

**BUSINESS  
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SPRING 2018

# WOMEN *in* BUSINESS

**THE  
LEADERSHIP  
& WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE  
ISSUE**

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Can your career and personal life ever be in harmony? Maybe not, but there are ways to tip the scale in your favour



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*BIV* profiles three female-run organizations in the Lower Mainland helping to support women in the workplace



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## Message from the editor

# FINDING YOUR CAREER FOOTING

Welcome to the latest issue of *Women in Business* magazine. We tackle two important themes in this edition – leadership and work-life balance. Both are elusive goals for many women. The career women we feature throughout these pages offer their advice and experience on how to achieve one or both – whether it’s for a short period of time or a lifetime.

Let’s start at the top, with leadership. This issue celebrates the winners of *Business in Vancouver’s* 2018 Influential Women in Business Awards. We profile the six recipients; women who have risen through the ranks in their careers, overcoming numerous challenges while positively influencing people and policy along the way.

We also have an engaging column from Nancy MacKay, founder and CEO of MacKay CEO Forums, about the skills

leaders need to thrive in today’s exponential-change world. Monica Murray, an advisor and self-described “gender equality champion,” writes about why some women suffer from so-called “impostor syndrome” and offers advice on how to overcome it. Writer Michelle Hopkins profiles some millennial leaders in Metro Vancouver, writing about how they’re running their shops differently than perhaps previous generations did.

With work-life balance, writer Paula Arab interviews women reimagining how to tip the scales in ways that many find more fulfilling. Writer Dene Moore looks at why so many women are stepping back or opting out of their careers due to a lack of work-life balance – and the cost for society. Michelle Hopkins also writes about women whose work-life balance includes caregiving

responsibilities, and their advice to make it work. Finally, workplace consultant Julia Ko offers tips for employers and employees on how to make work-life balance really work.

Also in this issue, writer Caitlin O’Flanagan profiles three female-run organizations in the Lower Mainland helping to support women in the workplace. Finally, Karen Dosanjh, innovation director, global brand, at GE Digital, looks at the #MeToo movement, the brave women stepping up to speak out about sexual misconduct, and how the workplace is poised to change – forever. Time’s up.

We hope you enjoy this latest edition of *Women in Business*. As always, we are open to hearing your ideas for future issues.

**Brenda Bouw,**  
editor, *Women in Business*

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# MISSION IMPOSTOR

MONICA MURRAY | Many women suffer from so-called 'impostor syndrome.' To get past it, 'flip the script'



**Change your language from negative to positive. Challenge those sacred long-held inner beliefs. Speak to yourself as you would speak to a good friend. Challenge these beliefs of other women you know**

**F**ake it till you make it." Amy Cuddy used this well-known phrase on her TED talk in 2012, saying that "power posing" can boost feelings of confidence. The fact that this TED talk has been viewed over 40 million times makes it clear that millions of people have a common driver – fear.

The so-called "impostor syndrome" is defined as high-achieving individuals who are marked by an inability to internalize their accomplishments and a persistent fear of being exposed as a "fraud," a term coined in 1978 by clinical psychologists Pauline R. Clance and Suzanne Imes.

While many of us have heard of this syndrome and most of us have likely lived it at some point in our lives, the power of our perceptions has the ability to influence our choices, behaviours and life in a way that can set a path for success or failure. "In my 30-plus years of corporate experience, I've seen many women inadvertently put obstacles in their path by not believing in themselves," says Marni Johnson, senior vice-president of human resources and corporate affairs, BlueShore Financial.

**WHAT ABOUT MEN?** ■ Do men suffer from impostor syndrome, too? To find out, Larry Cash, founder and creator of the Success-Finder psychometric assessment tool, analyzed a selection of male and female vice-presidents and CEOs and compared behaviours considered to be success factors for high-performing executive leaders.

What Cash and his team found is that the two groups have very few

statistically significant gaps across the majority of key leadership performance behaviours, including decisiveness, innovation, work ethic, family focus, intuition, self-sufficiency, wealth and political acumen.

**THE INNER VOICE IS A JERK** ■ I've got good news and bad news. The bad news is that the single biggest differentiating factor between male and female high-performing leaders is found in their inner belief system. The good news is that this is totally under your control.

Research results found that female leaders scored significantly lower than their male counterparts in the behavioural traits of self-confidence and self-respect. In addition, women scored significantly higher than their male counterparts in fear of failure and fear of success.

Through years of one-on-one coaching, Cash discovered that women are constantly trying to earn their self-worth. Interestingly, even if they are already successful and have achieved accolades, it's not enough. Cash finds that men's self-respect is tied to who they are and their perceived natural talent, whereas women tend to tie their self-respect to what they have done as well as the need to earn this respect on an ongoing basis.

The subtlety of fear of failure isn't the fear of failing itself; rather, women fear the consequences of failure. Interestingly, throughout his interviews, Cash often heard a distinct phrase uttered by women saying they are afraid that their failures would result in them becoming a bag lady.

**FLIP THE SCRIPT** ■ I am a true believer that women have the power to change their paths. "Setting clear career goals, understanding their

own strengths and believing in the value they bring to the table allows women to take risks and reach for their career aspirations," says Johnson.

However, I am convinced that for organizations to move the needle and have more women in leadership positions, it's more than just jazz hands, positive self-talk and leaning in. Bob Elton, executive-in-residence at Vancity, says conversations with men and women are different due to their inner perceptions. "As leaders, we have to check in with each other more frequently and at a deeper level to get to know what is driving those conversations," he says. When asked how that's going to work out, he replies, "By making it a habit, the men will get used to it."

Cash has one powerful piece of advice for women. Flip the script: change your language from negative to positive. Challenge those sacred long-held inner beliefs. Speak to yourself as you would speak to a good friend. Challenge these beliefs of other women you know. When a female colleague makes a good point in a meeting, tell her. When the inner jerk makes an appearance, kill it with kindness. The more we raise each other up and the more we challenge the inner jerk, the more our hands will be raised to go for that promotion, that project or that presidency. 🐣



Monica Murray is an adviser, board member and self-described "gender equality champion."

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The *Oxford Dictionary* defines the verb “**to balance**” as: to establish equal or appropriate proportions of elements in, e.g. “they are struggling to balance work and family life.”

It defines the noun “**balance**” as: a situation in which different elements are equal or in the correct proportions, e.g. “try to keep a balance between work and relaxation.”

# REIMAGINING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Can your career and personal life ever be in harmony? Maybe not, but there are ways to tip the scale in your favour



**MADÉLINE  
SHAW**

MOTHER AND  
ENTREPRENEUR

**What I learned through the experience of having small children in our office was that it reduced, rather than increased, stress**

PAULA ARAB

**T**he ever-elusive work-life balance. Is it achievable? Or is it a myth? The answer depends on whom you ask. Some people feel it can never be achieved because work and life are one and the same. They need to be integrated, not kept separate and balanced.

Others believe “balance” is inappropriate since it implies “equal.” If a significant deadline is fast approaching at work, or worse, a child is severely ill at home, then prioritization and flexibility are required. For others, the term simply means having it all without going crazy or getting burned out – a career, a family and a life. This may be achievable, but only if you give up the idea of perfection.

“I think it’s a myth but then we still have to live our lives so I think it’s both,” says Jacqueline Jennings, who has first-hand experience with burnout both as an employee and as an entrepreneur. “There’s a very antiquated idea that we have a work life and a personal life. They used to be separate in the days when you would get a job and keep a job for 40 years and they would give you a pension and you would clock in and clock out and there were no smartphones.” Today there’s no separation, she says. “It’s less about balance and more about, how do you survive and thrive without that separation?”

So, if we could wave our magic wand and find that equilibrium, short of inventing more hours to the 24-hour day, what would it look like? What could it look like, if it were to exist?

**RADICAL REIMAGINING** ■ Vancouver entrepreneur Madeleine Shaw is thinking big but starting small with a reimagined workplace she calls Nestworks. She has registered the business as a non-profit society and is currently scouting a location for her shared workspace that will be family-friendly and include a registered on-site daycare.

Shaw envisions renting a space of up to 20,000 square feet, separated into a number of different areas, and partnerships with family-friendly businesses, such as Café Deux Soleils on Commercial Drive, where kids are welcome and accommodated.

“Within the space of Nestworks, there would be a room where the children just get acclimatized. Mom and Dad are sitting there working on their laptops and the kids can go and explore and be with other children, but they can still see their parents,” says Shaw, 49, describing what she sees will be a series of collaborations that support family-friendly policies in the workplace.

Shaw has spent the past 18 months investigating shared workspace models in large cities, including Toronto, Chicago and Seattle. She juggles her own career with being a parent, a spouse and a daughter to aging parents.



“It’s a radical reimagining because it seeks to intentionally integrate things that have traditionally been very separate,” says Shaw, who is also a social entrepreneur and co-founder of Vancouver-based Lunapads, which makes clothes with built-in reusable menstrual pads.

“Children and parenting are traditionally considered unsuitable or incompatible with a professional work environment. I strongly question this, and feel like there is a very strong case to be made for positive outcomes including positive mental health, creativity, innovation and collaboration,” Shaw says. “The nature of work and how it’s constructed these days is changing radically. Why not this too? The way that we currently work and live is inefficient; it’s stressful and hinders full participation in the workforce by parents. To me, it’s not really radical at all, just something that makes sense and whose time has come.”

Jennings is familiar with the challenges of finding affordable daycare in Metro Vancouver. Her husband stayed home for the first two years with their son. He went on parental leave and when it ran out, he quit. “It’s basically impossible to find child care especially in Vancouver for a child under 18 months,” says Jennings. “If you can find a spot, you will be paying \$1,600

a month. For the difference, we were going to be paying somebody else to look after our son, and it was a nominal amount that he was going to be bringing home after we paid that person.”

The timing for Shaw’s idea couldn’t be better, as daycares and office rents are increasingly out of reach. The seeds of Nestworks were planted years ago when Shaw and Lunapads co-founder Suzanne Siemens started their families while launching their company in 2000. They brought their babies to work until each child was about 18 months old, after which Shaw says kids in the workplace no longer works so well.

“I had one child, she had two,” Shaw says. “The kids arrived conveniently about one to two years apart, so over a period of five years we had a child in the office the whole time.... What I learned through the experience of having small children in our office was that it reduced, rather than increased, stress, allowed us to practise extended breastfeeding and overall spend more time with our kids.”

