

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

# CONSCIOUS COMPANY

THE FUTURE OF  
BUSINESS AS USUAL

## HELLRAISERS

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THE WORLD

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# CONSCIOUS COMPANY

THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS AS USUAL



July / August 2016 | Issue 8

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## FROM THE EDITORS

The fight for gender equality has been ongoing for ages, punctuated by historic victories such as the women's suffrage movement, Title IX, and The Equal Pay Act. Yet battles still continue, both here in the US — with equal pay for equal work and transgender rights at the forefront of national conversations — and internationally, where women and their allies continue the fight against injustices ranging from sex trafficking to honor killings.

It's easy to be frustrated with how far we still need to go as a society to achieve gender equality, yet there are so many reasons for hope. As we look at the mission-based businesses that are proliferating globally, one thing is increasingly clear: the new economy demands women in leadership roles. No longer are companies able to operate from a place of command-and-control, hierarchy, and iron fists — quite the opposite, in fact. The most successful leadership teams in the new purpose-driven economy are defined by collaboration, communication, shared leadership, deep listening, empathy, and community — qualities that women often naturally possess or that are typically more feminine.

In this issue, we explore gender issues and the nuanced definition of leadership that is emerging in the workplace, predicated on a balance between the feminine and masculine. We found leaders in this new economy who are giving us reason to celebrate, women who are redefining banking, elevating architecture, single-handedly forcing the largest companies in the world to examine gender pay equity, and more. We hope the stories inspire you to recognize that the business case for women in positions of power is ironclad and the time for more feminine leadership has come, and then give you the tools you need to effectively join the fight in your own workplace.

With respect and gratitude,

Maren, Meghan, and the Conscious Company team

Photo: Julie Harris Photography



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### Corrections

In "Top 15 Affordable MBA Programs" (May/June 2016), we listed the incorrect full-program tuition for two schools. Hult International Business School's MBA costs \$69,800, while the MBA at Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey costs \$76,500.



**SUM + SUBSTANCE**  
**SHARES THE STORIES OF PEOPLE**  
**WHO HAVE CREATED PURPOSE**  
**AND MEANING IN THEIR JOBS.**  
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TREND, LISTENING TO YOUR GUT, FAILING  
GLORIOUSLY, WORKING HARD, AND FINDING  
OPPORTUNITY IN INOPPORTUNE TIMES.  
**EVERY STORY IS DIFFERENT AND**  
**EVERY STORY OFFERS A CHALLENGE.**  
**THESE CHALLENGES WILL**  
**PROPEL YOU AS YOU GO**  
**FORTH AND DO GOOD WORK.**



# These Evolved Enterprises Are Committed to Changing “Business as Usual”

**I**magine a whole new way for companies to align purpose and profits. Business could be the ultimate lever for making a difference in the world. However, what’s worked before is no longer an option. **These Evolved Enterprises™ are committed to moving beyond simply being transactional to truly transforming and even transcending the old rules of business.** They believe in a new definition of what a business can do, be and evolve into. Together they’ve joined the Evolved Enterprise Catalyst CO | alition to become part of a collective leading the way for the new era.

*Conscious Company Readers May Qualify for a Practically Free Copy of The New Evolved Enterprise Book That’s Igniting this New Movement (Read Details Below)...*

## “The Coming Business SHIFT That Could Change Everything”

**Here’s How To Align The True "Soul" Of Your Business With More Impact, Meaning, And Happiness - That Naturally Delivers Even Greater Profits**

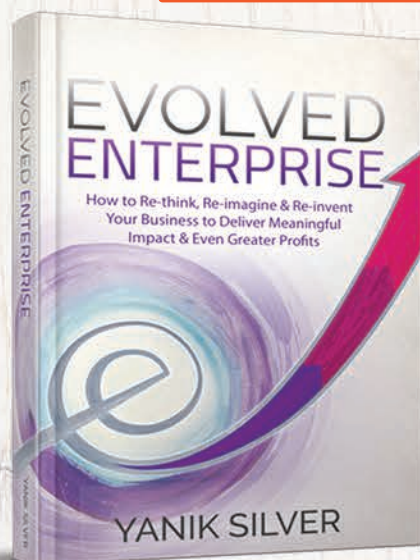
### ~~25,000~~ 15,000 Copies of The New Evolved Enterprise Book Available

This is the book launching this movement. To spread this message we initially committed to getting the first 10,000 copies of the Evolved Enterprise book out (at cost) to the visionary entrepreneurs and emerging global leaders who can make a difference.

Based on how fast those 10,000 books flew off the shelves, we quickly realized there are a lot more than 10,000 entrepreneurs who are eager to get the blueprint of how business can become one of the biggest levers for good—while actually being good for business.

To make sure we get this book into the hands of all the forward-thinking entrepreneurs out there who are ready to hear the Evolved Enterprise message and would make great additions to our community... we decided we needed to give away not 10,000... but 25,000 copies of this book. (You simply pay the hard cost of getting the book to your door.)

**Claim your copy of the new Evolved Enterprise™ book that’s igniting a movement here: [www.EvolvedEnterprise.com/conscious](http://www.EvolvedEnterprise.com/conscious)**



*“There’s a transformative shift in business, and what worked before is no longer an option. It’s time for evolved entrepreneurs, visionary creators, and change makers to rewrite the rules of business for the 21st century.”*



**Tony Hsieh**  
NY Times bestselling author of *Delivering Happiness* and CEO of Zappos.com



**John Paul DeJoria**  
co-founder, Paul Mitchell Hair Care

*“..absolutely vital in the 21st century”*



**Chip Conley**  
former CEO of Joie de Vivre hotel group and author of *PEAK* and *Emotional Equations*

## Each member has agreed to the following code of conduct and creed:



- ✓ *Be fully ethical and honest in all business dealings with customers, suppliers, partners, communities and agencies.*
- ✓ *Provide transparency for how the organization delivers an impact*
- ✓ *Considers how each shareholder is affected by all decisions*
- ✓ *Uphold hiring practices that promote employee diversity and empowerment*
- ✓ *Seek to continually grow and evolve collectively and individually within the organization*
- ✓ *Be seen as an industry and marketplace leader*
- ✓ *Stand for something greater than simply one bottom line*
- ✓ *Commit to rewriting the rules of business so everyone wins*

## Businesses from all different industries and parts of the world, along with hundreds more, are part of the new Evolved Enterprise™ Catalyst COalition:

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<a href="http://www.incisionmarketing.com">http://www.incisionmarketing.com</a>	Helping Small Businesses Repair Their Sales Funnels	<a href="http://www.winteamssuccess.com">http://www.winteamssuccess.com</a>	Creating a society of global passive millionaires
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<a href="http://www.magical-marketing.com">http://www.magical-marketing.com</a>	Magical brands and websites that attract your Soul Tribe.	<a href="http://epicmatcha.com">http://epicmatcha.com</a>	10x more potent than regular green tea, USDA Organic.
<a href="http://www.findingPurpose.com">http://www.findingPurpose.com</a>	Transformational mental and emotional fitness strategies.	<a href="http://www.lifecoachtrainingonline.com/">http://www.lifecoachtrainingonline.com/</a>	Become a Certified Professional Life Coach - Over 6000 Grads
<a href="http://www.magneticinternetsolutions.com">http://www.magneticinternetsolutions.com</a>	Fast Lead generation Results for Cosmetic Surgeons	<a href="http://ActionCOACHTeamSage.com">http://ActionCOACHTeamSage.com</a>	Helping business owners get the most out of their business.
<a href="http://ilovetoreview.com">http://ilovetoreview.com</a>	Marketing service for compliant product reviews on Amazon.	<a href="http://esensewebdesign.com">http://esensewebdesign.com</a>	eSense = More clients. Better processes. Maximum impact.
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The background features a dark blue field with a light blue grid. Overlaid on this are several gears of various sizes and colors, including white, light blue, and dark blue. Some gears are solid, while others are just outlines. The text is centered in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

# **BUILDING THE BUSINESS**



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# THE BUSINESS CASE FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE IS IRONCLAD.

## WE KNOW THAT...

Companies with the highest number of women on the board of directors outperform those with the lowest **BY 26% ON RETURN ON INVESTED CAPITAL.**

The cost of turnover for knowledge workers ranges from **200%-500% OF SALARY.**

Companies with women CEOs have experienced better financial performance, outperforming both the market and their industries by up to

**28%**

Compared with men at the same level, SVP-level women are

**20%**

less likely to leave, and women in the C-suite are about half as likely to leave.

**A HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN DIRECTORS** is correlated with higher Corporate Social Performance ratings.

Companies with **WOMEN DIRECTORS** had a lower risk of insolvency than other companies.

**WOMEN OUTPERFORMED MEN**

on the majority of leadership competencies in several studies, including "tenacity," "practices self-development," and "displays high integrity and honesty."

**GENDER-BALANCED TEAMS** create better conditions for innovation.

**MORE GENDER DIVERSITY** increases the probability that priority deliverables are achieved before schedule.

**THE COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE** of a group significantly correlates to the proportion of females in the group.



# SO WHY ARE THESE NUMBERS STILL SO DEPRESSING?

YET...

Women make up  
**50%**  
of the global working-age population and provide 75% of the unpaid care work worldwide.

Only  
**5%**  
of Fortune 500 companies have female CEOs.

Women make up only  
**23%**  
of SVP leaders and  
**17%**  
of C-suite executives.

As of 2013, women held only 17% of board seats in the US.

Women generate only 37% of global GDP.

**FEMALE LEADERS**  
are held to more rigorous standards and are more likely to be fired than their male counterparts.

Women still make just **\$0.78** for every dollar men make.

Only  
**63%**  
of men say the country needs to continue to make changes to give men and women equality in the workplace.

**LESS THAN HALF**  
of workers believe that gender diversity is a top priority for their CEO, and only a third view it as a top priority for their direct manager.





HOW  
TO

# CREATE AN AWAKENED, INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

BY CATHERINE BELL

Having an inclusive workplace with more women and minorities is good for business. The more inclusive the workplace, the higher-performing and more innovative it tends to be (see previous page). It also makes sense to get as broad a perspective as possible when leading an organization. Plus, it feels better to include people.

## THE BLEAK PORTRAIT

Despite all we know about why we should include women fully in the workplace, the picture for women is far from rosy. Globally, the women's labor force participation rate (the percentage of women employed or seeking work) decreased from 52.4 percent to 49.6 percent between 1995 and 2015. The odds that a woman will participate in the labor force remain almost 30 percent less than those for a man. Women earn

78 percent of what men earn. Women hold only 12 percent of the world's board seats, and only 4 percent of CEOs of S&P 500 companies are women. Women are more likely to be appointed to a board that has witnessed a decline in performance, and thus have a decreased likelihood of success as a result. When women do attain senior positions, they experience more stress, less job satisfaction, and fewer rewards, which further decreases their likelihood of success and limits their promotion opportunities. Female leaders are held to more rigor-

ous standards and are more likely to be fired than their male counterparts. Men tend to apply to positions if they believe they meet 60 percent of the eligibility requirements, whereas women apply only if they believe they are perfectly suited. In addition, when women act in a manner inconsistent with gender stereotypes, they are evaluated less positively and are more likely to be punished, both formally and informally.

This data is depressing. We can do better.



## OWN YOUR BIASES

### LET'S PAINT ANOTHER PICTURE TOGETHER

Here are some steps we can take today to foster greater inclusivity in our organizations. Remember, a more inclusive workplace is a better-performing workplace.

- **Become aware of our biases.** The bleak statistics make it clear that *everyone* has deep-rooted perceptual slants — it's just human nature. It's better to own and be aware of these biases (see right) than to pretend they don't exist.
- **Ensure that women are on the hiring list.** For every job you have available, check that your shortlist of candidates includes women. Remember that women tend to apply only for jobs they feel perfect for. Women: lean in to not being a 100 percent fit for the job and be willing to take a risk with an application. Hiring managers: stay aware of this tendency as you evaluate applicants. Hiring female candidates may require some deliberate sourcing. (See more about recruiting for diversity on page 14.) Be aware of the bias toward hiring women leaders in challenging times, and hire women leaders in good times too.
- **When hiring, be sure to pay fairly.** Make offers based not on what someone is currently making but rather on what constitutes fair compensation. Look at salary surveys to ascertain appropriate compensation packages.
- **Consider letting employees determine and manage their own hours — especially senior leaders.** Give people control and show you trust them, and magic happens. My consulting firm has had unlimited vacation for years, yet we have never had to let someone go for taking too many holidays.
- **Create mentorship programs for both men and women that highlight female leadership and celebrate transformational leadership.** Men who participate will be more likely to see females as leaders, and women who participate will have more opportunities to become leaders.
- **Demand that females be present and equally represented at all levels of organizations.** This is especially important for CEOs and board members.

Inclusivity is going to require a reset of our system to one that's more awakened, open, and adaptive. We need to see inclusivity in leadership across society, from the political sphere to religious organizations to private equity to how entrepreneurs are funded. Ultimately, working together differently, we can awaken an inclusive workplace. Remember: increase diversity, increase organizational performance. It's up to all of us — including you. ⚙️

*Catherine Bell is the author of the revolutionary new business book "The Awakened Company." She founded BluEra, an executive search and team transformation company that was recently on the Profit 500 list and is a best workplace. She has worked around the globe from the UK to Cuba. She has an MBA from the Smith School of Business at Queen's University, a Sociology degree from Western University, is certified in the Enneagram, is a yoga instructor, and is currently on the board of the Distress Centre.*



Take the first step toward changing the stats by starting to notice these well-proven biases in yourself. Don't beat yourself up for them; know that they are just human nature. But when you make the unconscious conscious, you can be part of the change.

▶ **ATTRIBUTION ERROR:** the tendency to give undue emphasis to internal factors such as personality instead of external factors accidental to the situation when evaluating another person's behavior. Example: I assume you didn't meet your sales targets because you are lazy, rather than because the economy hit a slump this quarter.

▶ **SIMILAR-TO-ME EFFECT:** the tendency to favor people who are physically and professionally similar to oneself. This effect has consequences during interviewing and hiring, during performance evaluation, and even in choosing whom to mentor.

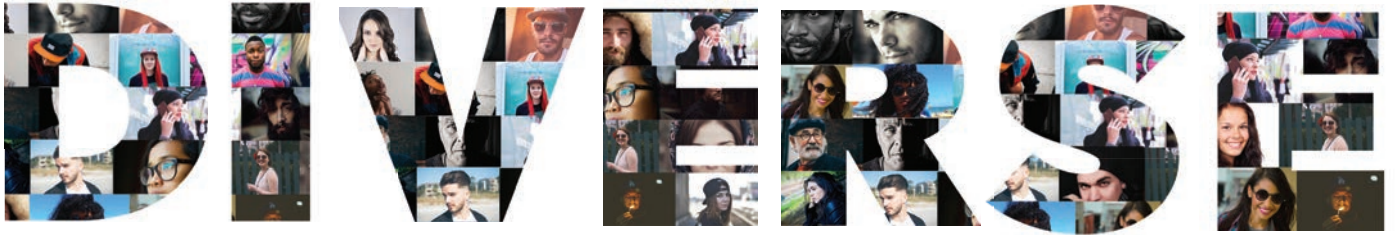
▶ **HALO EFFECT:** the tendency to use global evaluations to make judgments about specific traits. Example: I assume that because Jim is attractive and a star athlete, he will also be a great engineer.

▶ **FIRST-IMPRESSION ERROR:** the tendency to give undue emphasis to our first impression of someone. When combined with stereotypes about a particular group of people, this can lead to powerful, unfair negative perceptions that are hard to change. Example: I assume that because you come from an economically disadvantaged area and you speak with an accent, you are less intelligent and educated than I am.





# YOU NEED A MORE



# WORKPLACE

## HERE'S HOW TO GET ONE

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**BY BRIAN MOHR**

When most companies talk about diversity, they mean the usual suspects: gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation. But diversity goes way beyond that. Promoting diversity is about eliminating groupthink so you can inspire new, creative solutions and keep a competitive edge. Here are five unconventional paths to recruiting more diverse candidates of all kinds.



## BE CONSCIOUS OF YOUR BIASES

The first and biggest diversity mistake is assuming your team doesn't have biases. Everyone has preconceived notions (see page 13), so it's important to stay conscious of how these affect recruiting decisions. We at Y Scouts take advice from Zen teacher Shunryu Suzuki, who wrote in his book "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind" that "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few." You can apply this insight by recognizing areas in which you and your team consider yourselves experts — and thus are maybe unconsciously less open to possibilities that would be worthwhile to explore. Then, encourage everyone to "leave the title at the door" and think like a beginner. Pay close attention to the language and tone you use when critiquing a candidate. Doing so could help you catch an underlying bias. Most importantly, continue to invite your team to mindfully stay open, eager, and aware of preconceptions so recruiting diverse candidates becomes second nature.

## BE AWARE OF HOW YOU MARKET THE POSITION

Switch up your job advertising terms. For example, you may use a similar line in every job posting that asks for "bold and insatiable" candidates. These terms can attract more masculine traits, while the terms "empathy and vulnerability" could attract more feminine traits. According to a study by the Technical University of Munich, the words "dedicated," "responsible," and "sociable" also appealed more to women. If you're concerned about age bias, avoid using phrases that typically lure younger professionals, like "digitally savvy" or "lover of all technology." Also, consider whether or not a degree is truly needed for the position. Sometimes requiring one can adversely impact candidates from less privileged circumstances. The bottom line is that conscious leaders like you need to bring more awareness

to the terms used to describe potential candidates. Diversifying descriptions will attract candidates with more varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

## LOOK OUTSIDE OF YOUR INDUSTRY

Companies that only hire from within their industry miss out on big opportunities for diversity, growth, and innovation. The same is true when leaders stay in a position for too long and start feeling complacent. Repotting is the answer to staying fresh and inviting new approaches. The concept, which first appeared in "Self-Renewal," by John Gardner, and was made popular years later by Ernie Arbuckle, a former dean of the Stanford School of Global Business, encourages leaders to reboot their careers every ten years or so. You can use this theory to invite more diversity, new ideas, and unique perspectives by recruiting outside of your industry and encouraging leaders to move to new opportunities after their ten years are up. Remember that just because your connections are inside the industry it doesn't mean that their acquaintances are. Ask around for referrals, work with a search firm, or proactively reach out to people in other networking groups. Then, as you consider your options, think about the actual skills and behaviors that apply to successful people in your industry. It isn't necessarily about the inside knowledge; it's about how the prospective leader does the work.

## SEEK ALTERNATIVE RECRUITING EVENTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Avoid attending only so-called "diversity" recruitment events. Instead, your company needs to be present and visible at activities that matter to a wide, varied group of people. We suggest partnering with high schools, community colleges, and four-year programs to build relationships, trust, and visibility throughout the year. This is

particularly important in STEM and other fields where women and people of color are underrepresented. When you attend events, make sure you bring your most successful executives and possible mentors to represent potential career paths and keep students engaged after they graduate.

## CREATE AN INCLUSIVE COMPANY CULTURE

Recruiting diverse candidates to your company is hard, but keeping them is harder. Think about how you can create community for those new hires who may not have a strong cultural network to plug into at your company. Then ask yourself, "What does my employee onboarding and orientation look like? Does it ensure every new hire understands and feels welcome within the cultural norms and expectations of the company?" If you can't confidently say yes, consider hiring an onboarding expert, enlisting a mentor for new hires, or creating an affinity group to help employees get accustomed to the new landscape.

If you want to stay competitive in a global economy, you have to be open to new approaches to diversity. Start with these five unconventional tips and be prepared to watch your business change in a productive, profitable way. ⚙️



*Brian Mohr is the co-founder of Y Scouts, which is in the business of finding purpose-aligned and performance-proven leaders who help organizations achieve their missions faster. With years of deep experience in recruiting and leadership development, Y Scouts has seen how the combination of purpose and diversity can be the driver of success.*









# HOW TO DISAPPOINT OTHERS AND STILL EXCEL PROFESSIONALLY



Learning to disappoint others is an essential skill for career success — but that doesn't make it easy. Follow these 5 tips to get better at saying

# NO

BY GRACY OBUCHOWICZ

I grew up a people-pleaser, thinking that if I could take care of everyone else, then I would be granted total life success. This was partially true; people-pleasing has really helped me. I've always been a great student and have excelled professionally. I've even been called charming. Still, being overly accommodating has also hurt me professionally. My fear of disappointing others has made me sacrifice my own honest opinions in order to be likeable. I've gotten so worried about coming off well in a meeting that I've overlooked important details in projects. And when I'm not expressing myself fully, I become increasingly passive-aggressive, which can block progress and hurt professional relationships.

It has taken me years of rigorous self-examination, but I've learned that disappointing others is often an essential step to success in my career. This doesn't make it easy. Each time I have to disappoint someone or challenge a majority opinion, I need a big internal pep talk. But I do it in order to thrive as a professional — and as a human being. Here are my five strategies to help you wisely disappoint other people.





# 1

## REALIZE THAT YOU'RE NOT "TOO NEEDY"

I've always tried to keep my needs as quiet as possible. I used to throw myself into projects and dutifully work extra hours. But my needs would eventually surface, usually accompanied by a full-on crying breakdown in a bathroom stall. Sound familiar?

I've realized that it's not my actual needs that cause problems. Rather, my Herculean efforts to suppress those natural human requirements for basic self-care are what create strain. When I take on too much and allow tensions to build up inside of me, the eventual eruption is not pretty.

The kindest thing I can do for my work environment, myself, and everyone around me is set boundaries that give me true work-life balance. It always surprises me how easily I can find smart compromises or extra support when I voice my honest desires and ask for what I truly need.

# 2

## FIGURE OUT YOUR "F.O.M.O."

For years, I've suffered from the affliction of FOMO: Fear of Missing Out. It makes sense: belonging is an important human need, and our tribal ancestors had to stay connected to the group in order to survive. Today, this translates into FOMO.

In the past, when a new client approached me, or someone offered me an opportunity to teach a workshop, my lizard brain flashed and a "yes" tumbled out before I could even think. As a result, I spent years chronically overcommitted, sometimes even consciously double-booking myself in my effort to stay connected to everything and everybody. Worse, I projected my own FOMO onto other people. I convinced myself that the person asking me wouldn't be able to handle the rejection my saying no would ostensibly represent. Yet when I said yes out of FOMO, I would

often arrive late or cancel at the last minute, disappointing other people even more in the process. Really, the kindest thing I could have done was say no when I couldn't show up rested and positive to a meeting or event.

Like any addiction, there's a cure for FOMO: self-awareness. The more I can notice my own natural need for belonging, the easier it is to discern what I truly want from my time and energy. I commit to what I need and want to do. Then I kindly decline all other offers. This makes life so much easier for everyone.

# 3

## PRACTICE THE MANTRA "WHAT'S GOOD FOR ME IS GOOD FOR EVERYBODY"

Does this sound incredibly selfish to you? Try suspending your disbelief and begin practicing this principle. I say it to myself almost every day, and I'm always amazed to see it working — like when I have to change a meeting time and find that it's actually much better for my client. Following a thread of thought that interests me or asking a nagging question in a group can often unlock the solution to a problem that has been puzzling everyone.

This mantra becomes even more important during negotiations. If I try to be too accommodating and ask for less time, money, or support than I need, I'm doing a disservice not just to myself but to the common good. When I began my coaching practice, I knew from years of being chronically underpaid that I had to set my prices higher than made me comfortable if the venture was going to be sustainable. Even so, every time I got ready to reveal my price to a prospective client I would start sweating. Especially in the beginning, I received a few incredulous rejections. But I didn't back down, and kept asking. And I've found that the clients who don't hesitate at the price are the superstars of my program. Because they invest so heavily, they show up fully and make amazing breakthroughs. With their success, they prove that I set my prices correctly. Plus, those coaching fees give me the time and energy I need to show up fully for *their* success. In order to create this win-win situation, I have to stay strong and remember that what is good for me is good for everybody.





# 4

## LEARN TO CALL IN SICK

Calling in sick has always been one of my least-favorite tasks of all time. As soon I realize I probably ought to, I begin mucking through an unending river of guilt, and that mean voice in my head calls me lazy and tells me that I'm probably just faking it.

Last year, I interviewed Kansas City-based pastor Jessi Marcus for my podcast. We talked about my fear of calling in sick, and she told me she used to feel the same way until she reframed the issue in terms of social justice. She said she realized that if she didn't call in sick, she was upholding a culture where no one gets to rest. The decision may seem personal, but our distaste for rest affects people at the bottom of the economic food chain who are doing low-paid labor and who can't afford to take a day off, even when they desperately need one. It's up to all of us to create a world in which people are allowed to rest and recover. That means staring down our guilt, dialing our bosses, and advocating for a world where we are all allowed to take sick days. Since I learned to frame the issue that way, I've been amazed at how easily I can rearrange my schedule just by saying the magic words: "I can't come in today."

**"It's up to all of us to create a world in which people are allowed to rest and recover."**

If we want to be effective in our lives, we have to let go of the image that we can be perfect and make everyone happy. If we really want to take care of the people around us, we need to start with ourselves. What doesn't work is trying to be perfect and expecting others to do the same. It's way too stressful to live that way, and nobody can live up to such high standards.

