



She's One Strong Buck:
Navigating Status as a
Young Woman in
Manufacturing


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NECA WIN 2026

Who Am I?

- Age: 27
- Hometown: Binghamton, NY
- Marital Status: Engaged
- Manufacturing Manager @ Buckingham Manufacturing
- 4 Departments – 2 shifts
- 9 Direct Reports + 298 Indirect Reports
- Hobbies: Cooking & Working Out



What Does Navigating
Status Even Mean?



Why this Topic Matters?

- Our industry is built on experience
- Young Leaders often face age bias
- Women face an additional gender bias
- Today's Goal: Tools to navigate status with confidence

Did you know?

- Women make up ~27% of the U.S. manufacturing workforce, but representation drops sharply at the management level — especially in plant, operations, and people-leader roles
- In the S&P 100 – Women hold 29% of executive roles, and only 9% of CEO's are women
- In manufacturing specifically, women report lower access to stretch assignments, sponsorship, and promotion pathways into management compared to men
- Companies with gender-diverse leadership and management teams are up to 25–35% more likely to outperform financially

Sources: McKinsey & Company; Deloitte; Catalyst; S&P Global; LeanIn.Org

The Moment I Realized Age and Gender was a Factor

“It's very hard for me to report to you.”

The BUCK Mindset

B — Believe You Belong

U — Use Your Voice


C — Cultivate Credibility

K — Keep Elevating Others



B — Believe You Belong

- Age ≠ Ability
- Confidence is a leadership tool
- Belonging starts internally
- Confidence can help build trust




Imposter Syndrome vs. Age Bias

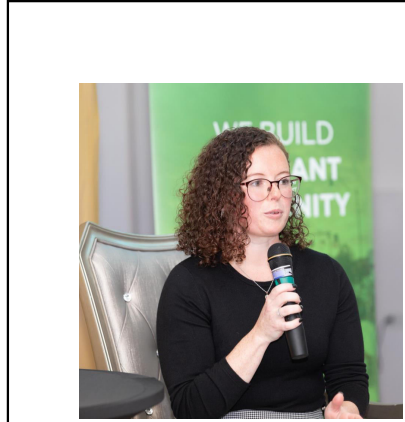
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    graph TD
      A[Internal doubt vs. external assumptions] --> B[Young women face both]
      B --> C[You can't control bias]
      C --> D[You can control your internal narrative]
  
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Building Presence as a Young Leader



- Sit at the head of the table
- Speak early
- Do your homework
- Lead with data
- Collaborate with others
- GET OUT ON THE FLOOR



U - Use Your Voice

- Closed mouths don't get influence
- Speak in every meeting
- The squeaky wheel gets the grease
- Your voice makes you visible

Using Your Voice So It's Heard

One message ≠ one delivery

Experience shapes perspective

Meet people where they are

Adjust delivery — not your message

Delivery Matters

- Knowing your voice starts with knowing your audience
- It's important your voice is understood
- Switch your delivery – not your message

Practical Ways to Own the Room

- Lead with data
- Ask strong questions
- Use people's names
- Enter with steady energy
- Speak in every meeting

Defining moment of using my voice

“Waiting to be noticed is a career-limiting move.”
— Lois P. Frankel



C: Cultivate Credibility

- Credibility is earned, not given
- Credibility builds trust — trust builds leader
- Trust creates a strong team

My Foundation: Let the Data Speak

- Started as a data analyst
 - Learned how to tell a story with numbers
 - Facts remove emotion & bias
 - Data builds confidence



How Data Changed My Voice

- Data speaks for you
- Data drives better results
- Data lets you set a goal and hit it
- Data allows for you to celebrate



Credibility Creates Trust

- Trust allows for a strong team
- Showing up consistently earns you credibility
- If you're known as credible you can move through the organization faster

Credibility Is Built in the Work

- Show up prepared
- Do the work others avoid
- Learn the details
- Earn trust daily
- “Get up and work”



K — Keep Elevating Others

- Leadership is not a solo act
- Respect builds trust
- Experience deserves recognition
- Elevating others elevates you

What That Looks Like in Practice

- Invite expertise into decisions
- Listen before deciding
- Credit ideas openly
- Spend time on the shop floor
- Switch “me” to “we”



Why It Works

- When you elevate others....
 - People feel valued
 - Trust Deepens
 - Engagement Rises
 - Results improve



What Elevating Others Looks Like on My Team

- Gender Diversity Across Roles
- 11 Different Languages, even more cultural differences
- Experience from entry level to decades deep
- Education paths that don't look the same

Stop Proving Yourself and Start Empowering Others


- Build Trust
- Explain Expectations
- Hold people accountable
- Show up for your team
- Celebrate **THEM**

Reflection:

- “Have you ever taken credit for something someone else did?”
- “Who did you advocate for early in *their* leadership journey?”
- “Did you ever — even unintentionally — make someone prove themselves longer than necessary?”

How We Move Forward

1. Give credibility
2. Interrupt bias in real time
3. Celebrate wins
4. Normalize different leadership styles
5. Mentor others




The BUCK Framework

- B — Believe You Belong
- U — Use Your Voice
- C — Cultivate Credibility
- K — Keep Elevating Others



Why BUCK Works

- Experience matters
- Perspective matters
- Respect matters
- Growth is possible



A Final Thought

- You don't have to wait your turn
- You don't have to know everything
- You do have to show up
- You do have to do the work



Take BUCK With You

- Believe you belong
- Use your voice
- Build trust
- Elevate others

Thank you

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