Even the name, Nestworks, suggests integration. “A nest is very cosy and a place where things are growing and incubating,” says Shaw. “It’s also a place where families live. And the work part of it, it’s because we’re working.”

Vancouver entrepreneur  
Madeleine Shaw in the Lunapads  
warehouse | CHUNG CHOW

## Reimagining work-life balance

RIGHT: **Jacqueline Jennings** (pictured with her son) has first-hand experience with burnout both as an employee and as an entrepreneur

BELOW: **Christa McDiarmid** questions the “common wisdom” on work-life balance | SUBMITTED



### CHRISTA MCDIARMID

VANCOUVER  
BUSINESS  
PSYCHOLOGIST AND  
EXECUTIVE COACH

**There is a culture that says you're weak, you don't work hard enough, if you go home at 5 or 5:30 p.m. That stigma has got to change**



Nestworks would also include specialized-care areas for infants, an area for toddlers and likely an adult-only, do-not-disturb area for meetings and quiet time. Lunch, however, would be shared. “You could eat with your kids. Why not? Or checkup on them, or whatever,” imagines Shaw. “To me, that is the secret sauce of the work-life balance.”

She describes a scenario many parents are familiar with: a child who starts to show early signs of being sick, but not sick enough to keep at home. “If your kid is maybe seen to have a tiny bit of an upset tummy in the morning, but seemed to be pretty much OK, then you drop them off at the daycare and then get on transit or you drive for 40 minutes to work, you can't satisfy tugs at the back of your mind wondering if your kid's OK,” she says.

“It's physically impossible in the middle of a workday for you as a parent to go and check on your kid and say: ‘How's your tummy, buddy?’” says Shaw. “I'm talking about these simple little things that promote family health, not to mention the impact that it would have on children having a sense of security to know that their parent is close at hand. It's not some mystery. They've seen the room where Mummy is having her meeting and it's just down the hall. They know if they need her, she'll come.”

**REALITY CHECK** ■ Five years ago, Jennings gave up a string of high-powered executive-level jobs that she says were her “primary relationships,” including being executive assistant to Lululemon Athletica founder and CEO Chip Wilson. Now married with a three-year-old son, she moved out of the city and runs her own company from her new home on the Sunshine Coast, giving her a fresh perspective on work-life balance.

“There's a lie being told, primarily through social media but we tell it to each other. It's that you can have it all,” says Jennings. “You can't. You aren't making perfectly home-cooked meals every single night of the week with organic vegetables you bought at the farmers market. Maybe your house isn't clean every day. Maybe your laundry just goes from the dryer into a pile instead of perfectly folded and back into drawers. Those are some of the lies of motherhood.”

Something always has to give, she says, nothing more so than the idea of perfection. “A lot of people can achieve the esthetic of a well-dressed baby, all organic natural products, perfect health and fitness, home-cooked meals. But, what is missing? Are you actually present or are you just curating and documenting that life? Is there joy and spontaneity? Probably not.”

She approaches life the same way she asks her clients to approach their careers: be clear on your vision and priorities. “You can do anything but you can't do everything. If you have 25 priorities, something is going to fail. You won't succeed.”

Other tips include:

- Connect with nature.
- Unplug and take time for yourself. Ante up “yourself care.”
- Say “no.”
- Don't eat lunch at your desk.
- Be mindful and take control of your schedule. If you're not a morning person, don't schedule meetings before 10 a.m.
- Take your breaks. Go outside and be exposed to the light and darkness of the day.

“Most people have some degree over their schedule whether they realize it or not,” says Jennings. Be proactive. Don't reply to a meeting request saying: ‘I'm free any time.’ Put forward three times that work best for you.”

If Jennings could wave a magic wand, what would her new reality of work-life balance look like? “It's so difficult because we all live in a culture of overworking,” she says. “The most radical idea that I can think of is that companies stop breaking labour laws. A workday is eight hours; anything over that is overtime. Yet no one gets paid overtime.”

B.C.'s Employment Standards Act states that workers are entitled to a minimum of 1.5 times their regular pay after eight hours in one day, or more than 40 hours in one week. They get twice their regular pay after 12 hours in one workday. Any company policy, short of a collective agreement, that states otherwise is illegal. The act does allow for averaging agreements, which permit hours to be averaged over a period of four weeks. Managers are excluded from the requirements; however, they are entitled to be paid for all hours worked,

unless their contract explicitly states otherwise. “There’s a huge misconception around our labour laws,” says Jennings.

**CULTURAL SHIFT** ■ The new norm will require a cultural shift, say those who advocate a return to less stressful times. The YWCA is one such advocate, promoting work-life balance through smart family policies “that address the imbalance in unpaid care, such as a universal system for early learning and child care, flexible working arrangements and parental leave reforms that encourage men to play a stronger role in the domestic sphere,” says the YWCA Metro Vancouver website. According to the YWCA, “more than ever before, we play many different roles in our lives,” including co-workers, parents, spouses, friends, volunteers and caregivers. “With so many responsibilities, it can be hard to take the time to care for our own physical and mental well-being.”

The YWCA cites research showing most people are affected by role overload, but women, more so than men, still carry a larger share of unpaid work at home. “Half of women in executive roles report they value flexibility over salary and would change jobs to achieve a better balance. Students and young graduates are also developing a strong desire for a flexible schedule.”

While flexibility is important, Vancouver business psychologist and executive coach Christa McDiarmid questions the “common wisdom” on work-life balance. “It’s a lot of talk about flexibility and work from home and I don’t think it necessarily translates to work-life balance,” says McDiarmid, 49. “I don’t think working from home necessarily improves work-life balance. In fact, I think it makes it harder for people to draw boundaries when they work at home.... It’s really easy to answer emails at 11 p.m.”

She believes the workplace culture has to shift, and from the top, with change being driven by the CEO and executive leadership team. “That’s why I target executives. You need role modelling from the top that shows this is an executive team that takes work-life balance seriously. There is a culture that says you’re weak, you don’t work hard enough, if you go home at 5 or 5:30 p.m. That stigma has got to change,” says McDiarmid, who believes executives need to publicly recognize and positively reward employees who consistently leave work on time. Other initiatives could include the boss going around at 5 p.m. and turning off all the lights, forcing people to leave.

Her strategies include:

- Exercise regularly.
- Disconnect – watch TV, play video games, do whatever works for you to recharge your batteries, but do it in moderation.
- Connect with nature – take a walk outside.

Shaw believes the very notion of work-life balance is part of the mythology that needs changing. She also questions the idea that it is a women-only issue. “I feel like the way that we have constructed ‘work’ and ‘life’ as completely separate – typically physically, as well as mentally and emotionally separate – is what needs to be questioned and reimagined.... If I see one more panel at a women’s business conference devoted to addressing how women and/or mothers can better address the issue, rather than acknowledging that it needs to be about systemic change, I think that I will fall over.” 🐦



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## Reimagining work-life balance: Opting out

# OPTING OUT

A lack of work-life balance is why many women are either stepping back or walking away from high-powered positions in government and other organizations



Mobina Jaffer with her daughter Farzana Jaffer Jeraj and grandson Ayaan Jeraj at her home in North Vancouver | CHUNG CHOW

### DENE MOORE

In her 16 years as a senator, Mobina Jaffer has seen many promising female politicians make a powerful debut in Parliament only to head for the exit.

Although Canada has attracted international accolades for having a gender-equal federal Liberal cabinet, despite decades of efforts – her own included – overall only 92 of the 338 members of the current Parliament are women. “It’s not a job that is very women-friendly. It’s also not men-friendly, to be fair, especially for British Columbians. The divorce rate is so high for British Columbia [federal] politicians – men and women – because of the distance,” says Jaffer, who lives in Vancouver.

Mid-career, when many women jump off the corporate ladder in every industry, is when most women first enter politics. Most don’t stay for long. “I came to the conclusion that we will never have 50 per cent women [in Parliament] because of what the job is,” Jaffer says.

She blames the lack of work-life balance, particularly for federal politicians from the westernmost province, who spend about 20 hours a week just getting to and from Ottawa. Jaffer leaves her house late Sunday afternoon,

arriving around 1 or 2 a.m. She works as much as 12 hours a day until Thursday, when she leaves after work to return home, where she normally spends Friday and Saturday working in her riding. By the time all is said and done, she has Sunday morning and afternoon for her family – her husband, two adult children and now grandchildren. Even as a busy and successful lawyer in her pre-political life, Jaffer was not as busy. “That’s the dilemma – that balance doesn’t exist because, I’ll tell you, no matter what you do there’s no balance,” she says.

Jaffer doesn’t name names, but in recent years bright political lights including former interim Conservative leader Rona Ambrose and former NDP deputy leader Megan Leslie have called it quits at the height of their popularity. In 2009 and 2010, the non-profit group Samara Canada interviewed 65 former MPs about their experiences in the House of Commons. The participants included 21 former cabinet ministers and one former prime minister who left politics in the previous few years. Twenty-two per cent were women. One MP told the interviewers: “I went through a seven-week period that almost did me in as a human being.”

“MPs are often derided for the perks and benefits of their jobs, and assailed by columnists and editorial cartoonists for their ‘gold-plated pensions,’ says a 2013 article on the study by Royce Koop, James Farnley and Alison Loat, then executive director of Samara, published in the *Canadian Parliamentary Review*. “Whatever merit there is to those criticisms, those who regularly lose their outrage over the benefits of MPs’ jobs rarely if ever bother to note the disadvantages of the career, and the fact that the demands of the job and its travel make achieving a work-family balance very difficult; indeed, we suspect that few Canadians would tolerate these demands in their own jobs.”

It’s not just the commute. A 2015 study by the Center for Creative Leadership found that the advent of smartphones has erased the lines between the personal and the professional. With the office at our fingertips 24-7, work now consumes 72 hours a week (including weekends) for professionals, managers and executives.

While these issues affect both men and women, female employees must also deal with the persistently shatterproof glass ceiling. Women still earn less for comparable jobs and the ranks of top management have

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## Reimagining work-life balance: Opting out

barely changed in decades of pushing for gender parity. While men and women both start out their careers equally confident of their upward trajectory, by mid-career many women are losing their religion on equality rights in the upper offices. A 2014 study by Bain and Co. in the U.S. found that among experienced executives, 34 per cent of men are still aiming for the top, while only 16 per cent of women are. “As they gain experience, women’s confidence also falls by half, while men’s stays about the same,” it says.