With time and practice, you can learn to disappoint others in order to take care of yourself. You'll see that you're allowed to be a living, breathing human being who risks conflict in order to gain intimacy and integrity. By advocating for yourself, you will help others more than you will ever know. It will take courage, but you can do it. You'll be ungraceful the first few times you say no and set real boundaries, but those boundaries will still work. Your life and your relationships will get better and better and you will feel like yourself again. You'll finally realize that saying no to others is actually saying a big yes to your own great and powerful life. ⚙️

# 5

## REALIZE YOU'RE LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Every season, I lead a group of overworked professional women through a 10-week self-care and habit-changing process. I've watched more than 100 women go through this process, and am always amazed by how much one person's self-care can affect a greater system. Often, the partners and children of my clients will begin to change their own habits just because they are inspired by their wives and mothers. I get referrals from coworkers and bosses who are impressed by the increased radiance of my clients and their ability to respond calmly in stressful situations.



*Gracy Obuchowicz is a self-care mentor, workshop facilitator, and retreat leader in ever-stressed Washington, DC. She is a recovering perfectionist who has learned to live a life of real self-care and self-love. Through her self-care coaching programs, she helps overwhelmed professional women transform their lives. Get more of her essential self-care tips at [selfcarewithgracy.com](http://selfcarewithgracy.com).*





# GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES FOR STARTUPS

**Make sure you're creating a great place to work by understanding what the law requires, then adopting gender equality best practices to go above and beyond.**

BY RYAN SHAENING POKRASSO



Most entrepreneurs worked for someone else before they took the plunge into running their own venture, and many remember what it was like to have that inappropriate boss or that work environment that just seemed overly rigid, unfriendly, or flatly unfair. Despite the efforts of some progressive entrepreneurs, the median wage of a woman working full-time in 2013 was 78 cents for every dollar that her male counterpart earned.

If you're now the boss, you have an opportunity to do better. Creating a gender-equal work environment increases employee morale, productivity, and retention, lowers risk, and is good for business. Not to mention that it's simply the right thing to do. Make sure you're creating a great place to work by understanding what the law requires and then adopting best practices to go above and beyond.



## WHAT DOES THE LAW REQUIRE?

There are numerous laws against gender discrimination (including discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy) directed at ensuring equal pay and preventing harassment and other similar issues. \* The most prominent federal laws in this area are Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Pay Act of 1963. A brief overview of some of the general requirements under these laws follows.

### RECRUITMENT AND HIRING

Simply put, it's illegal to discriminate on the basis of sex in the hiring process. For example, it's illegal to:

- Publish a job posting that shows a preference for applicants based on sex or discourages someone from applying for the job based on sex;
- Base hiring decisions on sex, or on stereotypes or assumptions about a person's sex; and
- Recruit new employees in a way that discriminates against candidates because of their sex.

### JOB ASSIGNMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

Decisions about job assignments and promotions cannot be based on sex, or based on stereotypes or presumptions about sex.

### PAY AND BENEFITS

It's illegal to engage in sex discrimination when it comes to pay and benefits. Specifically, wages must be equal for women and men performing substantially equal work under similar working conditions in jobs that require equal skill, effort, and responsibility. However, there are exceptions for differences in pay based on seniority, merit, or "any other factor other than sex."

### DISCIPLINE, FIRING, AND RECALL

Employers cannot base disciplinary actions on gender, and cannot base decisions to recall workers after a layoff on sex.

### TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

Employers may not discriminate on the basis of sex when structuring and offering training opportunities.

### HARASSMENT

There are important laws that prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace. These laws extend to unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other conduct of a sexual nature. Further, seemingly isolated and "innocent" incidents can be considered harassment if they create a hostile or offensive work environment or if they result in adverse employment decisions such as the victim being demoted. It's important to note that the harasser can be a supervisor,

co-worker, client or customer, and illegal harassment can occur outside of the workplace where there is a link to the workplace.

### RETALIATION

Finally, it's illegal to retaliate against persons who have complained, filed a claim, or participated in an investigation or lawsuit related to unlawful discrimination.

Despite these seemingly helpful laws, the statutory framework does not actually ensure an equal work environment because the standards for proving unlawful discrimination are too extreme to give the laws teeth, and many victims of discrimination never raise the issue out of fear of retaliation. So what can entrepreneurs do to help create an equal work environment?

## FIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE AN EQUAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

There are many actions that you as an entrepreneur can take to foster an equal, safe, and comfortable work environment for all employees; the suggestions that follow are just a few of the many ways to do so. Make sure to formalize your company's efforts as written policies and train workers on those policies. In addition, your company and employees should scrupulously follow the policies in practice, and you should review and update them on at least an annual basis.

\* The full range of these laws, and laws related to discrimination based on other protected categories such as race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information, is beyond the scope of this article, and entrepreneurs should consult state, local, and federal laws.





## 1 COMMIT TO TRANSPARENCY AND OBJECTIVITY IN COMPENSATION

One of the best ways to foster a culture of equality is to implement policies that require salaries and compensation packages to be disclosed to employees, and possibly to the public. Implementing a policy that mandates transparency creates accountability and ensures workers understand that pay works objectively. And speaking of objectivity, creating a policy that implements objective criteria for pay increases may help decrease implicit bias. However, you should avoid using criteria that are not absolutely integral to the job function or that disproportionately affect one population.

## 2 PREVENT SEXUAL HARASSMENT BEYOND WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

Some states require sexual harassment training. However, the requirements usually apply primarily to supervisors, and sometimes apply only to larger businesses. Ideally, every company should provide regularly scheduled and updated sexual harassment trainings for all employees. There are affordable and even free resources available that can make sexual harassment training accessible for even the smallest businesses. These resources can come from state agencies or other providers. Additionally, you should implement policies and practices that foster regular feedback related to harassment from employees and strictly prohibit harassment in any form.

## 3 FORMALIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEEDBACK

The best way to know if you have created a workplace that feels safe for employees is to make an effort to hear from them and to be open to feedback. You can accomplish this

by having regularly scheduled meetings where employees can speak directly with supervisors about what is and is not working for them in the workplace. Although the law prohibits retaliation, it still occurs, and employees may fear incurring it. To encourage candid feedback, when possible provide mechanisms allowing employees to give feedback to others in the business who are not direct supervisors, or to outside consultants. You could also implement a system for anonymous feedback.

## 4 CREATE A POLICY TO HANDLE COMPLAINTS


Your business should have a defined, fair, and objective policy for handling complaints raised by workers. The policy should include investigation procedures, witness interviews, requirements related to confidentiality, written findings, timelines for the process, and other defined procedures. Complaints about harassment and/or discrimination must be taken seriously, and any employee who raises a complaint should feel safe doing so and be assured that it will be addressed appropriately and objectively. There are numerous sample policies available online that you can tailor to your individual business as you see fit.

## 5 IMPLEMENT GENEROUS LEAVE AND FLEXIBLE WORK POLICIES

Finally, a key to creating an equal workplace is allowing employees to have the opportunity to take care of themselves and their families. One way to do this is to provide generous leave policies that employees feel comfortable actually using. Ideally, leave will be paid, but even if you cannot afford to provide significant paid leave, an equal workplace is one that allows employees to have flexibility to take time off for pregnancy, maternity and paternity, disability, sickness, and other reasons. Beyond leave, offering employees

the ability to have flexible work hours and to work from home at times can be tremendously helpful for providing them with the opportunity to care for themselves and their families. Take special care to ensure that employees who choose to take advantage of flexible work hours and working remotely do not feel disadvantaged in any way. A great first step is to offer employees the ability to work from home for a short trial period. If it doesn't work out, you can revert to the status quo, but if it does work out, you may find that you have a happier and more productive workforce.

## CREATING EQUAL WORKPLACES IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO

People spend a lot of time at work. As a business owner, you have the opportunity to create a comfortable, welcoming, and fair work environment for your workers. As you consider implementing policies to foster such an environment, it's important to be honest with yourself and your workers about the work environment you are creating. If you are unsure how to create an equal work environment, ask for help. 



Ryan Shaening Pokrasso is an attorney who founded SPZ Legal in the San Francisco Bay Area to assist entrepreneurs using business as a tool for social change and environmental stewardship. Ryan advises for-profit and nonprofit businesses as general counsel on matters ranging from entity formation and financing to intellectual property.



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**FOOD**



**“WE’RE MAKING CHANGE, WE’RE HAVING  
FUN, AND WE’RE SHOWING OUR DAUGHTERS:  
IT CAN BE LIKE THIS.”**







# THE SPICE IS RIGHT

First, Bhakti Chai conquered your coffee shop. Then it kept growing, reaching grocery stores and beyond. Here's how founder Brook Eddy did it — and how she keeps it fun.

Can you change the world with a cup of tea? How about 35,000 gallons of it per month? That's how much Colorado-based Bhakti Chai currently produces and ships to coffee shops and retailers nationwide, including mainstream grocers like Target and Costco. Yet even as the business launches new products (most recently, a sparkling tea) and touches new markets, it is staying true to its core mission of giving back to the global community. We sat down with founder and CEO Brook Eddy to talk about how Bhakti got started and what she has learned along the way.

## BHAKTI CHAI AT A GLANCE

-  **Founded:** 2006
-  **Location:** Boulder, CO
-  **Team Members:** 37
-  **Structure:** For-profit
-  **2015 revenue:** \$6.4 million
-  **Impact:** \$380,000 given to global charities



**What was the inspiration behind starting Bhakti Chai?**

Brook Eddy: I spent three months in India studying a movement based on “Bhakti,” or devotion through social action. I didn’t think about starting a chai company; I was just drinking a lot of homemade chai in people’s homes.

Then, probably two years later [in 2006], I started making my own chai on the stove, just to drink. I went into a cafe and realized the chai they had was gross — it was a powder. I asked a cafe in Boulder if they’d be willing to try my homemade chai and consider carrying it. The owner told me to bring in a sample.

I remember walking out the door and thinking, “If I bring in a sample, I know I’m going to start a company. Because it’s really good. Would I want to start a company? I could call it Bhakti Chai, and it could be based on all this stuff I learned in India. And I could kick ass, because all these other chai companies suck.” I’ve always had this kind of competitive spirit in me.

My background is studying social policy and nonprofit management. I

took classes in graduate school about how to make nonprofits work more like businesses, and at the time, I was thinking about how we can make businesses act more like nonprofits. So it kind of just came together in one of these “aha!” moments.

Then the courage to do it came when I brought in the sample. It was in a mason jar, no label, no nothing. The owner was like, “Oh my God, this is amazing. Can we get three gallons a week?” She didn’t even ask the price.

I went back and figured out how much my ingredients were and did my whole COGS [cost of goods sold] analysis. And then I decided, “I need a massage. I’m building that into my price model.”

At this point, my twins were a year and a half, I was working a full-time job, I was going through a divorce, and I was just exhausted. I knew I couldn’t quit my job. I figured, “If I’m going to do this as a hobby, the hobby has to be able to pay for itself, get me some massages, and get me some food money.”

I was working as a development director for an amazing organization, but I knew there was a cap on what

a development director can make. While supporting two kids, that’s not going to be able to buy a house here, ever. The courage came from seeing that this was my path. I said, “I can take this risk or I can have safety, and I know what safety’s going to look like. I don’t know what this is going to look like.” It hasn’t looked like anything that I thought it was going to — in many positive ways and also many obstacle-crazy ways.

**Now that you know what you know, is there anything that you would have done differently from the start, or has the journey just been exactly what it’s supposed to be?**

BE: If I had a magic wand, I would have been capitalized earlier. I tried as much as I could, but I couldn’t get a loan. I didn’t own a home. I had no family that had money. I didn’t even have a business credit card.

It was also 2008 and 2009 when I was raising capital, so it was not really a time to be walking around town and asking angel investors if they wanted to put in even \$20,000. I think we would have been here a

Bhakti’s retail products are sold in mainstream and natural grocers nationwide.







lot quicker had it not been so slowly capitalized and so “boot-strappy.” It’s still my dream of, “What if we had all that money? We could do whatever we wanted.” But that might have made for bad business, and I might have spent a lot more than I should have.

### Speaking of capital-raising, have you been able to find mission-aligned investors? If so, how?

BE: If you don’t like ginger, we’re not a fit for you, and if you don’t like our mission, we’re not a fit for you. It’s just finding that right partner. If prospective investors saw a Charitable Contributions line-item on our P&L [profit and loss statement] and were like, “Um, do you really need to spend that much?” I’d know they were probably not the investor for us.

Early on, it was local angel investors who always were on the same page with my mission. They were like, “We buy your product every day anyway — we might as well invest in your company.” It felt like we were in it together.

Then, moving more into institutional capital, we were able to be the first investment of the Colorado Impact Fund, which invests in mission-driven companies based in Colorado. That felt really good. They’ve been amazing partners.

And then we were able to do a round with [equity-based crowdfunding platform] CircleUp a couple of years ago. That was brilliant. I wish CircleUp could have been there when I first started, because that was an amazing platform. We were able to raise about \$350,000, but the connections were even more amazing. I’ve been introduced to so many people.

We also now have a line of credit and some equipment loans with RSF Social Finance. I feel like we’re on this great path. Not only are our investors on our team, but our financial partners are on our team.

### With regard to CircleUp and equity crowdfunding in general, have you struggled at all with having a larger number of shareholders than you might in a more “traditional” financing round?

BE: It has benefited us in that they’re all consumers, and they all come with their different expertise, connections, and introductions. Sure, it’s more time-consuming because I’ll get emails from lots of them at different times of the year; “Hey, what’s going on with this?” “Tell me about this.” “Oh, I had this idea.” There’s more of that that you have to deal with. But I try to send out yearly, or sometimes twice a year updates, to all the investor members — there are over 60 — to try to answer all their questions about everything, so they’re not ping-pong me all the time.

The other piece is that we’ve structured it from a legal perspective so that they’re investors but they’re not managers. They’re not true operator-partners, and if that’s clear, then they can’t come in and be like, “Oh, you shouldn’t launch sparkling tea.” They don’t have that right, and I’ve made that clear up front.

### What advice do you have for other mission-driven entrepreneurs who are heading into a capital raise?

BE: Make your story really strong, because investors want to invest in something that’s going to be positive for their returns and positive for the planet. They really do. You can have both, and we have more brands that are showing us — like Patagonia and Annie’s — that you can be super successful and you can do the right thing in terms of sourcing and how you deal with your employees. You have to live it, though, and not say, “Oh, that’s okay, I guess we won’t give to charities this year,” or “We won’t support organizations that really help women.” You’re the first guard of what is non-negotiable for your company.



## Brook Eddy’s Top 3 Pieces of Advice for Mission-Driven Entrepreneurs

### LOVE YOUR PRODUCT.

You’re going to be living it and sleeping it and dreaming it and day-dreaming it all the time. I even love the word “Bhakti” after saying it a trillion times. I still love the product. I still love what it stands for. I still love talking about it. My dream world is full of Bhakti all the time.

### GET CLEAR ON YOUR MISSION.

That’s how we’ve been able to attract a lot of talent that we probably couldn’t have been able to afford otherwise. People wanted to be a part of it. “You’re growing something and I want to be a part of it. It makes me feel good.”

### HAVE MONEY.

Just find some money [laughs]. I hope you have an uncle somewhere.



**What have been the largest challenges that you've faced, and how have you worked to address them?**

BE: Manufacturing is a huge challenge. At the beginning, it was pretty simple with tea and eight ingredients. As we've grown our product lines, with multiple suppliers and packaging and co-packers and our own brewing facility, that's been the biggest learning curve for me.

Cash flow is always also a big challenge. Even when we bring in a big investment; then we also

**Are there practices beyond yoga and hiking that you're using to keep some balance in your life?**

BE: Well, I'm happy to live in Colorado. That definitely is a stress-reliever, the Colorado Candies. And I'm supporting local Colorado companies, too [laughter].

**Do you have a morning routine to prepare for work?**

BE: First is getting my kids off to school. Luckily, they're on the buses now, so I don't have to leave. I'm just like, "Bye, don't let the door

I also think I'm really straight. I talk about things head-on, instead of beating around the bush. "What's going on with this? How did that happen? Let's solve it." My affect as a leader is nothing shocks me. People are coming in all day long yelling, "Fire, fire, fire!" and I'm like, "Okay, well, that's somewhat smoking. How are we going to solve that?" I hope that it feels [to my employees] like it's calm and we'll figure everything out.

**Is that a facet of your personality, to be calm under pressure?**

"THE COURAGE CAME FROM SEEING THAT THIS WAS MY PATH. I SAID, 'I CAN TAKE THIS RISK OR I CAN HAVE SAFETY, AND I KNOW WHAT SAFETY'S GOING TO LOOK LIKE.'"

build a big brewery. Sometimes our biggest customers don't pay us for a month or two, and we're like, "But we have to buy bottles!"

Also, being a single mom and trying to do everything. I'm really good at multi-tasking, but there were years I was working at my computer until 3:00 in the morning and then I would be up all day, running kids to soccer and then grocery shopping. I think my health has probably suffered. I have a good yoga practice and a good hiking practice, but that's been a challenge. I'd ask, "Oh, God, how much longer is the marathon?"

**Does it still feel like a marathon?**

BE: I have such a strong team now, it's not as much. It might be like a 5k that you haven't started to practice for, after you've been drinking all night [laughter]. But it's not a marathon.

hit you in the ass!"

Then I usually get back in bed with my laptop and get ahead of the day, know what I need to respond to, what's going on. I'll go do yoga or go for a hike, come home and shower, and then get into the office. And then it's into meetings and lots of phone calls.

**Tell us about your leadership style.**

BE: I'm just me. I'm very hands-off, and I do not micromanage. I think it probably could be developed more for people wanting true mentorship, like sitting down and talking about your career and how we can build you there. I just physically cannot do that; we're growing so fast. But I do want to bring more people into the company who have those types of roles so employees feel like they're being heard and honored.

BE: Yeah, pretty much. Just by being under pressure so much. There's no reason to throw a chair or tear up the table and get angry at anyone. It's like, "That sucks. What are we going to do to solve it?"

**How would you describe the culture here with your team?**

BE: We have a gong here that we ring when happy things happen, and we try to do spontaneous, fun things. "It's a random Wednesday, I'm going to get Indian takeout and we're just going to feast for no reason."

I love the fact that, even in our management meetings, there's a lot of laughter. People get to know each other; people become friends. Aside from work, they like spending time with each other. There's teasing. It's like a family, in a way. They tease me about my drinking: "Oh, we've got to get more vodka for Brook."





“We want to innovate products that are fun and interesting,” Eddy says. “It has to taste amazing. I have to want to drink it every day.”



Bhakti launched a line of sparkling teas in April 2016.

**How do you continue to have a level of accountability and drive your team forward, even when the culture is playful, fun, and people enjoy their work?**

BE: We go back to the metrics, so that we can say, “This is what the sales team wants to hit, this is what the marketing team wants to hit, this is what, overall, as a company, we want to hit” — both in terms of revenue and profits, and in terms of a consciousness metric. These things take a while, but when we do it, we’re like, “We all kind of did that together!”

**How transparent are you with your team members?**

BE: Definitely really transparent with all the management team. I don’t think someone working on our bottling line needs to know certain financial things. But everyone knows where the company is going. When we were building a new plant, everyone knew we were looking for property and how we were going to do it and

how we were going to raise capital.

I also don’t believe in everyone being a part of the fire drill if they can’t help solve it, because then everyone is just wound up and in fear. I’ll hold all that for everybody. You guys don’t need to know that a truck broke down and half of our product is sitting in some other state. We’ll figure it out.

**Do you have a board of directors, and if so, what advice do you have for others on building a congruent and effective board?**

BE: We had an advisory board for about 4.5 years, and that was amazing. I would recommend to do that before a board of directors. They’re there for you, but you don’t have to report to them. Being a CEO and founder, you’re kind of alone: you can’t just talk to all of your employees about issues related to the business. So having this advisory board was really helpful.

The board of directors was just created last year when we brought in our first private equity funds from

Colorado Impact Fund. I’m very lucky to have John Foraker, who is the CEO of Annie’s, on our board, and also our investor partners. It’s still getting built out, but with everything else going on, it’s not my top priority. I think that will evolve this year.

**What is giving you hope for the future?**

BE: More women in charge. On the presidential level, on the CEO level, and on the startup level. I look forward to when I can bring in some capital for myself that I can put aside to do a fund for women’s companies. I think we will get there. In the next 10 or 15 years, it’ll be easier for women to start companies, I hope.

And this generation. A lot of my friends — we’re in our 40s — we’re just hitting this amazing place. We’re kind of doing exactly what we said we wanted to do in our 20s. We’re making change, we’re having fun, and we’re showing our daughters: it can be like this. I call it “utopia” a lot. 🌱

Photos: Bhakti Chai



**1** ELIZABETH CLORE  
Bushy Tail Farm,  
Saxapahaw, NC

Elizabeth is a former research biologist from Boston. When her definitions of success did not map with the available careers in science, she began to research how to create a sustainable agriculture business on her family's 200-year-old farmstead in North Carolina that had sat untouched for decades. Now she grows a variety of vegetables, raises chickens for eggs, and says this is the first job she's ever had that she can't stop thinking about.

# THIS IS WHAT A FARMER LOOKS LIKE

The number of women running farms is growing. At least, photographer Audra Mulkern is darn sure that's true, even if the US Census data is murky on the subject. In 2013, she created The Female Farmer Project to document the increasing number of women she saw operating agricultural business in her community in Washington. Since then, she's shot close to 50 portraits, from Iceland to the Bronx, many of first-generation farmers working on their second careers. As she told the Seattle Times last spring, "I'm trying to disrupt the face of farming — while they disrupt farming."





2



3

**2** **MICHAELE BLAKELY**  
Growing Things Farm, Carnation, WA

This former schoolteacher owns and operates a small polyculture farm producing fruits, vegetables, pastured pork, goats' milk soap, and more.

**3** **SUZANNE NELSON**  
Haw River Ranch, Saxapahaw, NC

Suzanne is a former Capitol Hill journalist who approaches each day on her grass-fed meat and dairy farm with the same careful thought, passion, and energy she used to bring to her writing.





4

**CHRISTINA MILLER**  
Greenbow Farm, Ellensburg, WA

Christina started her career in the arts, but she now farms grass-fed meats and creates yarn and sheepskin rugs from the fleece of her sheep. She still draws on her art degree by visually communicating to her customers why she farms. 🌱





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# LIFE AFTER DEATH

ATLANTA'S HOTTEST NEW RESTAURANT ISN'T JUST GETTING RAVE REVIEWS; IT'S ALSO PROVING THAT A STRONG MISSION CAN THRIVE EVEN AFTER DEVASTATING TRAGEDY.





Light can emerge from the darkest of times. That's the lesson of Atlanta-based restaurant Staplehouse, a for-profit subsidiary of the nonprofit organization The Giving Kitchen (TGK). TGK provides emergency assistance grants to kitchen and restaurant workers who are facing unexpected crises. Staplehouse is Atlanta's hottest new restaurant, and supports TGK with 100 percent of its after-tax profits. It's a hybrid structure; one part of the business doesn't exist without the other. Yet the project only came to be after a key part of co-founder Jen Hiding's life went missing.

Hiding had been planning an eatery for years with her husband Ryan Hiding, a chef. The couple would invite community members to their home every Sunday for a supper club where they tested menu ideas and recipes. The intention was to refine the concept for the restaurant they dreamed of opening together.

But in late 2012, life interrupted their plans: Ryan was diagnosed with

late-stage gallbladder cancer. Doctors gave him just months to live. As the young couple dealt with their new reality, they also witnessed their community rallying around them, raising more than \$275,000 to assist with medical bills. Out of this community-based support, the idea for The Giving Kitchen emerged as a way to pay forward the kindness they had been shown and a means of perpetuating such kindness wherever there was need.

In January 2014, Ryan passed away. His widow decided the best way to carry forward her husband's legacy would be to continue with their plans for Staplehouse. She opened the restaurant in late 2015 with Ryan's sister Kara Hiding and Kara's husband Ryan Smith as business partners.

Success came quickly: local critics raved about the food, and in 2016 the James Beard Foundation nominated the restaurant as one of the best new restaurants in the country. Meanwhile, as of May 2016, The Giving

Kitchen had already provided more than \$500,000 in emergency grants in the local community.

Hiding spoke to us about resilience in the face of unimaginable challenge, and what gave her the courage to keep pushing forward to open the business of her — and her late husband's — dreams.

#### Why kitchen and restaurant workers?

Jen Hiding: It was inspired by what happened to Ryan, who was a chef here in town for many years. When he was diagnosed with late-stage cancer, our community really rallied behind us. It wasn't the restaurant community only; it was the community — anybody who loved the restaurants that he had worked at or knew of him or us.

A lightbulb went off: for the restaurant industry specifically, there was nothing available as that backbone of support when something crucial would



**“You either choose to get out of bed or you don’t.  
It’s as black and white as that. You can either choose  
to smile or you can choose to frown.”**







Staplehouse was a finalist for the 2016 James Beard Award for Best New Restaurant.





happen, like an unexpected injury. Unlike [in] many other organizations, corporate entities, or industries, if hard times happen, there's nothing to protect or help restaurant workers. That was the primary reason for us helping build The Giving Kitchen and knowing that we wanted to dedicate it, to start at least, to restaurant workers specifically.

Were we super nervous? Yes.

I feel like it's been just recently — literally the last couple of weeks — that the energy has shifted from pure intrigue to excitement. It's now really fun. It's definitely extremely hard and tough down there. We're short-staffed and the hours we're having to put in when we're here is exhausting. But, again, it always

Also, most recently, we're closed on Mondays and Tuesdays, and I have really thoughtfully and carefully tried to dedicate at least one full day to personal home life with my boyfriend and dogs. That's been helpful.

