

INSPIRING WOMEN

in Commerce and
Contracting **2021**

A partnership of
World Commerce & Contracting
and Icertis

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Preface

When we first started talking about raising awareness and recognition of the incredible women who contribute to the world of commerce and contracting, it was November 2019, and the world was a very different place. The relevance and importance of this program has only been intensified by our experiences over the last two years and the challenges that women have faced. We launched in the midst of the pandemic with aspirations which have been surpassed beyond imagination. We wanted not only to recognize and celebrate this extraordinary group of women, but also to give them a platform through which they would be able to share their passions, their vulnerabilities, their hopes and desires for women everywhere. This inaugural group of ‘Inspiring Women’ have lived up to their accolade – they have had the courage to share their own vulnerabilities, they have consistently lifted the spirits of those around them and above all, they have inspired. I am so proud of this initiative, so grateful to our Inspiring Women of 2021 for all they have done and so excited to continue this program into 2022 and beyond.



Sally Guyer
Global Chief Executive Officer,
World Commerce & Contracting

The Inspiring Women of Contracting program was conceived before Covid-19, launched during the pandemic, and continues to thrive as we find ourselves more than a year and a half into these unprecedented times. Like the women it honors and recognizes, this program is a story of resilience and dedication, to each other and to the discipline of contract and commercial management. The ongoing support of this program is of unique significance to Icertis, as our mission is ‘To transform the foundation of commerce’. Despite the added stress and exhaustion that has marked the Covid era, the women honored within these pages – and countless women beyond – continue to transform commerce through their leadership and inspiration. Of course, this program is all made possible by World Commerce & Contracting, whose example we’d all do well to follow: let’s hire outstanding women into leadership ranks, nurture women’s skills and support their career trajectories and, always, create networks so that we can collectively celebrate each other’s achievements.



Bernadette Bulacan
Vice President, Lead Global Evangelist,
Icertis



Lucy Bassli

Author, Innovation Advisor, Commercial Contracting Expert, Legal Operations Consultant.
Location: Bellevue, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I am a licensed USA lawyer and the bulk of my career I was in-house legal counsel at Microsoft Corporation. My main responsibility was to provide legal support to the global procurement function. Over the course of 13+ years I revolutionized how Microsoft handled its purchasing agreements by refining templates, reallocating internal resources, creating playbooks, outsourcing and developing a centralizing contract management office on my team. I am a subject matter expert on commercial agreements with an operations focus. For the past three years I have been running a niche firm specializing in consulting with corporate legal departments on how to optimize their contracting process by re-imagining all aspects of how contracts are handled today: their policies, people, processes and systems. My team includes licensed USA and international lawyers, enabling us to dive into the content of their templates and provide substantive advice on their negotiation positions. We provide a truly holistic view into the entire contracting process, bridging gaps between legal teams and their internal

business counterparts through smart risk-taking, empowerment, training and realignment of responsibilities.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Inspiring and influencing others

I have always been on an unstated mission to enable women, especially early in their careers, to feel confident and powerful. The team I built while in Microsoft (at its largest point it had 22 people) was 85% women, across various functions: lawyers, paralegals, contract managers, operations managers. I ensured junior women had access to clients and had a voice in every discussion. My greatest influence, though, has come recently. When I published a book about legal innovation (during the pandemic nonetheless), I was so pleasantly surprised by the number of people who reached out to me to tell me how much my book inspired them to be more creative in their work. My favorite example is when a lawyer approached me via LinkedIn to tell me how my book inspired her, and we ended up planning a conversation. During that discussion, I realized she was exactly the kind of person I would want as part of

my growing business, and now she is full-time on my team! I helped her shed some of the work that was not rewarding or where she wasn't treated well, and join me in a journey together and contribute to building a business. She is not the only one like that. Several women on my team and I, connected because of the ideas I share, and now we are a team of six women and one man. My favorite quote from a message I received from another reader, whom I've never met: "My jaw dropped multiple times reading your book *The Simple Guide to Legal Innovation*. In particular, your assessment that in order for innovation to succeed, the 'value must be obvious... [and] change has to be intuitive'. YES YES YES!"

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Innovation is core to what I seem to inspire people about. I left a safe and comfortable job in one of the world's best companies to start a business. It was scary, but necessary for me to achieve my professional goals. Every day I work with clients to inspire change in how they work and help them be a little more brave in their choices. I started a business to help others be more innovative. Specifically, I wrote a book, a related workbook, and developed online courseware (*Courses & Resources*, lucybassli.com) to educate lawyers on how to be more innovative in their practice. I think there is a gap in education for lawyers to really understand what the buzzword 'innovation' means. They will never be able to get out of doing things how they always have until they are able to embrace innovation in a more personalized and relevant way. So, I am filling that education gap for lawyers. I will also be publishing a book for corporate legal departments on how to methodically approach simplifying their contract review processes. I want to make the approach something pragmatic and tactical that every legal team can start to do on their own.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

My team consists of all women, with one exception (though he is a natural and genuine ally!) and I have intentionally pursued experienced women who felt unempowered to change their unsatisfying work situation, or junior professionals who were a little lost and needed career guidance. This year has been a tough one for people to take chances/risks with their career, yet we grew very quickly this year as our work continued to grow. I provided other project work or hired at least three women who found themselves without work due to Covid. My hiring is intentional, to give women opportunities to advance their careers in ways they did not feel they could do on their own. Small things I do: bring junior team members into client meetings and make sure they have a speaking role and clear ownership; provide the infrastructure (website blog, email blast service, etc.) for the women on my team to play a role in developing business and contribute to our firm's growth directly; women on my team only do work they enjoy with people they like (which includes clients) – that is part of our motto. A strict 'no asshole policy' is in place which I firmly believe helps women more than men. I don't ever want ANY woman on my team feeling like they were spoken down to by anyone, even a paying client. Life is too short ●

"A strict 'no asshole policy' is in place which I firmly believe helps women more than men"



Linda Berry

Executive Vice President and Head of Commercial & Contract Management, Capgemini.
Location: Birmingham, UK

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I started delivering services and projects in an in-house IT function. After moving to similar roles in an IT consultancy I transitioned into account management where my remit was to ensure that both parties benefitted from the deal they had contracted and to grow the account.

These experiences showed me the importance of understanding client business challenges and how the services being sold will address those challenges. I became increasingly interested in how to shape, sell and deliver good business for both client and service provider and, in particular, how to contract the deal so that both party's business goals are met. In the late 1990's I moved into a full-time commercial role negotiating new business contracts and advising accounts on contract changes and issue resolution.

I have grown this function from being just me to a large established global CCM function supporting a range of IT and consulting services across clients in many market sectors.

I love the CCM role because it brings together all aspects of business (sales, delivery, finance, risk, legal) and requires both soft skills as well as academic knowledge.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Expanding the CCM remit

When I started out in CCM, the role had no clear identity and was not seen as the business enabler it is today. I was effectively pioneering the development of the CCM function by demonstrating the benefits that a well negotiated and clearly written contract brings to the business. By showing both quantitative financial returns and improved relationships with clients I was able to influence my organization to allow me to grow the CCM function and expand its remit.