The pressures of family life also continue to weigh heavily on women. According to Statistics Canada, both parents worked in 69 per cent of couple families with at least one child in 2014. In 1976, just 36 per cent both worked. Yet despite increased involvement by men in child-rearing duties and household work, women continue to devote more hours per week to these duties.

But commuting and child care are not the only factors leading women to step off the corporate ladder. Janice Redekop was a tax manager for HSBC’s national tax group at its headquarters in Vancouver when she was asked about her career aspirations. “I remember having this conversation: ‘I don’t know if I really want it,’” she recalls. “I wasn’t sure I really wanted to get promoted because it just seemed like more and more work. So, it was more like work-life balance. I wanted to work, maybe, four days a week and not commute as far and maybe not work so much.”

At the time, she did not have children but she was training to compete in an Ironman triathlon. Living in Abbotsford, she left her house at 6:50 a.m. to catch the train to Vancouver and got back home around 7:45 p.m. “I never saw my husband,” she says. “I wanted to have a little bit more time to myself and that’s when I thought I would step back.”

Several years and three children later, she works three to four days a week at her own tax services company in Abbotsford. She handles accounts for 30 to 40 businesses and trusts. But her path also led to entrepreneurship – an area where women have outpaced men since the 2008-09 global recession. While women are still under-represented in the ranks of self-employed business owners, they have entered entrepreneurship at a significantly higher rate over the past decade.

Like men, some were forced into self-employment due to lack of alternatives – 22 per cent – according to a report by TD Economics. Fifty-three per cent of women, compared



### MOBINA JAFFER

CANADIAN SENATOR

**I came to the conclusion that we will never have 50 per cent women [in Parliament] because of what the job is**

to 71 per cent of men, were spurred by the challenge and the desire to be their own boss. But work-life balance was a much more significant factor for women. Twenty-five per cent of female entrepreneurs surveyed said the desire for greater work-life balance led them to start a business, compared to just seven per cent of men.

Redekop was drawn to both being her own boss and a more balanced life when she partnered with a friend after the birth of her second son to open a fresh, healthy food business. “I thought maybe it’s more flexible to start my own business,” she says. “It wasn’t; it was super time-consuming.... I could not stop thinking about it, 24-7. I just could not stop obsessing about all the things I had to do. That’s when I decided that was not work-life balance for me.”

Now self-employed in the tax industry, she’s combined the best of both worlds. “I’m in charge of myself. I come and go and do my own thing,” says Redekop, who now has time to dedicate to volunteer work. A balanced life is different for everyone, she says. “When I look back at my mom – that generation where you worked full time and took care of all the stuff at home – she was always tired. My mom was always tired and cranky, that’s what I remember. Except for in the summer when she had downtime. So, I didn’t want to be that person but at the same time, you think that you need to work and be independent.”

For Jaffer, the benefits of a life in politics outweigh the sacrifices. “I love my job,” Jaffer says. “To be a politician, there is no other job that gives you the opportunities that a politician has. Every day you can make a difference and you can be a part of the conversation.” She credits her “amazing” husband and children for making it possible for her.

Jaffer would like Parliament to rethink the schedule, which has remained the same since MPs arrived via train for a month of law-making. A schedule that takes into account that most MPs fly home for the weekend – and the distance involved for some – could greatly increase interest in public-service life, she believes.

Technology could be tapped to reduce the amount of commuting involved, and more time in the riding could benefit everyone, she says. And politicians themselves could ease the expectations they have of themselves, Jaffer says. Female politicians still bear the brunt of home work. “You still want to make the birthday cake, and you still want to have a clean home and you still want to do these things,” she says. 🐦



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# MAKING WORK-LIFE BALANCE WORK

**JULIA KO | Flexible work requires commitment from both employers and employees. Here's how to help make it work**



**Flexible work can mean different things to different people and organizations.... It will take many people and organizations to shape or define it**

**F**lexibility is going to be an important part of the future of work for Canadians. Our increasingly sophisticated economy demands it, driven by global economies of scale, rapidly changing technology and shifting societal values. We are witnessing it through changing legislation in places such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore and European Union.

Flexible work is also critical for gender equity and easing in-work poverty. While examples of flexible-work legislation and benefits for employees are easy to find on the internet, there isn't much literature to help organizations understand how to implement flexible work successfully. From my work, I see very little infrastructure to enable flexible work for organizations in Vancouver and Canada, and ultimately, we all lose out on

the benefits a modern workforce can offer.

In May 2017, I hosted a pilot roundtable with my colleagues Asubi Iwerreh and Christine Glendinning with seven employers to better understand flexibility in their organizations. From these discussions, we learned:

- Flexible work can mean different things to different people and organizations. There is no one definition. It is a complex definition, meaning it will take many people and organizations to shape or define it, and it depends upon pilots to determine what could be successful.
- Flexibility can mean control over time and outcomes.
- Sometimes organizations are forced to consider flexibility out of a sudden event such as moving headquarters, which causes the need for telecommuting and the need to adopt flexibility in order to be sustainable.
- Not all organizations understand the business case of flexible work.
- Without a platform or structure to support flexible work for those responsible for hiring talent, there are real consequences for organizations, such as:
  - Flexible work is implemented in a casual or on a case-by-case basis. As a result, if one case of flexible work doesn't go well, it can "poison the well" for everyone else.
  - Furthermore, toxic internal politics within an organization can happen. For example, Linda works Tuesday to Thursday, and most of the others on her team are full time, leading to tension inside the workplace where others on her team comment that she is "not working hard enough."
  - Without a formal structure and

support, organizations can foster a "culture of presentee-ism." For example, if people are seen at a desk from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., they are assumed to be working, whereas if someone is not at a desk and working from home, they are seen as not working.

- Not all jobs are flexible.

Flexible work is complex and ultimately requires a culture change within your organization. It's also necessary to prepare your organization for an incoming labour force that doesn't want to work in the same way their parents did, for people looking to ease into retirement, for professionals who want to upgrade their skills and credentials, and for those who want to improve their overall quality of life. Flexible work is a commitment.

It seems as though few companies are implementing successful flexible work. Those that are need a better platform to share their work with others and test what can work and what is possible. Should Canadian organizations fail to adopt flexible work within their hiring practices, they risk losing the deep and broad benefits flexible work has to offer. ↴

## Tips for organizations

Is flexible work a conversation that can happen right now? Here's a checklist:

- Do you have resources to start this discussion, i.e., managers who want to do this, time commitment, software, staff willing to pilot solutions?
- Identify what is driving this change.
- Dedicate some facilitated space for this discussion.

Next step: Determine some pilots and ensure that there is a process to gather data ethically, process and visualize this data, then report back to decision-makers at each quarter.

## Tips for employees

- Determine if your job can be flexible and if you can share it with your cohort.
- Develop two to three flexible types of work: for example, offer a mix of time and outcomes like, "I can do in-person meetings from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and I will work outside of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for project/writing/coding...." Also, develop a business case for flexible work. For example, leverage your skills and knowledge accordingly. Deconstruct your job and see what you could create as a sub-job.
- Determine if your manager is open to piloting a flexible work plan for three months with agreed-upon outcomes and objectives.



*Julia Ko is founder of Flexible Work, a Vancouver-based consultancy that supports organizations looking to implement flexible work practices.*

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# THE CAREGIVER'S CHALLENGE

Holding down a demanding career while also caring for a parent or child can be overwhelming. Meet two women doing their best to make it work



## ANNA LILLY

SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT AND PARTNER, FLEISHMANHILLARD CANADA

**The more you can ... take assistance from family, friends, colleagues and others in your network, the more you can make your new normal work both at home and work**

## MICHELLE HOPKINS

**W**hen Anna Lilly received the diagnosis that her three-year-old son had autism spectrum disorder, she was devastated. “At the time, I didn’t really know much about autism,” says Lilly, senior vice-president and partner with public relations and communications firm FleishmanHillard Canada. “When your child has serious difficulties in life, you are forced to confront reality in ways that others aren’t.”

Lilly and her husband immediately sought the help of occupational and behavioural therapists. The first year was a whirlwind of appointments to find the right treatments for their son. “We had to spend a lot of time meeting with professionals,” she says. “I had to take days and half days off and one or both of us stepped up when needed to support our son.”

Holding down a demanding career while caring for a child with a disability can be stressful and challenging.

According to the latest Statistics Canada data, the majority of the eight million unpaid Canadian caregivers are women like Lilly in their early to mid-40s – most of them in their peak earning years. Many are faced with the challenge of managing work and home commitments, while also caring for themselves both personally and professionally.

Lilly discovered ways to balance competing demands on her time and energy without compromising her



career. “When you introduce major family changes in the mix, you must reorient your focus both at home and work,” she says.

To make family and work lives work together, many women must sacrifice career opportunities – maybe even their entire career – to care for a loved one. Lilly says she’s fortunate to have the type of job that allows her to be flexible. “I can come in a little later and leave earlier or work from home,” she says. “I have great weeks where things go fairly smoothly and unpredictable weeks that are challenging, but I’ve learned to accept those weeks.”

Her best strategy is to seek help – whether that’s asking her employer for more flexible work hours or asking family and friends for support. “When my son was first diagnosed three years ago, I was very reluctant to look for sources of help.... I had this mindset that I could figure it out on my own, that I could do this,” Lilly says. “I soon realized I couldn’t.”

**WOMEN HELPING PARENTS** ■ Many young, single, career-driven women enjoy a relatively carefree life. For Melissa Polak, a 29-year-old senior manager at consulting firm EY, that has never been the case. “My father had a stroke while I was still in high school,” Polak recalls. “In addition, my mother has had mobility and health issues for a long time.”

Growing up with an Asian father, it was assumed Polak would take her parents in. “In Asian culture, typically the son looks after the father, but my brother is estranged from my father,” she says. “Dad’s retirement plan was

living with his children.”

Originally, Polak lived in Ottawa, close to her parents, making it easier to assist in their care. However, three years ago she accepted a promotion to Vancouver. “I rely much more on other people now for the day-to-day issues, but I fly to Ottawa several times a year.”

She has long made peace with her decision to move to Vancouver. “I’ve come to terms at how all of this has played out. By taking this promotion, I’m more successful and more financially able to support my parents,” Polak says. “The toughest balance for me has been about self-preservation, while not derailing my career.”

Over the years, she has found herself flying to Ottawa on a moment’s notice. “When my father was on a waiting list for a long-term care facility, there was a short turnaround to complete a move, or the room would be offered to the next person,” she says, “so I went to Ottawa for the weekend to help him move.”