It's very difficult in this kind of small business and partnership to be away for two full days or whatnot, because it really doesn't ever turn

**“As an entrepreneur, if you're not able to adapt to what reality is when things happen, then you might be in the wrong field; you might as well work for someone else forever.”**

**Before opening Staplehouse, you and Ryan had this long period of inviting people to your home, refining your concept, and testing out various menus on people. Was this helpful? Do you recommend that other entrepreneurs, especially those in the restaurant space, refine their concept before really diving in and opening something?**

JH: For any entrepreneur, there's a balancing act of just diving in and doing what you like and seeing what it turns into. We all start with this “plan.” Even we thought we had a plan, and that plan obviously completely changed. As an entrepreneur, if you're not able to adapt to what reality is when things happen, then you might be in the wrong field; you might as well work for someone else forever.

That's really what entrepreneurship is all about. It's adaptation and that willingness to go where your community will take you.

**How has opening the Staplehouse felt to you? What has this process been like?**

JH: The first six months were... exhausting, yes, but it was more than that. It was uncertain, and didn't sit right in our guts. Was business building? Yes. Were guests happy? Yeah, absolutely. Were we excited? Yes.

goes back to adaptability and sticking to your guts.

If you really believe in something, why not just push for that? If it's showing progression and you believe in it, even if it's not something that's turning around in a couple of weeks or even a couple of months, but if it's showing something positive over this long span of time, stick with it!

**What is the largest challenge that Staplehouse and TGK are facing right now? If you had a magic wand to fix anything, what would you fix?**

JH: Having enough people to where we don't feel exhausted at the end of the day because it was too hard, versus the exhaustion of feeling really great about what we produced. Honestly, in this city, with the amount of growth it's seeing with restaurants opening up left and right, I don't know where enough industry people are. We need more people here.

**You guys are blowing up right now; how are you taking care of yourself?**

JH: I trust my body. I learned what that meant after Ryan passed away, where I just let my heart and soul and brain work together and naturally let them lead me. If I'm tired, my body will rest the way it needs to rest.

off. It is a 24-hour-a-day love affair. But when time permits and it feels like it's doable, then really stepping away has proven very successful for my mental wellbeing.

**Every entrepreneur that I've ever talked to faces immense challenge and finds opening a business to be one of the hardest things they've ever done. You've faced an unimaginable challenge so far in your career. What advice do you have for others in terms of persevering in the face of challenge and overcoming obstacles?**

JH: We have to remind ourselves that we have choice. It's that simple.

You either choose to get out of bed or you don't. It's as black and white as that. You can either choose to smile or you can choose to frown. You can choose to open up a door for somebody else or you can just walk in front and ignore them. It's about choosing the positive. Choosing to spin a negative conversation into something a little bit more light-hearted. Choosing to do your best.

If you're feeling overwhelmed in the day, tackle two things: it's making a choice to say, “I can do this and I'm going to do it — or at least do it to the best of my ability.”





**What are the qualities that you possess that have helped you maintain resilience and become the leader that you're growing into being right now?**

JH: I am eternally optimistic. That is just my nature. I really didn't understand what that meant until the last couple of years. I've learned a lot. It feels almost cliché or silly, but I guess I just chose to accept all of this. I happen to be eternally optimistic and I happen to be really weird and dance like Elaine on Seinfeld [laughter]. I just do and that's just what it is.

Even as the eternal optimist that I am, that doesn't mean I don't struggle or cry for an hour when I get home. Maybe I haven't in the last little bit, but pain is pain, for everybody, and that struggle is very real.

It always goes back to choice though; you can either stay there or you can choose to push yourself along. If you've got great friends and family, and a support system to help you through, that's pretty major.

**What's the largest piece of advice that you have for other entrepreneurs?**

JH: Lean on others and ask for help. There is this hard line of pride; not enough people feel okay to ask for help. It's really, truly okay to say, "I need help right now."

**I'm sure that in your young life you have received a lot of advice. Is there a quote or a piece of advice that has stuck with you?**

JH: Interestingly enough, it comes from Ryan, my late husband. When he was still alive, he did a Creative-Mornings talk — these big once-a-month gatherings of creative entrepreneurs. Ryan was invited to do a talk about food and medicine when he was sick. It was June 2013, about six months into his treatment. He was really sick. He had lost weight. His hair had changed to gray. He looked different. This quote came out at one point where he was talking about the reality of where we were and what it


takes to persevere: "Anything that's long-lasting and worthwhile takes time and complete surrender."

That's the one I love the most.

**I can see why. What is giving you hope for the future?**

JH: I am in love. I found love after Ryan. I've been with my boyfriend for a while. He's such a gift — I like to say that to people, because he is.

And then my relationship with my family, with friends, and with my business partners, and the challenges that we all went through as a family after Ryan passed. How that's growing and building is just great. It gives me hope.

And then growth for The Giving Kitchen. There's a ton happening. Where we are now from where we were at the beginning is a pretty substantial difference. Knowing that over the next three to five years it might hit outward of just metro Atlanta is really motivating and encouraging. 

Photos: Andrew Thomas Lee





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An aerial night view of a city skyline, likely New York City, featuring numerous skyscrapers with illuminated windows and streets. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white rectangle containing the word "FINNANCE" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

# FINNANCE





# GOOD MONEY

Kat Taylor and Beneficial State Bank are proving there's a better way to lend.

## AT A GLANCE



**Founded:** 2007



**Team Members:** 71 (65 at the bank and 6 at the foundation)



**Traction:**  
• \$630 million in assets  
• 507 borrowers



**B Corp Score:** 165  
(the second-highest ever in the US)





If you think banking is all boring paperwork and rich guys in fancy suits out to make themselves even richer — well, you're partly right. But not when Kat Taylor gets involved. Taylor and her husband, Tom Steyer, were already billionaires when they founded Beneficial State Bank (BSB) in 2007, but their goal wasn't to make more money for themselves. Instead, they chose banking as one of three areas to focus their time and energy on in order to change the world for the better. (The other two areas are climate change and agriculture.) Rather than donating money to existing organizations, they created their own functioning business in order to coax change from within the industry.

Now Taylor serves as BSB's co-CEO, working long hours, but for zero pay. We spoke to her on a rare day of rest about why she chose banking, what makes BSB different, and what critical lessons she has learned along the way.

**You clearly have a deep-seated sense of responsibility. Has that always been a part of you? What are the earliest roots of the work that is most central to you now?**

Kat Taylor: Tom and I were born in 1957 and 1958; think of "Leave it to Beaver" and Donna Reed. You were supposed to be a good kid, do well in school, achieve at everything, get a good job, raise a nice family, and somewhere at the end of your life you would do some philanthropy.

But our two mothers disrupted that paradigm for us. Tom's mother ran school reading programs in Harlem. She was a total rabble-rouser. She rode a bicycle around; she railed against air pollution. And in 1955, my mother decided that American children weren't being taught enough environmental education and that's why we were crashing the planet.

**"It's a pretty audacious 'shoot the moon' challenge to change the banking system for good. But nothing less will suffice."**

She ended up being part of a team that built one of the earliest museums where you could learn about the planetary systems and get to know our flora and fauna better. So we had very strong influence from our mothers that you'd better not wait until you're 60 to write a few checks or anything like that.

Also, because I'm a child of TV, my childhood is dotted with spectacular images. Some people remember the moon shot; I remember all of the funerals — Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy, Malcolm X. I'm not particularly well set-up to be a civil rights leader, being a white woman from the West Coast, but I just could never believe I come from a country founded in slavery and native genocide and less-than-personhood for at least half the people.

So, for a long time I've been working in economic justice, but thinking of it more as, "Okay, I've got to get myself skilled up to do this." I went through a bank training program because banking is a very big obstacle to economic justice for minority communities. If you want to change an industry and you don't attend to banking, you're not going to get there. Banking is easily three or four times larger than any other industry. We chose a particular focus on banking and "good money" because that's what we could get our hands around and understand.

**What are the issues with the banking industry that inspired you to start BSB?**

KT: We consider banking to be the original and most powerful form of crowdfunding. We all pool our deposits so that we can finance the communities and world in which we want to live, and also borrow it back from time to time when we have needs — like home, college, and even retirement — if we haven't had the

## BANKING BY THE NUMBERS

### \$235 BILLION

Regulatory fines paid by the US's largest banks in the last seven years

### \$4.9 MILLION

Number of families who lost their homes to foreclosure in the 2008 economic downturn

### 16%, 53%, and 66%

Average household wealth reduction among Whites, African-Americans, and Latinos, respectively, in the 2008 downturn

### 1/3

Fraction of bank tellers who rely on some kind of public support

### \$500 BILLION

Bank-provided financing to coal in the last 10 years, leading to 140 million tons of hazardous waste in the US

*Source: Beneficial State Bank*

privilege of saving.

Low-cost capital [e.g., from depositors] is very powerful to begin with. It enables those who have access [to it] to offer goods and services at a lower rate, undercutting competition because their cost of goods includes the price of their finance. And then when you put that low-cost capital through a banking model, you can collect \$9 of deposits for every \$1 of equity and lend out \$10, or 10-to-1 leverage. That leverage is literally exponential. It's very powerful.

We certainly don't want to deploy that money in ways that are deleterious to us. But it has been deployed that way because it got anonymized. As soon as the banking system got big enough and the deposits all went into this big black box, then the bankers on the other side felt entitled to lend it to anything that would maximize return. It was aided and abetted by a thesis in capital

markets and corporate responsibility that the only responsibility of the corporation was to maximize shareholder profit.

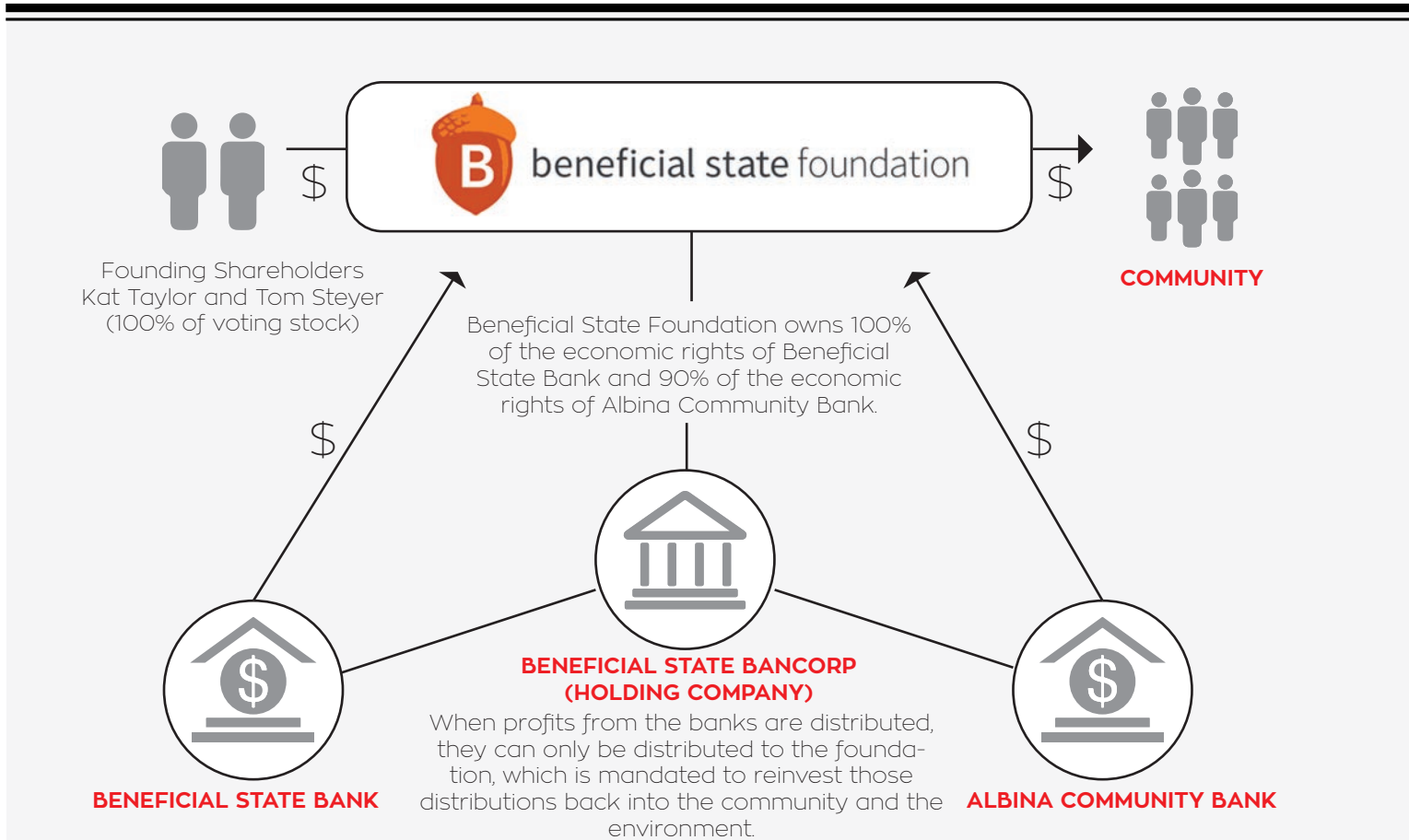
We have to pull the system back to us and acknowledge that the most important stakeholders are the depositors who put their money there in the first place. It is their money; and the customers', including borrowers and transactors who are helping the bank make good on its promise to use those funds well; and the communities' and the planet's in which all those activities take place. Because if you lend to fossil fuels, you are making society pick up that carbon bill.

I believe we can take the banking system back and make it govern in the public interest, a system of distributed power where the depositors are the ones driving the outcomes by their choice. We wouldn't want depositors saying, "Lend to this company," or, "Lend

to that nonprofit," but they should be able to look at our quarterly and annual track records and say, "Yep, I'm comfortable with that lending practice, so I'm staying here," or, "Nope! I don't want any part of that, so I'm getting out."

Also, one-third of bank tellers are on some form of public assistance, which means that, somehow, we can make shareholders very, very wealthy but we can't pay our tellers enough for them not to have to go back to the state and the federal government for any of the welfare programs.

Being a follower of the civil rights movement and trying to be of help in any way I could, I did follow the great socially responsible banks, the pioneering ones, like South Shore Bank [later ShoreBank] in Chicago, Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, and Self-Help Credit Union in North Carolina. To this day, I still so admire them. Those bank models







were really important to us in starting the bank, but they also were, in society's mind, still stuck in this category of, "Isn't that nice? There are the big banks and then there are these community banks to serve the underserved communities." And, to me, that was a false parsing of what was going on. Essentially, the best banking services for anyone are the best banking services for everyone.

These community banks are heroes in my mind, but we need deep systems reforms. Nothing else will suffice, because these community banks cannot overcome the damage of a banking system that's not working in the public interest. They can blunt the damage, but they can't overcome it.

**Tell us about how BSB works and how it's different.**

KT: Impact is important to us, and we get there with three design

features of the bank. First is our ownership model. One hundred percent of the economic rights belong to Beneficial State Foundation, which is a public charity, permanently governed in the public interest. The board has to be appointed by three large public charities that represent access to low-cost higher education, access to safe and affordable housing, and community development. There are no private shareholders in the mix, so there's no one forcing us to meet short-term quarterly earnings benchmarks — we have enough pressure to be profitable from our regulators and our own model. At the end of the day, profits, if and when distributed, can only go back into the low-income communities that we serve or the environment upon which we depend. So it's virtuous profit-taking to match the crowdfunding at the front end of the model.

The second design feature is our

lending practice. If we're going to be crowdfunding and responsible to our most important stakeholders, we'd better know and be able to tell them where those loans are going. At least 75 percent of our loan dollars have to be in the hands of the new economy. That means those loans are funding affordable housing, renewable energy, or sustainable food. They're also funding companies organized like B Corporations or worker cooperatives, and they're going to communities and actors previously starved of capital, like women- and minority-owned businesses, low-income communities, small businesses in general, nonprofits, and the social sector. If it were less than 75 percent, we wouldn't be moving to the new economy. We'd not only be standing in the old one but reinforcing it. And the other 25 percent can't be working against our mission — we have rigorous conversations around that.

## BENEFICIAL STATE BANK'S IMPACT

**\$285.7 MILLION**

loans dedicated to mission-aligned entities in 2015

**\$62.1 MILLION**

loans made to small businesses from 2012–2015

**81%**

total loan dollars given to mission-aligned borrowers and users in 2014

**\$65.7 MILLION**

loans committed to nonprofits from 2012–2015

**\$19 MILLION**

loans committed to affordable housing projects from 2012–2014

(752 affordable housing units supported)

**\$32.1 MILLION**

loans committed to renewable energy projects from 2012–2015

**\$56.9 MILLION**

loans committed to low-to-moderate income communities from 2012–2014

## KAT TAYLOR AND TOM STEYER'S THEORY OF CHANGE

Kat and Tom focus on three key strategic industries that they view as critical to effecting large-scale change from a systems perspective: finance, climate, and agriculture. In addition to Beneficial State Bank, which tackles finance, the couple has these other initiatives:

### Climate Change

In 2013, Tom and Kat founded NextGen Climate, a San Francisco-based environmental advocacy organization committed to supporting candidates at all levels of government who will take action on climate change. In April 2016, the organization announced a \$25 million campaign to encourage registration of Millennial voters in seven key states: Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

### Agriculture

Kat and Tom ventured into the world of sustainable agriculture with the purchase of a nearly 2,000-acre ranch in Pescadero, California. TomKat Ranch was intended to be a model conservation project, but has evolved into a demonstration site for sustainable farming practices, providing best practices for other farmers on everything from rotational grazing to grass-fed beef production.

The third design feature is radical transparency. We publish everything we possibly can about how we show up as a corporation: our B Corp score — we're the second-highest in the United States now; our greenhouse gas, landfill, and water footprint and what we're doing about it; our labor practices — we pay 150 percent of living wage in all markets, fully benefitted. We take commitments and certifications all over the place. We're trying to sign the Small Business Bill of Rights, etc.

The transparency is really important so that we know that we are being true to our stakeholders. But it's also important because our real theory of change is not that we *replace* the banking system but that we influence it in a way that *it* substantively changes. We can't just hold up the bright shiny object of our lending practice; you can find that done bigger, better, faster, stronger, in any of the big banks. But they don't show you the train of misery behind it: the one-third of tellers paid beneath the poverty line; the lending into the housing bubble and then the student debt bubble and now the auto loan bubble; the fossil fuel engagement; the \$235 billion of fines, etc., etc. That's what has to stop. We want them to keep doing that great lending, but they've got to stop the train of misery. And the only way that we can show the world that that's happening is sort of in the negative. We take all these commitments and pledges that they just plain can't.

We know we have to be a good bank to our customers and our communities and the planet. But we've got to change the banking system for good. We're not going to replace it. We're going to try to influence it by a smart regional model that inspires the even bigger regional banks to mimic some of our — not just behaviors, but commitments and warranties, and win market share from the biggest banks that way.

**What traction have you achieved so far?**

KT: We started from zero. When this merger [with Finance and Thrift at Pan American] goes through, we'll be about \$800 million in assets. It seems like a huge number to us. It is getting to the point where our scale is better at managing bank economics. There's high overhead in banking because of regulatory compliance, the core systems that you need to run; basically the electronic railway for all these transactions and the technology to report and monitor and everything else. That \$800 million in assets is getting us closer to where we can do that efficiently. It's still quite small compared to the \$2 trillion that Bank of America has, but I believe it is already getting some notice, like, "Wow! There's a different way to do banking."

We're attracting more deposits, which is important. We have people interested in providing outside equity under our unique ownership model, which is 100 percent owned in the public interest. We have increasing human capital coming to us through summer internship programs or just more applicants for open positions. We have been profitable for several years. We now pay taxes. We're hitting our return on equity, which is 5 to 10 percent; that's our goal. Below that, we don't think we're robustly sustainable, and above that we think we're charging too much somewhere because we should be returning more of that profit to our customers.

We are way ahead of plan in loan growth this year. We've had 20 percent loan growth, approximately, in each of the last four years, which is an industry standout. That's not by borrowers sacrificing. It's increasingly that the alignment of the bank is the thing that wins the deal once we're competitive on price and term.

**On a personal note, we, as a young company, applied for a line of credit from BSB and understandably were denied because of various risk factors. Is it possible for banks to redefine risks to accommodate for impact, or is it just the way that it has to be in the banking institution?**





KT: In all this decision-making, there's what we believe, and there's what we can convince the regulators to believe. They hold our fate in their hands. If you approve a lot of credit applications that you believe are very sound but the regulators see as high-risk, they will have you risk-rate them with a high number, which mandates that you reserve a higher amount of capital against those loans in case they don't go well, which inherently increases the cost of delivering any of the banking services. It may be more than you wanted to know, but that's a real constraint on us. We have to try to underwrite to not only our satisfaction but the regulators' satisfaction so we don't overburden the bank's cost structure, which isn't good for any of the bank customers.

But we are trying ways to solve for impact, because we believe that high-impact borrowers should get a benefit. It could come as "we're more inclined to approve you," but that is not going to fly with the regulators, because they're simply looking at ability to repay. So one way we've translated impact into ability to repay is we have recruited, with the borrower's permission and help, a funder of the borrower to stand in as a last-case guarantor. Particularly for a startup business that has no track record and cash flow yet, it allows us to look beyond them to their backer — their foundation that supported them or an individual who supported them — and take backing from that.

But it would be an interesting case study. We've done that; we've written some of these up to say, "Banks need to do a much better job of their basic responsibility, but they also can do more than they're doing right now."

### What's the largest challenge that you're facing as a banking institution?

KT: Getting really, really good metrics — high-quality, third-party auditable metrics that move beyond input. Which means moving from "This is how many loans we made" as an input to "This is what those loans funded" as an outcome; and even be-

yond that to "And because we funded this many renewable kilowatts, this community-choice solar neighborhood was able to accelerate." How do we know we're getting quickly to a new economy? Metrics and validation are very, very important for us.

And — I think of this as a fun challenge — wooing, recruiting, or courting human capital to this bank model. Bringing our training and development inside has been hard but

**“Work hard, but not at something that creates the world’s problems. Because however much money you earn and give back in the end, it is not as powerful as preventing the harms in the first place.”**

almost necessary, because if we rely on the big banks to train people and then we hire them, a lot of what they train inculcates something that's hard to un-train: "What we want to do in the branches is earn a lot of fees by all these practices that are actually not healthy for the individual customer," and so on.

Running a bank, meeting our regulatory burden — no one's complaining about that. That's just what we have to do, and we look forward to doing it well. The big banks rail about the regulations, but we don't want the regulations going away any time soon. Fair lending is there because there was so much *unfair* lending for so long. It's deeply ingrained. I think it's a pretty audacious "shoot the moon" challenge to change the banking system for good. But nothing less will suffice, so we just have to be down for that, and keep chipping away at it if we can.

**We know that you have a long history in the philanthropic world, and it seems like you've shifted towards capitalism in recent years. Can you talk about that decision and how you think for-profit models address problems differently than nonprofit models in philanthropy?**

KT: I actually love the whole spectrum, even the hybrids, and I think they all have their place. I think the reason we've moved to social enterprise is that it's a little bit akin to or metaphorical of our own life, where in the beginning, we thought, "Work hard, my boy. Do well in your chosen field. Accumulate resources and then give a high percentage of those resources back to solving the world's problems." Now we're like, "Work

hard, but not at something that creates the world's problems. Because however much money you earn and give back in the end, it is not as powerful as preventing the harms in the first place."

Corporations that feel all they need to do is maximize shareholder profit, that is a totally backward view that has to leave, and the way it will leave is by competitive companies. The best outcomes in society will come from well-governed, diverse, broadly responsible companies — meaning, "I don't just obey the laws, I observe a regimen like the B Corp Assessment," so that we literally are changing the fundamental business model to not create all the harm in the first place, to minimize harm that might be hard to either identify or predict. We should be moving towards a "Benefit to All, Harm to None" model as quickly as we can.

I know that sounds naïve, but think about organic agriculture. I mean, yes, the wolf eats the rabbit, the rabbit eats the grass; you could call that destruction, I suppose, but that isn't in my camp. What destruction is, to me, is tilling up half of the Great Plains, killing all the myriad microorganisms under the ground, and

## TAYLOR'S TOP 3 PIECES OF ADVICE FOR MISSION-DRIVEN ENTREPRENEURS

### 1 Measure for accountability.

I mean, really, honestly, measure as best you can — and not just the outputs, not just the outcomes, but what you say you're changing: are you getting somewhere on it?

### 2 Create a great culture.

That will attract wonderful human beings and keep them happy and fulfilled in what they're doing.

### 3 Create non-hierarchical organizations.

Or, to put it in the positive, put different and more people in charge and really distribute power as much as you can.

creating a system that's going to, by definition, spew a carbon externality into the atmosphere that we can't afford.

I think we are going to have to hold to these really high ideals. We are shooting for "Benefit to All, Harm to None" in everything we do. That's going to prevent a lot of things and make the treatment of symptoms a lot less expensive, but that means inherently changing our fundamental institutions, government, and business.

