



WINLPG

Women in LPG



Audrey Joe-Ezigbo

**Co-Founder & Executive Director,
Commercial Operations
Falcon Corporation Limited**

“WINLPG IS A POWERFUL TOOL FOR STRONG, DIVERSE YET LIKE-MINDED WOMEN TO POOL THEIR RESOURCES TO SUPPORT AND NETWORK WITH EACH OTHER. IN AN INDUSTRY THAT IS LARGELY MALE-DOMINATED, WINLPG PROVIDES A VERITABLE PLATFORM FOR WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY – IRRESPECTIVE OF WHERE THEY ARE IN THEIR CAREERS, TO LEVERAGE ON THE STRENGTHS OF THE COLLECTIVE, ACCESS DIRECT AND INDIRECT MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS THAT WILL EMPOWER THEM TO PRODUCE EVEN MORE EXCELLENT RESULTS IN THEIR CAREERS, AND CREATE GREATER ACCESS FOR OTHER WOMEN INTO THE INDUSTRY.”

Audrey Joe-Ezigbo

Meet the Role Models

WINLPG Role Models introduce successful individuals in the LPG industry and gives an insight into their career path, their challenges and their advice to fellow WINLPG members.

I am Co-Founder and Executive Director, Commercial Operations of Falcon Corporation Limited, a wholly indigenous world class ISO 9001:2008 and OHSAS 18001:2007 certified organisation with diversified operations in oil and gas, energy infrastructure, and real estate holdings. I am also the Co-Founder and Managing Director of other companies in our group including Falcon Kinetics Limited; Falcon Estates & Property Development Company Limited, and Falcongaz Limited, amongst others.

An academic at heart, I hold a BSc. in Microbiology, a PGD Banking & Finance, an MBA Finance, MBA Marketing, and an Executive MBA from the Lagos Business School. I also hold several Leadership, governance and management certifications from global institutions abroad including Harvard Business School and IE Business School.

I am the 1st Vice President of the Nigerian Gas Association (NGA) which is the umbrella association for professionals and businesses involved in the Nigerian gas industry. I also serve as Chairperson, NGA Investment Promotion Committee.

I am a 2014 winner of the prestigious ‘Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year West Africa 2014 Award’. I am a blogger, writer and published author of four books, including a collection of poetry. I am also the convener of the Double Impact Platform which is a business training and relationship building platform for entrepreneurial couples who are in business together.

“ Women across the world are significant contributors to the GDP and level of economic development of many nations. Today, women are making unparalleled achievements in traditionally male-dominated industries because we are naturally equipped with a depth of intuition, resilience and creativity that makes for business unusual. In an era where the world is speaking to impact investing and sustainable business, female entrepreneurs come to the table with more humane, structured, innovative and ethical approaches to doing business which, while enhancing the bottom line, also have significant transformational impact on people and society as a whole. The lesson to every entrepreneurial woman out there is this: “This is your time. Don’t wait to be given the opportunity... TAKE IT!”

Audrey Joe-Ezigbo

SIX KEY QUESTIONS

What is your goal today?

My greatest aspiration is to die empty of every gift, talent and ability that God has blessed and resourced me with; in the various contexts within which I am able to manifest them – business, family, ministry, etc. For each year of my life therefore, I set several goals in each of those spheres that feed into my life aspiration. Speaking specifically on the business front however, I am working to quadruple my company's size and revenues within the oil & gas industry over the next 3-5 years through a strong play in LPG storage terminals; Natural Gas distribution; upstream gas development; and gas transportation infrastructure development.

What does leadership mean to you?

Leadership means the boldness to be authentic such that your life is a worthy example of one who is aware and comfortable in their strengths, while being open enough about their weaknesses/fears/uncertainties/knowledge gaps as to then also serve as an encouragement to others along their own journeys of growth. Leadership is a mindset which understands that everyone – yourself included, desires to excel in life, yet constantly struggle with insecurities and the need for validation. Leadership is therefore about encouragement, collaboration, teaching and learning. Leadership is stepping forward in the face of uncertainties, taking risks – some more calculated than others, and doing life as best as you can with others, for the benefit of humanity.

Did you face any specific challenges?

Certainly! We came into the industry 23 years ago when the Local Content conversation had not yet started and it was expected that to succeed, you needed to have foreign technical partners. It was a hard road towards proving that we had the competence to deliver on our offerings, but we have long since overcome that and established ourselves as a preferred strategic partner of choice on various turnkey projects in the industry. Challenges we still have to grapple with include uncertainties that come from inadequate policy, legislation and regulatory pathways for Gas as a stand-alone industry independent of the Oil sector. This has adverse implications for new investments, but we are leveraging on our past and current successes to overcome this. The power situation and other infrastructural deficits also serve to create significant ramping up of overheads, as the cost of managing and minimising otherwise attendant economic and operational inefficiencies and redundancies is quite high. The challenges relating to rate, availability, access and bilateral flows of foreign exchange also continue to be a challenge, particularly because our capital projects have huge import-dependencies for core technical items required to be procured overseas due to the lack of in-country manufacturing/assembly alternatives.

Did you have a mentor and how did this help?

I've never had a mentor in the specific sense of it. My parents however had remarkable influence in shaping who I am today. My father was a military officer and my mother an entrepreneur. They blessed me with an upbringing framed by very sound principles – honesty & integrity, discipline, hard work & determination, humility, love and an ability to see the best in others. I was raised with a strong sense of independence, a mind-set for continuous learning, confidence in myself and my abilities, and a desire to achieve success in every focus area of my life, family and business.

Describe your Pathway?

I started out very early on what I like to call my 'Woman of Substance' journey – being that my inspiration to start and grow a global business was ignited when I watched the movie of same title, based on the book by Barbra Taylor-Bradford. I've been entrepreneurial as far back as I can recall, and had determined as a teenager not to work for anyone, but rather to own and manage my own businesses. I was also very clear that I would make a huge success of my businesses as long as I remained audacious, tenacious, focused, diligent and resilient in the face of odds.

When I met my husband, it didn't take long to see that he also had strong entrepreneurial aspirations and that we shared some attributes which if harnessed were capable of catalysing something truly exceptional. It didn't take much to convince him to join my entrepreneurial train full time, and together we birthed the first company within the Falcon Conglomerate in 1994. We have since worked doggedly side by side for 23 years to grow from one to several companies which are making significant tangible impact in the oil & gas, energy infrastructure, and real estate sectors.

What three pieces of advice would you give to someone embarking on their career with LPG?

First, regardless of what level you wish to enter the industry at, arm yourself with a wide range of information about the entire value chain and ensure you stay continually abreast of technological developments, policy and regulation, global trends, etc.

Secondly, you will need to find the balance very quickly between being aggressive in pursuing opportunities that present themselves, and being patient enough to see tangible results.

Lastly, I would advise that you join professional associations that can provide you support on your journey in terms of the right networks and access to industry contacts, industry information, and which give you a platform to gain mileage for your personal and business brand.



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Women in LPG Global Network

www.wlpga.org