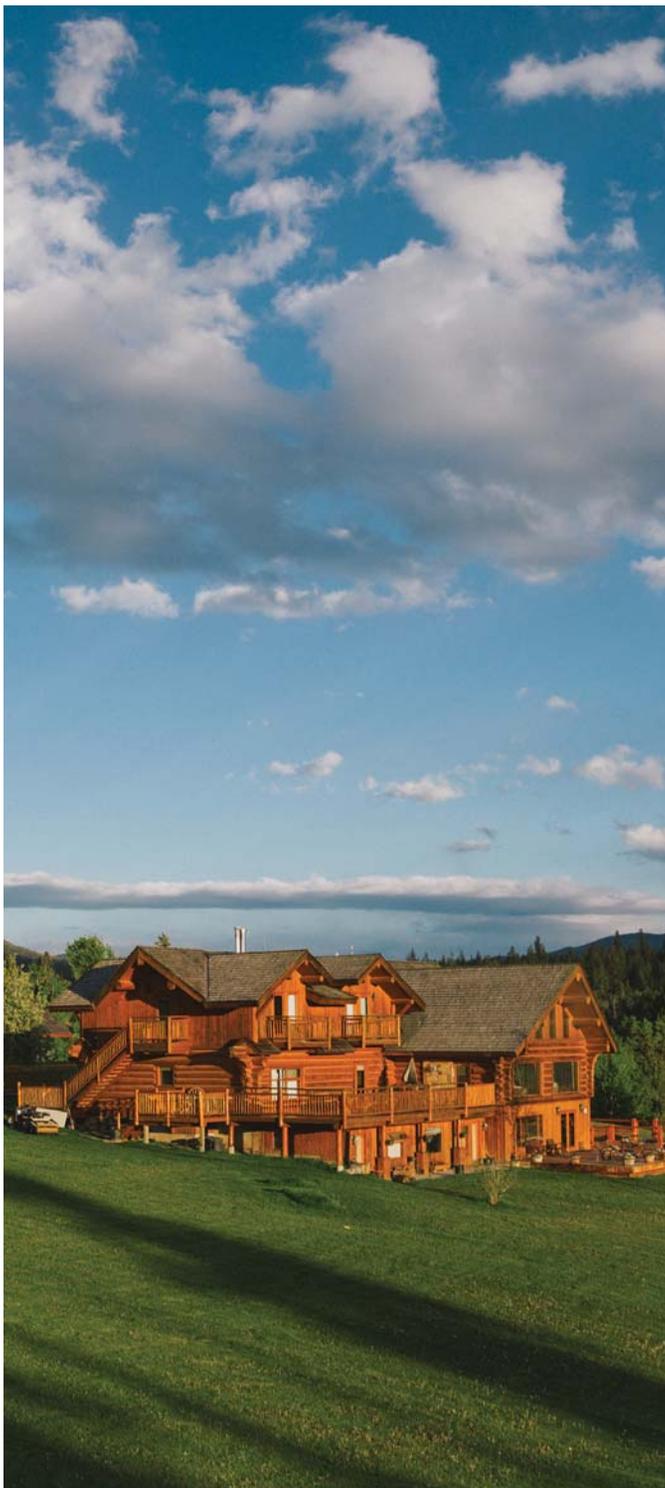
While managing two ill parents from across the country, she has been doing her best to juggle their needs with her career. “Thankfully, the company provides a program which allows me to take a temporary leave, enabling me to work flexibly over the summer and step away from the office to attend to family,” says Polak, who was able to resume her career after taking eight weeks off. “My co-workers have also been incredibly supportive.”

**CAREGIVING GROUND RULES** ■ Both women agree that caregiving requires laying some ground rules, both at home and at work. While most pregnant women plan

### Tips to keep your career on track while caring for an aging parent or sick child:

- Talk to your employer about your caregiving demands: the sooner they know, the sooner they can provide support to keep your job running smoothly.
- Take the time to understand your organization’s policies and benefits plan, including what it covers in areas such as sick leave, leave of absence (with or without pay) and bereavement leave. If you need to take a leave, try to be available by email or phone as much as possible, within reason.
- Talk to your employer about the possibility of and options for working remotely.
- Sometimes you can’t juggle both well: depending on your resources and support systems, one or both might suffer sometimes. When that happens, let your employer know so you can work out a solution.

Anna Lilly gets her son ready to go out | CHUNG CHOW



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## The caregiver's challenge



Melissa Polak balances her career in Vancouver with regular visits with parents in Ottawa | SUBMITTED

for how they'll juggle work and motherhood and have the benefit of a multi-month leave, few caregivers are able to prepare for when situations arise with their loved ones.

"I wish I had all the answers to the challenge," Polak says. "I've had to adjust at work and try to be more flexible to help take care of some administrative things for my aging father, which is increasingly complex as his health deteriorates and because he still lives in Ontario."

Today's reality is that both burdens continue to fall primarily on women's shoulders. "Being a primary caregiver to any loved one, young or old, absolutely and without question affects your career," adds Polak.

Lilly says women shouldn't try to do it on their own, especially when family and friends are often able and willing to help out in both big and small ways. "The more you can work on acceptance ... and take assistance from family, friends, colleagues and others in your network, the more you can make your new normal work both at home and work," Lilly says. 🐦



**MELISSA POLAK**

SENIOR MANAGER, EY

**Being a primary caregiver to any loved one, young or old, absolutely and without question affects your career**

## 2018 INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS HONOUREES

# THE INFLUENCERS

Meet the winners of *Business in Vancouver's* 2018 Influential Women in Business Awards. Here we profile the six recipients; women who have risen through the ranks in their careers, influencing people and policy along the way

INTERVIEWS BY HAYLEY WOODIN | PHOTOS BY CHUNG CHOW | ALL INTERVIEWS HAVE BEEN EDITED AND CONDENSED



SHELLEY BROWN



ANNE GIARDINI



SANDRA MILES



SUE PAISH



CHARLENE RIPLEY



KIRSTEN SUTTON

Each will be celebrated at the 2018 Influential Women in Business Awards luncheon on March 8, 2018

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## 2018 Influential Women in Business honourees



**Speak up, say what it is that you want to accomplish**

### **SHELLEY BROWN**

**VANCOUVER-BASED PARTNER AT DELOITTE CANADA**

I grew up in southern Saskatchewan on a farm with four sisters and one brother. We had a lot of freedom to run around. It was fabulous, when I think back to it. It was also a lot of hard work because everyone had to contribute.

I didn't think I would be an accountant. That really wasn't on the radar screen when I graduated from high school. My first plan was to go to a secretarial school and become a legal secretary. My mother sat me down one day and said: "Why would you want to be the secretary when you could be the leader?" She was the one that encouraged me to go to university and to progress. My other siblings would call me "bossy" but she would call me a leader.

I went to the University of Saskatchewan, where I got my bachelor of commerce. I took my first job in Calgary with a national accounting firm where I did my articles and became a partner in the firm. There was an opportunity to transfer back to Saskatoon. We spent 20 or so years there and then moved to Vancouver.

I think the best advice that I ever got was to speak up, say what it is that you want to accomplish and then work towards the goal. I did, and that's where I think I got the support from other partners in the practice to help me reach my goal. Early in my career I saw the partners in the firm and the kinds of things that they were doing. I

was fortunate to be able to attend some very impactful meetings with major clients in the Calgary market that really confirmed for me: "Yeah, this is what I'd like to do when I grow up."

When I stop to think about it, the actual technical accounting is kind of boring. The fun part is working with people.

I don't really accept the term work-life balance because I don't think it's ever in balance. I prefer to think about it as work-life integration. You work to ensure that you can maximize the benefits of both.

I got involved in non-profit work even before I started in a career. In our family it was always important to give back to the community, so it's something that I've been doing all my life. For many years I was involved in the profession at the boards of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants and then CPA Canada.

United Way has always been one that's near and dear to me. I currently sit on the board of Covenant House Vancouver. I also am chair of the board of the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Foundation. We are in the process of building the first children's hospital in Saskatchewan. That's pretty exciting. I find the work in the non-profit sector to be very rewarding, and I can honestly say that I generally get more out of it than I put into it.

I plan to retire from public practice in May. After that I will continue with the non-profit work that I'm currently doing; I will be looking for a couple of corporate boards to go onto. We'll see what happens after that.



**I like to be out there in the world as much as possible, as much as I can, all the time**

## **ANNE GIARDINI**

**CHANCELLOR, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

I think a lot of successful women have a hard time being kind to themselves. There's a saying I like, which is that we should try to be as kind to ourselves as a good mother would be, always.

It's a great thing if you have a great mother, and I did. But if you don't, go out and find them – find the friends you need, the mothering you need. An odd discovery in my 40s was that if you go to yoga, the yoga instructor kind of mothers you a little bit at the beginning and end of each class.

I had one of those wonderful childhoods. A competitive, big family – in a good way. My mother [Carol Shields] became a quite successful writer when I was growing up. My father was the dean of engineering in a university. It was an idyllic childhood, and it gave me confidence. It taught me nothing, however, about business because I didn't hang around with business people. In fact, when I started my articling job as a young lawyer, I don't think I'd ever been in an office before. It just wasn't in my world.

I learned early on that if you're curious about things and open to learning, there's nothing that isn't interesting. Even the right to reject non-conforming goods under the international sale of goods act; I ended up writing the most boring master's thesis in the history of master's theses. But it was interesting to me.

We grow up going to stores and I was always interested in what happened behind the doors. What was making this run? That gave me a deep interest in business as it happens. Whenever I see a closed door, I want to know what's behind it.

I always thought I would write books. Isn't that odd, because I didn't exactly set out on that path. I've published two novels; I've written four. I think if I didn't have a book brewing, it would remove some of my happiness. It makes me very happy to have a project like that on the go.

Law, by chance, is stories. I found when I read cases, it was like reading short story after short story. I've never had a dull day in the legal profession.

For me, balance is busyness. I like to be out there in the world as much as possible, as much as I can, all the time.

There's this concept called allomother, and it's the idea that if you run your life well, your kid doesn't just have one mother, they have a community of mothers. I remember landing in New York a few years ago for a large, multibillion-dollar transaction, and getting a call from home that one of my children was really in serious distress, to the point where my first thought was that I have to go home. I phoned one of the allomothers and she got right on it. I still get a little weepy when I think about it because I feel that it was a crisis that I didn't handle directly. But in fact I did handle it and it worked out fine. It was one of those moments when I felt there's something rich here, something to be learned about creative problem solving, and being present in different ways.