#### How do you see the role of business evolving over the coming decades?

KT: I think it's going to get a little mushier on that spectrum of non-profit versus for-profit. I think we still could have a lot of really good nonprofits in our midst with a business mindset. And I hope, on the other end of the spectrum, that we create a culture in America that says, "There isn't anybody who just gets to be a business and everything else be damned," that all businesses have corporate responsibility to their place and people and resources and everything else. I just don't believe there's something good to be had from pure profit.

**It might be safe for us to assume that you probably don't have to work. Why do you work so hard, and what is your personal purpose?**

KT: Yes, not only do I not have to work, but because of the way that the bank's set up, I can work but I can't get paid by any of the organizations that we started — which is fine.

The reason I work is that I actually feel very connected to this world, like the world is my community. This is our planet, but we're here on no greater stature than any of the other creatures who are here. I am inspired by challenges, but even more by solution sets. It's really fun to try to be creative about these things. And, I'm kind of a shy person. It's easier for me to relate to people in work settings.

**You must have a lot of people asking things of you and trying to get your attention. What gets you excited? How do you decide what gets your attention?**

KT: I'm 57. People my age kind of pooh-pooh younger people, network effects, technology, devices, but I get very excited about how next-gen solutions and next-gen actors are engaging. I don't think any brave worlds have ever been created by hand-wringing. I think they get created by vision and inclusion and remarkable constituencies coming together. So I always try to favor those things.

**What is the best piece of advice that you would give to the younger generations?**

KT: Honestly, I almost feel like I could get much more advice from them. I think they're brilliant. They seem very, very entrepreneurial and innovative to me. Maybe I'm seeing a certain cross-section of people. I feel like they have a lot of opportunity and so that allows them to feel that way.

But I guess I'd say that many heads are better than one. Working together is not only enriching, but you yield a better solution set. I know that there are all these heroes out there like Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, but we're moving beyond single-hero history to movement history. Go for flat organizations.

**What is giving you hope for the future?**

KT: Young people, and scientific and knowledge gains — the computing power, the bigger, cleaner datasets, incredible technology advances, incredible medical advances. All of that could be used for terrible things but for the fact that I love these young people. I think they've got a lot on the ball. I don't think we're necessarily hearing from them in our stupid, old, adult systems. By the end of my mother-in-law's life, she was so tired of talking to old people that she would just invite young people over. You'd go to her house for dinner and there'd be her and her husband and like forty 22-year-olds. That might be me someday. \$





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# IT'S TIME FOR A NEW CONVERSATION ABOUT WHO GETS OUR MONEY

Unequal access to capital is one of the biggest civil rights issues of our era. We need to fix the problem — and widen the conversation beyond gender.

By Melanie Pease Davidson

The first time I heard the term “gender lens investing” was around 2006. I was with a group of female philanthropists discussing socially responsible investing and microfinance as tools for poverty alleviation. At the time, a new nonprofit called Kiva Microfunds was getting a lot of attention for creating an online marketplace to connect lenders and borrowers around very small loans with very big impact on borrowers’ lives. Kiva was clearly a game-changer in the socially responsible investing space, but it was mostly working in developing countries. We lamented that meanwhile, here in the US, women-

led ventures remained grossly underfunded; it was in this context that I heard “gender lens” proposed as a screen or lens to apply to financial portfolios and funds to help solve that imbalance.

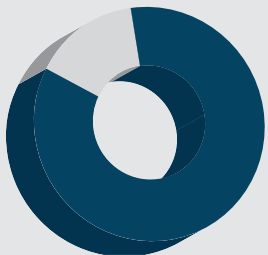
Despite the still-dire statistics around investment in women (see below), the situation has actually improved a lot since then. The concept of a gender lens has grown to include direct investments in women-led ventures and is seen as an opportunity to aim for better performance. The term has become relatively well known in impact investor circles, and is being used in mainstream financial firms like

JPMorgan Chase, Janus Capital Group, and Goldman Sachs, which all have models and financial tools dedicated to funding women.

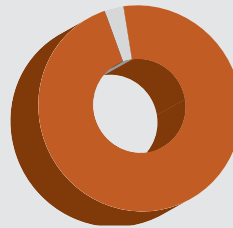
Yet even as I celebrate the fact that gender lens investing is becoming more mainstream, I can’t help but notice that by focusing on the idea of a gender lens, we in the impact investment community are missing a hugely important opportunity for creating change. As gatekeepers to power and opportunity, when we think critically about which ventures receive financing, the conversation needs to go much deeper than gender. We need to be talking about parity around race, for example, and making

## THE MONEY BARRIER

The sad statistics around investment in women-led businesses



97%



of venture-funded businesses have a male CEO

85%

of all venture-funded businesses have no women on their executive team

LESS THAN

10%

of tech startups are founded or co-founded by women





sure all people have equity in the workplace and access to affordable capital. Especially in the impact investing space, we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard than the already ambitious, certainly important, but not-good-enough “gender lens.”

This need becomes painfully clear when we take a look at the data: 87 percent of venture capital-backed founders are white; 83 percent of founding teams are all-white. Black female founders made up just 0.2 percent of venture deals from 2012 to 2014.

Obviously, these problems run deeper than funding. To create real change, we need to work across systems — financial, political, corporate, and philanthropic. And we need to work in a cohesive way, with consistent messaging and branding.

That’s where my colleagues at PeakChange and I are starting. We’ve been having fireside chats, purposefully seeking out people in the impact investment space that are representative of the populations we need to reach to determine the right

**“As gatekeepers to power and opportunity, when we think critically about which ventures receive financing, the conversation needs to go much deeper than gender.”**

language and dialogue for rebranding gender lens investing. This summer we will be having firepit chats. We plan to hire a professional PR and branding consultant to extract and articulate the deep ideas here, to come up with a new term that lets us retire “gender lens investing” and replace it with something that gets at the full picture of the change that needs to happen.

Will you join us? We know we’re not the pioneers or the only people talking about this issue, but we’re trying to combine multiple efforts in a way that pushes the dialogue

forward and allows new voices to be heard. We’ve set up a place where people can provide their input, see our progress, provide feedback on our ideas, and help this new idea roll out to a larger audience at scale. Sign up at [peakchange.co/gender](http://peakchange.co/gender) to get involved.

And in the meantime, I invite you to have an authentic dialogue about these issues in your community — even if it’s hard. It’s difficult to talk about race, to talk about economic disparity. We need to, all of us — even us white ladies. \$



*Melanie Pease Davidson is a veteran marketer and president and COO of Fruition, a Denver-based digital agency. She also serves as managing partner at PeakChange, an impact investing advisory firm based in Colorado that promotes innovative, business-driven solutions for future sustainability. Learn more at [peakchange.co](http://peakchange.co).*

Additional research and writing help from Emily Winslow



**1974**

the year the Equal Credit Act allowed any woman to get a small business loan without a male co-signer

**\$4.3 TRILLION**

amount the US could add in annual GDP by 2025 if women attain full financial equality

# NATASHA VERSUS THE WORLD

How one woman is taking on nine of the largest companies in the world to advocate for gender pay equity —  
**and is winning.**



Natasha Lamb, director of equity research and shareholder engagement at the Boston-based investment firm Arjuna Capital, is on a mission to address the gender-based pay disparities prevalent throughout the tech world. Her weapon of choice is the shareholder proposal, a little-known, yet extremely effective tool that democratizes investors' ability to participate in the governance process of companies they own stock in. Using the shareholder proposal, Lamb, 33, has brought the issue of gender-based pay equity to nine of the largest tech companies in the world, and is achieving dramatic results. We spoke with Lamb about the process, the business case for pay equity, and what gave her the courage to fight against the largest companies in the world.





### On a basic level, what is shareholder engagement and activism?

Natasha Lamb: We [Arjuna Capital] are active investors and we're seeking to amplify the impact of that capital beyond simply making a profit. One of the ways that we do that is through shareholder engagement and activism. We engage with companies on a host of different sustainability-related issues that make both financial sense and are good for the company [you're engaging with] and, hopefully, the world at large.

We will reach out to companies when we think there's an issue that they're either not paying attention to or that they need to improve on, and we will suggest an alternative path or more disclosure. The tool that we use most often for that is the shareholder proposal. We'll always make the business case for why improving their practices is in their own enlightened self-interest.

### Can you tell us about your most recent shareholder engagement piece?

NL: In 2014, we filed a first-of-its-kind shareholder proposal asking eBay to report on and close the gender pay gap. We did that because eBay is a tech company, and tech companies have a diversity problem and a women problem. However, they could actually improve performance and their ability to innovate because gender-diverse teams are shown to be a key contributing factor of innovation and performance [see page 10].

We filed a shareholder proposal with eBay and their board opposed the proposal, which was an ill-timed opposition. They did so about 48 hours before Patricia Arquette made a rallying cry for equal pay for equal work at the February 2015 Academy Awards. Patricia's message went viral and she was cast in a very good light, but eBay's opposition to our proposal cast them in a less-flattering light. They continued to oppose it. The proposal went to a vote last May, and 8 percent of shareholders voted for the proposal — that was the baseline for where we started this campaign.

This year, we tried again, but we rolled out the proposal to nine big tech firms: Apple, Intel, Amazon, Google, Facebook, Expedia, Microsoft, Adobe, and, again, eBay.

The first company we engaged with was Intel, and we were able to withdraw our proposal because Intel reported that they had 100 percent gender pay equity and that they were committed to keeping that gap closed. They stepped out as a leader in this space.

The next proposal we had was with Apple. We were able to withdraw, again, because the company was willing to act, and instead of our proposal going to a vote at Apple's shareholder meeting in March, Tim Cook stood up and reported Apple's gender pay gap and committed to closing it.

However, other companies were more defensive, as eBay had been in the prior year. Amazon opposed the proposal at the SEC. They argued that the concept of the gender pay gap was too vague for shareholders to both understand and vote on, which was both a ridiculous argument and a losing argument. The SEC upheld the proposal and it was set to go to a vote. In the meantime, Amazon backpedaled and committed to be transparent and close the gender pay gap.

The next company we worked with was Expedia, which made what I would consider one of the most comprehensive commitments to date. They agreed to write the report that we asked for and to report out on all compensation components, including base compen-

## HOW DOES A SHAREHOLDER PROPOSAL WORK?

### ▶ Step 1:

An individual or entity needs to purchase at least \$2,000-worth of company stock.

### ▶ Step 2:

The shareholder has to hold that stock for at least one year.

### ▶ Step 3:

The shareholder can then create a shareholder proposal prior to the company's annual meeting asking the company to change a particular practice.

### ▶ Step 4:

The company can then either: 1) Commit to act in good faith and improve the practice addressed in the shareholder proposal, in which case the proposal will typically be withdrawn; 2) Challenge the shareholder proposal to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to try to get the SEC to throw the proposal out; or 3) If the SEC upholds the proposal, but the company does not commit to acting in good faith to address the issue, shareholders have a chance to vote on the issue at the company's annual meeting, which can force the company into action if enough shareholders demonstrate they care about the issue at hand.

sation, bonus, and equity, because stock options are often an outsized portion of tech employees' compensation packages. That was very exciting. We were able to withdraw there as well.

Since then, Microsoft has been transparent and committed to close the gap. We saw Facebook, the day before Equal Pay Day, come out and say that they pay men and women the same, although their disclosure was very weak and they did not give any quantitative disclosure or detail as to the components that they were reporting on. That proposal will go to a vote. We kept that proposal on the ballot because we felt that [their response] set a poor standard for other companies reporting.

Then, most recently, at eBay, the proposal went to a vote [on April 27, 2016]. Fifty-one percent of votes cast were in favor of the proposal. What I would say explains that is the incredible momentum of all of the other companies stepping out and committing to pay women fairly. There was really a sea change. On the same day, eBay came out with a statement and said that they were committed to writing the report that we asked for in the proposal.

We have two more proposals that are going to a vote in June: Facebook and Google. We're in a dialogue with Adobe because the US Postal Service actually delivered our proposal late, later than their guaranteed [delivery] date. So they were able to keep it out on a technicality, but they were also willing to engage in dialogue, so we're continuing to engage with them. We'll re-file, if we need to, next year. We'll see how it all plays out. But it's been really an incredible year with so much momentum.

On Equal Pay Day, I was at the State House in Massachusetts speaking about our work, and one of the senators who spoke before me said, "This is not only Equal Pay Day; this is Equal Pay Year." And I really feel like that is true because the zeitgeist has changed. Women are no longer willing to live with this black box around compensation. We know there's a problem, and there's an easy solution, which is transparency and accountability, both to employees and to investors.

**Thank you on behalf of women everywhere! Can you tell us more about why you specifically targeted the tech sector?**

NL: I really wanted to address the structural barriers that keep and that have kept women from moving into leadership positions. When you look at the technology industry in particular, you see that there is a glaring gap in female leadership. For tech companies, in general, about a quarter of

the workforce is female, and when you look up the ladder at executive positions and board positions, that number falls to about 10 or 11 percent. It's really remarkable. One can assume that the pay gap widens as you go up that ladder as well; in fact, there's a lot of evidence to show that.

We were looking to engage companies on how you close this leadership gap and we saw the gender pay gap as one of those structural barriers. I don't think that any company sets out to improve their profit margins by paying women less, at least not consciously. But there is so much unconscious and structural bias at work, and the problem with unconscious bias is that we all have it and we don't know we have it because it's unconscious! [Laughter]

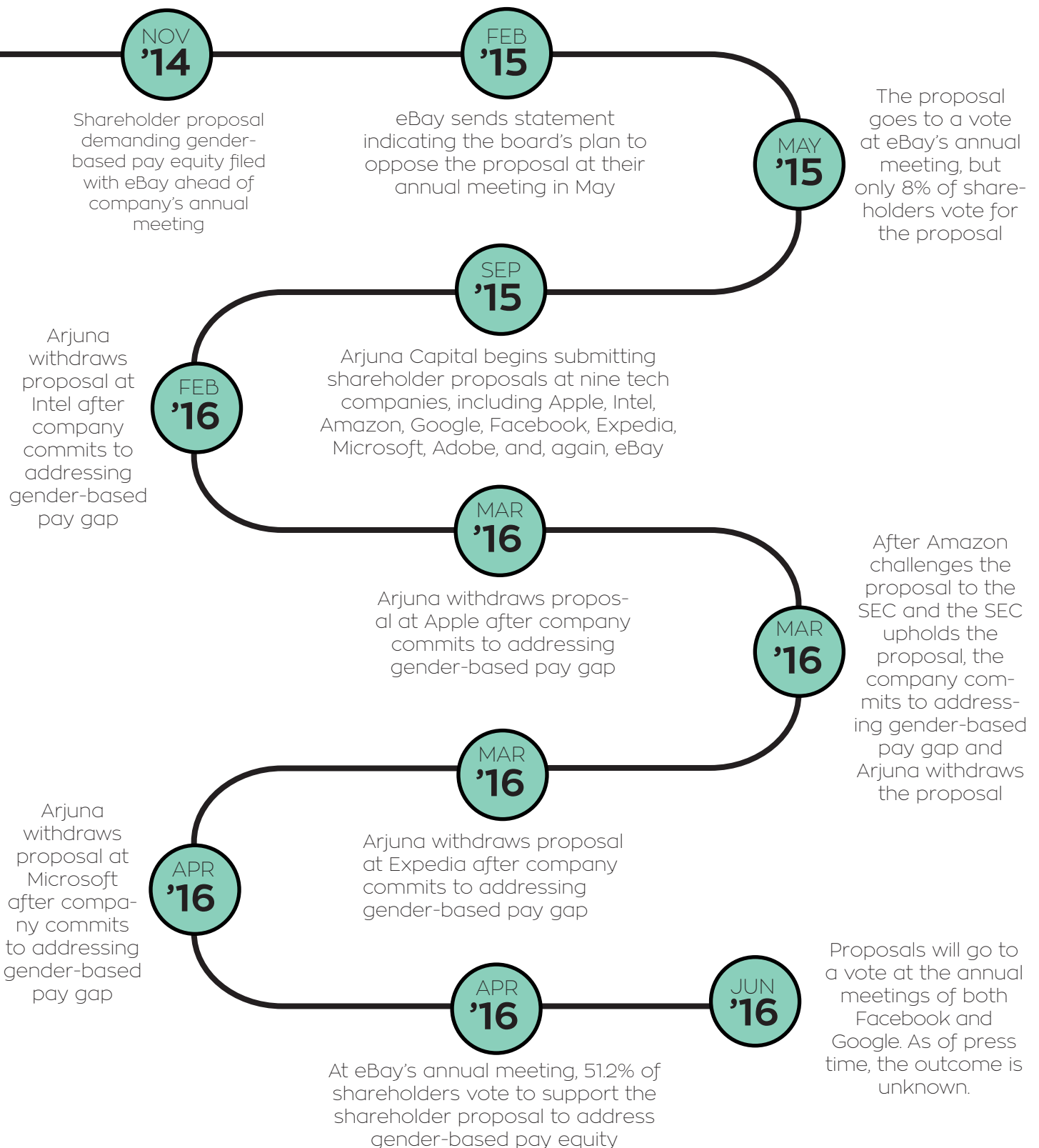
**“Women are no longer willing to live with this black box around compensation. We know there's a problem, and there's an easy solution, which is transparency and accountability, both to employees and to investors.”**

One develops unconscious bias as a child. There is a great piece done by Jimmy Kimmel, who, very surprisingly, is becoming one of my favorites. He went out on the streets of New York and asked children why men deserve to be paid more than women, and the children had a variety of responses. Most of them were disheartening. They said things like, "Well, women shop more online and men work harder." There was one young girl who said, "This is just a messed up world we live in." The last girl said, "Men make all the decisions, and we've never had a woman president." I think she really hit the nail on the head, because women don't see women in positions of leadership and that impression leads women into a vicious cycle. When you can change that cycle and see more women in leadership positions, then that begets more women in leadership positions.

That's really the structural bias that we were looking to address through the pay gap because if you can't attract and retain top talent, including women, you're not going to be competitive, and you're certainly not going to be performing at the same level as peers who can attract and retain top



# ARJUNA CAPITAL'S GENDER-BASED PAY EQUITY TIMELINE



female talent and move them into positions of leadership.

**When you filed these shareholder proposals, what was the business case that you made for gender-based pay equity?**

NL: Technology companies, in particular, compete on innovation. Gender-diverse teams have been shown to lead to greater innovation. And, not only that, gender-diverse teams have been shown to result in better financial performance on a number of metrics, including return on equity, profit margins, and stock price appreciation. So there is a strong business case to be made for why companies should encourage women into positions of leadership and, certainly, pay them fairly. In short, big tech companies need to attract and retain top talent, including women, and, in so doing, they will experience more innovation and better financial results.

**Why now?**

NL: Women are not willing to wait another 40 years for the gender pay gap to close, which is the trajectory at the current rate of change; the gender pay gap is not expected to close until 2058. Looking back to the 1950s, when sexism in the workplace was the norm, it's a sad reflection on a society that you would have to wait 100 years to close the gender pay gap. I think this is a critical time. Society is ready for change and women aren't willing to accept this inequity anymore.

**Did you just drop the mic? [Laughter] So, somehow in addition to these huge wins you've had in terms of pay equity, recently you've also had some massive wins in terms of climate change. Could you tell us about that?**

NL: We were really blessed that at the same time that we won at the SEC with Amazon, we also won with Exxon and Chevron. That's continuing an engagement that we've had for the last two years. In 2013, we filed the first carbon asset risk climate change proposal with ExxonMobil. Of course, they fought at the SEC and argued that shareholders did not need to weigh in on the fact that two-thirds of global fossil fuels' proven reserves are unburnable if we're going to prevent catastrophic climate change. And, certainly, we were arguing that this is the fundamental business risk that Big Oil is facing this century — that we're just not going to be able to burn it all. In fact, we can

only burn less than a third.

So, we filed this proposal asking them to describe the risk they face from stranded unburnable carbon assets and, luckily, we won. In a real about-face for Exxon, they came to the table and we were able to negotiate. In exchange for withdrawing our proposal, they agreed to write a 30-page report on the risk that they face from climate change as a carbon asset risk in particular.

The negotiation itself was really a landmark because it did represent such an about-face — just the fact that they negotiated with investors on this point. It was covered in over 500 global publications, including, of course, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, The New York Times.

Then, when they put the report out, it was quite clear that they weren't preparing for this risk at all and, in classic fashion, they denied the risk completely and argued that none of their carbon assets were at risk of stranding for several reasons. One, because global governments would not act and reach a global climate deal, [an argument] which, of course, now flies in the face of the Paris Agreement. Their second argument was that they would not leave the world's poor stranded and that emerging economies would need their energy.

Ironically, the report came out one day after an IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] report that said that emerging economies and poor economies around the globe would be most vulnerable to climate change. And, of course, [the Exxon report] completely ignored any kind of technological leapfrogging from carbon-based fuels to distributed renewable energy. As an aside, that is a much more likely path — much like [how] cell phones are used in emerging economies rather than long-line infrastructure for phone systems.

Third, they argued that it would just be too expensive; they argued that by 2090, consumers would be spending 44 percent of their income on energy if we were going to transition to a low-carbon economy. That is a number that is currently being investigated by the New York, California, and Massachusetts attorneys general because it represents a potentially misleading disclosure to investors, which is interesting in and of itself.

The report came out, and what we learned from that report was that they're not preparing for the biggest risk that they face this century and that investors need to reconsider how they're looking at these companies.

Last year, we filed a proposal both with Exxon and Chevron, asking them to shrink profitably



# SHAREHOLDER ADVOCACY'S GREATEST HITS OF THE LAST DECADE

'07-  
'10

Shareholder resolutions and extensive negotiations with Coca-Cola (2007), PepsiCo (2010), and Nestlé Waters NA (2009), lead all companies to commit to increasing recycling rates by more than 50%. When fully implemented, these will result in 20 billion more bottles and cans recycled in the US.

'07

As a result of a shareholder resolution, Best Buy agree to hold a pilot of an in-store electronics take-back program. After a successful 100-store pilot, it fully implements the program across all 1,000 US stores. The program has already recovered a billion pounds of electronics, with a new goal of 2 billion by 2020.

'13

Exxon releases the first-ever climate asset risk report after shareholders file "Carbon Asset Risk" resolutions asking oil companies to recognize and disclose the financial and stranded-asset risk they face due to climate change.

'13

When a shareholder resolution pushing McDonald's to stop using plastic foam serving items receives 29% of shares voted in support, McDonald's agrees to phase out foam cups and replace them with recyclable paper cups at 2,000 of its US stores.

'14

Procter & Gamble shareholders ask the company to phase out unrecyclable packaging. The resolution gains the support of 25% of shares, representing over \$35 billion. The company commits that 90% of its packaging will be recyclable by 2020.

'14-  
'15

Following a 2014 shareholder resolution pushing FirstEnergy to disclose its plans for managing its carbon emissions, the company begins its first-ever carbon reporting. In 2015, approximately 20% of shares are voted in support of a shareholder resolution encouraging the company to set a carbon target. Shortly thereafter, FirstEnergy adopts the most aggressive carbon target of US utilities: carbon reductions of 95% below 2005 levels by 2045.

'14-  
'15

Shareholder engagement results in three food companies — Dunkin' Donuts, Krispy Kreme, and Starbucks — reformulating products to remove nano-titanium dioxide, an ingredient that initial studies indicate may be harmful to health.

and favor value over growth because a growth plan this century is complete folly when you can't burn all of the oil that we already have. These companies are simply not going to make money in the same way they did last century. That's for two reasons: 1) there's only so much carbon we can pump into the air, and 2) the easy oil is really gone and all of the growth is coming from unconventional assets that are not only more expensive to develop but more carbon-intensive. That's a double negative for developing those assets.

Investment in developing new oil assets has gone up 100 percent over the last 10 years, yet development of new reserves has only gone up 3 percent. I would consider it an irresponsible use of investor capital. We would like to see them focus on the most profitable projects, avoid high-cost, high-carbon investments, and return excess profits to shareholders so that shareholders can reinvest those profits in the new economy and in companies that are creating solutions to our global challenges.

Both Exxon and Chevron, again, tried to challenge the proposal at the SEC, and this spring we won our bid and it will go to a vote at both companies.

**Where do you find the courage, as a single person, to go up against the largest companies in the world?**

NL: I'm a young woman working in finance and I am lucky enough to be able to speak and act from the position of an investor. When I look at our global challenges and the role that companies play, I fully understand that it's not just the companies that are the actors here. Investor-owners are also actors, and they have a voice. On a personal level, I believe that if no one speaks up and says, "Hey, this is wrong," then nothing will ever change and, in fact, things will get worse. I feel compelled to speak up, and I understand that many people aren't in a position to do so.

**What is giving you hope for the future, that your children's generation will see a different future than what we're experiencing now?**

NL: I see hope in so many areas. It's easy to get bogged down when the weather is wacky and the news is bad, but there are so many fundamental changes that are happening across our economy. Women are taking a

bigger role in our society and in positions of leadership. We have Hillary Clinton running for president and having a viable path to the White House. We're seeing so much more strong female leadership and a shift in the balance from the masculine to the feminine in a much healthier way.

When I look at our energy economy, I see a transformation in how energy is created and distributed. I expect every house with southern exposure will have an array of solar panels in the near future, that the barriers to entry for that technology have pretty much disap-

**“Gender-diverse teams have been shown to result in better financial performance on a number of metrics, including return on equity, profit margins, and stock price appreciation.”**

peared, and that people will be able to plug in their electric cars to a house that is generating its own energy. That will completely turn our energy system on its head for the better.