Global CCM

While my initial activities focused mostly on the sales side of CCM I was able to use this as a foundation to expand further into contract management bringing in use of CLM tools. Following a successful pilot I was able to present a strong business case for the roll out of a fully industrialized CCM capability across all our accounts globally. Under my leadership we have developed the end to end global function that is in place today and considered to be an essential capability to run our business successfully and is core to winning profitable business and meeting our clients' needs.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Like all senior women I am actively involved in high profile initiatives that support women including, coaching and mentoring programs, sponsoring roles and delivering formal training. These are all important and have their place but I would say that

the most important thing I do to support women is to continually do the small day to day things that make them feel valued and respected and that help build their confidence to aspire to and do more.

I always aim to create an environment where everyone is recognized for their contribution, encouraged and supported to express their ideas and where everyone has freedom to work in their own way. As an example, all parents feel under pressure to attend school events so I ensure that everyone (male or female) has the scope to do so. Changes in behavior lead to changes in culture and attitude. By setting an example and encouraging others to follow that example I believe that I am evolving support for women and embedding it into our culture ●

“I always aim to create an environment where everyone is recognized for their contribution, encouraged and supported to express their ideas and where everyone has freedom to work in their own way”



Barbara Chomicka

Director of Contract Solutions, Turner & Townsend.
Location: New York, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

My vision for my professional career stems from my very early career as a volleyball player. At a mere 5ft 10in, I was at a disadvantage to the top European players who averaged 6ft 2in height. What I achieved though, was a vast collection of fair play awards. This strong notion of fair play which accompanied me in sport, in the world of commerce and contracting context, translates to an atmosphere characterized by openness, co-operation, trust, honesty, commitment, and mutual understanding among team members. Considering this parallel between sport and contracting, I developed my professional brand as a trusted adviser around these values.

Following a change in vocation from being a professional volleyball player to becoming a contract and commercial adept, the progress of my professional career has been remarkable, from my first job as an architectural assistant in a very small architectural office located above a soap shop in central London, to becoming an elected Board Director of WorldCC.

Q: What are some personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Publishing in a new language

In the 15 years I have lived in the UK, I have progressed from learning basic English grammar to achieving a considerable body of published work in the UK, the United States and Australia and two doctorate degrees from British universities. I have developed from having to watch English films with Polish subtitles to speaking and joining panels at WorldCC, Association for Project Management (APM) and International Centre for Complex Project Management (ICCPM) conferences and CFO forums.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Pre-Covid-19, as a mentor, advisor and line manager, I have always attracted women who were looking for support to do things better and to compete for best jobs and projects. My support revolved around generating ideas, provision of insights and outwards, facilitation of their efforts – all highly abstract, hands-off, expert knowledge ‘stuff’.

The Covid-19 pandemic, and lockdown in particular, has altered the form of empowerment women are looking for. They also seem to look for a more ‘authentic’ person and it is interesting to see how this ‘authenticity’ is now being judged. Certain behaviors, driven by gender-based biases, which persisted in the pre-Covid-19 world, are now being contested.

In a post-Covid-19 world, as a mentor and work colleague, I still attract driven women who want to succeed in the provision of complex professional services in construction. They are less interested in my abstract knowledge though – they want to discuss how they changed the leaking tap first. They want to know what type of wet saw I used to cut the tiles for my kitchen floor. And while at the start I thought it was perhaps a little hilarious when my colleagues started sending me images of their various DIY enterprises such as toilet replacement for comment and guidance,

I realized that if you are a woman working in construction, administer contracts of value exceeding \$1 billion, certify compliance and final completion of bridges, skyscrapers and laboratories, and you never held a spanner in your hand, you feel you are missing out.

This sudden realization is not about scarcity of plumbers or builders in lockdown but women looking at ways to challenge and stretch themselves. They are seeing that there is a plethora of potential experiences and achievements in our industry they never considered because of gender-based bias. They are considering it now, and find empowerment, plenty of joy and pride in the outcomes they achieve. And since I installed several wall-hung toilet bowls, I am seen to be an ‘inspirational’ mentor; the right person to discuss various certifications offered by WorldCC, after a discussion on various in-wall toilet flushing systems, of course ●

“Women are seeing that there is a plethora of potential experiences and achievements in our industry they never considered because of gender-based bias”



Kunoor Chopra

Vice President of Legal Services and Co-founder, Elevate.
Location: Los Angeles, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

Kunoor is a practicing California attorney. After practicing for five years as a general litigator, she founded LawScribe, a pioneering law company providing litigation, contracts, and IP support to law firms and companies in the USA. She sold her company in 2010 and, in 2012, co-founded Elevate with Liam Brown. Kunoor was responsible for building the legal solutions Elevate would take to market.

Early on, Kunoor decided to build out a contract management offering due to increasing customer demand to optimize and do contracting more effectively and efficiently. Kunoor built a global team known for providing high-end contract management support, including drafting and negotiation of simple contracts like NDAs or complex outsourcing agreements. Kunoor extended Elevate's contracts offering by adding contracts consulting (process optimization and sourcing/implementing contract technologies). She also ensured Elevate built out a contract technology solution as part of its ELM.

In 2018, Kunoor moved day to day running of the contracts business to a new leader so she could focus on working with law departments to bring them, among others, contract management solutions.

Q: What are some personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Kunoor has contributed significantly to the legal industry through innovation and entrepreneurship. In 2004 she started a pioneering law company LawScribe which provided litigation, contracts, and IP services to USA companies and law firms. She sold it in 2010 and, in 2012, co-founded Elevate, one of the world's leading law companies.

There, Kunoor built legal services offerings, including a contracts organization supporting the full contracting lifecycle from infrastructure creation (playbooks, templates, data, metrics), to drafting, review, negotiation and obligation/rights management. Elevate's contracting team is extremely successful in delivering innovative, technology-driven solutions.

Diversity and inclusion

Kunoor has been a big proponent and advocate of diversity and inclusion. In 2012, when meeting with Liam Brown, Elevate's co-founder, she was determined to build a company where people could bring their whole, authentic selves to work because this is not something she experienced in her journey as an LGBT South Asian woman. Elevate early on started capturing metrics to help improve diversity and inclusion at the company, including through creation and public publication of an *Equitability and Inclusion* report. Elevate has been committed, through Kunoor's influence, in improving its diversity statistics and continues to look at ways to increase the pipeline of qualified, diverse candidates who apply to Elevate.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

In building Elevate, Kunoor has spent eight and a half years focused on Elevate's customers and their success. In 2019, she chose to focus on Elevate's 1,200+ associates through *Executive Sponsorship of Workplace of the Future*, an initiative intended to help each of the Elevate team members feel a sense of connection and belonging in an Elevate culture that is both welcoming and rewarding.