My grandmother had a wonderful saying. It was, "Wherever you go, there you are."

## 2018 Influential Women in Business honourees



**You can look at each roadblock and hurdle as a mountain, or you can just drive over them**

### **SANDRA MILES**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO, MILES EMPLOYMENT GROUP**

I'm a skier, and a mentor said to me: "Always do your black diamonds first." You always have black diamonds in the day. You don't want to do them. That really stuck with me as a good lesson to get things done, and move on. Because once you've done your black diamond, everything else is easy.

I grew up in North Vancouver by Grouse Mountain. I skied and I spent a lot of time on the mountains. My first job was working at Grouse Mountain in the gift shop, and I loved being up there.

I always kind of did entrepreneurial things growing up. We had a boat so I started this little boat-cleaning business called Deck Swabbers. Sounds ridiculous now. I did a housecleaning thing too. I just loved all of the bits and pieces that went along with doing your own thing. I think it was kind of in my blood a little bit.

I left Grouse and I went into sales because somebody told me I should do sales. I was working in the staffing industry. I really wanted to create my own thing. And so I did. I worked with a partner and we created everything from scratch. We interviewed everybody, finding out what they liked about working with the staffing industry and what they didn't like, interviewing not only potential clients, but also candidates looking for work. Everybody forgets about that piece. It's really important to have that empathy and that was something

we really wanted to bridge into the company.

I had had a business for 15 years that I sold, and then I started my current business. The Olympics were coming to Vancouver, and I love the Olympics. I'm a bit of an Olympic junkie. The request for proposal came across my desk, and I had written so many proposals that had been rejected that when this one came in, I threw it in the recycling bin. I just couldn't take another rejection.

Even though the deck was stacked against us, I couldn't live with myself if I hadn't tried. It's better to be in the game and roll up your sleeves than to bail. The night before it was due, I pulled it out. I put the coffee on and I pulled an all-nighter. And we won. We won the proposal to work for VANOC [Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games] supplying their corporate staff for five years. That was a huge time for us. That led to Olympic contracts.

One of the biggest challenges was managing through the recession. It came hard, fast, deep and steep, and it hit labour specifically hard. The reception area was full of people that had just been laid off from big companies. That was the beginning of a wave of daily people coming in. I didn't know how to manage through that. It was a humongous challenge. Companies weren't coming to the Olympics now or they weren't doing as big of an event. That was in September. In December, we got all these phone calls saying, "We've changed our minds." We sourced, placed, had to security clear over 2,170 people within a month. We broke our payroll, because it was never designed for over 2,000 people.

There were a million challenges but they were all opportunities and it was all super exciting. It's all about your attitude. You can look at each roadblock and hurdle as a mountain, or you can just drive over them.



## Congratulations 2018 Influential Women in Business Award recipients.

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**There's no  
such thing as  
impossible**

**SUE PAISH** | LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT  
FORMER PRESIDENT AND CEO, LIFELABS

I grew up in small-town British Columbia, in environments surrounded by people who were very, very different from me and my family. My parents were immigrant teachers from England. They were assigned work with some of the province's most disadvantaged populations. At that time, it was the communities of the Doukhobors and Sons of Freedom, people who were very marginalized in society.

For a long time in my senior high school years, I didn't have a vision. I took an aptitude test and I was told that I would be a very good bedside nurse, which I thought was not the right answer.

In second-year university, I was on an assignment working at General Motors. I had the opportunity to attend a labour arbitration and I watched how the lawyers worked. I thought it was fascinating. I liked how they dealt with problems and brought parties together.

Being the shy, retiring type, I decided to make a phone call to the general counsel of General Motors. I look back on that now and wonder, "What was I thinking?" What was even more surprising was he answered the phone. It was the result of that conversation that I decided to go to law school. My first job out of law school really was articling at what was then Russell & DuMoulin, one of Vancouver's largest and oldest law firms.

I was with Russell & DuMoulin for 25 years. I was the

first woman and the youngest managing partner the firm had. I was in my early 40s so wasn't quite ready to retire. I decided one day that I didn't want to wake up when I was 50 and wonder what it would be like to do something other than practise law. So I decided that I was going to leave the law firm, and I didn't have anything to do. It was a scary moment.

I was approached by Pharmasave; I sat on the board at the time. There was a CEO search going on and the then-chair of the board came up to me and said: "Would you think about putting your name in for that role?" I looked at him and said: "I can't do that. I'm not a pharmacist. I don't know about retail, marketing, franchising. I don't know how to run a national franchise with hundreds of outlets." I still remember his reaction quite quickly was: "We've got pharmacists, retailers, franchising, marketing experts. We need somebody who has vision, strategy and leadership skills. Will you put your name in the ring, please?" And so I did. That started me down a path of business leadership that I absolutely thoroughly enjoyed.

My association with LifeLabs goes back to 1985, when I got to know Don Ricks, who was the founder of an organization that then became LifeLabs. He saw in me things that I never saw in myself. He encouraged me to seek out a CEO position. I didn't think I had what it took. And Don did. Having that kind of inspiration has stuck with me forever.

I really think I helped LifeLabs position itself for growth and for doing things that were perhaps a little bit ahead of their time. Building a genetics lab and really putting a marker in the ground in genetics. Building LifeLabs to be one of the health technology leaders in Canada.

I only stay in CEO jobs five years. I did six years as managing partner at Russell & DuMoulin (now Fasken), five and a half at Pharmasave, and five and a half years at LifeLabs. I left LifeLabs in December.

Growing up, my dad taught me that there's no such thing as impossible. I hope I can continue to take on roles and responsibilities in a leadership way that have a certain level of impossibility to them.

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**Servant leadership to me is fundamental**

**CHARLENE RIPLEY**  
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT AND  
GENERAL COUNSEL, GOLDCORP

I was born in Sarnia, Ontario, and raised in Calgary. I remember playing outside a lot, even when it was freezing cold. I got involved in Girl Guides and really enjoyed that because I liked leading people. It was a really nice life.

I've never had a formal mentor. I would say the closest person to being a mentor to me was my father. He was an oil and gas engineer working for Halliburton in management, and I would often have questions that came up in my career that I would go to him with.

I wanted to be a psychologist, because I find people really interesting. I remember running that by my dad and he said: "You want to sit and listen to people's problems all day? What kind of a job is that?" Then I went to university and I took a law course at business school and I loved it. That's how I started my legal career. I remember telling my dad: "Guess what I do - I'm a lawyer, I listen to people's problems all day and I love it."

The most significant challenge from a personal and career perspective was when I was promoted. I was in my late 30s and I was promoted to be worldwide general counsel for Anadarko Petroleum, back in 2002. I was scared out of my mind. I had to leave Calgary and move to Houston and I was this young woman in a department of over 100 people. It was really daunting and on top of it, it was a highly dysfunctional team. They weren't

even talking to each other.

I felt like *Sesame Street*: one of these things is not like the other, and that was me. I did suffer from what's called "impostor syndrome." It generally afflicts highly successful women when you just can't internalize your successes. You feel like you're a fraud. I kept thinking someone's going to think they made a big mistake moving me to Houston, and I'm going to get sent back to Canada.

"Fake it till you make it" was something that really resonated and worked for me.

I spent two years working at restructuring the team: how they served the company, how they worked with each other. I felt like I left it in a better place. There were a lot of learnings around leadership that I carry with me to this day.

The role of the in-house counsel has changed. When I first started I remember the general counsel telling me: "Look, you just stick to the legal issues and you don't talk about the business issues. That's all you're allowed to talk about." That has changed. The advice we give has to be business-minded, and so you're much more involved in making business decisions and strategic decisions.

The concept of servant leadership to me is fundamental. Of all the leadership qualities, to me, having humility is the most powerful.

It's been almost five years at Goldcorp. It's been fantastic. I'm never bored; there's always something new and interesting to do. I'm really excited about where the company is going.

As I've progressed in my career, it's more than just getting the big deals negotiated and done, and winning big court cases. It's more about the success of the people that I can influence around me.



# Changing the face of leadership

Congratulations to the 2018 Influential Women in Business honourees. Collectively, this impressive group of women is changing the face of leadership in business. We are proud to sponsor these awards that recognize their outstanding achievements.

We believe in supporting women in leadership roles and the important work they do to develop healthy communities that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable.

**Vancity**  
Make Good Money.™

## 2018 Influential Women in Business honourees



**My hand was  
always the first in  
the air**

### **KIRSTEN SUTTON**

**VICE-PRESIDENT AND MANAGING  
DIRECTOR, SAP LABS CANADA**

I'm quite proud of the day I beat my dad at chess. Whether I was two or 22 or 52, he never let me win. I used to think people would say, "Oh that's really cruel. You should let your daughter win. Let her have some success." And he said, "No. I don't want to teach her how to play poorly. I don't want to teach her to win if she didn't earn it. I want to teach her to do this the way that's right, and to want to win." Finally, she did. That was a great day.

My mom liked to move around a lot. I've lived in 39 different houses in my 52 years, all of them in Vancouver. I went to the University of California first and then I moved my way back up, slowly up the coast to Western Washington University. It was a great chance for me to spread my wings and be on my own. My parents were psychology professors at the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University. They're very dedicated, very brilliant people. As a child I spent lots of hours there, and it represented a place where my parents worked. It was their job rather than a place where I was going to go study.

I started out as a chef. I was classically French-trained so that's my de facto. Had I known that the Food Network would come over I might have stuck with it. I really love cooking; I love feeding people, which isn't so different

really to what I enjoy now at work: that collaborative environment, working together, creating things that are brand new.

I graduated with English and I did technical writing. I was a big computer user. I loved games. I met my first serious boyfriend online after high school. I came in through technical writing and then quickly moved into different subjects through technology. I worked for a firm in Washington state that wrote the manuals for a product called Crystal, built here in Vancouver. Crystal Services was acquired by Seagate Technology, which became Seagate Software. Then they were sold and became Crystal Decisions, a privately held company. We were bought by BusinessObjects, and just 10 years ago we were purchased by SAP.

My hand was always the first in the air. I'm pretty good at stepping forward and stepping in, and so it's been really fun taking on different roles within the organization. All pretty much inside of development though, and I have no computer science background.

You would think it would be intimidating, perhaps you'd feel a bit like an impostor, but the truth is I'm not there because of my technical skills. I'm there because of my organizational skills, hopefully my people skills, and definitely to help people to scale and run efficient operations. Because of that, I'm not worried that I don't know the best architecture for the next iteration of the product. That's not my purpose.