We just bought a Nissan LEAF, and we got a two-year lease because we're on a list for a cheaper Tesla. I am so delightfully surprised at how incredible a car it is. Once a critical mass of people get electric cars, no one's going to go back. They're simply better, and not just for the climate. On so many performance metrics! When I filled up the family Subaru the other day, it felt archaic. There I was, standing there with the fumes and the cold weather and waiting to pump these fossil fuels into my car, and I thought, "This is not the path forward." \$



# ARE YOU MAKING A CONSCIOUS CHOICE ABOUT YOUR LAW FIRM?

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# HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR CAPITAL RAISE AS A FEMALE FOUNDER

Raising capital can be especially tough for women founders. Ease the pain with four key insights from an entrepreneur turned investor.

BY KRISTIN HULL



**F**or anyone launching a company, the first fundraising round can be one of the most challenging times of their life. Capital-raising can be a bit of an art, a science, and a dance requiring both a positive attitude and an incredible amount of perseverance. For women founders, the process can be even more daunting and uncertain. Currently, only 26 percent of angel investors and 4 percent of venture investors are women. And because there are also fewer women founders, they sometimes need to prove themselves more than their male counterparts do. The good news is that the number of women

entrepreneurs is increasing, and the number of female investors is also on the rise. Women with a sharp pitch deck, strong revenue projections, and numbers to back up an awesome product or service are poised to be excellent fundraisers. Here are four best practices I've learned as both a female entrepreneur raising capital and as an investor in early-stage businesses.



## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Spend serious time on both your business plan and staking out your potential investors. Know your audience: who is this potential investor, which similar businesses have they invested in, and why are you a great fit for their portfolio? Investors want to see that you are creating value and that you know your numbers. Have a simple yet well-designed pitch deck — no more than eight pages — with good financial projections and data to show why you believe the targets are realistic and attainable for you and your team.

## BE CONFIDENT

There are really good reasons to invest in women. I have found that female entrepreneurs make realistic projections, are more likely to meet their milestones, and are often more frank when mistakes happen. Moreover, First Round Capital has found that female-founded startups outperform startups that have all-male teams. So make your ask with confidence. Own how great your business plan is, and know inside and out what social or environmental problems your business addresses and how well you and your team are positioned to harness market forces to solve them. Think of it this way: as an entrepreneur you have a great service or product to offer the world, and by inviting an investor in you are allowing him or her to be a part of the change you are working hard to create. Remember that you are also making a contribution and an offering by inviting the investor's participation and partnership in this shared mission.

## SELL YOURSELF!

This means being your true, authentic self. Investors are looking for execution skills, so tell them real stories about what life events led you to start this business and how your unique talents and skills have allowed you to meet or surpass projections thus far. Investors also want transparency about past failures because they want to see how you confronted and overcame those challenges and how you put yourself on the road to success. Tell stories about milestones you are proud of that may also illustrate how you have confronted roadblocks, and share how as a result you are ready to tackle any issues that come your way.

## PATIENCE IS YOUR FRIEND

Know that fundraising generally takes a lot of time, and that building relationships is part of the process. Women tend to have high emotional intelligence, which can be incredibly useful in building relationships with investors. To the extent that you can, be empathetic — i.e., step into the shoes of the investor to guess what is most important to him or her. It will serve you well in connecting your proposal to their interests.

Also keep in mind that there are difficult funding cycles: both summer and the holidays are times in which investors can be elusive. Don't be discouraged if potential investors are not getting right back to you. As you grow relationships, do ping potential investors with friendly updates, keeping them apprised of your milestones. Many will be watching your progress and may eventually want to invest in you.

Remember: the right investors are those who believe in you as an entrepreneur, are fully aligned with your mission, and also bring more than money. They might have great connections to other investors, solid legal advice, tech support, new customer pipelines, etc. Ideally you will collect a basket of patient and supportive investors who believe in you, are willing to introduce you to other potential investors, and may be willing to roll up their sleeves here and there to advance your progress. And until you get there, repeat after me: I've got this. \$



*Kristin Hull, Ph.D. is co-founder of Impact Hub Oakland, North Oakland Community Charter School, and Nia Global Solutions. She is a partner and portfolio manager at Green Alpha Advisors, a solutions-focused public equities firm.*

The image features a central graphic of four wind turbines in silhouette, set against a background of a cloudy sky. The turbines are arranged in a slightly staggered line across the frame. The word "ENERGY" is prominently displayed in the center in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The overall composition is clean and modern, emphasizing renewable energy.

**ENERGY**





# WANT TO SOLVE THE WORLD'S ENERGY PROBLEMS? START IN HAWAII

Photo by: Alex Schwab  
flickr.com/photos/alexschwab

## Energy Excelerator is thinking local to spark global change — and building an unstoppable clean-tech innovation network in the process.

For clean energy startups, the action's in...Hawaii? Believe it. A combination of ambitious laws, island economics, and the community-building prowess of a powerful startup accelerator have turned the island paradise into the hot place for clean tech innovators.

### THE PERFECT BACKDROP

The potent combination starts with Hawaii's isolation. The state has the highest electricity prices in the US — more than double the national average. That makes it possible to bring clean energy technologies to market in Hawaii at higher price points than elsewhere and still be

competitive with existing options. Meanwhile, thanks to a 2015 law, Hawaii's utilities need to get 100 percent of their power from renewable sources by 2045. "That very aggressive goal has demonstrated the need for innovation, because we can't get there with the technology that we have today," explains Dawn Lippert, co-founder and director of Energy Excelerator, a Honolulu-based national program for startup companies across energy, water, transportation, agriculture, and cybersecurity.

Finally, mix in Lippert's own organization, a for-profit/nonprofit hybrid that's creating a community of big funders — think the US Navy

and tech giants like Panasonic — and spunky, mission-driven startups to solve challenges across every sector energy touches. "Our mission is to help solve the world's energy problems, starting in Hawaii," Lippert explains. "We use Hawaii as a test bed and early proving ground for companies to come to market, and then we help them scale globally."

The result is a dynamic and growing community of diverse stakeholders in a unique position to truly change the world. We spoke with Lippert, who co-founded Energy Excelerator in 2013, to get the scoop on EE's mission, challenges, and hopes for the future.

**Can you simply explain what Energy Excelerator does?**

Dawn Lippert: Our program does three things: we provide funding for companies to put projects on the ground — early deployment; we help companies find customers to pilot with and help them get traction, whether their customers are utilities, businesses, commercial, industrial, or consumers; and we build a community around these companies. We have 42 portfolio companies, and we have a very strong peer-to-peer philosophy.

Our primary organization is a nonprofit, funded mostly by the US Navy as a commercialization program for important technology. We're also

how energy impacts agriculture, and is it secure? So you really need to speak to cybersecurity — and even education: do we have the right people for the new economy? Everything is so interrelated.

At Energy Excelerator, we take a two-pronged strategy, both top-down and bottom-up. Top-down, we look across the entire system and say, "Okay, here's the soft spot." We need companies that are, for example, able to address restaurant energy efficiency, which is an underserved sector in Hawaii. Or we need companies that are going to be able to put fallow agricultural land to productive use. But then our strategy for addressing the problem is to find the best-in-class, most exciting, innovative startups

spectrum, across demographics? And not just in Hawaii but around the world and our supply chains?

**You get a couple hundred applications every year to be part of the program, and you accept less than 7 percent of the companies that apply. What are you looking for in the companies that make the cut? Are there any key things that are instant red flags or instantly elevate a company for you?**

DL: We want all the companies to be part of a community. You can imagine that in 10 years, working with about 15 companies a year, we actually get to work with about 150 CEOs and leadership teams. We're building a

**“We really think the world is going to 100 percent renewable energy. Hawaii is just getting there faster.”**

funded from the US Department of Energy and from a number of corporate partners such as GE Ventures, Blackstone, Hawaiian Electric Industries, and others. It's a public/private model on the nonprofit side.

We also just launched a for-profit sidecar fund. We make grants up to \$1 million on the nonprofit side, and then the venture capital fund follows-on with investments into our fastest-growing companies.

**Can you speak a little more about what's so special about this island world that you're getting to operate in?**

DL: It's been a perfect backdrop for companies to come in and innovate. When I lived in DC [as a consultant working on energy issues for Booz Allen Hamilton], I focused on energy as a vertical market. But when you live on an island like this, you start talking about energy and immediately you start talking about water, then

and entrepreneurs from around the country to solve those problems in a bottom-up way.

We are certainly hoping it will go beyond Hawaii's shores, but being here where you can get all the big decision-makers in a room together at one time is very powerful. You can have a look at the entire system. We're relatively unique in that way, but this model can be applied to other places. We really think the world is going to 100 percent renewable energy. Hawaii is just getting there faster.

This notion of 100 percent is really important to us. We use the hashtag #innovatingfor100, and the goal is technically 100 percent renewable energy by the year 2045, but we think of it much more expansively. We actually think of it as 100 percent of our systems. That includes agriculture and water, but also working for 100 percent of the people. How do you make a transition in a way that works for people across the income

people-based network of these entrepreneurs who are going to be the next generation of change-makers in this industry.

We're looking for people who are happy to add to that ecosystem in terms of skill or talent and also want to be part of a larger system change. They're very interested in being larger than themselves. That's often the case with entrepreneurs in this sector because if they were not mission-driven, they'd probably be in social media or tech or something else, right?

We also think diversity on teams makes better teams. We really like to see diversity in terms of men, women, business expertise, technical expertise, age, and geography. We can look across our portfolio and see how our diverse teams are doing versus other teams.

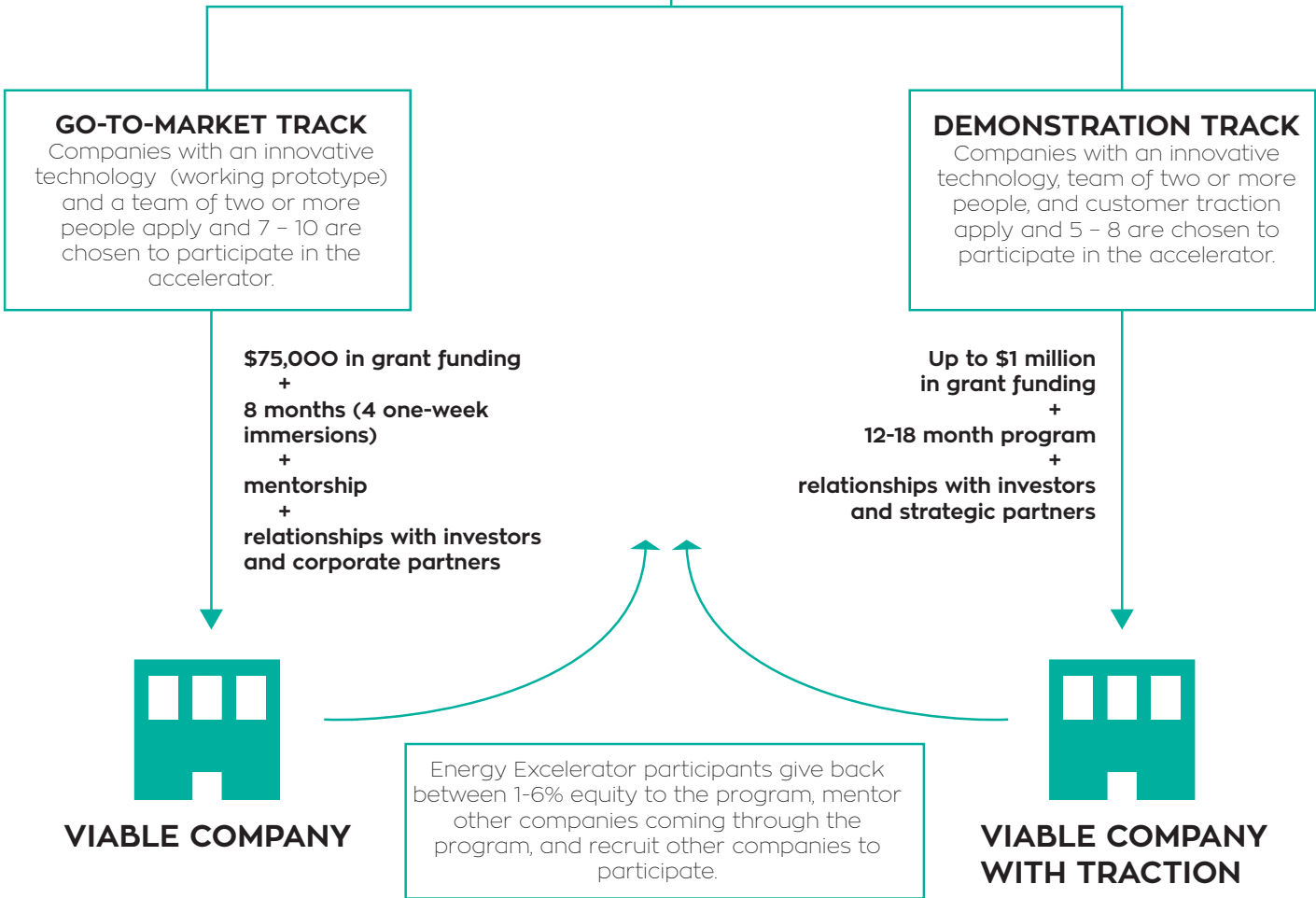
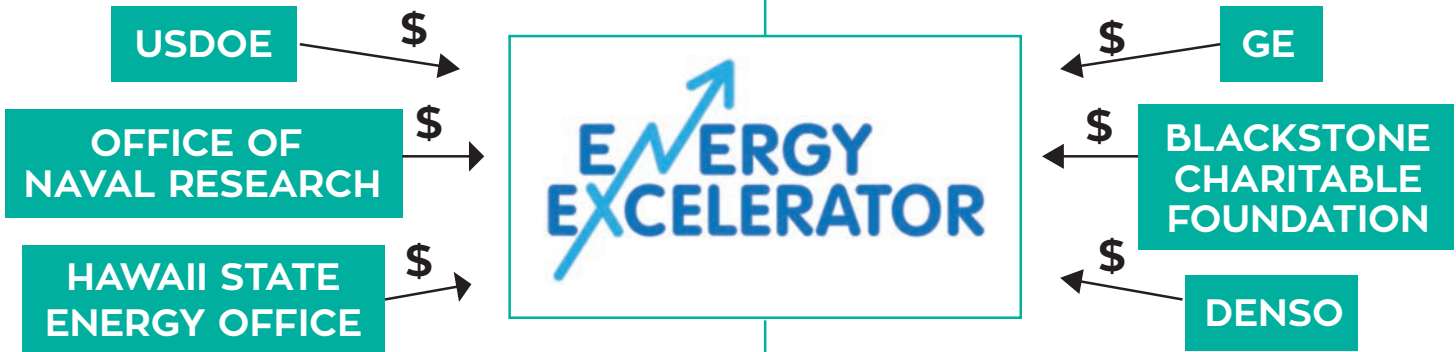
And then we also look for traction. In our demonstration program, traction is required in order to get the project funding from us. We're looking for companies that



# PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR HIGH TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH

Energy has been identified as a challenge for the US Military and Hawaii has a goal of running on 100% renewable energy by 2045. The government has a vested interest in developing new energy solutions and provides grants to the program because it can scale solutions faster by leveraging private capital and strategic partnerships.

Corporate and philanthropic partners also support the program.





## Lippert's Top 3 Pieces of Advice for Mission-Driven Entrepreneurs

### 1. TRY NEW THINGS.

You may fail, and that's a good thing, because you definitely learn something and the next thing you do will be much better for it. When we started our first funding program, it was not successful. The way it was structured was wrong and incentives were misaligned. We had to end it and interview a lot of people, learn a lot, and start something new.

### 2. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTNER WITH DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS.

People really flock to those with like-minded ideas, but some really powerful partnerships can come out of partnering with people from different perspectives — or even the incumbents in your industry. They often will bring a huge amount of value. We have an unexpected coalition of partners, including utilities. In disruptive energy dialogue, utilities are not the first people that new entrepreneurs want to partner with. But we've found they're really critical for moving the ball forward.

### 3. BE BOLD IN ASKING PEOPLE FOR PERSONAL MEETINGS.

Ask the industry leaders you really respect out to coffee or lunch. Come up with bold, interesting questions. People like to be in interesting conversations.

have a repeatable, scalable business model already. And for companies that don't, they go to our Go-to-Market program, which is basically where we pay them \$75,000 to work with them for a year to develop that kind of traction and customer pull.

### What are some surprising lessons that you've learned?

DL: There are so many. One of the things we've learned is that how people manage both up and down teams is a really strong indicator of company success. We now interview not only the founders and company leadership and entrepreneurs, but if it's bigger than two or three people — most of the teams we work with average around 10 members — we also like to interview either the newest person or the person that is the ops assistant or the lowest person on the totem pole. Trying to get a sense of the company culture is actually incredibly important to the long-term success of the company.

We've also learned that people with a growth mindset are much more successful. We're looking at lots of different ways to interview for that or test for that. What I mean is the people who think there is something they can learn from other people, and that they don't have all the answers. We've worked with entrepreneurs that are at different points on that spectrum. We've found that our most successful entrepreneurs are the ones who ask a lot of questions, listen really well, and are always learning and growing that part of who they are.

And in terms of business, we've sometimes taken companies that are not financially strong and that's been okay as long as we know the leadership team really well and they have a path to where they're going. That may be a red flag for some folks, but we pay much more attention to the business, the customer traction interest, and the entrepreneurs themselves. We'll help companies in financial hard times because all startups go through them.

### What trends do you see in the clean energy industry?

DL: Using data to reduce capital investments and reduce costs on the grid and also add more services and options for customers. We're seeing that not just in energy, but in transportation and water. It has been really interesting to help the different sectors and see them be able to use these tools. For example, we have a company in the water space called WaterSmart. They use big data to compare your water use with your peers', predict water use, and look across the energy system at what's happening and use that to drive the behavior for conservation. Five, seven years ago, we saw a lot of these companies in the electricity space. Now we're seeing them emerge in the water space a few years later. That's one of the trends that we're following very closely.

The other trend that we're seeing is huge expansion of corporate investing and interest in this sector. Just last May we had our entire team in Silicon Valley for the week. We had a big event at Google X, with 28 of our teams there presenting their companies. And we had over 150 corporate investors.





Energy Excelerator creates cohorts of CEOs who learn from each other as they move through the program.

**“We’ve found that our most successful entrepreneurs are the ones who ask a lot of questions, listen really well, and are always learning and growing that part of who they are.”**

GE Ventures, one of our corporate partners, was there with four people. Toshiba, Panasonic, Hitachi, LG, Siemens — all these guys were there and they’re really keenly engaged in the innovation ecosystem and looking for new companies and new paths to market.

**What’s giving you hope right now?**

DL: I love working with entrepreneurs. Where others see huge chal-

lenges, entrepreneurs see opportunity. That’s a really special group of people to work with.

I also really love working with people that are new to this industry and seeing a lightbulb come on. We have a fellowship program where we pay for new grads to work at the startup companies. Last year we had nine fellows, and seven of them were women, which is awesome. Three of them ended up with jobs with the company coming out of the fellowship.

They catch the excitement and fever of working in an industry that’s not only changing really fast, but everything you do to help one of these companies succeed is climate-positive: every single new customer, every single new sale, new product — all of that helps the world, in the larger sense of it. Seeing that fire in young people as they join new companies and become part of that mission has been extremely rewarding. ✨ Photos: Energy Excelerator



Solar CEO Runā Jha (center left) and her village-level solar sales agents holding solar lanterns in Janakpur, East Nepal.

# CEOs DON'T GET SEX-TRAFFICKED

**EMPOWER GENERATION FOUNDER ANYA CHERNEFF  
WANTED A BETTER WAY TO FIGHT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.  
HER ANSWER? TURN VULNERABLE WOMEN INTO  
CLEAN ENERGY ENTREPRENEURS.**

**W**orldwide, around 650,000 women and girls are sold across international borders into some kind of slavery each year, often as a result of deep, systemic poverty in their communities. Without economic alternatives, women and their families are more vulnerable to the false promises, desperation, and risky behavior that leads to trafficking. Meanwhile, two billion people lack access to reliable energy. Tackling just one of these issues is obviously tough. Tackling both of them at the same time? That just might be brilliant.

At least that's what social enterprise Empower Generation is hoping. The organization uses the power of clean energy business to enhance the lives of women in remote, impoverished communities while improving access to energy in those same spots. Empower Generation trains and supports women in starting their own solar retail companies, selling and servicing solar lanterns and home energy systems door to door via a network of sales agents. Meanwhile, the female solar retail CEOs gain business skills, a good income source, and — perhaps most important! — respect within their communities. We caught up with co-founder and executive director Anya Cherneff to learn more about how having two missions can be twice as powerful.





### How did you end up starting this business?

Anya Cherneff: I'm coming from a background of working in nonprofits around women's rights issues, especially anti-human-trafficking and anti-prostitution. And I got a bit burnt out. I came to this realization that rescuing victims of human trafficking is incredibly important and it's a really big job, but it's just like putting a Band-Aid on the larger issue. It's the systemic poverty that needs to be addressed. To put it in economic terms, in order to reduce the supply of people into exploitative labor, you have to provide them with value-adding job opportunities in their communities.

My now-husband Bennett [Cohen] was working in clean energy. He pointed out that there are two billion people around the world without reliable access to energy. "What if you trained women to work in this industry?" he asked. "What if we capitalized on this market opportu-

## EMPOWER GENERATION AT A GLANCE



**Location:** San Francisco, CA, and Nepal



**Founded:** 2011



**Team Members:** 6 in the US (2 full-time); 9 in Nepal



**Impact:** Built a network of 19 solar businesses and 158 solar sales agents to provide 50,000 lights to 250,000 people.



**Recognition:** 2015 Clean Energy Education and Empowerment (C3E) International Award for leadership



**Structure:** Hybrid nonprofit/for-profit



**2015 Revenue:** \$500,000 in sales

**“Women feel the most pain from energy poverty and they also stand to gain the most from a transition to clean energy.”**

nity?” We thought that was a cool idea. We liked that it was combining our two passions. We called it “Solar Babe” for a long time and joked about it. And eventually we had joked about it enough.

We didn't want to reinvent the wheel or impose any idea that didn't fit a particular community. So we went on what we called a “learning tour.” We travelled for just under a year through a few different countries in South and Southeast Asia. In Nepal, the energy poverty situation was obvious. Less than 40 percent of the population has access to electricity. And those that do — even for the tourists — you literally get a schedule from the government telling you when your power is going to be on every day. It's usually between like midnight and 3:00 a.m.

It was really clear that there's a big need there. And I'd lived and studied in India, so I was familiar with Hindu-based social structures and knew how oppressive they can be to women. Women are basically considered property of their families until they are sold to their husbands' families. They are second-class citizens or below.

And then when I was in Nepal, I met my business partner Sita Adhikari. I was on a trip learning about this great women's micro-finance cooperative that was working really well, and here is this woman telling me that she'd grown it as a volunteer. I'm thinking, “In our culture you would be the head of your own company or a leading CEO, and here you're just a star beneficiary of a nonprofit's program.” During that meeting, she said to me: “My

real dream is to start my own business, and I would like to employ at least 100 women.” That was our lightbulb moment. All of the pieces came together and I thought: “Well, if this woman is willing to give our ‘Solar Babe’ idea a try, let's support her.”

### Can you explain the business model?

AC: We import clean energy technologies, like solar home systems, solar lamps, clean cookstoves, water filters, etc., and then we sell them through our women-led distribution network of local retailers. So we do two things as a social enterprise. On our nonprofit side, we work as a capacity-builder. We identify rural women who are uneducated and inexperienced in



### Impact Lenders and Donors



### Clean Energy Technology Suppliers

As a nonprofit/for-profit hybrid, Empower Generation is supported financially through donations and grants (nonprofit) and impact investment and debt (for-profit) funding.



Empower Generation purchases clean energy technologies in bulk from suppliers, which it then sells to entrepreneurs at wholesale prices.



## EMPOWER GENERATION

5. Once a loan is paid back, Empower Generation helps the entrepreneur get a working capital business loan from an independent, local microfinance organization in their area. The original loan is then redeployed to help another woman start her own business.



4. Gradually, the women pay back the initial loans made by Empower Generation to set up their businesses and purchase clean power products through the profits made by their businesses.



3. Entrepreneurs either sell products directly to customers or via a village-level sales agent who earns a commission on each sale they make from the entrepreneur.



1. Empower Generation provides training and loans to women in rural areas who want to run their own business selling clean energy technology to their communities.



2. Women business owners purchase clean energy technologies from Empower Generation at wholesale prices. Empower Generation helps the entrepreneurs set retail prices for the products to help them increase their margins.







**“WOMEN ARE REALLY THE ONES WHO ARE GOING TO DEVELOP THEIR COMMUNITIES IF THEY ARE EMPOWERED ENOUGH TO EARN A SUSTAINABLE INCOME.”**



Empower Generation's co-founders Anya Cherneff (left) and Sita Adhikari (right), with Runa Jha (center), one of the program's Nepalese solar CEOs

business and train them to register, own, and operate their own clean-energy retail company. And on the for-profit side, we import technologies and sell them wholesale to our retail network. Those retailers then sell products or clean energy to their last-mile customers.

