

INFLUENTIAL WOMEN HIGHLIGHTS She Went From Busser To The Boardroom — Then Walked Away To Build Something Of Her Own

WINTER PARK, FL, UNITED STATES, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Débora Mendonça's rise from an entry-level restaurant job in Brazil to senior operations leadership, and her decision to leave it for entrepreneurship, mirrors a wave of professionals trading corporate security to found their own companies.

WINTER PARK, Fla., Aug. 24, 2026 — Americans filed nearly 5.9 million new business applications in 2025, an 8% jump from the year before, and consulting has become one of the fastest-growing landing spots for professionals walking away from corporate careers, according to Forbes. Débora Mendonça, Founder and CEO of DM Business Solutions, is one of them — and her path to that decision started decades earlier, bussing tables.



Mendonça immigrated to the United States from Brazil and built her career in hospitality from the ground up, starting in entry-level service roles and climbing steadily into senior operational leadership. At The Glass Knife, she eventually oversaw multi-million-dollar operations, managing performance, cost control, and scalability for a fast-growing restaurant group — the kind of corporate role she once thought was out of reach.

Then she left it.

"I had done the thing I once thought was impossible — I had the title, and I was running multi-million-dollar operations," Mendonça said. "But I realized I was building someone else's vision instead of my own. Walking away from that security to start my own company was the hardest and clearest decision I've ever made."

That decision led to the launch of DM Business Solutions, where Mendonça now helps business owners strengthen operations, develop teams, and build the systems needed for sustainable growth — the same skills she spent more than a decade sharpening from inside high-pressure operations.

Her approach is built on two principles she calls non-negotiable: empathy and accountability.

“Empathy without accountability is just being nice, and accountability without empathy is just being hard on people,” Mendonça said. “The businesses that actually last are run by leaders who hold both at the same time.”

That balance, she said, traces directly back to her first jobs.

“I started as a busser clearing tables, and I know what it feels like to be the person nobody consults before a decision gets made that affects their job,” Mendonça said. “That’s the perspective I bring into every business I work with now.”

Beyond consulting, Mendonça is active with the Winter Park Chamber of Commerce, Quest, Inc., and the American Heart Association, and speaks publicly about leadership, resilience, and operational strategy. She has studied at NYU School of Professional Studies and completed Harvard Business School’s CORE program, along with certification in human rights education.

For young women entering business, Mendonça’s advice reflects her own path: get clear on what you want, don’t compromise your character to stay somewhere that doesn’t align with your values, and treat mistakes as information rather than verdicts. “Resilience isn’t about always being right,” she said. “It’s about being honest enough to get better.”

Learn More about Débora Mendonça:

Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/debora-mendonca>

Website: <https://www.dmbusiness.solutions>

Influential Women

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