

Condriac's Keshia Patchiappen on climbing the corporate ladder

 By [Jessica Tennant](#)

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Keshia Patchiappen, appointed a director at Condriac Digital Communications earlier this year, shares her journey from manager to leader over the course of her 11-year career trajectory from then intern to now CEO.

■ ***Since taking on a leadership role, what have been some of your greatest challenges and most exciting opportunities?***

My biggest challenge thus far has been learning to be a leader instead of a manager. The distinction between these two things is so important – being a leader means mentoring your team and providing them with the space and guidance to grow and flourish in their roles. It means consistent support, both professionally and emotionally. Another challenge as a leader is constantly navigating how to handle situations. In the face of hardship, you need to be the one with a steel resolve to set the tone and act as an example to the rest of the team. My most exciting opportunity has definitely been the personal growth I've experienced from taking on a leadership role. The most rewarding thing is being able to create an environment to mentor and develop talent and allow people to take their careers into their own hands.



Keshia Patchiappen

■ ***Why do you think women in leadership positions remain a minority within an industry that does not lack female representation, with the majority of candidates entering the advertising field being women?***

I think that a lack of female representation is a global legacy, and doesn't necessarily apply to the advertising industry only. It's an issue across the board. I have been lucky enough to work under the most phenomenal women. An issue is that while female leadership is present, it is predominantly white female. Agencies would benefit so much from not only a diverse workforce, but from strong female leaders of colour. These opportunities need to be created for women in the industry.

■ ***Do you have any mentors/are there any women in the industry that you respect and admire?***

I attribute my growth and passion for communications to my mentor, Monalisa Zwambila. She is an incredible powerhouse of a woman; I have learnt so much from watching her grow her business. From a community perspective, it is so important for black female entrepreneurs to pioneer a movement and create a culture of support for women in the industry. There shouldn't be a climate of competition between women, we are here to empower and uplift each other.

■ ***How can we ensure the next generation results in more empowered females and better gender representation in the creative industries?***

Even though we work in a very competitive industry, it is so important for women to support each other and help foster each other's growth wherever possible. It is our duty as women to inspire and motivate each other and create the space for women to be excellent. This is how we raise the bar.

■ ***What is the most notable lesson you've learnt on your 11-year career trajectory from intern to CEO?***

So much can be said for working hard and working smart, but making magic comes from working with passion. What

separates good work and great work is the willingness to take risks, to be different. Sometimes they don't pay off, and then you get up, dust yourself off and move on. Failure is an invaluable lesson.

■ ***Why digital communications?***

Data drives everything we do at Condriac. From a digital perspective, incorporating data and insights to drive strategy is a game-changer. Data affords us an unprecedented capacity to remain dynamic, responsive and ahead of the curve and such an in-depth understanding of our target audience allows us to act quickly, efficiently and with confidence.

■ ***What is your message for Women's Month, to women starting out and those by your side?***

To both my peers and women starting out: stay hungry. You are in control of your own trajectory. Learn from the women around you, champion the women around you. Let's shatter glass ceilings together.

ABOUT JESSICA TENNANT

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