



WINLPG

Women in LPG



Nkechi Obi

**Executive Vice-Chairman
Techno Oil Limited
Lagos, Nigeria**

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 the Founder and Executive Vice-Chairman of Techno Oil Limited, Nigeria's foremost Oil and Gas Company. I like to think I am a visionary and astute business woman, who presides over the Techno Oil Group, a diversified conglomerate with subsidiaries and interests spanning across oil and gas, aviation, power and real estate. The business which was founded more than a decade ago from humble beginnings, and today is one of the leading indigenous business conglomerates with operations in key sectors of the economy and providing employment and growth to the economy.

I hold a B.Sc in Economics and am an alumni of the prestigious Lagos Business School and Harvard Business School and I have experience spanning over 25 years in the petroleum industry. I enjoyed a distinguished career in ExxonMobil and ultimately left ExxonMobil to venture into private business.

Today, Techno Oil has annual revenues in excess of \$250million and staff of over 500 personnel and has, through the deployment of various strategic assets and distributive outlets across Nigeria, supplied a range of quality products that are ISO 9001; 2008 certified by NIS. Techno Oil has won various awards as the supplier of choice in 2009, the most impactful company in the downstream oil and gas 2014 and the most impactful company in clean cooking in 2015.

“ In recognition of all many business achievements, and several local and global awards, I was honored by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with a National Award of the Member of the Order of Niger (MON).”

Nkechi Obi

SIX KEY QUESTIONS

What is your goal today?

I want to be remembered as somebody who is fair to all and has impacted on the community. I actively support causes championing good governance, women empowerment and charity. I am greatly involved in philanthropy. At Techno Oil, we take pride in being a good neighbour and a responsible corporate citizen. It is difficult to distinguish my personal attributes from Techno Oil. The company is a manifestation of my undying belief in integrity, excellence, service and rewards.

I have an initiative, **"Techno Oil Cooksafe Initiative"** which is primarily concerned with health, safety and environment of our women through safe cooking in West Africa. Our initiative is a vehicle for women empowerment and socio-economic growth of the poor. Our focus is to save lives, improve health, empower women and preserve the environment.

Describe your Pathway?

I realised in early in life that I was endowed with the gift of entrepreneurship. Under my astute mother's tutelage, I learned the ropes of trading. During the period, I exhibited very strong entrepreneurial skills such as tolerance for risk-taking, initiative, innovation, creativity and independence.

During my service year in the NYSC, I used the allowance paid to me at the Orientation Camp to set up a small-scale sewing outfit. The business attained reasonable degree of success before I wound it up to take on more challenging prospects. Upon completing the service year, I was retained by ExxonMobil where I had a distinguished career.

I quit my job after 10 years to set up Techno Oil with my brother, Tony Onyeama. I left the job in order to "satisfy my innate desire to provide service and create wealth". In recognition of my entrepreneurial achievement, the President of the Federal Government bestowed a national award of Member of the Order of Niger (MON) on me in 2012.

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

I believe in return on experience. My career in ExxonMobil contributed enormously to my career growth. Hence I encourage young start ups to learn a trade or be an employee before venturing into business.

My advice for aspiring female LPG entrepreneurs is; Be focused, disciplined and determined. Be the best at what you do, go the extra mile, seek knowledge and develop yourself.

Have high standards, get mentors, network and make great professional connections, nurture relationships, increase your professional visibility.

Join active and progressive networks and ensure work-life balance.

Did you have a mentor and how did this help?

My mother is my role model. She was a successful textile merchant, hardworking, diligent, fair, humble, and philanthropic and above all, God fearing.

I believe in result-oriented hard work and the supremacy of ethical values. The guiding principle of my life is to strive to work hard; to be fair to all and; to be humble.

My experience from family values inculcated by my parents helped me realize that so long as I remained on the path of diligence, patience and integrity, triumph was only a matter of time.

What does leadership mean to you?

To me leadership means leading by example. I inspire my team through leadership. And leadership is by example.

As an executive chairman, my responsibilities are in the areas of: strategy, planning and execution. We work as a team through weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual meetings and retreats.

We strategically recognise our strength and weakness. We translate our challenges to opportunities and I provide leadership and support to staff particularly in instances of challenging times. Even when they have made bad decisions, the emphasis is making them take responsibility without injuring their self esteem.

Did you face any specific challenges?

As a business, we are constantly assailed by challenges. Ensuring that the vision, mission and values are always foremost in the minds of staff. Although access to finance is a regular challenge for most companies, we have been relatively fortunate that through hard work and proven business successes, we have been able to access short-term finance to run our business.

Some other major challenges we face are regulatory such as, inconsistencies in Government's policies, the inability of Government to fully deregulate the downstream sector of the petroleum industry and the delay in passing the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) into law. The decay in infrastructure such as power, basic amenities and poor road network also constitute challenges.

All these contribute to low productivity and consequent erosion of margins. When I am faced with daunting challenges along the way, my response has always been that of defiance, commitment and optimism.



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Women in LPG Global Network

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