

Interview series.

Leaders making a difference, 2024

International Women's Day Edition



Nanny Gaul

Head of Property Management for MPA Property Administration, a Member of FIBRA Macquarie

Nanny Gaul's remarkable success story unfolds from her modest beginnings in Colombia to her flourishing career in the US, where she arrived as a young woman with limited English skills and no college degree. Hard work paid off and within a few years she entered the industrial real estate industry where she has held several C-level positions. Today, as the Head of Property Management for MPA Property Administration, a Member of FIBRA Macquarie, a real estate investment trust targeting industrial, retail, and office real estate opportunities in Mexico, Nanny is responsible for managing a portfolio of 240 industrial properties.

Nanny recently spoke with dss+ about her incredible career trajectory, why she believes empathy is critical for anyone in a leadership position, and why learning from the people around you will ultimately help accelerate your career.

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What influenced your early career and how has it progressed?

I was born and raised in Colombia and moved to the US when I was 21. I spoke very little English, but eventually I went to college and received an accounting degree. After graduation, I ended up with two job offers from big six accounting firms and that's when I realized that the sky was the limit.

From then on I marked my own path. What I learned is it is not just about doing the work, it's also about finding the opportunities and doing the best that you can with them. Many people can have luck, but it is what you do with that luck that truly makes you successful.



To drive operational excellence, we often talk of changing mindsets and behaviors. How can company culture and good leadership have influence on operations management?

Leading by example is so important. It comes from the top. A strong company culture aligned with operational goals can establish clear expectations for performance and quality standards. Good leadership communicates these expectations effectively and ensures they are understood throughout the organization. The more you see what other people go through, the more empathy and understanding you gain, and it really helps me do my job more effectively. Understanding the vision, the purpose behind our actions, and the strategies for achieving our goals grants me the ability to enact the desired change.



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Describe your leadership style. How do you stay motivated and inspired as a leader?

I lead with a very hands-on approach and maintain an open-door policy for my team. Honesty is paramount in my leadership style, and I emphasize to my team the importance of transparent communication, and that we can only address challenges and grow together if they share their experiences with me. My team understands that I support them unconditionally. Recognizing the significance of each team member's contributions, I make it a priority to know them individually, enabling me to leverage their strengths effectively.



You are responsible for a vast portfolio totaling 240 properties. How do you juggle your day-to-day responsibilities while still managing your overall responsibilities as a leader?

Delegating is key when trying to juggle responsibilities in my role. I try to empower my team to take ownership of their work and trust them to handle certain responsibilities, which in turn allows me to focus on higher-level leadership tasks. Clear communication is also vital when managing my workload as providing the right context ensures delegated tasks are understood and can be executed effectively and efficiently.



What is the best leadership advice you have ever received?

Lead by example, and have empathy for what the other person might be going through. Actions often speak louder than words, and when leaders demonstrate the behaviors, values, and work ethic they expect from their team members, it fosters trust, respect, and motivation. By embodying the qualities we wish to see in others, we can inspire our teams to excel and achieve success together.



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What do you think distinguishes leadership from management?

I believe leadership inspires and teaches, while management instructs and coordinates. As a leader, if you don't inspire, and people don't believe what you believe, you're not going to get the most out of people. I don't want the bare minimum from my team. I want to be part of a team that accomplishes many things. If I can align my team around a shared purpose or vision, that is a win all around.





What advice would you give to women who are interested in your industry?

Don't be intimidated. Confidence is key. Believe in yourself and your abilities by acknowledging your achievements, skills, and contributions. Trust in your decisions and don't be afraid to take risks or speak up when necessary. I work in an industry that is embracing work-life balance, especially for working mothers and it is becoming easier to break into. There are a lot of learning curves but as long as you can commit to ongoing learning and personal development, the path gets easier. I'd encourage women who are interested in large-scale property management to seek out new challenges, and embrace opportunities for growth and improvement.



People are always going to remember how you made them feel. I apply that to everything I do. I greet everybody, I shake everybody's hand, from the building guard to the CEO. I think that is so important when trying to make a lasting impression.



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