



10 Tips for Single Women Doing Business as Missions



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Is there a place for single women doing business as mission? Absolutely!

Frankly, single women have always played a huge role in missions and continue to do so in the context of BAM. With the ratio of single women to single men being 7 to 1, we trust that the One who called them will be faithful to mightily use them!

We interviewed a number of single ladies (current & past) for advice that they would give to new single female kingdom workers. Here are 10 tips that you should consider before launching into your professional life in a creative access country.

Be aware of the different models for BAM in your context.

As you look to get established in your new location, you could have a number of choices with the “how”. You could start your own company, work remotely for a company in your passport country, join an existing BAM business, get a “secular job” or partner with a local friend. You need to understand the pros & cons for each of these options... especially as a single woman.

Single women should be professionally prepared for the role they will be filling overseas.

Credentials and identity are super valuable. Credentials that support one’s established identity are really, really important for single women coming to the field to work in BAM. Some women may be more flexible and adaptive than others, but in general, single women will have better experiences in BAM if they have skills and training and credentials that enable them to work in their giftings and area of expertise. Ideally, you would find a professional identity that you love, are trained to do, and brings you and others joy.

Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to the law

When you decide to move overseas to work in a business or start your own business, you need to understand the legal ramifications. You need to do due diligence to understand the tax implications (both local & back home). You should clearly research the business laws of your new country. We would recommend finding a great accountant or lawyer that can help you navigate the system. Claiming that you “never knew” is not an acceptable answer when it comes to international business.

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Learn language and culture as much as is possible.

You have enough challenges to deal with in moving overseas to do business. Do your best to gain an understanding of and the ability to communicate in the local language. It is important when you go into government offices that they can see you have an understanding of either the local language or the lingua franca as you have to sign documents in either. Single women working in BAM are not treated as professionals with the same respect given to men in some contexts, so having a good command of the language and understanding of the culture is valuable.

Find a few trusted friends

We have found that it is very helpful to have a trusted local woman or two who you can ask for advice on cultural and professional things. Before you take an important step or make a key decision, ask your trusted friend for their input and opinion. They may also be able to explain the laws and local systems. Also, pray that God will give you one or two trustworthy local men who can advocate for you and help you. They understand the dynamics and what needs to happen to move things forward way better than a foreigner will. Obviously, you need to be very careful to be culturally appropriate in dealing with these men.

Be aware that you will very likely be working in a “man’s world.”

With that said, it has been found to be helpful to carefully observe the way local women behave. Of course, as a foreigner, there will be some slight differences in how you behave, but as a general rule of thumb, learn from the locals. You should always be aware of your non-verbal communication when dealing with men. Keep physical space and physical security in mind.

Connect with families both local and ex-pat.

Bless them as they bless you. When appropriate, pursue and build relationships with the wives and children of the men you rub shoulders with in your BAM context. Getting plugged into families can be a real blessing during your time overseas.

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You need a healthy single life

Just as it is important for married couples to prioritize having a healthy marriage over their ministry and business, it's also important for singles to prioritize having a healthy single life over their ministry and business. Every person is different, so a healthy single life is going to look different for each individual, but it's so important to have a couple of life-giving relationships of mutuality where you're both giving and receiving. Be honest with yourself about your own limitations. Not having a family to care for might give you the permission to keep working into the wee hours of the night. Life can feel VERY full because you're essentially working two jobs. Be sure to ask the Lord what is "enough" and what your boundaries are, and walk in freedom in that. At the same time, do recognize that time and flexibility as a single are a gift.

Do not neglect your relationship with the Lord.

You need to remain in the Word and in prayer. Pray daily for your colleagues. As a business owner you will have to make some quick decisions in a cross-cultural context where you don't always understand all the cues in the culture and can feel vulnerable at times. Keep in step with the Spirit remembering you can call on Him at any time to guide your path.

Keep eternity in mind; live intentionally no matter what.

Business and ministry do not need to be thought of as separate entities. "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have!" (1 Peter 3:15) Know who you are in Christ. Your value does not come from others even though affirmation and appreciation are welcomed. Your value comes from God. That is Truth. Hold on to the Truth.

AND...Enjoy the journey!

For other Business as Mission articles and resources, please visit www.bam360.org. The purpose of BAM360 is to empower and equip the next generation of Christian entrepreneurs to make a positive spiritual and economic impact in areas lacking a Christian witness.

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