**You also do loans and funding? How does that fit in?**

AC: On the capacity-building side, to get the women's businesses off the ground, we provide a whole range of support services. We do a lot of business skills training for the entrepreneurs. We provide discounts for the purchase of these clean energy technologies, and then to get them started we provide them with a \$1,000 line of credit or working capital loan for their first order of inventory. They recruit sales agents that work on commission, selling solar door to door, and we also provide branding and marketing support for them.

**You also help the people in that community with loans?**

AC: We sell two different types of products: small solar lanterns, which cost from \$10 to \$35, and larger solar home systems, which cost \$100 and \$350. The systems include several lights, enough power for an efficient television or a fan, and charging for a small tablet and mobile phones. For that we offer pay-as-you-go options to our customers. So, instead of buying the entire system up front, which most customers can't afford, we allow customers to pay us on a monthly basis in similar installments as they're already used to paying for kerosene; say, \$10 a month over a period of three years, after which they own the system.

The majority of our customers actually purchase a solar lantern without needing any credit, because the payback on a solar lantern is usually less than three months, based on the amount of money they spend

on kerosene and candles.

We're basically creating a market with every woman whose business we help launch. We're creating sustainable demand for the products that we import and sell.

**Why women?**

AC: Throughout the world, women are undervalued in terms of the formal economy, and we want to work towards some sort of systematic change to create gender equality. That's the warm and fuzzy reason. But another real reason is that women are the best business opportunity and the best business investment. Microfinance has proven that in these remote developing communities, women are more reliable. They tend to pay back their loans more effectively, and we see that the income that they earn is put back into the community and their families in a really meaningful way. So whether that's paying for their continued education or for their children's



education, or to support some sort of school, or some sort of community installment, we see that women are really the ones who are going to develop their communities if they are empowered enough to earn a sustainable income.

And then on the energy side, in Nepal at least, we find that our women are usually marketing to women as the household energy managers. Women are the ones responsible for the majority of the household energy inputs, like cooking fuel or lighting. So they have a good sense of how much they are spending, how dangerous or harmful things like kerosene can be, and how ineffective products like candles can be. Women feel the most pain from energy poverty and they also stand to gain the most from a transition to clean energy. It's very effective for a woman entrepreneur in her community to get up, take her solar light, and explain to another group of women how this light has changed her life. It's really relatable.

**What are the largest challenges you're facing right now with this business, and how are you addressing them?**

AC: Surprisingly, having women lead their own businesses is working out really well. We thought that was going to be the biggest challenge — will people accept a woman-run company? There is maybe a little bit

of pushback in the very beginning when a woman attends that first training. But then once she starts making her first sales, the impact a solar light makes on a customer's life is just so self-explanatory. Then the customers become good advocates for her, and she tends to be pretty supported in her business.

So I'd say that the biggest challenges for us are access to capital and working in a high-risk country. Obviously we have to work there, because that's the type of place that we're trying to influence, but it can be tough. There's a reason why Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world. It has little to no infrastructure. The power is out all the time, for example. The government is pretty inept, if not totally corrupt, and so it can be a really risky, tricky place to get business done.

The third issue is probably finding and retaining talent, because the level of education in Nepal is just not great. We have to do a lot of work capacity-building, not only for the women we are supporting to be business owners, but also for our local team that is supposed to support them.

**You started as a 501(c)3 nonprofit, but now you're making a transition to a hybrid for-profit. Tell us about the transition.**

AC: We've always wanted and planned to be sustainable [as a

for-profit], rely less and less on donor grants, and have a profitable company, from our smallest retailer up to our headquarters. We figure if we're convincing women to take the risk to start a business and sell these products, we'd better be able to do it ourselves. And going back to the original reason we started this business, it was to capitalize on this huge market opportunity. In Nepal, for example, the off-grid solar opportunity alone is about \$440 million annually.

The first few years, we just wanted to prove that our model worked and make sure that we could earn money doing this. Then we spent the next year and a half trying to figure out the best hybrid structure. It gets tricky in the US, working with a traditional charity structure and a for-profit structure. It's not well-defined.

Now we're at the point where we figured out the structure, we know our model is working and growing and scaling, and we are just at the beginning stages of raising seed capital for the for-profit.

**Is there anything you've learned in five years of working with women as entrepreneurs that has surprised you?**

AC: I was really nervous in the beginning that we would have a lot of women drop out of our program in the first few years, because a startup never really makes money right off the bat, and I thought if it was totally about income-generation, we wouldn't be giving these women what they needed to keep going. And none of them have dropped out for reasons that have to do with not earning enough income in the beginning. They all really quickly recognize the leadership benefits, and see the change in the way their community is treating them. They stay in it first and foremost because of that, and then know that the money part is coming if they continue to work hard. Just having them recognize that on their own was really surprising to me. ✨

Photos: Empower Generation



Sita Adhikari, co-founder and country director of Empower Generation, explains how to use a solar lamp to a group of earthquake victims in Nepal in 2015.





# THE NEW OIL BARONS

Pumping petroleum is so last-century. Lisa Dyson and the team at Kiverdi have a better way: use microbes to convert waste into the oil we all need.



Kiverdi's business can sound like magic at first: the company uses biology to turn carbon dioxide gas into oil. But in nature, that conversion process is nothing new; in fact, it's how we get all vegetable oil. An olive tree, for example, turns carbon dioxide, sunlight, and water into olive fruits, which we then harvest and refine into an oil we can eat, burn, make into soap, etc. The problem with existing natural cycles that capture carbon dioxide in this way is that they're too slow to keep up with the large carbon emissions responsible for climate change. Inspired to take action after witnessing the environmental destruction of Hurricane Katrina, Kiverdi's co-founder and CEO, Lisa Dyson, went looking for a way to speed up the process. She found her answer not with plants like olive trees, but with microbes.

Five years after its launch, the company is working with industrial customers to transform waste carbon from sources such as landfills, manufacturing, or agriculture into customized low-cost, sustainable oils of the sort needed for everything from lotions and detergents to nutritional snacks and packaging materials. Dyson spoke with us about the potentials of this new technology and how she sees sustainability changing the landscape of business overall.

**Where did the idea for Kiverdi come from, and how did you go from having an idea to having a business?**

Lisa Dyson: Kiverdi began by pairing old research with innovations in biotech. My co-founder, Dr. John Reed, and I read some NASA technical reports written in the 1960s and 1970s that discussed recycling carbon dioxide aboard spacecraft. These

## KIVERDI AT A GLANCE



**Founded:** 2011



**Location:** Hayward, CA



**Team Members:** 20



**Awards:** 2012 Edison Award in Energy and Sustainability



research papers sparked an idea: could we develop a similar technology that would enable us to profitably recycle carbon dioxide here on Earth into valuable products? The answer was yes, so we started a business to do it.

#### What is your business model?

LD: We partner with manufacturers of goods to identify supply chain pain points where our technology can offer a unique solution. The pain points range from the need to source a custom raw material to deliver enhanced product performance, the price volatility of a specific raw material, or the desire

#### Have you been able to find mission-aligned investors? What advice do you have for others who are embarking on a capital raise?

LD: We have. When I asked one of our investors why he invested in Kiverdi, he said that although he found our disruptive technology and huge market potential very appealing from a business standpoint, he was most excited by the impact we could have on solving real-world environmental and resource utilization issues.

We have also been able to access a significant amount of non-dilutive funding from the US Department of

LD: Building a business is a journey. You begin with an idea, then go out to the market and often have to modify your approach based on market pain points and demands. I can't say that there are specific things that I wish I knew from the start. Every new thing that we have learned has made us a better company.

#### What advice do you have for aspiring entrepreneurs?

LD: Surround yourself with mentors and industry leaders. Seek out lots of advice. Take this advice into serious consideration. However, all situations are different; your situation is likely

**“As I advanced through my career, I found the number of women — first in my classes, then in business and industry meetings — continued to decline.”**

to profitably recycle a carbon waste stream into valuable products. We work with manufacturers to commercialize targeted solutions.

#### What traction have you achieved to date?

LD: We have multiple projects underway with large manufacturers to bring targeted solutions to market. The projects are in various stages of development depending on the nature of the solution. This is an exciting time for Kiverdi as we are proving that we can scale up unique solutions to recycle carbon into value in a way that is not only profitable for the planet, but profitable for business.

#### What are the applications of your various products? And who is your primary target market or consumer?

LD: We are commercializing three key products at the moment. Our high-protein meal can be used to replace fishmeal to enable sustainable aquaculture. Our PALM+ can replace palm oil in consumer goods, including detergents, lotions, and fabric softeners. Our citrus oil can be used as a flavoring, fragrance, or biodegradable cleaner.

Energy, the California Energy Commission, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

My advice to entrepreneurs is that fundraising always takes longer than expected. Start early and be creative. Look for funding in non-obvious places in addition to the more traditional outlets.

#### How can we encourage more women to participate in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers?

LD: A good issue to figure out is how to keep women from leaving STEM areas. As I advanced through my career, I found the number of women — first in my classes, then in business and industry meetings — continued to decline. There are multiple reasons why women who at one point are excited by STEM areas choose to pursue other areas in life. A focused effort on retention could go a long way to both increase the number of women in STEM careers and to provide role models to encourage and excite future generations of women about the possibilities.


#### What's one thing you know now that you wish you had known at the start?

different. After careful consideration, do what is right for you and your company. And don't forget to take care of yourself.

#### What do you predict for the future of your industry?

LD: Sustainability is of increasing importance to brands and their suppliers. Companies have set sustainability targets and are actively looking for partners to help them deliver on the promises they are making to their customers. The demand is there and growing. I expect we will see more and more products that incorporate recycled components, have lower net carbon emissions, and have decreased petroleum use in the future.

#### What's giving you hope for the future?

LD: Sustainability is becoming increasingly important to consumers. As they exercise their buying power more and more by choosing the most sustainably produced products, manufacturers and brands will increase production of these products. We have a long way to go, but progress is being made. The growing demand for sustainable ways of living and the innovation that is happening to meet this demand make me happy.  Photo: Kiverdi



The background features a complex, layered composition of translucent, organic shapes. A prominent element is a large, white, spiral shell-like structure in the upper left and lower left. Other shapes include overlapping, rounded forms in shades of light blue, purple, and pink, some with small protrusions. The overall color palette is soft and ethereal, with a central white rectangular area containing the text.

# **INNOVATION AND DESIGN**



# BELIEVING IS ACHIEVING



Ayla Schlosser's nonprofit, Resonate, is providing the main thing women need in order to close the wage gap: **CONFIDENCE.**

## RESONATE AT A GLANCE



**Founded:** 2013



**Location:** Kigali, Rwanda



**Team Members:** 4



**Structure:** Nonprofit social enterprise with a business-to-business earned-revenue model



**Impact:** Trained more than 1,100 women in East Africa

According to the UN, women globally could increase their income by up to 76 percent and an approximate global value of \$17 trillion would be added to the economy if the employment participation gap and the wage gap between women and men were closed. Even in a place like Rwanda, where 64 percent of Parliament members are female and there are excellent public and private sector interventions to increase women's education, financial literacy, and vocational training, those gaps still exist because women lack the confidence in their own skills and abilities to turn opportunity into action.

Armed with this knowledge and a skillset for community organizing, Ayla Schlosser moved to Rwanda in 2013 with a concept for an organization that would use leadership training to unlock the potential of women and girls in East Africa and close wage and employment gaps. Within two months of her move, Schlosser met her co-founder Solange Impanoyimana, and the two have been developing their organization, Resonate, ever since.





Resonate’s training program works with women to recognize and build confidence in the skills and resources they possess to make decisions for themselves, speak up, and take on leadership roles to spark change, growth, and development. Since 2013, it has partnered with more than 30 organizations — such as Women for Women International and Kate Spade’s On Purpose factory — and has trained more than 1,000 women. Companies in Rwanda have noticed the training’s benefits and have been hiring Resonate to train their own team members. Schlosser spoke to us about her innovative program and the power of storytelling to unlock potential.

**How did Resonate start? Where did you get the inspiration for this?**

Ayla Schlosser: Unlike other classic founding stories, Resonate wasn’t the result of a single “aha” moment. Rather, it was the natural coming together of a set of skills and interests that filled a gap. While living and working in Washington, DC, as a community organizer, I became fascinated with the very powerful and uniquely accessible tools used to build leadership in communities, yet I was frustrated at how narrowly they were being applied. I’ve always been someone who likes to think about how I

can maximize my personal impact on the world, and I realized that these leadership tools could be making an even bigger difference in international development by unleashing the latent leadership potential of women and girls. When I realized these tools weren’t being used in that way yet, I knew I had to try it out.

I chose Rwanda as a place to pilot because of the unique situation of women there. Rwanda has more female parliamentarians than any country in the world — 64 percent! — and yet, on a community level, there is still much to be done in terms of advancing gender equality. If we were to close the gender-related employment gap in Rwanda alone, it would result in an \$82 million increase in GDP.

**You design systems and curricula for women “to reframe what they believe to be possible, build on their strengths, and create change in their lives and communities.” How? What did the design process look like for you and your team?**

AS: The basis for our model — leveraging your personal story as a tool for leadership — is rooted in years of US social movements and was formalized by one of our advisors, Harvard Professor Marshall Ganz. Over the past two

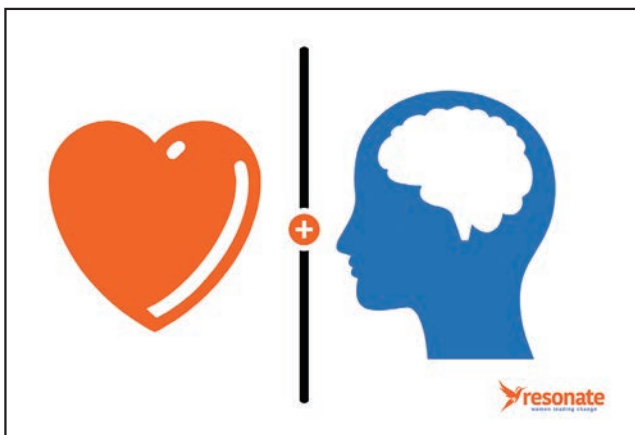
years, Solange Impanoyimana and I have taken Ganz’s Public Narrative framework and adapted and adjusted it to fit the specific context. It started as a lot of trial and error — learning from each new training that we did and iterating. We have just recently worked with a curriculum consultant to take more than two years’ worth of learning and solidify it into a formal, standard curriculum. In addition to our written curriculum, we also worked with an amazing designer to distill our content into a series of five images that serve as a graphic curriculum when working with low-literacy populations.

We have found that belief is an incredibly powerful thing. Our training seeks to shine a light on the skills and strengths that women already have. We ask them to reframe challenges they’ve faced in their lives as obstacles successfully overcome, and think about pivotal moments in their lives with respect to the choices they made. Most of them already have dreams for the future. We give them the tools to turn dreams into future goals.

**What is the most important thing for people to know about women in order to empower them?**

AS: What they are capable of achieving! After our training, we

**RESONATE’S GRAPHIC CURRICULUM FOR LOW-LITERACY STUDENTS**



Stories connect to both your head and your heart



Be proactive in the face of a challenge



# Schlosser's Top 3 Pieces of Advice for Mission-Driven Entrepreneurs

1

## TRUST YOUR GUT.

You will receive unfathomable amounts of advice, both solicited and unsolicited, from people pushing you to try new things, grow faster, or change direction. Some of it is good advice! Some of it isn't. You know what drives your work and will be the best judge of whether a particular strategy will move you closer to achieving your end goal or not.

2

## KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOOD AT (AND WHAT YOU'RE NOT).

I have wasted far too much time trying to do things that someone else could have done faster and better, if only I'd asked.

3

## TAKE A VACATION.

I recently learned the hard way that taking time away isn't only something I should do for my personal well-being, it's also necessary for the success of my business. I took a full week away and was able to identify a bunch of inefficiencies that I couldn't see when I was so deeply immersed in them. I can confidently say that we are now in a better place as an organization as a result.

have seen women interview for jobs, start businesses, report household violence, run for and get elected to their village councils, buy land, put children back in school, and re-orient the trajectories of their lives toward safety and prosperity. All we do is give women hope for the future, a sense of self-confidence in their abilities, some tools for leadership and decision-making, and then get out of the way — they do the rest.

### What are the common misconceptions that you face regarding the women that you work with?

AS: That they will be resistant to change — but we have found quite the opposite. Because our training works with women to set their own goals, we find them to be enthusiastic and self-motivated to achieve the changes that they want for themselves, their families, and their communities. And similarly, we often have people wondering how others react to women coming into their leadership. We already know that at a household level, when you invest in a woman, she reinvests 90 percent of that into her family. We have begun to see that by investing in a woman leading her

community, her own goals often have a larger community benefit.

### What's the biggest lesson you've learned from doing this work?

AS: I'm consistently blown away by human potential and resilience. Real change doesn't come from a willingness to try — it comes from a willingness to try again.

### What's your vision for Resonate's future?

AS: At Resonate, we envision a world where women are leaders in creating communities where all people are respected and valued. That means investing in women's leadership at all levels; not just bolstering those who have already self-selected and succeeded, but unlocking potential in those who may never have thought of themselves as leaders otherwise. By employing Resonate's model at scale through strategic partnerships, we can close employment and wage gaps, create a safe environment for women and girls, and see women driving economic and social development internationally.

Photos: Resonate 



Recent high school graduates in Uganda during a Storytelling for Leadership workshop





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# THE PEOPLE'S ARCHITECT



Photo: Timothy Soar

**Award-winning architect**

**Sarah Wigglesworth**

**has spent decades re-imagining what sustainable building means.**

## SARAH WIGGLESWORTH ARCHITECTS AT A GLANCE



**Founded:** 1993



**Location:** North London, England



**Team Members:** 13



**Structure:** For-profit



**Awards:** 12 regional and sustainability awards from the Royal Institute of British Architects

Some architects leave their marks in grand, sweeping venues meant for special occasions: think Jørn Utzon's Sydney Opera House or Frank Gehry's Guggenheim. But it's the ordinary places — our homes, schools, offices, neighborhoods — that truly sculpt us as we rub against them year after year. It's towards those humbler places, the built world of the everyday, that British architect and professor Sarah Wigglesworth has directed her laser-sharp intellect for more than three decades. With her focus on empowering the people she's designing for, her commitment to sustainability in all its nuances, and her willingness to question business as usual, she has managed to simultaneously elevate and subvert the status quo in her corner of the architectural landscape. And while hers is not a household name, the world has indeed noticed, bestowing on her several of the UK's highest architectural honors, including a dozen Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awards and a medal from the queen. We spoke with her to ponder the meaning of work, the right to good design, and how architects can and should shape the future.





**Tell us about how you ended up where you are today.**

Sarah Wigglesworth: I always knew I wanted to be an architect. I was just a girl from London, but I went to an extremely old, well-established university in the east of England. Suddenly, I came up against what I'll call "the British establishment" — a lot of quite arrogant people who were very pleased with themselves. My sense of identity really came out; it suddenly turned me into a feminist. I wasn't taught by a single female, at all, my entire career in university. That was the '70s and early '80s, so it wasn't all that long ago. There were very few female architects discussed — it was as if no women had contributed to the history of architecture.

Then I left college and I found a lack of discourse in [architectural] practice. That's when I took up teaching as well. It was a really fantastic ground for trying out things and for discussion, both with other tutors and with students. It forced

me to state my position; when you're a teacher, you have to declare what you believe in.

Meanwhile, I'd set up my own practice and was doing very modest work and just learning the craft and making all sorts of mistakes and getting fed up and all the rest of it. But it was a great balance.

Then my partner Jeremy [Till] and I were very lucky to be awarded a Fulbright Fellowship. We were given 10,000 pounds by the Fulbright Commission to go to America for nine months and study anything we wanted. We taught at the University of Pennsylvania for a bit, and then we went on a long trip around the United States. That's when we became sustainable architects.

As often happens when you step outside of your little puddle and get a bit of a perspective, suddenly things became a lot clearer. One of the things that shocked us about America was the profligate lifestyle. A lot of waste, a lot of car travel, a very petroleum-based economy, massive distances, flying around

places. We came back thinking, "You know what? Architects really have to start taking responsibility for this." And although we had been taught about sustainable architecture while we were in college, I'd always dismissed it as a bit hippie-dippy and not very mainstream. It seemed like a distraction.

We came back, and within about two years we had decided to buy a site and make a showcase eco-building in central London. We took about two years to learn all about green buildings. We didn't know anything about it. We were thinking up all these completely wacky things to do, like using recycled materials, building breathing walls. When the building was done, architects just didn't know what was going on with it. It probably was completely incoherent. But I still stand by it. We still live and work in that building, and it's been showcased absolutely everywhere.

That's when our practice started winning awards. It all took off, and we've never looked back. We've gone

Mellor Community Primary School's habitat wall was constructed by the community from salvaged materials and is designed to provide habitats for a range of wildlife.



Photo: Beccy Lane of Positive Image Photography



on winning awards for quite a lot of our work. We haven't built that much, but I'm more interested in quality than quantity. I care about working out, "What are we trying to say with this building?" and what we want to learn and research by doing it. Obviously, we need to satisfy our clients' desires and needs. But I'm talking about asking, "What is our identity?" and, "How does that get expressed through the work that we do?"

But all of these things are so accretive. There was never a total epiphany or anything. It was just slow and steady, trying to work out, "How can we contribute in a way that asks some really difficult questions while positing some really interesting answers?" If that's not what architecture should be about, then it shouldn't be about anything.

**How are environmental sustainability and community sustainability core to what you do?**

SW: In the early days, one used to see sustainability as being rather a technical thing. I am actually very anti the idea that sustainability can be solved simply through technology. We labor in the West under the impression that technology is going to sort out all our ills for us. But that creates a culture of expertise where we experts, i.e., architects, engineers, and so

forth, lose touch with communities. We don't empathize with them. We don't understand their problems.

I've come to the conclusion that instead of making everything more and more complicated and technical, we need to make it much, much simpler. Where things tend to go wrong with sustainability is where [the technology] is much too complex and people don't know how to use it. We might find, for example, in a school building, there won't be anybody who knows how to use complex building management systems. If we said, "Okay, let's just have opening windows that can be controlled by the children," it would work so much better. I don't see why we don't do that kind of thing much more.

Also, you have to bring a community with you when you're dealing with place-making. If you take sustainability to mean "something self-sustaining," we need people loving and caring for their environment and feeling that it's an expression of them, and that therefore it can be cared for and looked after. The only way to do that is to involve them. Those feelings are fragile and they take root slowly. But it's really important that this buy-in happens because otherwise the environment that people occupy becomes something they're alienated from.

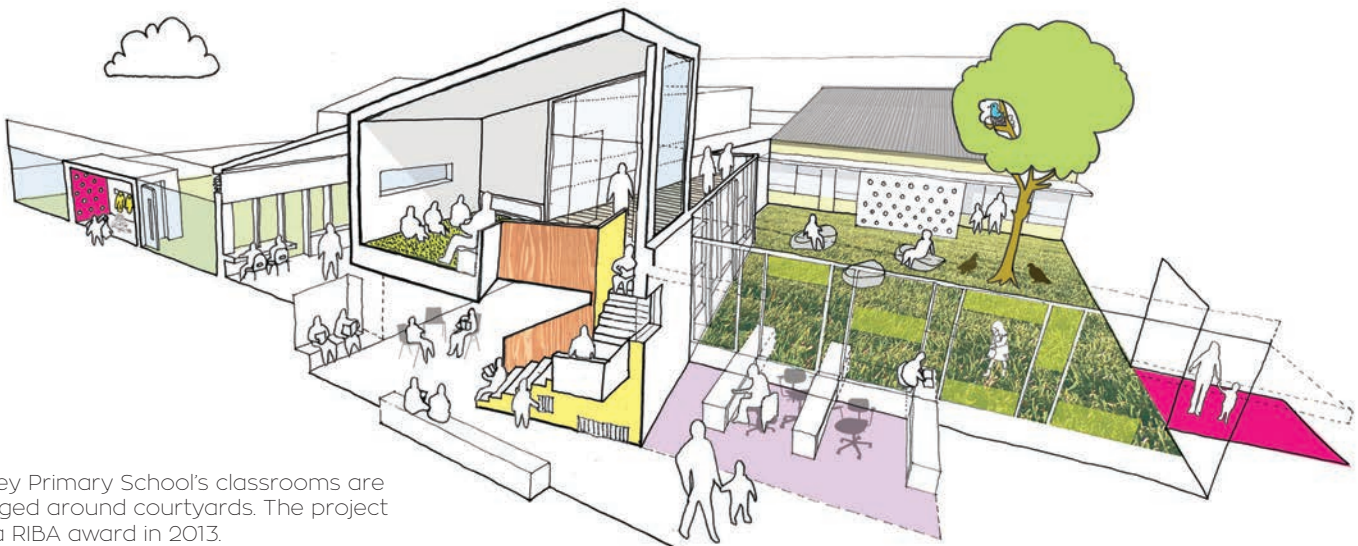
**How does that attitude and that philosophy overlap with feminism and gender?**

SW: A lot of the people who control the direction that technology takes tend to be men. And there is a sense in which men approach problems in a fairly abstract and a disembodied way. The feminist critique of that is that we need to re-inject this idea that all understanding is situated and corporeal. It's body-specific and it's culturally specific, and we shouldn't forget that.

But it tends to be that the whole drift of what's regarded as progressive in the architecture and planning world has a technical slant to it, which means that even to critique it is seen as non-progressive.