Kunoor also:

- Started a Women Innovator in Law group at Elevate to empower women by supporting them to “courageously innovate, inspire, invest; to bring their unique talents boldly to Law”. Kunoor is creating a space for women to address important issues, help each other advance, including bringing a speaker series of women leaders to talk to Elevate's associates about their journeys and what they can do to succeed in their careers.
- Started a monthly discussion series with Lucy Bassli, which launched in August 2020, to encourage and empower women in the legal industry to embrace innovation and chart their professional journeys. Each month, they feature a woman, sharing their journey and advising women on how they can innovate and succeed in the changing legal industry.
- Mentors multiple women at Elevate to help them develop and advance as professionals ●

Kunoor has helped empower women by supporting them to “courageously innovate, inspire, invest; to bring their unique talents boldly to Law”



Sharyn County

General Manager of Procurement, Property and Fleet, Jemena and Zinfra.
Location: Melbourne, Australia

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

Over the last 11 years I have held several senior leadership positions within the Jemena group, with the most recent being the Enterprise General Manager of Procurement, Property and Fleet where responsibility includes managing a centralised procurement, property, fleet and plant group delivering across the Jemena and Zinfra group of companies.

Prior to this I held the role of GM Commercial within EB Services (a Singapore power company) where responsibilities included leading all commercial and procurement requirements for the group including the development and implementation of technology sourcing strategies.

I am an active supporter of World Commerce & Contracting through my work on the Australian Advisory Board and previously held Board positions for not-for-profit companies.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Mentoring and inspiring

I am driven by making a difference to the procurement, commercial and contract management profession through involvement in mentoring, and communities of practice enabling shared learnings and ideas to drive best practices and innovation. I give my time to share with others at meetings, conferences and membership groups.

I am involved in a number of internal and external mentoring programs and believe having a good mentor is key, so I am willing to take on anyone who reaches out for support and have had some great mentors over my career.

I am also motivated to build and maintain strong relationships with suppliers and partners to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes along with a passion for people and creating an environment that fosters and enables success and achievement. I have developed supplier relationship programs that align values across groups and have driven best practices and training in commercial and contracting across the broader organization.

Leadership

Early on in my career I was given some great advice that has stuck with me 'make sure you report yourself in your career'. So whenever an opportunity comes along to do something different and learn something new I have taken it. This is when the growth comes and has led to me taking on a number of roles and experiences outside my area of expertise that have enabled me to grow.

These experiences have provided me with a diverse background enabling me to apply these learnings across other roles and share with those I lead and mentor. In commercial and contracting there are many sides to this space and having a diverse background you can apply to any role has benefitted the organizations I work for. Commerce and contracting brings together all aspects of the business lifecycle and bringing a diverse background to this enables you to influence and lead others with an understanding of their environment and challenges.

I learnt that you do not need to be a subject matter expert to lead subject matter experts, you just need to create an environment where they can be their best and clear the way for them to do their job.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Being and leading as your authentic self and showing vulnerability is key during these times. Do not be afraid to wear your heart on your sleeve and be vulnerable.

This helps others be ok with how they are feeling as we are all feeling different degrees of vulnerability with Covid-19. I have led by example through this time showing my vulnerability and ensuring I am doing the things that energize me and encouraging others to do the same.

I have worked hard to ensure my team are fully engaged with regular check ins and enabling flexibility in how the group works through choice and ensuring all team members have full support especially those with care duties while working from home. I have encouraged, recognized, and rewarded all types of work done by the group during this time including helping the community and supporting our Covid-19 response.

I have been part of internal and external mentoring groups and have been a sponsor of our diversity and inclusion group developing key inclusion and diversity programs including a mentoring program supporting women who are passionate to drive change and inclusion across the group especially offering broader support during this time. I have increased my check ins with those I mentor, encouraging them to use this time for further self-development and learning as well as providing insight into how I am dealing with it ●

“Being and leading as your authentic self and showing vulnerability is key during these times”



Christina Demetriades

General Counsel, Europe; Global Sales and Delivery; and Legal Executive Committee Sponsor for Legal Operations, Accenture.
Location: London, UK

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I started my career as a tax lawyer, in Queensland. Unfortunately, the nature of tax practice at that time in Australia meant that, very often, our role came towards the end of a transaction. Others had shaped the deal, settled the commercial construct, and handled the negotiations. We would find ourselves, in the tax team, during the final throes of the deal, opining on the transaction and attempting to influence – not terribly effectively – the course of the deal. I found it deeply unsatisfying.

I knew that I really wanted to be able to have much more impact, and to be at the heart of the business. That is why, when I had completed my LLM, I decided to move into being a commercial lawyer. My focus over the last 25 years has been on IP, Digital, Outsourcing, Technology and ecommerce contracts, in private practice and for the last seven years, in-house. I have been able to shape transactions and been instrumental in helping grow our business at Accenture.

I've also been able to build a world-class team that has handled a transformation of our focus from traditional outsourcing and SI contracts to Digital, Cloud, Security, Industry X and Applied Intelligence.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Redefining and empowering

One of my proudest achievements has been moving the needle on our team's brand and reputation. When I joined Accenture, the team were seen as contributing to the company's reputation of being difficult to do business with. I kicked off a project to redefine our relationship with the business, the first step was to face up to their uncomfortable feedback.

I re-examined the client experience of working with Legal, developing a strategy, based on what would have the greatest impact on that experience (focussed on speed to close, competitiveness and delivering real insights) which would deliver demonstrable value to Accenture.

I benchmarked our competitiveness, delivering insights that were valued by our internal clients. We used comprehensive change management around our team's activities, and spearheaded Accenture's development of innovative technology to unlock dark data in one million contract records, in 12 languages (www.accenture.com/us-en/case-studies/about/unleashing-insights-accentures-contracts) unleashing our team's ingenuity.

Through stakeholder engagement, we secured the confidence of senior leadership, empowering our team to take smart risks and be trusted to own the most critical business decisions in our sales process, securing our place at the heart of Accenture's business. Instead of feeling they had to use Legal, our business now proactively involve us early and see us a critical part of their success.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

I am one of the sponsors of Legal's Inclusion & Diversity (I&D) program. During this crisis, I have championed:

- deployment of flexible work arrangements for more than 99% of our workforce,
- virtual community building, and
- practical levers that help our people manage or share the burdens of home and work life, which can disproportionately affect women.

We know that in difficult times, law firms deprioritize I&D initiatives. During the 2008 economic downturn:

- Gains made in female associate representation in the legal profession declined from 2008, and numbers dipped for the first time in 20 years.
- The pay gap between women and men partners increased by 29%.
- Even though women were only 16% of the equity partnership, they accounted for 50% of the equity partners who were terminated.

