

Women in the Workforce...

V'taas B'chefetz Kapeha

Micro as Macro

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We Jews do a lot of counting. And measuring, too. Take matzah, for example, or *eruv* or *shiurim* for *brachos*. And *Sefirah*, of course. We count and measure to ensure we are doing a *mitzvah* right, in anticipation and to show *chashivus*. There are multiple meanings and reasons for each, but one central message is that every bit counts. Yes. An inch, a milligram or a few minutes can make the difference between right and wrong, *mutar* and *assur*, success and failure.

Leave a little sugar spilled on your counter as you take a midnight tea ... micro. Ant party in the morning ... macro.

Five minutes to take a healthy breakfast ... seems micro. Hungry all day or blow your diet ... macro.

Off the phone to greet the kids for a few minutes ... seems micro. Knowing what the day held ... macro impact.

It's like that with our lives, family, friends and *Yiddishkeit*. It's really like that at work, too. Many think they need to bide their time and make it big, or that only a spectacular win counts in the world of corporate culture and business. Go for the gold! But don't forget the micro steps that are critical to macro success. The small details of good business practice, the little bits that keep your accounts in order, the small gestures that build up goodwill between

people, the unnoticed times that you hold back on doing something hasty, are all the building blocks of creating both success and the relationships to enjoy it with.

I'd like to share a micro list of things I recommend keeping on your to-do list – even as you pursue macro, major success.

Write thank you and summary notes after a meeting. We tend to trust our memories too much. At the meeting everything seems clear and you are sure you won't forget who must do what by when. Take the time to summarize the discussion, action items, responsibilities and due dates for each. It creates a record everyone can check themselves against, ensures everyone has the same take-away items and that the team is on the same page. It saves time as you start your next meeting and can easily refer back to decisions and time line. Take an extra minute to thank the participants in the meeting, using this technical task to create goodwill in addition to organization.

Acknowledge important dates for your team. A birthday, a personal *simchah*, and other important dates should be acknowledged in some small way (within the guidelines of *halachah*). This goes a long way to make people feel noticed, acknowledged and important to you.

Celebrate small wins. It may be tempting to discount a small victory

in the quest to motivate your team to reach for the stars. However, the big ticket success is sometimes long in coming – and in the interim people lose momentum, or the ultimate success remains out of reach.

It is important to take the time to acknowledge small steps to success. A great call? A first purchase? Led the team meet well? Tell the people around you – colleagues, employees and even a boss appreciate an acknowledgement of a job well done, even if it is something relatively small, and this reignites the drive for success.

Look for little opportunities to practice a skill you are working on. Perhaps you'd like to learn another language or gain proficiency in a new program. Whatever the skill, the chances are that you are too busy to spend the chunk of time needed to master it, causing you to push off that goal again and again. But if you would grab every small opportunity to practice even a bit of that desired skill, you could slowly but surely gain more proficiency than you ever thought possible. For example, if it is Hebrew you'd like to master, try out a new word you heard a couple of times; use a mundane interaction to practice a sentence or two. It will add up.

Reread correspondence before you send. This can't be overstated. We are rushed and overloaded and really don't have extra time. But if you are sending an important email, a sensitive letter,

an important document – take the time to double check and reread it before you send. Better yet, let some time elapse before you reread, so that you can really check your work. The gold standard is, of course, to have someone else read and double check, where appropriate.

All of these tips apply to our personal lives as well as our professional lives. Everyone and everything counts, and little investments grow. Do you have important little habits that we can learn from? Please share – your email may just help many women grow macro results.



Temech is a nonprofit organization that promotes employment, entrepreneurship and professional development for women in Israel. Shaindy Babad is the CEO of Temech. Shaindy joined Temech in 2008 after working in high-tech and as a serial social entrepreneur.

