mentor they will never be the same because everyone is different and unique in their own way. Finding a mentor is important as mentors take mentees through the journey of positioning a brand called '**YOU**'. She advised woman to take

relevant opportunities, speak at a conference, ask one question in a meeting, network internally beyond an individual's immediate team, share your voice with influencers and taking part in community development. This will help building your personal and strong brand. Ms. Kava recommended women scientists to take into consideration people you want to be connected with that is selecting the target group, channels and the frequency you will market yourself. An individual can break a brand he or she built in ten years because of one wrong doing, be cautious of your actions. She advised women and man to embrace social media and use it as a platform to tell your story and build your brand. Knowing your purpose is also important. Building a strong personal brand as a woman will help you become classy, elegant and powerful. A classy woman is a genuine, high value woman who holds herself and think of herself highly regardless of life circumstances, despite what other people may think of her. Acting with confidence and grace is a key to being a classy woman with a strong personal brand. A classy woman is a woman of her word and has a respectable reputation based on her consistency of her word. She keeps her promises and obligations. She ended the presentation with a profound quote, "Being female is a matter of birth, being a woman is a matter of age, but being a lady is a matter of choice.

The session was closed a question and answer session as members asked for clarity in certain areas they needed polishing. The closing remarks were given by Ms Betty Mukuwapasi, OWSDZNC committee member as she explained the nuggets that were shared on personal brands. She quoted the presenters speech as she highlighted that your personal brand is not determined by your background. She then gave reference to Shakespeare quoting his famous statement, "some are born great, some achieve greatness". Know who you are and love yourself. Let's work to improve our personal brands.

Compiled by: Amanda Muza Administrator for OWSDZNC