As the sponsor for our Legal Panel, I wrote to our panel firms to ensure they treat diversity as a priority. I highlighted our commitment to support their I&D efforts, and ensure they staff our matters with a diverse group of attorneys. We have established, under my leadership, data driven I&D programs with our panel firms, including I&D awards, to incentivize our panel firms to align with our values and commitments on gender ●

“During the Covid crisis I have championed flexible work arrangements for more than 99% of our workforce”



Helena Fonseca

Public Procurement Coordinator Program, Organization of American States (OAS).
Technical Secretary of the Inter-American Network on Government Procurement (INGP).
Location: Washington DC, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

Since the beginning of my career, within the OAS, I have worked for the promotion of transparency, integrity and institutional strengthening of governments around the Americas, where I have succeeded in consolidating my technical expertise related to the design, execution and monitoring of regional cooperation projects; as well as political awareness skills to engage high-level authorities and build technical capacities to specialists in public procurement.

Throughout this path I have led relevant actions which have contributed to the achievement of important results as Technical Secretary of the INGP such as:

- the consolidation of the Network as the main regional forum and community of practice for cooperation
- settlement of the INGP as a reference for global procurement networks
- worldwide promotion of Latin American and Caribbean procurement practices
- elevation of public procurement as a strategic area to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, due to my commitment and contributions, the public procurement topic was featured as a key area in the highest regional political fora such as the Eight Summit of the Americas – Document of Lima on Democratic Governance to Combat Corruption; and the OAS General Assembly who recognized the INGP as an hemispheric technical cooperation mechanism within OAS Member States.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

I consider it important to highlight my self-knowledge process and the actions that have driven me to strengthen my leadership, inspire, generate a sense of belonging, and build an ecosystem in public procurement. My journey towards leadership has allowed me to reflect, identify, and strengthen my capabilities and areas for improvement; find my motivation and purpose; generate a vision; and identify the values that have delimited my essence as a human being and leader.

This process has allowed me to act with discipline, determination, and commitment; to deepen my knowledge, skills, and abilities; and to be consistent

with my core values, such as: integrity, empathy, persistence, continuous learning, transcendence, courage, and emotional intelligence. These values have been my driving forces to achieve objectives, be resilient in facing of different challenges and promoting collaborative initiatives focused on the common good; specifically, through the consolidation of a public procurement ecosystem with purpose, based on trust, credibility, sense of belonging and commitment from all the actors that make it up (across countries and international communities), which has made it possible for each one to contribute from their capabilities and roles to build alliances, generate aligned efforts and achieve more powerful results.

A channel of cooperation

Through my personal and professional experience as a Senior Specialist of the OAS, and Technical Secretary of the INGP, I have also contributed as a channel of cooperation to carry out processes of awareness, training, and technical assistance to achieve national and regional demands. As well as inspiring and influencing holistically at the political and technical levels to find solutions that strengthen transparency, ethics, integrity, value for money and sustainability, to persistently position public procurement as a strategic vehicle to generate greater public value and better access to citizens' rights.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

As a part of the actions taken to promote local economy and the participation of women in the awarding of emergency contracts caused by Covid-19, I am

currently supporting, as INGP's Technical Secretary, the consolidation of a sustainable public procurement ecosystem composed of international/multilateral organizations, public and private sectors and civil society, in order to raise awareness; promote inclusive public policies; and build technical capacities to foster the implementation of social, environmental and economic criteria in public procurement in the region.

This initiative has a strong focus on women as business leaders to achieve more inclusive and sustainable economies through public procurement, as a strategy to transform the way the State contracts and to whom it awards contracts. It will also contribute to demonstrating the impacts and benefits of contracting triple-impact companies led or staffed in majority by women, especially MSMEs, qualified to become state providers.

Also, I am exploring new projects to work on forging coalitions between governments and women's associations to increase the participation of women in the design and implementation of legal frameworks for open and inclusive public procurement and its implementation in pilot countries to promote the purchase of products or services produced, provided, or distributed by women ●

"I am exploring new projects to work on forging coalitions between governments and women's associations"



Jennifer Geiling

Deputy Director, Policy and Partnerships, The City of New York's Mayor's Office of Contract Services.
Location: New York, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I began my career as a corporate lawyer, specializing in technology contracts and negotiating business relationships. E-commerce was emerging and the work was innovative, creative, and ever-changing. The sector's entrepreneurial spirit was contagious and in 2004 I embarked on my own business enterprise. Inspired by my brother-in-law Hank who was born with developmental disabilities, and leveraging my legal skills and experience, I founded and built Hankering for More (HFM) – a non-profit with a mission to provide socialization, education, networks, and independence for adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities. With a novel curriculum, HFM facilitated social independence for hundreds of clients, cultivated a network of support services through joint ventures and partnerships and secured financial sustainability.

Hungering for wider impact and seeing opportunities to improve the business environment for social service organizations, I merged HFM and became the founding Executive Director of Mayor de Blasio's Non-profit Resiliency Committee (NRC).

I was charged with reforming the City's \$7 billion human services contracting portfolio and building a stronger business relationship with the hundreds of non-profits that deliver thousands of social service programs every year. The NRC ushered in dozens of policy reforms that have changed the face of City human service contracting.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Supporting diversity and inclusion

As Deputy Director for Policy and Partnerships at MOCS, I lead initiatives to support the Mayor's mission to establish NYC as the fairest big city in America. I focus on leveling the playing field for Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) and small organizations. The backbone of these efforts is enabling greater access to City contracting through technology innovation, relationship development and public awareness campaigns. Through the NRC, I brought small, community-based organizations to the table to ensure our policy decisions were equitable, balanced and inclusive. My team leads the digital integration of City Council's discretionary contracting portfolio –

making it easier for nearly 2,000 organizations to contract with the City and streamlining the contracting process for more than 6,000 awards. I'm currently on a campaign to engage the City's 10,000+ certified M/WBEs in electronic procurement, which offers expanded business opportunities specifically for these stakeholders.

Leading policy reforms

As NRC Executive Director, I lead the design and implementation of dozens of policy reforms across 41 City agencies, with nearly 1,000 non-profit business partners, impacting thousands of contracts. Most notably, the *Health and Human Services Cost Manual*, developed by the NRC, standardizes cost treatment, budgeting and expense claiming across the City's \$7 billion contracting portfolio. It creates a standard, transparent and inclusive policy that makes it easier for all businesses and the City's 40 Mayoral agencies to manage their contract budgets and financial obligations. New York City was the first in the nation to create this framework, establishing a model for other municipalities and private foundations.

As Deputy Director at MOCS, I established the agency's first public relations team that is charged with raising the reputation of City procurement, contracting and our office. We have advanced a narrative that is taking hold and transforming our position in the City and elevating our work. I speak regularly on the significance of contracting and procurement professionals and have been featured by media outlets through podcast and writing engagements. My work was recognized by the Frederick P. Hayes Foundation, awarding innovative contributions to the delivery of public services.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

As a member of the MOCS executive team, I serve on panels that target women in leadership roles in an effort to inspire women to lean in and lead. I also lead on M/WBE engagement initiatives that target greater inclusivity of women in City contracting – speaking regularly at community and business convenings and Mayoral initiatives. As an alumna of New York University Wagner School of Public Service and an adjunct professor, I have spoken about my professional journey as a woman and served as a counselor for other women considering careers in public service. I mentor the women on my team, encouraging them to lead with confidence and promoting them as they realize success and growth.

