

# WOMEN IN ECOMMERCE

Your Questions Answered



## THREE QUESTIONS, FIVE PERSPECTIVES

Installment two of Catalyst and Pacvue's Women in Ecommerce event took place on March 25th and featured an inspiring panel discussion with female leaders in ecommerce. We received many important questions from the community and audience. Here our speakers weigh in on some of the questions we did not get to during the event.

## SPEAKERS:



**Ekta Chopra**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
E.L.F. Beauty



**Kerry Curran**  
Executive Director,  
Marketing & Growth,  
Catalyst



**Mindy Fashaw**  
Chief Operating  
Officer, Pacvue



**Alice Fournier**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
WD-40



**Tracey Gibson**  
Senior Director of  
Sales, Amazon  
Hamilton Beach  
Brands, Inc.

## QUESTION 1:

# How did you handle moving from the person who does the work to the person that develops the strategy and vision?



**Mindy Fashaw**  
Chief Operating  
Officer, Pacvue

It's incredibly important that both people stay connected and aligned. The person executing will likely be tied to KPIs and it's important that the strategy, vision, and KPIs to measure success are aligned. I would recommend working together to establish the core set of KPIs to measure success. The executor will want to ensure they are informed on executional nuances that may impact the ability to accomplish strategic objectives. The person setting the strategy and vision will need to understand the tools available to execute and the capabilities and limitations of those tools.

There were a few key actions I took before I moved into a more strategic role.

*Asking/volunteering for more senior projects to show I had the ability to be more than just tactical:* I wanted to prove I was dependable and willing to do anything to advance.

*Letting my manager know that I wanted a more strategic role:* Don't always assume your manager knows where you want to go and how fast you want to get there. This allows them to mentor you with a goal in mind.

*Found opportunities to showcase my strategic and leadership abilities on the business that I was managing and cross-functional projects:* I shared my growth strategy with high-level stakeholders and solicited their feedback for my own personal growth.

And, in some cases, I moved to a different company that recognized my potential instead of waiting on a promotion with an existing company. This approach shouldn't always be used because you don't want to be perceived as a job hopper. But, when done at strategic times in your career, it can serve you well. It has worked well for me.



**Tracey Gibson**  
Senior Director of  
Sales, Amazon  
Hamilton Beach  
Brands, Inc.



**Ekta Chopra**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
E.L.F. Beauty

It's a journey, but it requires you first to recognize your strengths and areas you need to focus on. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. I made it my goal to learn everything I could about the org, people, and mission, and created a vision for myself. I found great mentors who can help and had a relentless focus on becoming a leader. I became a great listener and someone who modeled behavior for others. My curiosity and ability to manage vertically and horizontally helped me build great relationships.

Over time, my focus as a leader has evolved from tactical execution to change management. It was a natural transition to surround myself with great people who know a lot more than I do; and lead them in a way to help transform the business!



**Alice Fournier**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
WD-40



**Kerry Curran**  
Executive Director,  
Marketing & Growth,  
Catalyst

It is hard to relinquish control of the work. My approach has been to train and coach my team and then allow them to do it their way, with guidance. Developing strategy and vision requires stepping back and understanding how your team contributes to larger business success, and ensuring you are all paddling in the same direction.

## QUESTION 2:

How do you view continued professional development in the ecommerce field? Are there any resources you could share?



**Mindy Fashaw**  
Chief Operating  
Officer, Pacvue

This is really unique to the individual in that eCommerce is a broad industry and there are various areas in which to focus. As mentioned in our webinar, it's important to focus on the skill set that you have already developed as well as the skills you want to build and determine which areas of eCommerce might make sense for you to explore. Understanding cross-functional roles and how they contribute to delivering eCommerce business objectives is critical to those who want to grow in the eCommerce space. Reading published studies, attending various industry webinars, and partnering with your cross functional counterparts are all good places to start.



**Tracey Gibson**  
Senior Director of  
Sales, Amazon  
Hamilton Beach  
Brands, Inc.

This comes down to continually educating yourself. eCommerce changes so quickly, you always need to be learning. Be an early adopter and test and learn on the different platforms. This will allow you to learn quickly and pivot. In addition, I enroll in free classes online, even if I'm just auditing the course. This can be done through LinkedIn Learning, Coursera or EdX.



**Ekta Chopra**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
E.L.F. Beauty

Digital is about constant change and constant learning - I am responsible for my development and education. From leveraging Udemy, LinkedIn, and other platforms, I am always hungry to learn more and more.



**Alice Fournier**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
WD-40

I very much own it. I keep great sources of insights and learn from others and spend time coaching peers, from which I learn a lot as well.



**Kerry Curran**  
Executive Director,  
Marketing & Growth,  
Catalyst

eCommerce knowledge comes from multiple sources. I follow thought leaders (individuals and companies) on LinkedIn for broader industry updates and information. I also take time to interview my colleagues who are closer to the planning, activation, and data across the retailer platforms to learn the intricacies and identify strategic opportunities.

## QUESTION 3:

What do you see as your biggest challenge in another somewhat uncertain year?



Online competition and automated buying. Now every brand is online and there are a lot of emerging, digitally native brands with great marketing resources. It's difficult to produce content at the speed of the low cost newer brands on the market. In addition, with all of these added sellers and products to manage, retailers like Amazon are relying completely on automation to make buying and selection decisions. These automated decisions don't always make sense due to external factors, and it can have a devastating effect on operating costs when the system doesn't purchase to what is forecasted.



**Tracey Gibson**  
Senior Director of Sales, Amazon Hamilton Beach Brands, Inc.



**Ekta Chopra**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
E.L.F. Beauty

Prioritization. Someone gave me great advice: know "when to spot lions vs. the chipmunks" and what it means is feed the lions; those are priorities you want to dedicate the most time to and chipmunks are the 100's of things that seem exciting but will add zero value. Know how to spot these to prioritize your time and mindshare.

Staying connected with people across the world. Finding the right balance between keeping healthy professional relationships going while not adding too many Zoom meetings.



**Alice Fournier**  
Chief Digital Officer,  
WD-40



**Kerry Curran**  
Executive Director,  
Marketing & Growth,  
Catalyst

I learn so much from industry peers that I meet through events and networking. I've really missed the in-person conferences and meetings and hope to keep meeting people via virtual events.

The biggest challenge, however, is staying ahead of the emerging opportunities for buying and optimizing media across the retailer platforms. Most retailers require multiple partners to activate, so creating one streamlined, integrated approach across data analysis, programmatic, and retail search, in the midst of rapid evolution, is not for the faint of heart.