It takes a lot of energy to be out in front and sponsoring people and championing your business or your employees. Leadership is stamina.

I think leadership is being authentic. You have to be the same you at work or at play or at home. I learned the greatest lessons at home on how to compromise, how to work with people, how to build on people's strengths. And I take that to work, and I bring work back home. 🐦



**2017**



**Natalie Dakers,**  
Accel-Rx Health  
Sciences Accelerator



**Judi Hess,**  
Copperleaf  
Technologies Inc.



**Kathy Kinloch,**  
British Columbia  
Institute of  
Technology



**Laura Nashman,**  
BC Pension Corp.



**Marcia Nozick,**  
EMBERS (Eastside  
Movement for  
Business and  
Economic Renewal  
Society)



**Martha Piper**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT),  
University of British  
Columbia

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

CBC Vancouver is honoured to be the exclusive media partner of Business in Vancouver's 2018 Influential Women in Business Awards. We applaud the winners on their outstanding work influencing and shaping some of Canada's largest companies.

Strong female leaders in the CBC Vancouver newsroom have also been integral to our growth and evolution into a digital first media company. I have seen first hand the impact of their vision, leadership and determination. They, along with this year's winners serve as inspiration for local business leaders and up and coming entrepreneurs.

Congratulations once again to this year's accomplished winners! Thank you for your contributions in our local communities.

Sincerely,  
**Johnny Michel**  
Senior Managing Director  
CBC English Services  
British Columbia & Alberta



**Celebrating Achievement**

On behalf of everyone at Fasken, I would like to congratulate the 2018 BIV Influential Women in Business award winners. Their persistence and determination is admired by us all and serves to inspire the next generation of business leaders, both women and men.

As Vancouver's largest law firm and a leader in business law and dispute resolution, we have the honour of working alongside many of our province's business leaders. This allows us to observe first hand, and appreciate, the significant value added to our community by the skills and dedication of Influential Women in Business award recipients, both past and present. Accordingly, Fasken is delighted to support events and initiatives that promote and celebrate the success of women in business.

Once again, I am pleased to congratulate this year's winners and commend the achievements of all women who are leading the way in the business community.



**William Westeringh, Q.C.**  
Managing Partner  
British Columbia



## Influential Women in Business past honourees



**2016**



**Karina Briño**,  
*Mining Association  
of BC*



**Eva Kwok**  
*(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT),  
Amara Holdings*



**Evi Mustel**, *Mustel  
Group*



**Michelle Pockey**,  
*Fasken Martineau  
DuMoulin LLP*



**Karimah Es  
Sabar**, *Centre for  
Drug Research and  
Development*



**Marcia Smith**, *Teck  
Resources Ltd.*

Sponsor's Message

### Innovative Strategic Leadership



**Lori Mathison**, FCPA, FCGA  
President & CEO, CPABC

Today's changing business climate demands leaders with a powerful capacity for strategic and innovative thinking. The six women recognized as part of Business in Vancouver's Influential Women in Business Awards exemplify these qualities, driving the success of their organizations.

These same qualities are upheld by the 35,000 professionally designated accountants represented by the Chartered Professional Accountants of British Columbia (CPABC). CPAs employ strategic thinking and new technologies to help their organizations

manage change. At CPABC, we are training tomorrow's business leaders to anticipate the unexpected, make sense of complexity, and analyze data to make business decisions that drive success.

Key to adapting to change is the furthering of gender equality in the workplace. CPA promotes female leadership through CPA Canada's Women's Leadership Council. This Council is a catalyst for change and advocates for pay equity and boardroom diversity. It focuses on promoting and creating a work environment within the accounting profession that retains, promotes, and advances women to positions of leadership.

CPABC is proud to be a sponsor of this year's Influential Women in Business Awards. The honourees all demonstrate outstanding leadership and serve as inspiration for business leaders, both present and future. We wish them all continued success.



CONGRATULATES THE 2018 WINNERS

Anne Giardini  
Chancellor, Simon Fraser University

Sandra Miles  
President & CEO, Miles Employment Group Ltd.

Kirsten Sutton  
Vice-President & Managing Director, SAP Labs Canada

Charlene Ripley  
Executive Vice-President, Goldcorp

Shelley Brown  
Partner, Deloitte

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Sue Paish  
President & CEO, LifeLabs

PORCHLIGHTFINANCIAL.CA



**2015**

**Carolyn Cross**, *Ondine Biomedical*

**Debra Hewson**, *Odlum Brown Ltd.*

**Fiona Macfarlane**, *EY*

**Nancy McKinstry**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), *HSBC Canada*

**Renee Wasyluk**, *Troika Developments*

**Susan Yurkovich**, *BC Hydro*

**2014**

**Barbara Brink**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), *Applied Strategies Ltd.*

**Barbara Dunfield**, *Sennen Potash Corp.*

**Joyce Groote**, *Crossing Sectors Inc.*

**Dana Hayden**, *PavCo*  
**Barbara Kaminsky**, *Canadian Cancer Society*  
**Laurie Schultz**, *ACL*

**2013**

**Sage Baker**, *Q5 Innovations Inc.*

**Judy Brooks**

**May Brown**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), *Vancouver Parks and Recreation Board*

**Blaize Reich**, *Beedie School of Business*

**Shannon Rogers**, *Global Relay*

**Jill Schnarr**, *Telus*

**2012**

**Wendy Grant-John**, *Deloitte*

**Elizabeth Harrison**, *Farris*

**Jill Leverage**

**Lois Nahirney**

**Launi Skinner**, *First West Credit Union*

**Kari Yuers**, *Kryton International Inc.*

**2011**

**Bev Briscoe**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), *Briscoe Management*

**Amiee Chan**, *Norsat International*

**Christine Day**, *Lululemon*

**Evaleen Jaeger Roy**, *Jaeger Roy Advisory Inc.*

**Tina Osen**, *HUB International Insurance*

**Tracy Redies**, *Coast Capital Savings*

**2010**

**Janet Austin**, *Vancouver YWCA*

**Ida Goodreau**

**Julia Levy**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT)

**Sarah Morgan-Silvester**, *University of British Columbia*

**Cybele Negris**, *Webnames.ca*

**Janine North**, *Nothern Development Initiative Trust*

**2009**

**Julia Kim**, *Phillips, Hager & North Investment Management*

**Tracey McVicar**, *CAI Capital Management*

**Colleen Nystedt (Hardwick)**, *MovieSet Inc.*

**Jane Peverett**, *BC Transmission Corp.*

**Carole Taylor**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), *former B.C. finance minister*

**Tamara Vrooman**, *Vancity*

**2008**

**Wanda Costuros**, *BC Hydro*

**Laura Hansen**, *Image Group*

**Lisa Pankratz**, *Mackenzie Cundill Investment Management*

**Patrice Pratt**, *Vancity*

**Barbara Rae**  
(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), *Dekora*

**Catherine Roome**, *BC Safety Authority*

# A Lifetime of Extraordinary Accomplishments

Congratulations to Sue Paish on receiving the 2017 Business in Vancouver Influential Women - Lifetime Achievement Award. We are honoured and grateful to have benefitted from your outstanding and inspiring leadership. Thank you!

From your LifeLabs family.



## Influential Women in Business past honourees

COMPANIES AT TIME OF AWARD



### 2007

**Susan Adams,**  
*Bevendale Enterprises Inc.*

**Shushma Datt,**  
*i.t. productions*

**Grace McCarthy**  
*(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT)*

**Nadine or NJ (Dee) Miller,**  
*FAST First Aid & Survival Technologies and JJM Construction Ltd.*

**Elise Rees,** *Ernst & Young*

**Elizabeth Watson,**  
*Governance Advisory Services*

### 2006

**Kazuko Komatsu,** *Pacific Western Brewing Co.*

**Roslyn Kunin,** *Roslyn Kunin and Associates*

**Alice Laberge**

**Wendy B. McDonald**  
*(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), BC Bearing Group*

**Judy Rogers,**  
*City of Vancouver*

**Anne Stewart,** *Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP*

**Lis Welch,**  
*The Welch Group*

### 2005

**Karen Flavelle,**  
*Purdy's Chocolates*

**Pat Jacobsen,** *TransLink*

**Eva Lee Kwok,** *Amara International Investment*

**Debra Lykkemark,**  
*Culinary Capers*

**Doreen McKenzie-Saunders**  
*(LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT), Women in the Lead Inc.*

**Sandra Stevenson,**  
*Sport BC*

### 2004

**Barbara Maple,**  
*Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre*

**Nancy McKinstry,**  
*Odlum Brown Ltd.*

**Catherine Osler,** *Titian Communications Inc.*

**Sue Paish,** *Fasken Martineau DuMoulin LLP*

**Faye Wightman,**  
*University of Victoria*

### 2003

**Jill Bodkin,**  
*Golden Heron Enterprises*

**Anne Lippert,**  
*Lippert Investments*

**Martha Piper,** *University of British Columbia*

**Anne Sutherland,**  
*RBC Royal Bank*

**Naomi Yamamoto,**  
*Lasercolour*

### 2002

**Judy Bishop,** *Bishop & Co.*

**Shannon Byrne,**  
*Paradata Systems*

**Frances McGuckin,**  
*SmallBizPro.com*

**Carole Taylor,** *Canadian Broadcasting Corp.*

**Linda Thorstad,**  
*Thorstad/Vancouver Economic Development Commission*

### 2001

**Mobina Jaffer,**  
*Dohm Jaffer & Cashman*

**Lucille Johnstone,**  
*St. John Ambulance*

**Wendy Lisogar-Cocchia,**  
*Absolute Spa Group*

**Susan Mendelson,**  
*The Lazy Gourmet*

**Linda (Lynn) Warren,**  
*Vancouver Breast Centre*

### 2000

**Maureen Chant,**  
*Jim Pattison Group*

**Nancy Greene,**  
*Sun Peaks Resort Corp.*

**Dr. Julia Levy,**  
*Quadra Logic Technologies*

**Gerri Sinclair,** *X-cite*

**Nancy Stibbard,** *Capilano Suspension Bridge*

### Sponsor's Message

## RAISE THE BAR

TEC Canada is once again a proud sponsor of BIV's 2018 Influential Women in Business Awards. The theme of International Women's Day this year is *#PressforProgress* and we are committed to empower, recognize and support women to achieve gender equality in leadership roles. The winners are dynamic role models and they have set an example of what's possible for women in business.