Finally, I note that I served as a principal member of the City's Covid-19 Rapid Response Health and Human Service team, designing policies and practices to support ongoing services during the Covid-19 pandemic and in reopening ●

"I lead initiatives to support the Mayor's mission to establish NYC as the fairest big city in America"



Nkemdilim Ilo

Chief Executive Officer, Public Private Development Centre (PPDC).
Location: Nigeria, West Africa

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I trained as a lawyer in Nigeria. My interest in contracting, public procurement and governance began in 2010 and was spurred by a confluence of several issues I observed in my country Nigeria. Looking at the state of public infrastructure, the absence or dilapidated state of basic public facilities in the health, education and works sector, I became interested in how much of the public infrastructure deficit was occasioned by compliance issues in the public procurement and contracting pipeline or the absence of an effective regulatory and public disclosure/accountability system. My involvement in contracting was further piqued by my interest in the relationship between public taxation and the

responsibility of government in the provision of basic amenities. This led me to begin a career in the non-government sector in the field of public procurement governance, open contracting, and public disclosure.

Q: What are some personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Advocating contracting reforms

Three criteria that illustrate my personal achievements and contributions in my career are leadership, leading in technology and raising the reputation of contracting in my organization and industry. I have spent more than eight years working in the development sector, as a frontline advocate for public procurement and contracting reforms that improve the provision of effective service delivery in Nigeria.

In my current role as the Chief Executive Officer for my organization, the Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC), I have played a pivotal role building a strong CSO network which has been central in opening procurement and contracting processes in Nigeria in a way that elevates accountability and citizens' voices.

Shaping fiscal transparency

This has further led to me playing a central role in shaping fiscal transparency in contracting under the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Nigeria, formerly as the co-chair of the open contracting committee and now as steering committee member (the highest decision-making committee under the OGP framework). One of the crucial outcomes of my work has been the improvement of sub-national contracting and disclosure process through the replication of a groundbreaking technological platform, Budeshi, across several states in Nigeria.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

One of the learnings that has come from the Covid-19 pandemic has been the increased domestic burden on working mothers. As a working mother of two young children, I am uniquely aware of the significant increase in the domestic work of women in catering to the basic needs of their family, in addition to paid responsibilities. This puts a constraint on our ability to be top performers, especially in a society where women must work twice as hard to climb up the ladder.

A second learning has been the challenge in sustaining the earning power of women as more businesses are negatively impacted by the pandemic. As the lead of my organization, one step I have taken is to ensure that women have the space and support they need to meet their responsibilities to the organization, this means making adjustments to working hours and deliverables to accommodate the needs of the family. Additionally, I have taken steps to ensure that the status quo is maintained in ensuring the availability of economic power through income (in simple language – I have ensured staff continue to get their full salary).

Finally, the availability of a support system of safe spaces in ensuring the mental and emotional health of my female employees given the rise in sexual and gender-based violence during this pandemic period ●

“I’ve made available a support system of safe spaces to ensure the mental and emotional health of my female employees”



Kayleigh Kuptz

Chief Operating Officer and Co-founder, Deployed.
Location: London, UK

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

My background is in strategy consulting and financial services which gave me insights into the commercial processes and behaviours on both the seller (Accenture) and buyer-side (HSBC). Born out of these insights was Deployed, a London-based SaaS startup that I founded with two other experts in the industry.

Deployed aims to bring innovation and digitalisation to services procurement and reinvent how work is defined and agreed. Deployed's Work Authoring Platform accelerates the writing process via data-led guided scoping, automating the commercial process of agreeing work.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Being a co-founder at Deployed, I am proud to be a driving force and contributor in defining work better and applying innovation to contract and commercial management, with this I hope to contribute to:

Raising the reputation of contracting in your organization or geography or industry

... and the reputation of procurement by bringing innovation to highly manual processes, and equipping procurement with effortless control and easy to access data insights to have benchmark costs and deliverable descriptions at their fingertips.

Defining the new normal (post pandemic)

... better defined scopes of work and easy-to-author SoWs enable companies to increase their contingent (and remote) workforce by providing clear deliverables and acceptance criteria.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Deployed is proudly majority female-owned and managed. As founders we place high significance on maintaining an equal gender balance in our board and teams. We make sure that the women in our company are not just equal in numbers but also in role seniority and are either in or have the prospect to grow into a leadership position.

As the COO, I make sure that our team members are always challenged to learn or experience new things that will broaden their skill set and benefit their further career. I encourage the women in the company to take on tasks that lie outside of their comfort zone, success in those tasks is a huge accelerator for confidence and professional pride.

I also try to look out for stereotypes that harm women and whilst I can't control that they exist, we can control how we as a company deal with those stereotypes, which sometimes means having courageous conversations to overcome them ●

“We make sure that the women in our company are not just equal in numbers but also in role seniority”



Jorden Lam

General Counsel, HESTA.

Location: Melbourne, Australia

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I am an executive leader and general counsel that passionately embraces the seismic shift in how businesses evolve into the digital age, and how that translates into legal and commercial teams. My professional experience in the financial services and health sectors has exposed me to the myriad of commercial contracting relationships had across different businesses – all however with the same underlying themes and challenges. Wearing hats as a legal adviser as well as that of a non-executive director, I have become involved in designing procurement practices and frameworks to ensure value can be derived from vendor relationships, beyond the black and white terms of a contract and in a sustainable fashion for both parties.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Leading in technology, innovation and entrepreneurship

As a vocal advocate for continuous improvement, I have used my capacity as a leader within my organisation to champion how we solve tensions and problems with our business processes and practices by adopting appropriate tools. These tensions cause not only inefficiencies and frustrations for employees within the organisation but also impact on the end outcome in services, for example, that we deliver to our customers. The Legal and Commercial Affairs team have under my guidance worked closely with the business to deliver enterprise-wide contract management and procurement tools. We started with a contract life-cycle management system in 2018, then followed that with implementing an automated procurement and vendor management system to enable contract owners across the business to derive greater value from negotiated arrangements.

Both tools support the decentralised procurement and contract management model adopted in the business, so the Legal team are the key enablers and educators on how to negotiate with and manage vendor relationships having regard also to the relevant legal and commercial risks. My team and I are currently now also looking at how we can implement similar technology in our investment teams to support their practices and strengthen operational governance.

The delivery of the above-mentioned technology solutions to enterprise-wide challenges could only have been achieved with a strong innovation mindset which is what underpins the drive to challenge existing practices for improvement. I lead my team with the mantra that we do not accept existing practices as the best outcome, and empower individuals to embrace an entrepreneurial attitude to solving business problems. It is with this mindset that my team have been able to operate beyond the usual remit of lawyers, and deliver valuable improvements and value to the organisation.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Having myself had the fortune of experiencing the support and mentorship of other senior women, I believe we all have a strong role to play to support other women in their roles to achieve their leadership aspirations. I make a conscious effort in my capacity as a business leader to adopt a growth mindset and to embrace diversity in every form when hiring members of my team and just as importantly, how I continue to lead and nurture that diversity.

