

Rachel Ross Recognized by Influential Women for her Leadership in Higher Education Innovation and Technology

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Rachel Ross, PhD, is a dynamic leader, educator, and advocate for innovation in higher education, bringing more than 20 years of experience in strategic account management, partnership development, and educational advancement. Throughout her career, Dr. Ross has focused on connecting people, technology, and purpose to drive meaningful transformation across academic institutions and communities.



Dr. Ross' professional journey began at Monster.com, where she first recognized the power of technology to expand opportunity and create access. She later joined The Wall Street Journal, where she led strategic partnerships with business schools and executive education programs nationwide. Working closely with faculty, administrators, and institutional leaders ignited a deep passion for advancing creativity, equity, and access in learning—ultimately guiding her transition into the education technology sector.

Today, Dr. Ross serves as an Account Executive at Apple, managing strategic partnerships across Florida's higher education landscape. In this role, she collaborates with university presidents, provosts, chief information officers, and academic leaders to advance digital transformation initiatives that support student success. Her work centers on aligning Apple's ecosystem with institutional goals, helping colleges and universities embrace innovation through active learning environments, challenge-based learning models, and faculty professional development.

In addition to her corporate leadership, Dr. Ross is deeply committed to education as an Adjunct Faculty member at St. Thomas University. There, she teaches business and global marketing courses that integrate technology, artificial intelligence, and creative problem-solving.

Dr. Ross holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Central Florida, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix – South Campus, and a PhD in Workforce Development and Training from the University of South Florida. Her doctoral research and ongoing scholarly interests explore educational innovation, leadership development, and technology adoption. These academic pursuits reflect her lifelong commitment to empowering individuals to learn, lead, and thrive.

Dr. Ross attributes her success first and foremost to God's grace, which she believes has guided every step of her journey. She also credits her grandmother's timeless wisdom—"this too shall pass"—for providing strength and perspective through life's many seasons. Her professional path, though unexpected at times, became a calling rooted in faith, resilience, and service. Initially met with uncertainty, her journey ultimately revealed a deep purpose in supporting underserved students and creating pathways to opportunity. Above all, she honors the unwavering love and support of her son and her mother, whose encouragement and belief in her continue to inspire her work.

The best career advice Dr. Ross has ever received is to lead with fearlessness. "True growth begins when you step outside your comfort zone and take bold action, even when the outcome is uncertain," she says. Every major breakthrough in her career—from entering new industries to embracing unfamiliar technologies and leadership roles—came from choosing courage over comfort. "Fearlessness turns obstacles into opportunities and transforms ambition into impact."

To young women entering education, technology, or leadership fields, Dr. Ross offers advice rooted in self-love, perseverance, and unshakable confidence. Growing up with a single mother and without an active father, she learned early that resilience is built through faith in your own potential. "Align your career with what truly fulfills you—your gifts, passions, and purpose," she says. "That alignment will sustain you when the path feels uncertain." She encourages women to celebrate progress, embrace their uniqueness, and recognize that adversity can be transformed into strength, which in turn can be harnessed to inspire and uplift others.

Many of Dr. Ross's greatest opportunities emerged during moments of uncertainty—pursuing her doctorate, entering new industries, and stepping into leadership roles that demanded growth. Joining Apple became one of her most transformative experiences, revealing how technology can unlock access and possibility for students everywhere. Teaching has been another profound gift, allowing her to witness potential ignite and empowerment ripple outward. "Every opportunity—personal, professional, and academic—has taught me that when faith meets preparation, doors open beyond imagination. True opportunity isn't found—it's created through courage, purpose, and belief in yourself," expresses Dr. Ross.

Guided by core values of faith, family and friends, curiosity, and lifelong learning, Dr. Ross approaches every role with authenticity and purpose. Having traveled to more than 20 countries, she brings a global perspective that deepens her appreciation for diversity, connection, and shared humanity. Whether in the classroom, collaborating with academic leaders, or exploring the world, Rachel Ross, PhD, remains committed to growing, serving, and creating opportunity—one courageous step at a time.

Learn More about Rachel Ross:

Through her Influential Women profile, <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/rachel-ross>

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