**How does that tension align with your success? You seem pretty well-respected in the architecture community, but I assume that has also been a fight.**

SW: It's a juggling act. It's difficult to resolve the contradictions that are inherent in where I'd like to be or the discourse that I'd like to have versus the prevailing doctrines and the expectations of awards or clients or the market. I would say that we are relatively successful but, actually, we're a very small practice. It depends



Takeley Primary School's classrooms are arranged around courtyards. The project won a RIBA award in 2013.





how you measure success. I measure success by, “Am I fulfilled? Am I being true to my own sense of identity and my values?”

It’s difficult because there are always compromises involved, but you find these little serendipitous moments. Clients select you because you reflect their values. I’m very aware that being a woman and having my kind of attitudes and demeanor has closed lots of doors, because that’s not appealing to certain kinds of people. But, equally, it will appeal to others, and perhaps they’re people that I would like to work with because they recognize something in me that

to the public. We have been on television, and although I don’t think television is a great medium for architecture, it’s really important to get a message about the importance of architecture out there in the general public. Architecture deserves a bit more attention than it gets at the moment. You get acres and acres of books reviewed in newspapers, but you don’t get that much architecture discussed. The public needs to be the discerning consumers who say, “You know what? That’s not good enough. We demand better.” This isn’t just about taste. It’s actually about quality. “This works, that doesn’t,”

have to pull back, at least you tried.” Who wants to reach the end of their life and think, “I couldn’t really be bothered to try?”

**What’s giving you hope right now?**

SW: I’m going to be 60 soon, and for about 30 years now I’ve been teaching and practicing at the same time. But I’ve decided to give up academia, and I’m going to go hell-for-leather trying to do what I want and creating the kinds of conditions for good architecture wholly through the practice. It’s a really good time for me to focus; architects typically reach

**“If you take sustainability to mean ‘something self-sustaining,’ we need people loving and caring for their environment and feeling that it’s an expression of them.”**

reflects their values. There’s no point in pretending to be somebody you’re not, because you’re just going to have a huge identity crisis.

The older I get, the more I feel I’m just lucky to have had any work at all, really. And some people I’ve met have been incredibly inspiring. Usually, it’s a client that’s pushing you to produce something absolutely amazing because they’re amazing in their own right and you feel they deserve it. But these things do take a while to work out. You need to take time to think about what kind of an architect you want to be.

**What has been the impact of Sarah Wigglesworth Architects?**

SW: The impact I would quite like to have made is to change the discourse. I don’t just mean the kind of debates we’re having; I mean a shift in values and what’s important about architecture. I think one can do that through teaching, or through lecturing and explaining and writing, which I do. You can do it through your buildings, which I hope we do. The other thing is actually speaking


“This is good for me, this isn’t,” “This makes me feel good, this doesn’t,” or “This is hostile and this isn’t” — those kinds of things.

**What specific advice or lessons would you give to someone who is having a similar feeling to what you had when you were in school, of “Yeah, this status quo thing? Not loving it. I know there has got to be more”?**

SW: Be bold. The most amazing things can happen if you’re bold. There are always compromises in whatever you do; therefore, you’ve almost got to push the boat out further than you think in order to gain the gains that you really want to achieve.

Even yesterday, we were in a meeting with a client who is really worried about getting planning permission for a private house he wants to build. I was saying, “Look, you’re spending a lot of time, energy, effort, and emotion on this project, and in the end you’re going to live there. Don’t compromise on day one. Go for what you want, because it’s worth it, and even if you

their peak quite late in life, after a long apprenticeship and a long period just trying to build a practice and work out how to do what they want. As I move into this part of my life, I feel very competent at what I do. At that level, it has become easier over time. It’s not quite such hard work to get work anymore. I’m sure there’s going to be some really fantastic stuff to come up in the next 10 to 15 years, and it’ll be great to see what that is. I would like to think I’ve still got one really interesting and great project ahead of me before the end.

I also think things in society are changing a lot. This austerity thing that we’re going through in the UK and the financial problems that we face as a globe are probably here to stay. I feel quite optimistic about that, oddly enough. It’s really good to think about it as something like the new normal. We’re going to have to think anew about how we use and distribute resources, and how we build with what we’ve got, and how to live together in a really different way. Those who stay ahead and can think about that in a different way are going to inherit this new era. 

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A large iceberg floats in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is visible above the water, while the much larger, jagged base is submerged below the surface. The sky is a pale blue with light clouds, and the water is a darker blue. The overall scene is used as a metaphor for leadership, where the visible tip represents the public face of a company and the submerged part represents the hidden, foundational elements.

# LEADER- SHIP

Presented in partnership with the Savii Group. Savii Group is a thought-leading corporate culture advocate that not only helps shape goals for companies interested in being a force for good, but also provides bonafide funding and tools to help them get there.

savii group



# WHY DON'T MORE WHITE WOMEN FIGHT FOR ME?

BY GERRY VALENTINE

**I'm an African-American man and a strong ally for women's equality. I take my ally role seriously, and I work hard at it. But sometimes I wonder: why aren't more white women standing up for me?**

Sometimes living your values can leave you feeling not valued. I had that experience recently in my work as a male ally for gender equality. I was speaking on a panel at a gender diversity event when a woman in the audience raised a challenging question. She explained that as an African-American woman, gender bias is just one part of the challenge she confronts. She said the lack of racial diversity in business is just as frustrating for her, and she wanted to broaden the conversation. As the only minority on the panel, I understood her point and thought a broader discussion could benefit the group. However, our

moderator seemed uncomfortable with discussing race, and she politely steered us back to gender diversity.

I had a chance to briefly speak with the African-American woman after the event. She told me the evening had left her feeling invisible and undervalued — which was ironic because we were there to celebrate the value women bring to business. As an African-American male ally I felt the same, and it wasn't the first time. I've seen many gender diversity events sidestep discussions of racial diversity. It's a missed opportunity for women leaders, and especially for conscious

women leaders.

Racial diversity and equality in the workplace are in line with conscious business values, essential for building a sustainable economy, and necessary in order to achieve gender diversity. Race is an extremely sensitive topic in the United States, and conscious women leaders have the life experience and leadership skills to make meaningful change around it. And perhaps most importantly, taking on an ally role for racial equality in corporate America offers conscious women leaders an opportunity to step into a position of increased strength and power.





## TO HAVE A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY, WE NEED RACIAL EQUALITY IN BUSINESS

One of the important tenets of conscious business is creating shared prosperity, rather than economic inequality. Some of the most blatant examples of inequality in the US fall along racial lines. While we're well aware of the social justice issues minorities face in the United States, there's far less public discussion about the discrepancies in the business world. Minorities are dramatically underrepresented in top leadership (approximately 4 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs are minorities), minorities who are equally qualified are significantly less likely to be interviewed or hired, and minority entrepreneurs are less likely to receive venture capital funding. This kind of underrepresentation translates into reduced economic power and reduced influence, which are at the heart of inequality. This dynamic produces poor minority communities that are locked out of economic prosperity and relegated to a cycle of multigenerational poverty.

The trends in minority underrepresentation are also on a collision course with US population trends. By the year 2044, the majority of US citizens will belong to what are minority groups today. In fact, the majority of US children under age five are already minorities. It won't be possible to build a sustainable economy — one with shared prosperity — if the majority of citizens are locked out of important roles in the business sector. Population trends are important from a gender equality standpoint too, because the majority of women in the US will soon belong to racial minorities. If our gender equality work doesn't represent the concerns

of racial minorities, it ultimately won't represent the concerns of most women.

## CONSCIOUS WOMEN LEADERS ARE UNIQUELY QUALIFIED TO ADDRESS RACIAL INEQUALITY

In my executive coaching work, approximately 50 percent of my clients have been women. It's something I'm proud of, and my female clients have helped me understand the alignment between gender equality and racial equality. Many of the stories my women clients tell me about their struggles in the business world outline exactly the same struggles I face as an African-American man. For example, women leaders in high-tech fields have overcome preconceptions that "girls" aren't good at science or math. As an African-American man with an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering, I've had to overcome the

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**“If our gender equality work doesn't represent the concerns of racial minorities, it ultimately won't represent the concerns of most women.”**

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preconception that I was better suited for athletics or the entertainment industry than engineering. My female clients speak of having their opinions automatically discounted in business meetings, and of being labeled “emotional” or “angry” if they express their views assertively. Most African Americans in the business world are well aware of having their opinions discounted, and African-American men especially have to walk a very fine line with assertiveness to avoid the “angry black man” label. These parallels have shown me that my

experiences are highly relevant in the work for gender equality. I'm well-suited as an ally for women because I can directly relate to the challenges they face. The same is true for women leaders; their experiences enable them to relate to the challenges minorities face in the business world.

Women leaders have another strength as allies: their leadership skills. Race is a highly sensitive, hot-button issue in the US. Making meaningful change will require high levels of leadership skill in areas where women are often rated higher than men, like collaboration, inspiring others, and championing change.

## ALLIES ARE POWERFUL

Allies are an important force for change. Perhaps the most significant example is in the LGBTQ rights movement. LGBTQ people make up a relatively small portion of the population — estimates range from 4 percent to 10 percent — and therefore don't wield significant economic or political power. Yet in the last several years we've seen tremendous progress in LGBTQ equality, and it has come from the engagement of a large number of allies. Allies in any cause have a unique power to influence and drive change. That's why I take my role as an ally

for gender equality so seriously, and why women leaders have such an important role in racial equality.

Becoming allies for racial equality can also deliver an important benefit for women. When you take up the ally role, you step into a role of leadership and power — a role of driving change and making your voice heard. That is precisely how we want women to be seen in order to drive gender equality. So when a woman steps into the role of an ally, she also steps into her power.



## HOW TO BE AN ALLY FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

Here are some specific steps conscious women leaders can take to become allies for racial equality in the workplace.

### 1

**Listen and learn.** The first step as an ally is to listen deeply and learn the concerns of the people you want to help. Avoid making assumptions, and seek to understand what they believe they need. Learn about workplace issues that may affect minorities disproportionately.

### 2

**Use privilege to confront inequality.** One of my biggest tools as a male ally for women is that my male privilege allows me to confront inequities in a very powerful way. For example, it is very powerful when a male leader speaks up about observing gender bias (for more on this, see page 100). White women can do the same thing for racial equality: speak up when you notice the lack of minority representation; challenge inappropriate stereotypes or assumptions; and address issues that may affect minorities disproportionately.

### 3

**Build racial diversity in your company or organization.** It's important for allies to demonstrate action. Women-run companies and organizations that work in the gender equality space often lack racial diversity in their own hiring, especially at the leadership level. Take visible action by making sure women-run companies and organizations reflect racial diversity at all levels (see page 14 for more tips about recruiting for diversity of all kinds).


### 4

**Be courageous, persistent, and patient.** Race is a very sensitive issue. Building racial equality in the workplace means addressing centuries of disparities. Taking on this work means potentially having some uncomfortable conversations, and you may make some missteps along the way. Like the other types of change we are making in the conscious business movement, progress on racial equality is going to require the courage to fail sometimes, as well as the patience and persistence to remain engaged over the long run.

## A CALL FOR COURAGE

Those of us who are called to the conscious business movement are ultimately working in the realm of courage. Building sustainable ways of doing business that deliver prosperity for all requires that we confront centuries of flawed thinking, and that we risk uncertainty, criticism, and failure. The work towards racial equality is no different. We need to confront centuries of injustice, and the problems will not be solved quickly. It's especially difficult work in this country because it demands accountability for a fundamental contradiction in our national identity: that the economy in the land of "liberty and justice for all" was actually built on racial inequality and enslavement — and that reality persists today.

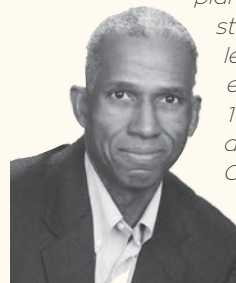
You may make mistakes, and you may even encounter skepticism from minority communities about your intent — skepticism born from longstanding injustices. The answer to all of these challenges is courage: the courage to persist, and to recognize that racial justice is fundamental to a sustainable economy, and to gender equality.

I'm leaning in to my courage, too. Now in my work as an ally for gender equality, I emphasize its inescapable link with racial equality, and I make sure that questions like the one the African-American woman asked of the panel get answered. I've resolved to step up and speak out, to call on women leaders — especially conscious women leaders — to become my allies, too. If we want to change the world, we need to work together to bring equality to everyone. I'll keep fighting for women. And I'm asking, right here, right now: can I count on you to fight for me? 

*Gerry Valentine is the founder of Vision Executive Coaching. He helps build companies that work, and that work for all — supporting profit, people, and the planet. Gerry focuses on business strategy, innovation, and*

*leadership. He has 30 years of experience with multiple Fortune 100 companies, an MBA from NYU, and a BS from Cornell University. Connect with Gerry on Twitter*

*@gerryval or by email at gerry@VisionExecutiveCoaching.com.*







# 3 TIPS FOR BEING AN AWESOME MENTEE

BY MELIS TUSIRAY

We've all heard it before — mentoring is one of the biggest factors in professional success. And it's not just hype: the research backs it up. But how do you make the most of your mentor-mentee relationships? Women, especially, often find themselves over-mentored and under-sponsored. What that means is that we get lots of advice from mentors — passive support — but significantly fewer introductions, interpersonal recommendations to mentors' networks, and other forms of active support. While passive support is very important, active support is what helps us network, build social capital, learn different aspects of the business, and identify new growth opportunities. It is just as important as advice, if not more so. If you've read this far and have been thinking, "Oh man, I'm definitely over-mentored and under-sponsored!" then here are three practical tips to help you make the most of your mentor-mentee relationship and garner more active support.

## 1 KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

One of the most frustrating things mentors say they experience when sitting down with a potential mentee is asking "How can I help you?" and getting the reply, "I don't know, what do you think?" A mentor's role is not to write your future for you — it's to share in your vision for the future and to help provide you with the knowledge and tools you need to get there. While this doesn't mean you need to have a life plan for the next 50 years, communicating with your mentor regarding how you'd like to grow and advance over at least the next five years will help them identify how they can best help you get there. Mentors know a lot, but not all of it will be relevant to your goals. Help them narrow the focus area so they can provide you with the information and support that's most relevant to you and your goals.

## 2 BE AUTHENTIC AND BRING YOUR "A-GAME"


Mentors are more likely to believe in you, trust you, and sponsor you if you are authentic and always performing at your absolute best. When mentors give passive support such as advice, they're not really putting anything of their own on the line. They give you advice, and then you both go on your merry ways. When they give you active support, they're also putting their own reputation at stake because they're the ones who brought you in. How you behave and how you perform in that situation reflects not only on you, but also on your mentor. Therefore, when you start asking mentors for active support, they need to be able to trust that you will perform in a way that reflects well on both of you. They simply aren't going to take the risk if they don't believe you can deliver.

## 3 ASK FOR WHAT YOU NEED

You should know what you need when you go to talk to your mentor. Is it just insights? Is it an introduction to a specific person or company? Ask your mentor for specific, focused support, because even if you know what you want, unless your mentor is a mind-reader (in which case, can you introduce us? I have a few business propositions for them...) you have to request the type of support you're seeking. While being so direct can be a very scary prospect for some mentees, mentors would much rather have you ask politely for what you need than leave them guessing about how they can best help you.



Melis Tusiray is the founder and president of Hey Ladies! (heyladies.org), a platform that provides practical, applicable advice and strategies to women who work.

If nothing else, remember that moving from passive to active support requires the mentee to play an active role, engaging with the mentor in a focused and intentional way. By implementing these tips, you can begin to shift your approach and create the relationships you need in order to build the career you want. 



# WHAT HELPS YOU PREPARE BEFORE A BIG MEETING OR PRESENTATION?

**“I like to be over-prepared. I really like to write out a script, even though I usually end up not using it. The best thing I learned preparing for my TED Talk was instead of thinking that you have to provide something to the audience, think that you’re giving the audience a gift. Your participation and your talk is this gift that you’re bestowing on them, whether you’re going up for a big pitch, or a big speech, or a big meeting.”**

— Anya Cherneff, Empower Generation

**“It’s just a little natural nervousness that I go through, but I write out the entire presentation. I seek out quotes and inspirational words from other people and listen to music. It’s a lot of word-inspiring but they also help me prepare.”**

– Jen Hiding, Staplehouse and The Giving Kitchen







**“Remember, people in the audience want to see you succeed. If you come with a sense of joy and excitement about what you do, that will be infectious. Even if you mess up, your sense of joy and fun when you’re up there will be communicated to the audience. That’s really what projects confidence and what will make them want to come talk to you and work with you.”**

— Dawn Lippert, Energy Excelsator

**“Always try to empathize with who it is that you’re talking to. What is it that you think they’ll be trying to get out of the discussion with you and what would their worries be; then try to pre-empt them.**

**You don’t always get it right because you can’t always know everything about your clients. You can only do what you can do and feel, ‘I did the best I could and if they don’t like us, well, that’s fine. Then there’s probably a good reason why they don’t like us and we’re not for them.’ You just have to put it down to experience.”**

— Sarah Wigglesworth,  
Sarah Wigglesworth Architects



# 6 POLICIES

## WE NEED FOR GENDER EQUALITY IN BUSINESS

Despite the clear business case for more women in leadership, change is slow. The US needs new government policies — including mandates — to achieve equality now.

BY PAT HEFFERNAN

American business has a problem: it's missing women in leadership. Nearly half of the employees of Fortune 500 companies are women, but only 5 percent of CEOs and 17 percent of corporate board members are. True, 20 years ago no Fortune 500 company had a female CEO. At this pace, however, it will take another 90 years before men and women are Fortune 500 CEOs in equal numbers.

Meanwhile, our economy is missing out.

Conclusive research shows that women in leadership help companies' bottom lines (see page 10 for full details). The Center for Responsible Business at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business found that businesses with more female board members had better environmental, social, and governance impacts.

Outside the Fortune 500, women-owned businesses are the fastest-growing sector of startups, yet only one-third of all business owners are women. Babson College found that if US women had the same access to capital as men do, the economy

would gain six million jobs in the next five years.

### WHAT'S IN THE WAY?

If the benefits of more women in business leadership are so clear, why isn't change happening faster? The main barrier to progress is culture. The cultural barriers to women advancing to senior management, entering boardrooms, or starting businesses are formidable. Both men and women are complicit: multiple studies have shown that both men and women hold an unconscious bias against women being effective business leaders and scientists and holding other roles that are non-traditional for women.

Linda Scott, University of Oxford professor and creator of the Double X Economy concept observes, "There's no reason to believe that leadership connects to the X and Y chromosome, but we see persistent resistance to having women in leadership positions and constant undermining of women who get to leadership positions." Nearly three in ten cases

before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission are sex discrimination cases, and that figure doesn't include state offices of human rights and other enforcement agencies.

The bias can be subtle. "Women tend to work more collaboratively, and collaboration holds more value than it has in the past," notes Susan Labandibar, founder of Tech Networks of Boston. "So women, in theory, should be better leaders, but we're still fighting stereotypes. We have to work extraordinarily hard not to reinforce people's stereotypes, which makes it difficult to be an authentic leader." For example, a woman in a business leadership role might feel pressure not to cry or express empathy with staff for fear of triggering a "softie" stereotype.

Unconscious bias also makes it harder for women to gain working capital. Women are one-third as likely as men to win angel or venture capital funds, and they receive only 7 percent of all venture capital funds invested. Reisa Brafman, Social Consciousness Leader of Community Partnerships and Women's Initiatives





at EILEEN FISHER, has observed that “Women often do not have access to capital or equal access to the financial marketplace to grow their ideas.”

## MAKING CHANGE WHEN CHANGE IS HARD

Business and our economy need women in leadership. Yet years of effort have been unable to change the collective patterns of behavior that support persistent gender inequity. Some thought leaders suggest returning to legal mandates.

For the last few decades, the political climate has moved away from mandating business behavior, but there was a time not so long ago when quotas finally pushed institutions of higher education to address racial and gender disparity. Scott remembers being among the first cohort of women going through MBA programs in an era when the federal government used the leverage of its grants and contracts to require that female students be represented. “Universities had fears that all the science contracts would be pulled out” if they did not do more about gender disparity in their programs, she explains.

MaryAnne Howland, founder, president, and CEO of Ibis Communications, an advertising firm specializing in inclusive and multicultural marketing, notes that she benefited from social programs and affirmative action that created quota systems to provide opportunities she would not otherwise have had as a woman of color. “There might come a point when quotas are no longer necessary, but right now I’m all-in for them,” she says. “I think that’s the only way change is going to happen.”


The lack of progress we’ve seen over the past decades makes it clear that employers and institutions need external help to achieve the desired results on this front. To regain positive momentum, let’s:

1. Require 30 percent or better representation of women on the boards of public companies. By 2015, such quotas helped achieve wom-

en’s representation of about 40 percent in Norway, 34 percent in Sweden, and 34 percent in France.

2. Hold entities accountable for meeting legal quotas. Law360 explains that Dodd-Frank Section 342 set “inclusion requirements at the specified US government agencies that regulate the financial services sector, entities that contract with the agencies, and the private businesses they regulate” by gender and race. For disclosure and transparency to be effective, businesses and NGOs need to let the nine regulatory agencies, federal contractors, and financial institutions know someone is watching. The American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC) can lead this effort.
3. Implement or monitor federal legislation and regulations regarding pay equity, closing gender employment gaps, providing paid family leave and subsidized childcare and preschool, and improving other workplace challenges which disproportionately hamper women and minorities in attaining financial independence and industry leadership.
4. Expand funding of federal Small Business Administration and Small Business Innovation Research programs for women-owned small businesses, and require the Small Business Administration to be more transparent and timely in providing gender and racial data on the awarding of government contracts.
5. Raise the goal for awarding government contracts to women-owned and small, disadvantaged businesses from the severely inadequate 5 percent to a modest 25 percent. Raise the embarrassingly low goal of spending 3 percent of federal prime contract dollars on Historically Underutilized Business Zones or similar businesses to at least 15 percent.
6. Require gender-blind hiring and promotion by all companies and institutions, and require disclosing employee gender mix at each pay level.

Elected officials and corporations make huge investments to reach women because women comprise 52 percent of voters and 47 percent of employees in non-agricultural industries. Both women and men can leverage the power within companies and institutions to push for cultural changes and adoption of policies that level the playing field for women. And they can apply political pressure to secure legislation and regulations that mandate changes. Business owners and leaders can learn more and show their support for gender equality at [asbcouncil.org/inclusive](http://asbcouncil.org/inclusive).

A major jump in the number of women in business leadership positions, achieved with a mix of legislation, regulation, and corporate commitment, will make the best and highest use of all our human resources. We have only old cultural biases to lose, and much to gain: more financial strength, more social resilience, and millions more jobs. 



*Pat Heffernan is president of Marketing Partners in Burlington, VT, and a board member of the American Sustainable Business Council.*

*The American Sustainable Business Council advocates for policy change and informs business owners and the public about the need and opportunities for building a vibrant, sustainable economy. Through its national member network, it represents more than 200,000 owners, executives, and investors from a wide range of industries. ASBC invites you to send us your ideas, join us in this effort, and find further information online at [asbcouncil.org](http://asbcouncil.org).*



# CHALLENGE YOURSELF

Over the previous year, CONSCIOUS COMPANY and Thrive Consulting Group have teamed up to co-host seven Sum and Substance events around the country exploring purpose, joy, and meaning in work. At the end of each story, the storytellers provide one challenge that they believe will help the audience members explore ways to find fulfillment in their own work. Here are questions and challenges from our female storytellers for us all to consider as we look for more purpose in our professions.

**“TAKE A STEP. IF YOU’VE GOT AN IDEA, TRY IT AND SEE WHERE IT LEADS YOU.”**  
— KIM HUNTER

**“HAVE YOUR AVOCATION BE THE**

# SAME

**AS YOUR VOCATION.”**

— Colleen Barrett

**“I HAD TO LEARN ABOUT LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO PATIENCE AND HUMILITY. I ASK YOU TO REALLY EMBRACE THAT REGULARLY.”**  
— KIM HUNTER

**“Look around, find an unfairness, whenever you see it... YOU HAVE THE POWER, WE HAVE THE POWER, to step in and say ‘This is wrong. Oh my goodness, I’m not leaving the room until this is fixed,’ and get it changed.”** — Carol Peppe Hewitt

**“HOW MANY TIMES IN YOUR LIFE HAVE PEOPLE SAID THAT SOMETHING CAN’T HAPPEN, AND WHAT MADE YOU DO IT ANYWAY?”**  
— STACY FLYNN

**“WHAT WOULD YOUR KIDS SAY ABOUT YOUR LIFE AT WORK?”**  
— JILL BAMBURG

**“BE OPEN-MINDED AND OPEN-HEARTED. BE MORE CURIOUS THAN CONVINCED. BE WILLING TO BE UNCOMFORTABLE.”**  
— LORI HANAU





“If you’re not living a **FULFILLED, HAPPY, HOLISTIC, HEALTHY LIFESTYLE,**

then what are you willing to do about it today, going forward, to make a difference for yourself? Because you have to help yourself before you can go out and help anyone else.”

— Gail Warrior

**“ASK YOURSELF: WHAT DO YOU CARE ABOUT?**

AND IF YOU DO WHAT YOU CARE ABOUT, THERE’S A PRETTY GOOD CHANCE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE GREAT AT IT, AND YOU’RE ALSO GOING TO BE HAPPY.”

— Natasha Lamb

“LISTEN TO AND RECOGNIZE THOSE INTUITIVE HITS.”