Very practical actions include ensuring I support women in the law by briefing women lawyers when I require external legal support, and challenging the female/male partner ratios when engaging external law firms. Having these conversations means I can exert the influence I have as a client, to encourage other organisations to take active steps in supporting women in senior leadership positions.

I have over the years continuously mentored and supported young women both within and external to my organisation who are in the early stages of their careers. Through these relationships, I decided to document some of my reflections and learnings by way of my career website – www.jordenlam.com – so as to offer a resource for women looking for guidance on commonly experienced challenges in their career journey. It is this strong and continuous desire to support women that inspires me to regularly write about my experiences and thoughts ●

“I believe we all have a strong role to play to support other women in their roles to achieve their leadership aspirations”



Mariel Reed

Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, CoProcure.
Location: San Francisco Bay, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

After four years in mainland China, I moved to the Bay Area to join a mission-driven tech startup. Moving back to the USA was a shock. The America I encountered every day on the streets of San Francisco fell far short of the one I had been evangelizing to friends abroad. Why, in a City with over \$10 billion annual budget, were so many members of our community living without shelter, access to sanitation, dependable transit, or quality education? I joined the San Francisco Mayor's Office to learn more. Working on technology purchasing projects, I came to understand: the buying decisions that public servants make have an outsized impact on our local communities and businesses. But most of the time, public servants don't have the information they need to make informed, expedient procurement decisions. What if it was as easy to find information for our public buying decisions as it is for our personal ones?

I started CoProcure because it shouldn't take hours of phone calls, emails, and internet searches for public servants to find relevant suppliers, compare available purchasing methods, or learn from peer public agencies. Today, CoProcure serves USA buyers from over 400 local governments.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Social justice

I didn't dream of starting a company. I fell in love with a problem: how might we maximize the positive impact of public procurement for our communities and businesses? I believe solving this problem is not only a huge business challenge; it's an urgent matter of social justice. When governments fail to work well, the pain of that failure is not felt evenly across our communities.

In the beginning, my conviction for solving this problem was all I had. The first year was terrifying; I tried many things that didn't work, all while watching my personal savings quickly evaporate. As a first time female founder working in the government space, I faced a steep learning curve pitching

venture capitalists. But alongside the countless rejections, there were important yeses. I recruited an amazing technical co-founder: she's an experienced engineering leader, a passionate advocate for social justice and inclusion, and a mom. Together, we've raised \$4 million in venture capital and built a team of eight full-time employees (majority female engineering team). We're still early in our journey, working towards our shared mission of bringing the ease and efficiency of the free market to public purchasing.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

I think about supporting women in three ways. First, I seek to help the women I've hired and work with directly at CoProcure grow. Our company is proudly female-founded, I recruited a female co-founder and head of engineering, and the majority of the engineering team members we've hired are women. My co-founder and I strive to create an environment that is welcoming and empowering and that allows our team members to safely take risks and stretch their skills.

I also aim to support women indirectly by encouraging more women to start businesses and working on products that benefit women. As a female founder, I seek to encourage and assist other women to start businesses, especially venture-funded technology companies. I provide informal mentorship and coaching to at least two or three other female founders on an ongoing basis.

Finally, I see working on products that enable a more equitable society as inherently positive for women. Women make decisions for most of our country's most vulnerable families and children; when government services work better, women and their families benefit ●

“We strive to create an environment that is welcoming and empowering and that allows our team members to safely take risks and stretch their skills”



Emma Rees

Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, Deployed.
Location: London, UK

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I am the CEO and co-founder of a tech startup called Deployed. I became involved in commerce from a young age, owning my own hairdressing salon and expanding into five stores with over 100 staff and freelancers. I put myself through university part time (Economics and Business management) and leveraged my experience to create an on-demand app for hair and beauty.

I then pursued an opportunity to co-found a startup focusing on one problem – the friction agreeing short term contracts which graduated into contract automation for professional contractors. This has evolved again into the company today: a platform designed to help any user write a good scope of work for any business before they contract for services.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Supporting diversity

We recently won the Melinda Gates and Microsoft Ventures' Global SaaS Female Founders Competition. It's a \$2 million USD investment in our startup to grow the business – and we are committed to hiring a diverse team, going the extra mile to recruit technology talent from minority and underrepresented groups.

When my children were at school in a mixed community in East London, I worked with my children's primary school to support local mothers to cook and sell Halal Bengali cuisine in the local Spitalfields Market which provided income and learning opportunities for other mothers at the school.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Deployed is proudly majority female-owned and managed. As founders we place high significance on maintaining an equal gender balance in our board and teams. We make sure that the women in our company are not just equal in numbers but also in role seniority and are either in or have the prospect to grow into a leadership position.

As the CEO, it is critically important to me that I dedicate time to regular one-to-one coaching sessions with each team member. Understanding their personal goals is equally as relevant as their professional aspirations and is a key factor in providing the right support and guidance.

We endeavor to always provide opportunities for growth and development to our team members so that they are equipped on their personal and professional journeys. Through our experience with Covid-19 the message is clear: we possess immense strength when we uplift, support, and encourage each other ●

“We possess immense strength when we uplift, support, and encourage each other”



Arianne Reza

Associate Deputy Minister with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).
Location: Ontario, Canada

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

In December 2021, I will be celebrating my five-year anniversary in the field of public sector procurement. Prior to this, I have held a variety of other senior government posts mostly related to the commercial movement of goods and travellers across borders. Currently my position is Associate Deputy Minister with Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC).

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Simplifying the procurement burden

One of my key leadership responsibilities is to help shape and guide the work of the central contracting authority for the Government of Canada. During my time as Assistant Deputy Minister of Procurement with PSPC, I led many complex change initiatives to modernize procurement which is an ongoing key mandate commitment for the Government of Canada. My role sees me at the forefront of the work to simplify the procurement burden on suppliers, focusing on inclusivity and accessibility for all participants and building transparency, looking at managing risk and driving better outcomes for Canadians.

Helping shape a new system

This means implementing initiatives such as the Electronic Procurement Solution, the Contract Modernization Initiative, and introducing more socio-economic considerations in procurement. These initiatives are shaping a new, more modern and responsive federal procurement system that delivers expertise, capacity, business intelligence, tools and strategic partnerships to the end-users, suppliers and stakeholders. We have adopted approaches that are designed to respond better and to do so quickly, efficiently and transparently. Leadership and my ability to innovate and direct teams to achieve results are what enables me to be a driver for change in a complex system.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Women in leadership need to be visible. Women in leadership need to be realistic about the challenges they face, but also about how they overcame them. I have never shied away from using my voice and being heard. Through leadership and visibility, I have helped countless women realize there is room for them at leadership tables in government. My presence and success have signalled that women can and must be heard, as diverse opinions and views lead to better solutions and approaches.