We want to hear from you! This discourse is for and about you, me, all of us. Please send your comments, thoughts to hamodia@temech.org

A Fish in the Net

What? This couldn't be happening! *Ribbono shel Olam!*

He screamed uncontrollably. There was no one in the rented one-room apartment, and Chaim allowed himself to burst out freely to the empty walls. He crawled back into bed, pulled the cover over his head and waited for the horror to pass. What should he do now? What?

He was a big dealer of *Stam*. Every so often, *avreichim* gave him their work: *mezuzos*, *tefillin*, *megillos*. ... Chaim wrapped up the precious items in a suitcase and flew off to sell them in locations around the world. This time, he'd come to Lakewood with a big, valuable supply of *tashmishei kedushah* to sell.

On the second morning of his trip, as soon as he'd awoken, he realized that he'd had "visitors" overnight. Thieves had broken into the apartment and taken his suitcase.

Suddenly the expression "his world went dark" became real for Chaim. The suitcase had contained dozens of *Stam* items written with great toil by poor *sofrim*, who were waiting for the money they would earn from the sale!

When he regained control of his hands, and his brain began to recover from the initial shock, Chaim called the Lakewood police. They sent two officers, who examined the way the thieves had broken in and determined

that they were locals who did not know what was in the suitcase. "They'll probably toss it somewhere when they discover that all that was in there were some parchments with strange writing."

Some parchment with strange writing. ... Despite his 37 years, Chaim felt like he was on the verge of tears.

Over the coming few days, all the Yidden in Lakewood worked together to try and help Chaim. Every corner of the city was searched carefully, advertisements were printed in the local media, and Chaim himself

walked through the streets like a man possessed, his eyes scanning every corner.

Nothing helped.

Deeply dejected, Chaim packed his things, thanked the members of the community for their efforts and returned home to Israel, empty-handed and brokenhearted.

Only upon returning home did he remember the thousands of stories of *yeshuos* that had happened in the merit of *tzedakah* to Vaad Harabanim.

He had nothing to lose. As it was, he'd lost more than he could have ever imagined. He decided to donate

a certain sum, a percentage of what the suitcase was worth, if and when the unbelievable would happen and it would be found.

What happened next seemed to be straight off the pages of a fantasy tale.

A small fishing boat was bobbing in the water in the lake in Lakewood. A large net was spread over the water and the fishermen were waiting to trap some fish inside it.

The fishermen raised the net. "It's heavy," one of them noted. His friend's eyes widened. "What kind of fish is this!" he guffawed as he pulled out a wet suitcase!

The suitcase was opened, and as the sun beat down on the boat, they saw dozens of rolled up parchments with Jewish letters.

"Just some old junk," the first fisherman muttered. "What a waste of time. Chuck it back in the water."

His friend closed the suitcase gently and hugged it protectively. "No! Maybe someone is looking for it. We have to give it in to the police."

At the police station, the merit of the *tzedakah* continued to accompany the lost suitcase. Tens of thousands of lost items are recorded in the precinct's

computers, and this could have just been another item on the list: "Suitcase found in the lake."

But the phone call regarding the suitcase was directed to the *frum* operator's line.

She immediately made the connection between the loss that had held Lakewood's community in suspense for days and this new item that had been found. She quickly located the dealer from Israel to inform him of the good news.

Chaim didn't rejoice prematurely. He was well aware of what happened to *Stam* items that were submerged in the water for two weeks. Even if the suitcase had been found, there wasn't much chance its contents would be salvageable. And even if it hadn't been in the lake for two weeks, it would have likely been damaged by the seasonal rains and snow.

But wondrously enough, after the suitcase was transferred to a licensed *magia*, it turned out that only a small number of the pieces had been damaged! Suddenly the *magia* recalled that over the previous two weeks, unusually, no rain or snow had fallen in Lakewood!

When Chaim left the *magia's* house he immediately sat down to write his own piece: an amazing story of a *yeshuah*, another one of many that happened in the merit of a donation to Vaad Harabanim.