— Jennifer Alexander

“FIGURE OUT WHAT YOUR CANDY SHOP IS, FIGURE OUT ALL THE JOBS THAT YOU DON’T WANT TO WORK IN THAT CANDY SHOP, **AND THEN START MAKING CANDY, AND THEN SHARE YOUR CANDY.**”

— Greta de Parry

“When there is an opportunity in front of you, think about it: does it give you energy? Or does it take your energy away? If it takes it away, don’t do it. But if you’re feeling that draw, then maybe take the leap. Let yourself do a little more, to give a little more to something that you really are energized by.”

— DeLisa Alexander

“IF YOU ... ARE REALLY NOT PRESENT, AND YOU ARE NOT WILLING TO WORK YOUR FINGERS TO THE BONE FOR IT, I CHALLENGE YOU TO **WALK AWAY FROM IT. YOU ARE PREVENTING YOURSELF FROM FINDING THAT THING YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT.**” — Kimber Lanning

“WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DIE TO? LIKE THE PHOENIX; [IT] LIVES ITS FULL LIFE CYCLE ... AND THEN BURNS ITSELF DOWN. SUBMITS TO THAT DEATH. KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THERE IS A RESURRECTION INTO A HEALTHY NEW SELF.” — NILIMA BHAT

“THINK ABOUT WHO YOUR UNSUNG HEROES ARE, AND IF YOU ARE LUCKY ENOUGH THAT THEY ARE STILL ALIVE,

**GO TELL THEM.”**

— LAURA ROBERTS

“WHAT ARE YOU FANATICALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT? WHAT TRULY FEEDS YOUR PURPOSE?”

— HEIDI JANNENGA

**+ SUM+SUBSTANCE**

# WHAT'S WORKING

## PRACTICAL ADVICE FROM THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE TOUR

### What do you do every day that you consider important to your success?

Courtney Klein: Every day, I try to write a thank-you note to someone.

My parents were divorced when I was young, and I was away from my paternal grandmother. She would always send notes to us girls in the mail. There was something really powerful about getting something tangible with a stamp. I love the post office for that reason, and I hope it always stays in business. So part of my tradition is to always write thank-you notes, consistently, to people who have meant something to me, my work, the team, or our collective mission here. I really believe in the power of remembering daily who you're thankful for and who made your day and this work possible.

**Who:** Courtney Klein is co-founder and CEO of Phoenix-based SEED SPOT, one of the country's top non-profit incubators. Since 2012, SEED SPOT has accelerated the dreams of more than 170 social entrepreneurs.



Watch our full interview with Courtney and other inspiring stories at [sumandsub.com](http://sumandsub.com).



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# MEN // EMPOWERING WOMEN IS YOUR JOB, TOO. HERE'S HOW.

**“Since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, it’s largely been men getting the world into trouble,” says author and CEO Robert Silverstone. “To resolve humanity’s biggest issues — war, poverty, climate change — we need women to share the platform. Women are certainly going to fight for women’s rights. But it’s time for men to step up and play their part.”**

Silverstone is the director of the Aspire Foundation, which his wife, Dr. Sam Collins, established in 2010. The foundation matches mentors from the private sector with mentees in nonprofits and social enterprises who are “making a difference” (MAD) for women and girls. Collins’ goal was to reach one million women by 2015. She blew past that target last year (13.8 million and counting), so now she’s aiming to help one billion women by 2020.

Silverstone has been heavily involved in the Aspire Foundation’s work from the start, and as the organization began accepting male mentors in 2015 — a group he’s calling MAD Men. Here are his best lessons on how men can help empower women by being strong allies.

## 1

### LISTEN

“When I ask women what they need from men, the most common thing I hear is they don’t want men interrupting them,” Silverstone says. “Sometimes men have a fairly short attention span or want to get to the bottom line, and that’s not always the feminine way of communicating. Men tend to think things through and then spit out the answer. Women tend to find the answer themselves by having an opportunity to talk it through. If you don’t allow that to take place, that woman feels shut down, and it chips away at her confidence. Allow the feminine to speak, and be able and willing to listen.”


## 2

### SPEAK UP

“There’s a tremendous amount of unconscious bias that takes place among men,” Silverstone says. “When a man gets up and says, ‘Hey, guys, this is not respectful behavior,’ many more men will pay attention.” If you notice a man make an inappropriate comment, Silverstone recommends quietly taking him aside, rather than calling him out in front of the group. Say something like, “I don’t know if you’re aware of this, but that comment you made could be considered inappropriate. I just want to bring your attention to it.”

## 3

### BECOME A MENTOR

Whether formally or informally, look for ways to use your skills and connections to help a woman get ahead. “It’s not about being a consultant and giving advice,” Silverstone says. “It’s about learning to bring out the best in your mentee.” Consider joining a formal organization (like the Aspire Foundation; [theaspirefoundation.org](http://theaspirefoundation.org)) that provides training in effective mentorship. “We’re looking for mentors who want to make a difference for women and girls wherever on the planet [they happen to be],” Silverstone explains. “The commitment is one hour a month for six months. That’s it. Most people find they can certainly manage that.” 



# ARE YOU READY TO **RiseUP**

## AND DO YOUR PART FOR THE WORLD?



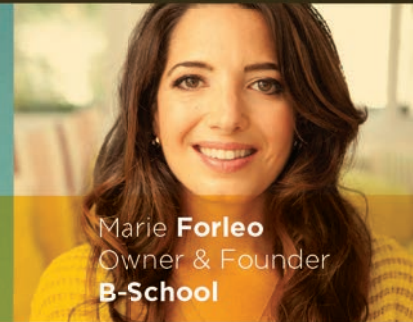
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# LEADING FROM WHOLENESS

BY LORI HANAU AND CLAIRE WHEELER

We have been conditioned to see the world as either/or: us/them, men/women, owners/employees, costs/benefits, internal/external. Our tendency to see things as either one way or the other not only makes invisible anything and anybody that transcends such a binary, it also precludes our innate ability to embody our own wholeness. Ask a colleague if they see themselves as whole, and they will likely look at you quizzically. Ask them if they feel broken, fractured, or split, and they more likely relate immediately.

But in our Shared Leadership framework, wholeness is one of the four key pillars. As inhabitants of today's chronically bifurcated world, the idea of wholeness can be fundamentally transformative. We have a lot to learn by focusing on our inner work, the work of coming into balance with the seemingly contradictory energies and identities that reside within us.

This article is a call for the opening of our individual and collective consciousness through exploring wholeness within ourselves, our leadership, and our businesses.

## THE SPLIT

"Psychologically, we all have both feminine and masculine polarity within us," explains Nilima Bhat, co-author of "Shakti Leadership" (with Raj Sisodia). In the yogic tradition, "Shakti" is the feminine principle of divine energy. "Shakti Leadership" evokes a feminine archetype of leadership that is generative, cooperative, creative, and empathetic. "In leadership especially, the masculine pole — the one with more overt power, more aggression, more confidence, focus, clarity, more strength — is valued," Nilima says.

Our collective and complementary feminine values have become unrecognized and undervalued. As a result, says Nilima, we have a "huge imbalance in systems, because all systems are energies that need to be in balance and in dynamic equilibrium. If the energy of a system or a leader is only playing to the masculine side to the neglect of the feminine, of course that is going to be a dysfunctional system. It will fall into disequilibrium.

"It is very clear this is a hyper-masculinized world. And that is the problem. The masculine isn't wrong; it's just hyper. This whole journey is about knowing how to develop the neglected feminine and bring our system into an equal balance."

This balance or state of wholeness will come through opening to and embracing our feminine qualities in addition to our masculine qualities. "The patriarchy has wounded both women and men because it has left us as split beings," Nilima says. "In the process, the system has lost vital feminine energy needed for balance and sustenance. Therefore, we are on a downward spiral as a planet and as a global culture."





## FEELING THE TREMORS

Everywhere we turn, the groups we are working with are being shaken and stirred. In the political landscape, in the workplace, and in community, disruption and discomfort are at hand. At the same time, more conscious companies are placing a greater emphasis on group wisdom and shared power. More value is being placed not only on leadership development, but also on human development in the workplace. However, the consciousness of wholeness is relatively invisible in the workplace and in society at large. Nilima explained it this way: “Coming to business, we need to access something we don’t even know we’re not in touch with.”

Few would disagree that what we are facing today is a crisis of consciousness. To paraphrase Einstein, we know that our problems cannot be solved from the same level of thinking that created them. From Nilima’s view, “If we have to solve the crisis of consciousness of our times, we are going to need leaders. Because we do not have leadership that is addressing this, it is also a crisis of leadership.”

Therefore, “Shakti is the rising tide that is lifting all boats. Shakti is rising in the system because this is what systems do; they evolve towards balance and equilibrium until that level lasts and it’s time to evolve again.” In other words, as we come into balance within ourselves, the system comes into balance. By intentionally cultivating the feminine qualities that live within each of us, and leading consciously from a place of wholeness, we begin to transform the larger systems of which we are a part.

## EVOLUTION MADE CONSCIOUS

A core belief in our work at Global Round Table Leadership is that we are brilliant far beyond our current imagination — that we are filled with genius, and already know what to do, if we are willing to see. A shift of consciousness occurs when we trust that we are fundamentally whole, not fractured. As difficult as this can be, it is an essential condition for conscious leadership.

Leadership is both a product and a driver of contemporary culture. As leadership adapts to meet the needs of the times, it simultaneously shapes how we see our problems, our solutions, and ourselves. In Nilima’s words, “Energetically we are very intelligent. As each of us resets the balance within our own body and mind of consciousness and energy or masculine and feminine polarity within each of us, so will the system of which we are a part.”

Resetting that balance is an inside job. Wholeness is already within us, but tapping into it means reaching beyond our cognitive minds alone into our heart, our body’s wisdom, and our spirit for the fullness of our intelligence. The consciousness to evolve is a uniquely human capacity, but it usually doesn’t happen until we care to change. The courage to care is the spark that ignites our integrity — that drives us to grow, open, and blossom into higher form, even as doing so can be highly uncomfortable, disorienting, and scary.

Through our caring and ignited integrity, we have greater capacity to see our blind spots and habitual ways of operating with honesty and clarity, dropping any shame we may be carrying. We are

## THE 4 PILLARS OF GLOBAL ROUND TABLE LEADERSHIP’S SHARED LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Shared Leadership is the practice of bringing out the greatest capacity in everyone by empowering everyone in a group to be responsible for and engaged in the high function of the whole. This is a fundamental shift in how we understand and apply power and leadership.

### 1 HUMANITY

We recognize each other and meet as equals in our humanity — what exists at the core of us, before relating through roles, status, and expertise.

### 2 EQUALITY

We relate as equal learning partners in full acknowledgement of what we can contribute and learn from each other.

### 3 WHOLENESS

We are fully ourselves, wherever we are. We are also conscious of the concentric relationship and impact of self to group, group to goal or mission, mission to the world, and the human world to all of life.

### 4 COLLECTIVE WISDOM

We know more together than any one of us does on his or her own. We cultivate the collective wisdom of the group by honoring our diversity, respecting and trusting the natural gifts and talents of each and every person.



## TOP 5 PRACTICES FOR TAPPING INTO YOUR WHOLENESS IN THE WORKPLACE

### 1 BEAUTY

Put up your favorite art, photos, or inspirational quotes. Make sure to gaze out a window regularly to look at the sky or the trees around you. Even better, take your breaks outside to balance a culture of sterility and autopilot.

### 2 BREATHE

Take a couple of deep, slow, intentional breaths before you walk through the door at work, and as you cross the doorway into meetings throughout your day. Feel your feet on the ground. Roll your shoulders back slightly, opening up the chest cavity. Smile inwardly to yourself. Make sure your energy is grounded and calm, not scattered and intense, to balance a culture of stress.

### 3 COMMUNE

Eat with people, not at your computer. Make sure to connect through your humanity, not just through your roles and responsibilities. Take breaks with colleagues — and don't talk about work! — to balance a culture of hyper-productivity.

### 4 ASK, DON'T TELL

Try to be more curious than certain. Invite input and feedback to balance a culture of certainty.

### 5 QUIET


Make room for silence to enter your mind, your conversations, and your team meetings to balance a culture of busyness.

*For the Top 10 Practices for Tapping Into Your Wholeness, please visit our blog at [globalroundtableleadership.com/c/blog/](http://globalroundtableleadership.com/c/blog/).*

able to see our own direction for strengthening and softening, integrating the masculine and feminine energies within us and organically becoming whole.

To tap into your wholeness, begin with the work of self-awareness and reflection, feeling into where you are in balance and where you might be behaving in ways that are out of balance. When are aggression and control your automatic ways of leading? As a leader, when are you true to what you value, like being thoughtful as you listen, or saying “I don't know” even though your team might see that as weak?

This is not always easy work; it demands humility and courage. But the moment the awareness of our own imbalance comes around, the stewardship of wholeness takes hold. Sometimes the desire to grow comes out of that awareness and sometimes it fuels our self-awareness, enabling us to suddenly recognize what we couldn't see before; and sometimes the desire is to run to the nearest television show to distract ourselves. When we choose focus over distraction, we begin to cultivate a wholeness that extends from our being into our teams, our work, and our world.

As Rumi, the 13th-century Persian poet said, “Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing there is a field. I'll meet you there.” 



*Lori Hanau is dedicated to supporting shifts in consciousness, communication, and community in the workplace through experiential learning. She founded Global Round Table Leadership, where she works co-creatively to coach, guide, facilitate and steward individuals and teams in opening to their innate brilliance, cultivating the soul of their organizations and their work. She is faculty and Co-Chair at Marlboro College Graduate and Professional Studies and on the board of Social Venture Network.*



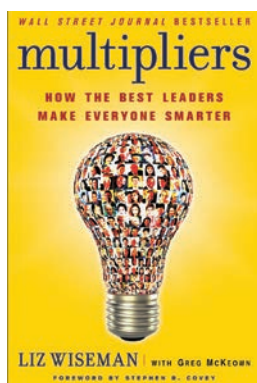
*Claire Wheeler is a freelance consultant and co-conspirator for sole practitioners, community-based businesses, and nonprofits. As principal of Rework, her passion is to translate the creative genius of people and organizations into systems and structures that make work make sense. She finds power in prose and splendor in spreadsheets.*





# 3 GREAT BOOKS TO MAKE YOU A BETTER LEADER

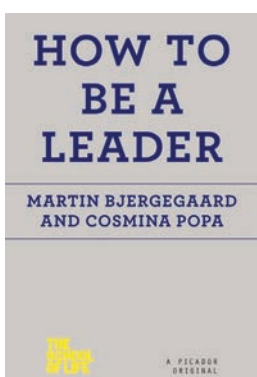
Leadership is much more than just getting to call the shots and tell other people what to do. Becoming a capable leader requires rigorous practice and deep reflection. Here are three books — two brand-new and one that has proven to be an instant classic — that will help you become a better leader, no matter how good you already are.



## MULTIPLIERS: HOW THE BEST LEADERS MAKE EVERYONE SMARTER

BY LIZ WISEMAN  
> JUNE 2010

Some leaders make everyone smarter and multiply the effectiveness of their teams while others diminish the talent and intelligence of those around them. There are five critical capacities that separate one type of leader from the other, and this book holds up an unforgiving mirror for you to see exactly what areas you need to work on. Once you know the characteristics of multipliers and diminishers, you'll recognize them everywhere.



## HOW TO BE A LEADER

BY MARTIN BJERGEGAARD AND COSMINA POPA  
> FORTHCOMING, AUGUST 2016

The foundation for your leadership is your own self-awareness. If you don't believe that, this book is a must-read. Full of engaging stories, mind-expanding insights, and practical instructions for upping your leadership game, this book will convince you that leadership is not simply a title — it's a moment-by-moment choice. Know thyself more deeply and watch your abilities grow.



## AN EVERYONE CULTURE: BECOMING A DELIBERATELY DEVELOPMENTAL ORGANIZATION

BY ROBERT KEGAN AND LISA LASKOW LAHEY  
> MARCH 2016

Ready to play in the big leagues? This book by two education researchers from Harvard is a profile of what are probably the three most advanced corporate cultures in America (and no, you probably haven't heard of them). What it takes to grow into the role of leader in those cultures represents a humblingly high bar for vulnerability and growth that transcends the personal/professional divide. Could it be that workplaces can become the ultimate forum to help people become greater than they think possible? Read this book to find out.

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## WHEN MEN DON'T THRIVE, WE ALL



**Feminism can only succeed if men and boys also succeed. Here are 5 ways to rethink how we engage across the gender divide to make sure we thrive — together.**

BY MOE CARRICK

No question: I celebrate feminism and the changes it's brought globally. But it's dangerous to ignore the hard truth that men are not thriving. Shifting demographics and a changing notion of what it means to be a man pile onto a mountain of loss and confusion for many men today. Men commit suicide 3.7 times more often than women. Ninety percent of the US prison population is male. Gun-related massacres — almost entirely at the hands of men — are hugely on the rise in the last 20 years. Addiction rates remain chronically higher for men than women. Yet until men and women fully thrive, our most profound societal problems will remain unsolvable. We need true partnership between men and women in ways that benefit all.

Imagine a new world where men are encouraged to be vulnerable — to give and receive empathy, compassion, and support for life's pain points including depression, loss, and fear. Think about what it would look like if more men supported each other in successful self-management, and taught their children that courage includes being scared and sometimes failing. Consider what true equity would look like: women holding half of all top business jobs and governmental offices, contributing materially to gross income, innovation, and stability, joining the workforce early and staying through their lifetime. I propose the following five critical shifts to reach this world of true partnership.

### **1 ENCOURAGE MEN TO TURN TO EACH OTHER**

Supportive spaces just for women are now ubiquitous, from yoga groups to book clubs to women-only conferences. These deliberate, mindful opportunities for deep connection have clearly helped women. Moving beyond old-school “boys’ clubs” that reinforce outdated models of rank and status, we must create conscious and thoughtful ways for men to come together in support of one another and of men’s contributions to society. Through men’s work with each other, the notion of what it means to be a man today can shift and evolve as new, healthy partnerships grow. Organizations such as The Good Men Project, which offers a glimpse of what masculinity





might look like in the 21st century, and Men Advocating Real Change, or MARC, provide resources and ideas for men engaging with each other.

## 2 OPENLY DISCUSS ROLES AND EQUALITY AT WORK

Most people today value meaning at work and lifestyle considerations above all else, and yet the majority of leaders across all sectors remain men whose work dominates their lives and who are often supported by a stay-at-home spouse. When we discuss better work-life balance, we often focus on women's issues and needs, particularly within their roles as mothers or homemakers, without discussing men's need to have lives and relationships outside of work, including community involvement, caretaking roles, and hobbies. Openly discussing the benefits of social change relevant to men and women alike — with regard to money, time, connection, visibility, and impact — provides higher likelihood of balancing competing demands between work and home for men and women according to more equitable norms. Invite employees in your company to discuss what priorities at home and in their community matter to them as they strive to work hard. Such open conversations invite vulnerability from both men and women about their personal story and how they want their individual relationship with work to play out on a day-to-day basis.

## 3 CHANGE HOW WE RAISE OUR KIDS

We raise boys and girls differently, and it affects the men and women they become. Girls are stereotypically encouraged to be cooperative, verbal, unobtrusive, supportive, and emotionally tuned-in. Boys are acculturated to be decisive, logical, strategic, and never "weak." These habits land us in a world of hurt when it comes to true partnerships as adults: women often hesitate to assert themselves and speak directly

in conflict, and men are often left without the skills to name — much less embrace — emotions beyond anger and detachment. One way to start changing these lessons in practice is to pay attention to how you notice a child's assets: focus on the humor, eloquence, or creativity of girls, rather than appearance, or invite a little boy to talk about his feelings when he is upset rather than encouraging him to simply "buck up."

## 4 KILL THE RUGGED INDIVIDUALIST MINDSET

"I stand alone" might well be the mantra of 20th-century manliness, but it is now an outdated phrase that invokes isolation and loss. Standing alone has been replaced in the global economy with standing together. In their bestseller "The Athena Doctrine," John Gerzema and Michael D'Antonio highlight the fact that nurturing, communication, sharing, and cooperation are the traits most desired by businesses globally. Debunking the myth that any of us, especially men, can stand alone and succeed will unlock the capacity for men to become networked human beings with material support and engagement that brings out their best. We can do this by reinforcing the workplace norms for collaboration, listening, trust-building, and empathy, thus inviting partnership behavior rather than the lonely isolation of handling problems alone.

## 5 ALTER HOW WE VALIDATE MEN AS CARETAKERS AND WOMEN AS CAREER-HOLDERS

Women who work often speak of feeling guilt-ridden or chronically overextended due to their internalized feeling that they should be perfect mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters at the same time as they are successful in their careers. And men who step off a career track to take care of family or pursue other interests continue to face subtle ridicule and nuanced pressure

that they are not doing what men should do: support the family. Let's start talking about how women are breadwinners and world-changers in significant ways, and that men can be and are appropriate and tender caretakers of home and hearth. We must talk about our unconscious biases across gender lines and how they impact the paths we clear and celebrate for men and women. Openly discussing the complex roles we each play and the societal expectations we carry will assist us in finding new ways to validate one another across gender.

Feminism (equal rights and opportunities for all) can only succeed if men and boys also succeed. We need to reconsider how we work, how we parent, how we love, how we spend, how we listen, and how we lead. I propose we have the honest conversations at home, at work, and in the community that are necessary to create lifestyles that make sense for human beings, workplaces in which men and women thrive equally, and homes in which breadwinning and caretaking are worthy ambitions for men and women alike. 🧑



*Moe Carrick is the founder of Moementum, Inc., a leadership consulting business and certified B Corp. She grounds her approach in a unifying and undeniable truth: successful work is dependent upon human relationships. Moe feels privileged to work with clients such as Prudential Financial, REI, Nike, Tech Soft 3D, and many others. Find her at [moementum.com](http://moementum.com) or on Twitter @moecarrick.*



# ACTIVATE YOUR FEMALE LEADERSHIP POWER

Don't fall prey to the common traps and myths that keep women down. Try these five quick tips to activate your female leadership power —

**TODAY.**

BY KRISTI HEMMER

# 1

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## CHOOSE BRAVE

American society teaches girls to be perfect and boys to be brave. From the monkey bars to the job application process, women reach for perfection rather than risk being flawed or getting hurt. As one of my clients realized when she chose brave over perfect, conflict or perceived failure no longer felt personal. She was able to make tough decisions and move on quickly. When you choose brave, you give yourself permission to be imperfect. Today, choose brave.

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# 2

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## TAKE ACTION

Cinderella and thousands of variations of her tale around the world teach women to wait for Prince Charming, magic, or even a mouse to save us. Young girls shake Magic 8-balls, create paper "fortunetellers," and tally friends' votes before making a decision. Women are taught to raise our hands, follow the rules, and be "good girls." But research presented in "The Confidence Code" by Katty Kay and Claire Shipman shows that waiting actually causes women's confidence to spiral downward; even perceived failure raises our confidence and is better than waiting around. Today, stop waiting, decide what you want, ask yourself "Why am I waiting for permission?," take action, and stop giving your power away.

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YOU REHEARSED FOR SUCCESS?"

# 3

## REHEARSE FOR SUCCESS

Women's brains are wired to ruminate and dwell on hypotheticals. As leadership and sociology researcher Brené Brown says in "Daring Greatly," women rehearse for tragedy. What would it look like if you rehearsed for success? Almost all the women I work with are stumped when I ask this. Their default is to tell me what could go wrong instead of what could go right. What does success in your next meeting, job, or relationship look like? Sound like? Feel like? Today, rehearse for the success of your next anything, whether it is an interview, a meeting, a conversation, a decision, or maybe a job.


# 4

## KNOW YOUR WORTH

As the US women's national soccer team is illustrating in their wage-discrimination lawsuit against the US Soccer Federation, women are underpaid for equal work by as much as 40 percent. Not only do women typically not negotiate for our first, second, or even mid-career positions, we take jobs that we are overqualified for and are "grateful for the opportunity." In my empowerment class of six corporate women who aren't reaching their potential, three of them had been given raises because they were "bottoming out," and another was told by her boss that he couldn't believe how "cheaply" they were able to hire her. Today, work to determine your worth in dollars and position yourself for a raise, more time off, a paid vacation, or whatever else adds value to your life.

# 5

## KNOW WHAT YOU WANT

I ask my students and clients, "What do you want to be known for?" This question often prompts tears. One stood up in class and said, "I don't know. And how can I be a leader if I don't know what I want to be known for?" A client of mine was told she was too nice to be the boss. She felt it; she was exhausted doing everyone else's jobs. What she really wanted was to be known for being an effective leader who brought out collaboration and equitable input. She stopped putting in the extra hours and is now focused on accountability and clear expectations. Today, take time to figure out what you want to be known for. Then don't apologize for being powerful. 



*As an educator for 20 years, Kristi Hemmer saw firsthand how girls and women shrink in a classroom, boardroom, and conversation; it made her mad enough to quit her six-figure job and start her own social business, the Academy for Women's Empowerment (AWE). AWE offers programs and experiences to help girls and women be confident, own their power, and unleash their possibility. AWE puts the W in power: [puttingwomeninpower.com](http://puttingwomeninpower.com).*

*parting thought...*

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And you will not always be able to solve all the  
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can have, because history has shown us that  
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**- Michelle Obama**





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