

"WHY FIT IN WHEN YOU WERE BORN TO STAND OUT?"



HELENA PATAÇÃO

Helena Patacão is Founding Partner of Helena Patacão Investments. She holds a Master in Business Administration and Management, is an entrepreneur and a businesswoman in the area of energy efficiency and management, with annual sales records as a senior consultant in the corporate segment (large accounts, business clients). Come with us to meet her.

Her company specializes in the study of power profiles, systems integration and management of consumption of large electrical installations. This project came into her life at a time when she felt the need to take the next step. "I built my professional career in order to obtain the experience and the fundamental knowledge to found my own company", begins by telling us Helena Patacão.

At that point, she recalls, the country was going through a financial and economic crisis. Even so, she decided to take the risk and take this step. "My daughter was only four years old. Being a single mother, this was undoubtedly a great challenge both in my professional career and in my personal life", she tells us.

With 14 years of experience in this market, she is a leader in the creation of new trading strategies focused on the electric market, and has been distinguished with 7 leadership awards since 2004. Can we say that the entrepreneurial vein has already been born with you? We asked her. Helena Patacão thinks so. She has known since her childhood that her profile indicated her as a leader and remembers, still in elementary school, to start leading jobs and groups. "Both the sense of responsibility and the

sense of independence came very early in my life, because I have always been ambitious for leadership. I believe that it is an innate ability, and that a good leader has to meet certain characteristics in his personality. Good character, sense of responsibility and justice, and independence in taking actions and decisions are determining factors in my success as a leader and entrepreneur", she says.

Her eagerness for independence led her to want to start working early and go live alone. She wanted to be autonomous, and by the age of 21 she had a team of 30 people in charge. How do you reconcile, in your daily life, to be a single mother, without help from relatives, with your life as a businesswoman? "Above all, it takes a lot of discipline, rigor in time management, the spirit of sacrifice and the ability to know how to manage priorities. I am guided by success and I do not allow myself to fail as a mother. Being a mother every day, pampering, bathing, cooking, following schoolwork, playing, and observing the evolution of my daughter, who is the great love of my life. I sacrifice the time it would take to hold some meetings or to finish some important work, but being my priority, I choose after a tiring day, and after she is already sleeping, stay up late at night to work to be able to fulfill the goals that I

establish and the responsibilities that I assume".

Karate practitioner and trainer, our interviewee has no doubt that martial arts, which have been a part of her life since the age of seven, also influenced her way of being and her ability to lead. "The spirit of fighting and competition, the team spirit and the challenges associated with karate and martial arts meet the person I am. Skills developed such as perseverance, necessary to never give up, overcoming the physical limits of pain and tiredness, as well as the ability to concentrate, have become a way intrinsic to my way of being in life and to my personality. It is in this way that I can overcome the difficulties and adversities of life without regrets and overcome any obstacle".

But who is Helena Patacão, as a woman and as a professional? "In every circumstance I am always grateful and humble, both in learning and in relationships with others. I am demanding with myself and I am in constant self analysis, self criticism and evolutionary improvement, because above all it is a duty to set an example, as a woman, a mother and a professional", emphasizes Helena Patacão.

For our interviewee, a leader has to be a human person with the ability to realize that business and companies are made of people.

But what features do you think are crucial to achieving success? Helena has always used the expression "money is the reward of work and success is the reward of an excellent job".

Based on this principle, she tells us that it is important to define what position we intend to occupy in the labor market, if we want to be just a number or if we want to achieve excellence. "However, in order to achieve excellence we need to be able to identify the differentiating element and apply it in the environment around us, knowing how to use and take advantage of our own capabilities".

What challenges does a leading and entrepreneurial woman face today? For our interviewee there is an added difficulty and the challenges are much greater because of being a woman, especially in this area: a technical area and associated, mostly, the male sex. "We already see some women with some influence in positions of leadership, however, when we speak of business administration, this is still exercised largely by men. It is gratifying to be respected, recognized and distinguished in this environment, but we need more entrepreneurial women", she emphasizes.

FROM PORTUGAL TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

After a restructuring and adaptation of the company, Helena Patacão will now focus on its internationalization and integration in foreign markets, with a focus on the United Arab Emirates, where it will have its own headquarters, but without neglecting work in Portugal.

Helena Patacão has been working in Portugal for large companies and clients of renowned and alert to the socio-economic-environmental responsibility: "it is imperative to build sustainability and energy independence as a measure social responsibility and change of mentalities". She will now apply her expertise and develop projects in the United Arab Emirates.

Dubai, which will be the center of operations to work with the Middle East, was the natural choice for meeting the best conditions within the current global economic environment and for its potential for development and growth. "I identify myself with the strategies, culture, laws and goals, and admire the leadership practices of the Dubai royal family. They bring together all the conditions I need to be better and more creative, and I believe that my profile, knowledge and experience are an asset and can make a difference in a society that encourages and supports entrepreneurial women".

Within the evolution of the electric market itself, and since the legislation already allows the production of electric energy for self consumption, there are more and more companies in the market that present proposals and solutions to customers. "It is crucial to analyze, verify and study the energy profile, introduce measures to change behavioral practices, observing the technical and legal conditions, so that companies obtain the necessary guarantees



for the execution of their projects, due to the diverse and price disparity they face". This is where Helena Patacão Investments leads, because in addition to enabling the negotiation, defending the interests of the client and ensuring the best performance ratio of any measure to be implemented, financially enables the operation avoiding the investment of equity capital by the client. "I always guarantee that the customer is getting the best technical and financial solution", she tells us.

In the view of Helena Patacão, portuguese companies increasingly feel the financial difficulties that arise from the demands of market competitiveness and taxation. "These difficulties lead to the incessant demand by managers to rethink their strategies in order to adapt to a survival cycle that strangles financial liquidity".

The development of projects in the United Arab Emirates will have its challenges, because each market has its specifics. However, for Helena Patacão, it is necessary to adapt the business model to the needs and realities of each market, and it is gained when the missing need is discovered and if a gap is filled. "I apply my technique where I identify what is missing and what is wrong. It is based on the response I provide to these two issues, which builds my strategy and successful business operations".

Thus, the biggest challenge will be to be successful in Dubai, emirate that has won numerous world leadership awards in several areas. "This is an ambitious and courageous challenge. On one of my visits to Dubai, a noted world-renowned personality who had become my good friend, told me, using a phrase from the well-known Dr. Seuss... "Why fit in when you were born to stand out?". "This is now my main guideline, and undoubtedly the greatest incentive to believe that this bet has everything to win", concludes our interviewee. ■

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Helena Patacão stimulates the versatility to consider that enriches the personality and strengthens the character.

She is a Karate Coach and founded the KAMAE personal defense class for women where she teaches the practice of movements and reaction techniques used to preserve a woman's physical and emotional integrity.

She is also a participant in several motor sport events, where she has also won some awards.



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