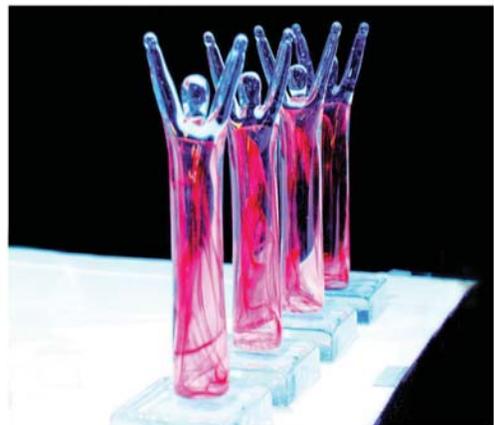
For over 30 years, TEC has supported Canada's best and brightest chief executives, entrepreneurs and small business owners to accelerate their growth. Through confidential group meetings, one-to-one executive coaching, world-class speakers and a global network of over 22,000 members, TEC has advanced our country's leaders, professionally and personally.

In partnership with BIV's Influential Women in Business Awards, we celebrate this year's winners and continue to work together to champion our country's most innovative leaders.

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TEC-CANADA.COM

**TECCANADA**

*Congratulations*  
**HONOUREES!**



At Janet Helm we are proud to be the award sponsor once again for this important event, recognizing influential leaders in business.



**JANET HELM**  
celebrating recognition!

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# EXPONENTIAL LEADERSHIP

NANCY MACKAY | The 7 critical skills leaders need to thrive in an exponential-change world



**Leadership is about inspiring people to take positive action**

The world is changing at an exponential pace. The volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity that we live in is unprecedented. Disrupting customers, employees and business models is what is required to be successful in today's business environment. I believe that we all need to become exponential leaders if we want to thrive in this new world. Leadership is about inspiring people to take positive action. Exponential leadership requires that you develop the following seven critical skills to thrive in an exponential-change world:

**1. MASTER YOUR TIME** ■ Mastering your time is the most important exponential leadership skill. Having a 90-day plan each quarter to set health, family and business priorities is necessary to ensure that you are living your life without regrets and not burning out. Time mastery is a lifelong journey and critical to ensuring that leaders can achieve extraordinary results and enjoy the journey of life along the way. Successful leaders don't try to suck it up and do it all themselves. They surround themselves with other people who have "been there and done that before" through advisory boards, industry peers, CEO peer groups, team members, coaches and mentors.

**2. FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS** ■ It is far more efficient to focus 80 per cent of your time and energy on your areas of strength and delegate or outsource the other activities that someone else can do better. To discover your strengths, take the Clifton-Strengths assessment, and ask for feedback from internal and external stakeholders. Then, reallocate

your time to focus on things that are aligned with your areas of strength, and delegate activities that aren't. This will enable you to achieve exponential results.

**3. ELIMINATE EGOTALK** ■ Everyone has an ego. We all play the "blame game," get defensive, make other people wrong, and judge others. Learn how to park your ego, take responsibility and accountability for all aspects of your life, show respect and value other perspectives to show up as a leader. This will enable you to lead the pace of exponential change regardless of the inevitable resistance that occurs.

**4. PRACTISE MENTAL TOUGHNESS** ■ Mental toughness is about focusing on success daily, and having the courage to move forward when the going gets tough. We all dip "below the line" from time to time, but your ability to stay positive at least 80 per cent of the time is essential to mental toughness. It is achieved by having a compelling vision, focusing on what you want and visualizing success. Reliving positive moments rather than mistakes and letting go of worry, guilt and regrets will enable you to maximize your energy, be present and not listen to the thousands of negative thoughts that enter our heads each day. Most of the 60,000 thoughts that go through your head every day are negative, and pull you below the line, where most people spend up to 80 per cent of their time. The key to exponential leadership is to reverse this, and spend 80 per cent of your time above the line, where you are a better problem solver, make better decisions and are a better leader.

**5. USE THE HAPPINESS FORMULA** ■ Leaders can waste a lot of time being miserable and playing the blame game when they're not

happy. Learn to apply the happiness formula to change. You can be happy no matter what when you match your life conditions with your expectations. Surround yourself with other exponential leaders (peers, mentors, friends, family, colleagues) every day and you will enjoy the journey and achieve exponential results.

**6. INNOVATE AND DISRUPT** ■ Let go of the past and experiment by introducing new methods, ideas or products. If you are not disrupting your customers, employees and business model, your competitors will be disrupting you. Surround yourself with people who think differently. Diversity is key to innovation. If you surround yourself with people who think just like you, you will miss out on the opportunity to lead the pace of change in your industry. It takes courage to innovate and disrupt and to become an exponential leader.

**7. EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY** ■ In today's world, every business is a technology business. As a leader, you must learn and try new technologies, so you can be an exemplar for others and outpace your competition. In the past 90 days what new technologies have you personally embraced or experimented with? Drones, Google Home, Zoom? If not, why not? ↩



*Nancy MacKay is the founder and CEO of MacKay CEO Forums, with a vision to populate the world with better leaders.*

# LEADERSHIP, MILLENNIAL-STYLE

Meet 3 millennial leaders who are managing people and companies on their own terms

INTERVIEWS BY MICHELLE HOPKINS



## MAILI WONG

**Today, when things get chaotic, I'm the stabilizing force. I'm calm, cool and collected in the face of risk**

## MAILI WONG

PORTFOLIO MANAGER AND AUTHOR

Maili Wong was working on the fifth floor of New York City's World Financial Center on September 11, 2001, when the two planes struck.

"Our tower was connected to the World Trade Center. When the second plane hit, the whole building shook," says Wong, first vice-president and portfolio manager of the Wong Group at CIBC Wood Gundy.

The events of 9/11 might have destroyed her sense of security, but it would come to shape her vision of leadership. "Before that happened, I would take the safe path," says Wong, who is also the bestselling author of *Smart Risk: Invest Like the Wealthy to Achieve a Work-Optional Life*. "Today, when things get chaotic, I'm the stabilizing force. I'm calm, cool and collected in the face of risk."

Now highly successful with her own wealth management practice, Wong practises a "Don't tell people what to do; empower them" approach to leading her team of nine. "Sometimes mistakes are made, but rather than place blame, we focus on: what is the corrective action and what can we learn from our errors?" she says. "I help lead others through a deep-rooted sense of safety, by encouraging diversity of thought, as I believe it creates a constant state of evolution and empowerment."

Although 9/11 defined Wong in many ways, mentors also played a pivotal role, most notably her father, Terrence Wong. "Dad taught me to share credit and take credit when due," Wong says. "He also told me, 'Let go of ego and lead with the right intentions.' I celebrate the synergy of harmony, independence and collective success.... I value freedom of expression and independent thought."

## GENESA GREENING

**PRESIDENT AND CEO, BC WOMEN'S HOSPITAL & HEALTH CENTRE FOUNDATION**

**G**enesa Greening believes in a collaborative work environment. She values open participation from individuals with different ideas and perspectives. "I describe my leadership style as transparent, communicative and engaging."

Before becoming CEO at the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre Foundation in October 2016, Greening served as executive director of First United Church Community Ministry Society. Over the years, she made a name for herself raising money for non-profit organizations.

Her biggest ally was the late Virginia Greene, one of B.C.'s most successful business and community leaders. Greene was responsible for marketing Expo 86, and was deputy minister with the Province of British Columbia and a successful business entrepreneur. Early on in her career, Greening says Greene took her under her wing, introducing her to some of the city's most influential women. "Virginia was everything I wanted to be ... authentic, transparent and true to who she was," Greening says. "She was also opinionated, strong-willed, gifted and yet graceful, passionate and wholly female."

Greening's other mentor was Krista Thompson, executive director at Covenant House. "From Krista, I learned about the complexities of a political environment,"



Greening says. "I owe a lot to both as they taught me to believe in myself, trust in my decisions and be unapologetic about leading others."

From former bosses, Greening understood early on that the old-school ways of micromanaging don't work in today's workplace. Today, Greening has a team of 26 "exceptionally dedicated people" working for her. "I'm not afraid to hire gifted women who are braver, smarter and more capable than me, because then the organization can only thrive."



### GENESA GREENING

**I'm not afraid to hire gifted women who are braver, smarter and more capable than me, because then the organization can only thrive**

## RAVY MINHAS-MEHROKE

**CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, BOMBAY BROW BAR INC.**

**T**here was a time, a few years back, when Ravy Minhas-Mehroke looked in the mirror and didn't like what she saw: it was the eyebrows, to be exact. "It was that complete frustration that I couldn't find anywhere in downtown Vancouver to get my eyebrows threaded," she says.

It was that discontentment, and trouble finding work during the 2008-09 global recession, that led her to launch Bombay Brow Bar in 2009, alongside her sister, Amy Minhas. "I was already thinking about opening my own business ... I just didn't know what," says Minhas-Mehroke.

Today, Minhas-Mehroke is co-founder and CEO of the Bombay Brow Bar Inc., which has three locations in the Lower Mainland, as well as the Bombay Beauty Bar. The company has grown to more than 40 "team members," up from five when they started.

At Bombay Brow Bar, Minhas-Mehroke promotes a collaborative environment where team members can see the impact of their work, understand their value and are recognized for their efforts. "My team is part of every



### RAVY MINHAS-MEHROKE

**I can't be successful without my team. My role might be different, but we are all on the same team, sharing the same vision**

decision we make. We share feedback all the time and everything is done as a team," Minhas-Mehroke says. "I can't be successful without my team. My role might be different, but we are all on the same team, sharing the same vision."

Minhas-Mehroke credits serial entrepreneur and long-time mentor Judy Brooks, co-founder of the successful Blo Blow Dry Bar franchise, for teaching her how to become a better leader and business owner. "Judy taught me to think outside the box, that execution is everything and to look through the client's lens."

Brooks says Minhas-Mehroke's open and collaborative leadership approach is a hallmark of the millennial generation. "Millennials view organizations much less hierarchically than previous generations," Brooks says millennials, perhaps more than previous generations, want to inspire others, make a difference in the world and lead companies that care about more than the bottom line.

