



VOICE OF BUSINESS

Supporting women in their careers starts when they're young



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The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce has done case studies and analyzed the disparity between women in middle management, compared to the number of women in executive leadership positions in the Dayton region.

It is no surprise that the gap is significant. When comparing the number of middle management women to executive level women in the Dayton region, there is a 30% difference. This disparity was the

driving force behind the chamber's creation of Empower and the Executive Women's Council, so that we can do our part to help more women navigate their leadership journey.

However, supporting women in their careers starts way before they fill out their first job application. As a dad of two daughters, I've seen firsthand how competitive sports, church programming, extracurricular activities and life experiences help teenage girls become strong female leaders.

These teenage experiences help young women learn how to be humble, work as a team, win and lose as a team, communicate and lead people. It teaches them poise and

respect, and shows them how hard work and practice equals success. All of these attributes are characteristics of good leaders, strong CEOs and successful people. It is imperative that they start to learn these skills as early as possible.

Don't get me wrong, there are many days when it is not as idealistic. There are days when social issues and emotions dominate our family conversations. There are days when I understand the emotions and, many of the times, I have no clue why these things are happening.

Nevertheless, it strengthens me and it strengthens my daughters as we work together on ways to navigate these emotions and remain

focused on the objectives. It is the life lessons the girls have learned in sports, internships, volunteering and engaging with professionals that help get them through these challenges. Being comfortable with their true self and knowing that everyone brings a unique strength to a group or team are lessons that cannot be taught in text book. Athletic teams are comprised of players with varying unique strengths.

Each girl on the team excels at a unique skill and it is good for young women to see the value they provide for a team and excel to be the best at their individual strength. Each girl knows that there is a time for them to lead a team and

there is a time when they need to be lead.

This character building and leadership development grows young girls into strong women that have confidence and leadership skills. These women are able to motivate teams, drive culture, maximize a return on investment for shareholders and advance strategic agendas.

These fundamentals and leadership development starts when they are young, and the results are strong women that build businesses and communities, and make our region better.

Chris Kershner is the Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce CEO and president.