Women often consider their track record and what they have done in order to plan for their advancement. I believe my work has been instrumental in helping women from a multitude of backgrounds realize that they must also consider their future potential. ●

“Through leadership and visibility, I have helped countless women realize there is room for them at leadership tables in government”



Nicola Stott

Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, Exigent.
Location: London, UK

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

If someone had told me 17 years ago that I would be leading a 500+ employee global organization that would trailblaze in the legal industry, I would not have believed them. My journey to contracting has been an evolution, that's for sure. After 15 years in marketing and commercial roles at blue-chip corporations such as American Express and Macquarie Bank, I co-founded Exigent, which was then an outsourced legal administration organization providing a single service to law firms in the UK.

Today, Exigent stands as a global leader offering data-driven legal and consulting services to corporate clients and law firms. After acquiring a Bangalore-based technology and legal services provider in 2013, Exigent gained a proprietary contract management solution that was a catalyst to us fulfilling our professional desire and purpose: 'To enable our clients to make more informed decisions from the information held within their contract portfolio'.

By diversifying our service offerings and expanding our geographic footprint, I have been able to work with corporations around the world and become immersed in the world of commerce and contracting. For me, contracting isn't about contracts per se, it's about organizing, interrogating and analyzing data to achieve commercial insight and prosperity.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Reshaping our future

When Covid-19 first hit, I resolved to not just survive but to thrive. I could see how this devastating crisis could be a catalyst for us to grow stronger. I led the formation of our Plan Ahead Teams who would reimagine our client experience and our colleague journey. My colleagues were given the opportunity to pitch for a place in these groups bringing 40 bright minds to the table to reshape our future. As a result, we are pushing boundaries with our client experience, our entire colleague journey has been reimaged and engagement at Exigent has never been higher.

Making a positive difference

I feel very vulnerable saying this out loud, but making a positive difference is my reason for being. This sits at the very heart of me; it is woven through the tapestry of my life. I am blessed and privileged to be in the position I'm in, to be able to touch so many people's lives and have the opportunity to make a positive difference to them. I strive to lead my colleagues with a mixture of empathy, inclusivity, vibrancy, optimism and encouragement – to be the best version of themselves personally and professionally.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

With 80% of my colleagues based in locations where gender inequality is still a reality (India and South Africa, I am proud that 65% of Exigent's global workforce is female and of our 40 leadership/manager positions, more than half are filled by wonderful women.

The pandemic has not impacted the way Exigent supports women in the workplace. It's always been critically important to encourage and inspire my female colleagues to realize their professional potential. I made the decision early on that I would lead by example, with an 'anything is possible' philosophy. In response, women all over Exigent are realizing that the glass ceiling simply doesn't exist.

Through these challenging times, male and female employees alike have been empowered and given the flexibility to find a work/life balance that lends itself to their personal circumstances and family responsibilities. My role has been to prioritise my colleagues' health and safety, protect their jobs and their income, steer with a calm, steady hand, authentically communicate and lead Exigent to emerge stronger.

I do none of this alone; I am encouraged, supported, made stronger and braver by all the amazing people I have around me. For them I am truly grateful ●

"I made the decision early on that I would lead by example, with an 'anything is possible' philosophy"



Vivien Suerte-Cortez

Consultant, Open Government Partnership.
Location: Metro Manila, Philippines

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

I was introduced to public procurement in 2002 when I was working with civil society organizations advocating the passage of the Government Procurement Reform Act. The GPRA was passed the following year. I was one of those who took part in successfully advocating for the inclusion of civil society observers in the law's implementing rules and regulations.

My work with Procurement Watch in 2007 laid the foundation for my current advocacy for public procurement and open contracting. We capacitated teachers, parents, and students by discussing the law, the importance of accessing contracts, and the value of monitoring. Over time, we witnessed several school principals who demanded replacements of substandard deliveries of school armchairs. These experiences showed me the transformational power of having and using contracting data to hold government and the private sector to account.

My role at Hivos Southeast Asia reflected my passion to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders in procurement reform. I would describe my life's work as enabling more people to participate in governance, and bringing them together in an environment of institutional collaboration for contracting reform. While challenging old practices and mindsets and introducing new ones is never easy, it can be done.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Changing for the better

Colleagues say that I constantly look for something to change for the better, with my experience tempering this desire. In close to two decades, I have seen much good and I have also seen what makes development work taxing, difficult, and frustrating. This pragmatism allowed me to continue the work I do. I have abandoned the idea that anybody could, on their own, make the world a better place. But I know that innovation happens when individuals and groups with unique strengths and capabilities come together to achieve incremental steps toward

a common goal. This is why I think a degree of success was achieved in programs I have managed, such as the Citizen Participatory Audit and Open Up Contracting in the Philippines.

Imagining possibilities

Colleagues believe that I've been endowed with the skill of looking at a particular situation and spotting an opportunity – for collaboration, for policy influence, or for an initiative. I am able to imagine possibilities and balance the risks against the rewards of pursuing it based on my understanding of the formal and informal processes, the personalities and their key motivations, and the political factors that may affect a certain initiative.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

My work has been about challenging long-standing norms, introducing new approaches, and opening up spaces for collaboration.

Public procurement used to be secretive, with only those in inner circles and usual participants in the know. Thus, corruption thrives. People were cheated out of resources that were supposed to be for their welfare. This was the deep-rooted problem that the GPRA sought to address, but even the law's objectives are often frustrated in its implementation.

Increased participation of citizens can help ensure transparency and exact accountability among our leaders. Over the years, I have worked with women who are passionate, persistent and hardworking. They have careers and families, but they make time for meaningful participation in the affairs of government. Likewise, many female government employees are open to new ways of doing their work. I share their hope that the next generation of Filipinos would live in a more transparent environment.

My work at Hivos allowed me to nurture the participation of women stakeholders. This is true for all partners. Specifically, in South Cotabato, we worked to gender-tag women-led procurement activities. The objective here was to encourage more women-led organizations to participate in public procurement ●

“Innovation happens when individuals and groups with unique strengths and capabilities come together to achieve incremental steps towards a common goal”



Elizabeth Whitla

Executive Director, Contracts for the Strategic Missile Defense Business, Raytheon Missiles & Defense.
Location: Boston, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

My career in contracting began in Canada working for Hughes Aircraft (later acquired by Raytheon). Hired to write user manuals, the contracts organization intrigued me. It seemed like the perfect job, the bridge across our multi-functional organization. Accepting an entry level position, I spent the next 10 years growing my international contracting experience on DCS contracts that took me across Europe and the UK, China, Singapore and Indonesia, before transitioning to a leadership position in the USA in 2004. Selected for a development rotation working for a Raytheon business president, I learned business operations from the top down, and witnessed the effects of good and bad deal formation on the business. The experience made me a stronger leader, but I longed to return to contracting. Over the next 10 years, I served as Contracts Director in three Raytheon divisions, before moving to a Senior Director role leading the Global Subcontracts team for all air and missile defense, radars, command and control

and naval system contracts. The Raytheon/UTC merger brought me back to contracts for my most challenging role, leading the team overseeing Raytheon's Missile Defense Agency programs, to include the USA missile defense system and those of its global partners.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Championing caregivers

There's a silent epidemic affecting our workforce and it's not Covid-19. One in six Americans working full/part-time report assisting with the care of an older or disabled family member and 64% of these caregivers are women. Many turn down projects/promotional opportunities, making challenging decisions to choose family over career. In 2019, Governor Baker's Council to Address Aging in the State of Massachusetts sought a co-chair for its Caregiving Workforce Committee. I was challenged to bring a large employer perspective to the team. This experience and the recommendations made to the Commonwealth, continue to influence my leadership support of flexible work arrangements that champion these individuals.

