



WHEN

COMMUNITY

STEPS IN AS THE CORNER OFFICE

In Dubai's fast-paced success culture, three women stepped away from corporate certainty to build something quieter and far more powerful. Anul Mundra, Jen Blandos and Reema Mahajan reveal how purpose, belonging and community have become the new markers of ambition and impact

WORDS BY ANUL MUNDRA AND JEN BLANDOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

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Anul Mundra
Building belonging

Anul Mundra had a high-flying corporate career until it abruptly ended. Her entire department was consourced to India, and she was made redundant with six months' salary in hand. Then Covid hit. Like millions around the world, Mundra suddenly found herself at home, navigating uncertainty. But instead of retreating, she leaned into something she had always been good at: bringing people together. A natural social butterfly, she began educating people on how to manage work from home life during the pandemic. What started as informal conversations quickly turned into something much bigger. "Expats can feel transactional," said Mundra. "You meet people all the time, but meaningful connection takes intention." That insight became the foundation of XpatzHub, a lifestyle-driven platform

that blends social experiences, business networking and wellness-led gatherings. From sunset meet-ups and cultural exchanges to coffee conversations that turn strangers into friends, XpatzHub helps expats not just live in Dubai, but truly belong. She gathered 70 people she already knew into a group for WhatsApp and Facebook. "As initiatives took shape and were shared across social platforms, word spread organically. People invited people and soon close to 80,000 people registered in the very first year," said Mundra. Mundra took XpatzHub to the next level expanding its vision to embrace a multicultural focus. "Today, the community has grown to over 410,000 members across Instagram, Facebook and Telegram and our database is made up of unique email IDs and mobile numbers," she said. "In the beginning, people did not take communities seriously," Mundra said. "They thought it was just a platform to chat. But I always believed in the power of belonging." "Expats come from different parts of the world, often without family or deep-rooted support systems. XpatzHub was created to bridge that gap and turn a foreign city into a home away from home. When the right people come together, meaningful things happen," she added. One of Mundra's initiatives is her pledge to empower 1,000 women business owners. "Through XpatzHub, women get help to secure their business, start a business and learn marketing completely free of cost. So far over 400 women have received help from us. Our goal is to reach the 1,000 mark by the end of December 2026." Today, Mundra's definition of success has definitely shifted. "It is no longer about KPI. It is about walking into a room and seeing people who found their tribe because of something I created." Her long-term vision is clear: to make XpatzHub a complete solution for expats so that when someone moves to the UAE for the first time, they have a trusted point of contact from the moment they arrive in the emirate.

Jen Blandos
The power of ecosystems

If there's one woman who embodies the notion that a career can be a life and a life can be a career, it is Jen Blandos. An entrepreneur since 2002, Blandos never set out to build an empire; she simply followed the intersections of joy, challenge, and opportunity. Looking back now, she admits that had you asked her a decade ago whether her work would become her life's purpose she "probably wouldn't have thought about it that way." But the truth is, she was building not just businesses, but ecosystems of support long before the world knew it needed them. What began as a quiet Facebook group in the early days of Covid-19 quickly evolved into something much bigger: a thriving global community born from urgent questions women were asking in

real time: How do I replace lost income? Pivot my business? Find clients in chaos? Blandos realized this wasn't idle chatter it was demand for community, infrastructure and real support. In 2020, she professionalised Female Fusion, secured a formal DMCC license, and launched a paid membership model treating it like a business from day one, not a hobby. "I saw early on that the community could burn out in founder long before it became sustainable," she says, a problem she solved by designing systems, boundaries, and clear pathways for growth. Under Blandos' leadership, Female Fusion has evolved into one of the UAE's largest and most respected professional communities for women entrepreneurs, boasting tens of thousands of members across 30+ countries and offering masterclasses, townhalls, workshops, curated networking experiences and even a

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Reema Mahajan
Where women find home

Reema Mahajan didn't set out to build one of Dubai's most influential women's communities. It started with a need to belong. Armed with a decade of corporate experience and an elite education from IIT Delhi and IIM Bangalore, Mahajan walked away from a conventional career to build something rooted in purpose. She moved to Dubai with her family. New to the city and navigating life as an Indian woman abroad, Reema noticed a gap in women getting support that went beyond business cards. She therefore started Indian Women Dubai, initially as a small Facebook group. "Community isn't about numbers," she said. "It's about showing up again and again." What followed was organic growth fuelled by trust. Today, the community empowers and connects over 150,000 Indian women across the UAE, which include homemakers, entrepreneurs and women navigating corporate careers.

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A NEW DEFINITION OF SUCCESS What unites Anul Mundra, Jen Blandos and Reema Mahajan is not just courage, it is clarity. Each woman recognised that the traditional corporate ladder no longer aligned with who they were becoming. In its place, they built ecosystems of connection, support and shared growth proof that community is not a side project, but a powerful business model in its own right. In a city known for speed and scale, these women remind us that sometimes the most meaningful impact starts with a single conversation and the bravery to step away from what's safe. And that, perhaps, is the most luxurious lifestyle of all.