They're also less afraid to seek help; in fact they "actively seek out mentorships," Brooks says. "The young women I mentor are brave, courageous, bold and not afraid to ask questions. These millennials possess self-confidence, lots of energy and they multi-task efficiently. They believe in doing well by doing good." 🐦

# LEADING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

PENNY WILSON | Organizations must take a human-centred approach to leading in an era of digital disruption



The key to leadership in the digital era comes down to the human element – managing personal mindsets and building employees' digital capabilities so that they can better connect with customers

I have been part of numerous digital transformations throughout my three-decade technology career. In the 1980s on Wall Street, we transformed equity trading from five-part paper slips to a touch of a button. In the 1990s, we used computer graphics to transform art from a pencil into a 3D virtual world. Now at Hootsuite, we are transforming human connection through social media. Disruptive technological change is not new but the pace of change has accelerated. As a result, our work and personal lives are being redefined by the use of technology quicker than ever.

According to We Are Social's *Digital in 2017* report, more than half of the world's population owns a smartphone. Having access to the world in our pockets has created an expectation of immediacy. Today's customers expect to get anything they want, when they want it. Last fall, I was fortunate to visit Morocco. It didn't matter whether I was in the middle of the Sahara desert or on top of the High Atlas mountains, every guide and camel driver had a cell phone in his or her pocket and was constantly connected to the broader world. Social, mobile and real time have fundamentally changed human behaviour, which means businesses must rewrite how they operate in the digital age.

Organizations of all sizes must embrace reinvention or face losing market share. According to *Inc.*, in 10 years 40 per cent of the Fortune 500 companies will no longer exist. Disruption from new technology (among other factors) impacts a company's longevity on the list.

The key to leadership in the digital era comes down to the human element – managing personal mindsets and building employees' digital capabilities so that they can better connect with customers. As leaders, keep these points in mind when embracing change and building empowered teams:

■ **Adopt an adaptable mindset.** Digital thinking must be incorporated into the company culture, which means it needs to start at the top and be reinforced at every level of the organization. As a leader, you set the tone for how the company approaches innovation. Be comfortable with change and disruption. In many cases, there are no predefined road maps to approaching new business problems. It will require unconventional thinking that may conflict with previously held notions. An agile mindset will pave the way for curiosity and discovering new ideas that you may not even conceive of today.

■ **Empower employees through training and communication.** Despite generations maturing in an age of digital, there is a huge digital skills gap in business. Seventy-seven per cent of companies surveyed by Capgemini considered missing digital skills a key hurdle to the

company's digital transformation. Work with your people team to brainstorm dynamic ways to approach learning and development, and don't silo training to one team. Every department has an opportunity to harness technology and deliver the best possible customer experience consistently across every touchpoint.

■ **Listen.** At the core of good leadership is listening. Listening to your employees is key to productivity, culture and ultimately profitability. And listening to your customers can lead to substantial improvements in your business. Technology, such as social media, gives companies an opportunity to obtain the raw, unvarnished truth at scale. Harness valuable data to understand your customers' pain points and tailor your strategies accordingly. Be comfortable with letting your customers lead you. They will help identify ways to leapfrog the competition.

Technological disruption can be scary, but the future is bright for those who are fearless. 🐸



Penny Wilson is the chief marketing officer at Hootsuite.

# THE #METOO MOVEMENT'S NEXT ACT

**KAREN DOSANJH** | Thanks to brave women speaking up about being victims of sexual misconduct, workplace behaviour is changing. It's up to everyone to ensure the advancements we make stick



**This transformative moment in time should create a positive shift today and for the future of work. To make that happen, we must all do our part**

**2017** will go down in history as the year the too-silent issue of sexual harassment in the workplace finally found its voice. The unsettling allegations of sexual misconduct against powerful men across a wide range of industries have created a seismic and long-overdue shift in how society views sexual misconduct. Thanks to a number of brave women (and men) who have spoken publicly about their experiences, the narrative is changing around what is and is no longer acceptable behaviour in the workplace.

Still, we have a long way to go before completely eradicating this pervasive issue. Consider a recent Government of Canada survey on harassment and sexual violence in the workplace that shows 60 per cent of respondents experienced some level of sexual harassment or violence on the job. Half of the survey respondents said the harassing or violent behaviour was from a superior. Not surprisingly, 94 per cent of respondents who reported experiencing sexual harassment were women.

What's also troubling is the wide-ranging impact. "Harassment and sexual violence in the workplace negatively impact not only the person experiencing these behaviours, but also their families, co-workers and their employers," the survey report states.

If there's a positive side to the troubling issue of sexual misconduct, it's that the allegations against so many high-profile men have

empowered more victims to speak out. The #MeToo movement playing out across traditional and social media has revealed the magnitude of this global problem.

Even I felt compelled, for the first time, to share my experience with verbal sexual harassment in the workplace that took place very early in my career. Since then, before I even considered a job opportunity, regardless of the compensation and benefits, I first asked myself: Can I trust these people? Will I be safe here?

It's a question women – and men – should feel entitled to ask, no matter the profession or stage in their careers. If we've learned anything from the recent sexual misconduct scandals, it's that everyone should feel safe at work, without question. No employee, regardless of age or gender, should feel afraid to report harassment in the workplace for fear of repercussion, retaliation or losing his or her job. We all have the right to stand up and speak out against behaviour that goes against the laws of common decency and humanity.

Corporations must also pay closer attention to the problem. The events of 2017 prove there is little tolerance for sexual misconduct in today's workplace, or society in general. Reporting the truth can, should and hopefully now will result in swift action against the alleged perpetrators.

This transformative moment in time should create a positive shift today and for the future of work. To make that happen, we must all do our part.

It's an issue I've been discussing with my teenage sons. My husband and I are focused on raising kind, respectful and earnest young men who will be good people who also do good work. We now have open conversations at the dinner table about the type of colleagues and leaders they want to be. As a family, we discuss how we can all help contribute to a workplace with greater accountability, empathy and respectfulness – a place where every employee feels safe. In every job they hold, throughout their careers, we hope our sons will help foster a workplace culture that prioritizes common courtesy and decency. Doing the right thing, no matter what, will always be the right career move.

I encourage everyone to use this important period in history as an opportunity to change workplace cultures for the better, once and for all. Let's also continue the dialogue about the importance of right and wrong, and help to create teachable moments for future generations. After all, it's our actions that will influence what happens next. It's up to us to ensure the advancements we make today actually stick. 🗨️



*Karen Dosanjh is the innovation director, global brand, at GE Digital. She also established and leads the GE Women's Network for B.C.*

# WOMEN TO WOMEN

*Women in Business* profiles three female-run organizations in the Lower Mainland helping to support women in the workplace

CAITLIN O'FLANAGAN

**W**omen are coming together in huge numbers to support one another. Whether it's speaking out about sexual misconduct, gender inequality or simply lifting each other up when life gets tough, many women are working together to change the status quo. Here in the Lower Mainland, women are supporting each other through programs and initiatives that help them succeed professionally. Their goal is to create safe environments for women to network with other women, strengthen leadership skills and ultimately provide a community of support. Here are three organizations doing their part.

## FEMALE FUNDERS

Female Funders is an online education platform that's working to inspire more women to become angel investors, individuals who provide capital for a startup business, often in exchange for convertible debt or ownership equity. Industry statistics show fewer than 20 per cent of all angel investors today are women.

"We're trying to increase the diversity of thought in early-stage investing, because it not only supports women investors, but we're hoping that as a result, it will support female founders as well," says Lauren Robinson, executive director at Female Funders.

While Female Funders is largely about educating women, it also aims to create a network of connections for female investors, says Naomi Giberson, Female Funders' new ventures associate. The online program allows women to sign up at different stages, whether they're ready to invest or are still unsure and just want to sit down with an angel investor.

Giberson and Robinson believe Vancouver has a close-knit community of women who are interested and have the means to invest. Female Funders strives to create a safe space for these women.

"Angel investing is stereotypically just pale, male and stale, and women don't always feel safe in that



environment, to express their ideas or ask the questions that they want to ask," says Giberson. "And to give them that space, where it's all women supporting women, they might be more likely to step outside their boundaries."

Aspiring female angels gather to learn about angel capital from accomplished investors through Female Funder's Angel School | SUBMITTED

## MINERVA BC

Minerva BC is a non-profit founded in 1999 that provides leadership programs for girls and women. Its goal is to increase the contribution and influence of women in the workplace. Minerva BC also works to address systemic barriers that can work against women's equality and advancement.

Tina Strehlke, Minerva's interim CEO, says that its programs allow women to step into their leadership and give them the self-knowledge that they need to progress in their careers. She says women who go through their programs have gone on to make huge changes both for themselves and for other employees at their organizations.

"We have a lot of women who are stepping forward to say, 'This is important. It needs to be in our organizations. We need to talk about it,' and they're doing that," she says.

Strehlke doesn't feel that companies or organizations are choosing to be discriminatory but rather that our society has a history of being biased and unbalanced.

"If you're not creating organizations and opportunities for women to grow, progress or advance in their careers, then they're going to opt out," Strehlke says. "This issue hasn't gone away. People seem to think that women's issues were all solved in the '70s and that it's not that bad. But when you actually look at who's got a seat at the table it's still pretty inequitable."



Tina Strehlke, Minerva's interim CEO, says her organization's programs empower women as they advance in their careers | SUBMITTED

## Women to women



Natasha Irvine, marketing and events manager at Dress for Success Vancouver, has seen first-hand how her organization helps women enter the workforce and get ahead | SUBMITTED

### DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Dress for Success Vancouver isn't just about providing clothing for women looking for work. The organization also strives to empower women by offering career counselling and programs that develop professional skills. Whether it's workshops about how to ask for a raise,

how to be confident in public speaking or how to create a LinkedIn profile, their goal is to get women into the workforce and to help them succeed once they're there.

Of course, a new outfit can also help to build self-esteem. Natasha Irvine, marketing and events manager at Dress for Success Vancouver, has seen it happen time and again. In some cases, women come in with a job interview that afternoon and have nothing to wear. "They leave and they're just transformed in that new outfit. Absolutely transformed. It's incredible," she says.

Dress for Success assists more than 2,000 women each year, with the help of donations and volunteers, both from companies and from individuals. Irvine says donors have numerous reasons for contributing. They say, "My mom was a single mom and that's why I support you guys, or I had to live in a shelter for a time and I see the work you're doing and I see how I could have benefited from that," Irvine says.

While the professional attire is an essential part of Dress for Success, Irvine says its career centre and the skills workshops are also vital to supporting women taking their first or next career step.

"Women helping women is hot right now; it needs to be. The conversation needs to be expanded and the awareness needs to continue. There's room for everybody at the top," says Irvine. "We really do have to work together to support one another, because it still is a very male-dominated world." 🐦



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