



Anita Torres

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Learn about Florida Entrepreneur Anita Torres:

Born and raised in the Bronx, Anita Torres, Founder of Passion Powered Leadership, moved to the Sunshine State in 1989 in search of warmer weather. She first settled in Miami before working her way north and finding the right fit in Lake County. After years in talent development, training and education, Torres decided, in January 2007, that the time was right to use her talents and skills to help business leaders get the most from their employees.

"My last role was with Liberty Mutual," she said. "I was a Senior Instructional Designer and Corporate Facilitator. In that role, I designed and developed learning programs for the direct field sales teams, front-line employees, and their managers. I primarily focused on emotional intelligence, consultative selling, customer service, and professional

development skills for leaders and sales representatives. I also supported other designers and trainers and helped them to understand the process of designing learning materials. Before Liberty, I was with First Data Corp. doing something very similar."

In early 2007, Torres developed a strategy that would allow her to still maintain employment with Liberty Mutual, but also build out her new business on the side. Creating the proper balance between life, work and motherhood was essential. Fortunately, Torres' boss was fully onboard.

"I expressed my desire to go out on my own," she said. "I wrote a business plan that consisted of a compressed work week to give me time to build my new practice. They approved and, for over a year, I worked for Liberty for 25 hours per week and worked on my business in my remaining time. This gave me the perfect opportunity to feel it out before jumping all the way in. On June 13th, 2008, I completely cut ties with Liberty to focus on my business."

Little did Torre's know at the time, but her decision to leave Liberty Mutual came only months before the economic recession grinded many businesses to a halt. As Torres shared, it was scary time, but she had no other option than to continue moving forward.

"I thought about calling my boss to get my job back," Torres said with a laugh. "However, that wasn't really an option. The only thing I could do was to stick it out. Once I made that decision, my focus was on how to reach customers. I was certain that I wanted to do business to business, but meeting the right people and presenting myself was a challenge. There wasn't much social media back then, especially for businesses, so much of my growth came down to networking, attending events and

developing relationships."

Torres continued, "Initially, another challenge was adapting to life as an entrepreneur. From an employee standpoint, I had people that believed in me and knew I was credible. When you're selling yourself and your own services, you have to prove your value. Graduating from FSU with my master's degree, and later earning the Certified Professional in Learning and Performance designation from the Association of Talent Development helped to build my commitment, conviction, courage, and confidence.

When Torres first launched, she primarily focused on group work and consulting centered around helping leaders and their employees get better at their jobs. She'd focus her efforts on developing a program and delivering it. Today, she compliments many of her consulting assignments with individual executive coaching sessions. In 2017, Anita earned the Associate Certified Coach designation from the International Coach Federation. According to Torres, the ability to offer both and the pride she gets from developing passionate leaders is what helps to set her business apart from others.

"Passion Powered Leadership is not about business as usual," she said. "It's about shaking things up, waking up your workforce and leading with passion. Passionate leaders plus powerful communication yield productive teams and profitable results. Through executive coaching, team development and organizational consulting, I guide leaders in passion-based solutions designed to address specific needs such as enhancing your presence and communication, building a passionately engaged workforce, and aligning employees with the core passions of

the organization."

Torres continued, "Whether it's in-person or through a Zoom meeting, I bring energy and enthusiasm to everything I do. I take pride in inspiring leaders to communicate simply, engage teams powerfully, and to be leaders worth following through coaching, training, and consulting. My family name defines my purpose in life: Transforming Organizations to Realize Real and Extraordinary Success! I've also created the "Get R.E.A.L." framework to ignite authentic and passionate engagement in business and in life."

Anita is also a published author, most recently featured as a leadership expert in "Experts and Influencers: The Leadership Edition." By sharing insights, tips and tools, the book seeks to equip and empower readers to more fully step forward as powerful leaders. What drives Torres is facilitating change in teams and organizations and helping to develop passionate leaders and engaged employees.

"The name 'Passionista' was given to me by one of my clients and it stuck," she said. "I describe it as a person that lights up a room; infuses energy in others; inspires bystanders to get involved and is often the cause of spontaneous smiles and laughter. Before I realized it was a thing, I was being introduced as Anita the Passionista at business events. Also, 100% of workshop attendee surveys used the word passion or passionate so I decided to embrace it. What is important to know is that my passion comes naturally to me. I love my work. I love my clients. I love my life."

Looking ahead, Torres is focused on helping business leaders, HR professionals, trainers and facilitators raise the level of employee

engagement. Her clients are improving performance and productivity and also see higher levels of satisfaction, less turnover, and report happier workplace experiences.

What advice does Torres have for aspiring entrepreneurs? "Many leaders tend to act first and ask questions later," she said. "Leaders who make the time to effectively pause before jumping into a situation begin to create the balance between knowing what to say, what to do, and how to be---a leader worth following."

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