Keeping the virtual office door open

The silver lining to Covid-19 is that it forced technology and cultural acceptance for working remotely. Raytheon/UTC merged within weeks of Covid-19 and a significant challenge was transferring our culture virtually. Every level of my organization is connected by video. Our D&I *About Me* Campaign goes deeper than work, celebrating our differences, sharing culture, discussing corporate values and reminding us that we're here together. It keeps the virtual office door open – even from home. Post pandemic, 60% of my team will continue to work remotely part-time and this focus will lay the foundation for future change.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

Twenty years ago, I was working on my MBA when my male supervisor came into my office and said "I feel sorry for women like you Liz... the bloom is really off the rose". Throughout my career, I've encountered comments like this and those who are threatened by diversity, instead of advocates for it. We are at a tipping point of important diversity discussions in our country, and I am proud to have been part of my company's journey. Awareness, a desire for change and women championing other women can progress a culture and force points on gender inequality. My leadership team, 50% of which are women, work on the philosophy that it's not

enough to ensure diverse candidate slates, it starts with the panel of interviewers to infuse real diversity into the process. As a member of the Raytheon Women's Network and Chair for the Raytheon Missile Defense Workforce Council, I collaborate on strategic initiatives that invest in our employees to create better engagement, expand the employee proposition to develop strategic roles, and highlight supportive programs, such as Women Unlimited, that celebrated 100 Raytheon graduates last year ●

"Women championing other women can progress a culture and force points on gender inequality"



Alexandra Wrage

President and Founder, TRACE.

Location: Greater Vancouver Metropolitan Area, USA

Q: What is your professional background and how did you become involved in the world of commerce and contracting?

Alexandra is an attorney by training, and she spent several years as in-house counsel at well-known corporations before pursuing her own business venture. She founded TRACE International, the non-profit business association dedicated to anti-bribery and good governance, in 2001 because she recognized a commercial need for standardized compliance resources and tools. She founded TRACE Inc., which works alongside TRACE International, in 2007 to meet compliance and risk management demands that did not fall under the scope of the shared-cost model.

Alexandra is a pioneer and champion for ethical business: At the time when she founded TRACE, most companies paid little attention to anti-bribery compliance. She has continued to pave the way for good corporate governance, as TRACE has evolved and grown with changing global regulatory

environments and industry needs. TRACE now has more than 500 members and clients, and Alexandra has helped thousands of companies worldwide raise their ethics and governance standards. Her proactive approach to anti-corruption – through training, due diligence and risk management – helps prevent bribes from being paid by companies in the first place, ultimately preventing financial crime that enables pervasive global issues such as trafficking and terrorism.

Q: What are two personal achievements and contributions through your career?

Innovation and entrepreneurship

Innovation and entrepreneurship were the driving forces behind TRACE's inception: When anti-bribery was an afterthought for most companies, Alexandra's answer was to create a global standard. She works tirelessly to advance the global anti-bribery agenda, responding to economic, industry and regulatory changes and constantly inventing new resources and tools to help companies commit to ethical business.

Alexandra established TRACEcertification, a detailed due diligence review, analysis and approval process that has become widely recognized, in 2012. Companies can share their TRACEcertification reports with an unlimited number of potential business partners. TRACE Certified entities are pre-vetted and trained business partners for multinational organizations, many of which rely on TRACEcertification as an essential part of their due diligence process.

Making a positive difference

In furtherance of TRACE's mission, Alexandra gives back through the TRACE Foundation, which promotes, supports and funds research, investigative journalism, publications and related projects that encourage greater commercial transparency and advance anti-bribery education. The annual TRACE Prize for Investigative Reporting recognizes journalism that uncovers business-related bribery and financial crime. Past recipients include journalists from Iraq, Kenya, Peru and Europe whose reporting have made a tangible impact in the fight against corruption.

Q: Covid-19 has illustrated the critical importance of helping women to realize their professional aspirations – what role have you played or are you currently playing within your organization to support women in their roles?

A women-led company, TRACE works to empower and support its majority-female staff. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, TRACE was swift in implementing flexible working policies to meet the increased demand childcare has placed on women.

Alexandra advocates for gender parity in the global workforce and has written and spoken extensively on the benefits women bring to corporate governance. When Alexandra launched the TRACE Intermediary Directory of TRACE Certified entities, she included a function that allows businesses – many of them small- and medium-sized intermediaries in emerging markets – to identify if they are over 50% women-owned. Additionally, Alexandra supports gender inclusivity in her field, and she has previously chaired the Women in International Regulatory Law Steering Committee ●

When anti-bribery was an afterthought for most companies, Alexandra's answer was to create a global standard

The following pages contain articles sharing the thoughts and passions of just a few of the Inspiring Women working in commerce and contracting.

They capture the essence of this year and we hope the subject matter and words themselves, inspire you →

Authenticity and resiliency

by Anna-Marie Southern

Catalysts for change

Authenticity means being truly present and connected to people and experiences in a way that is meaningful to your life. It is a commitment we make to ourselves and a quality we look for in others. It is found at the root of confidence and passion, which grows into trust and respect. Yes, we want to be authentic, but it takes immense courage to practice.

Who we are, or at least who we appear to be, matters enormously

It is not uncommon to feel that we have many different roles to play in our personal and professional lives. We are leaders in our teams, co-workers, colleagues, experts, and friends; we are also mothers, daughters, sisters, and partners. Each title carries the expectations of others, from the way we speak, behave and dress, to the knowledge and skills we should possess. Our true self remains the same no matter where we are, who we are with, or what we are doing.

What does it really mean to be authentic?

An authentic person, object, or emotion is genuine; you can describe something as authentic and mean that it is of real, true, or of undisputed origin, however you can also mean that it is such a good imitation that it is almost the same as the original. Authentic information is reliable and accurate; trustworthy.

To be authentic in the most genuine sense means to be true to yourself, your values, beliefs, goals, and ideals by living in such a way that these things are congruent with your actions. Authenticity is about your presence, and acting with conviction, confidence, and passion and it is exponentially more rewarding to live this way.

Being true to yourself opens way for a deeper sense of trust in your judgements and decisions. Seldom do we doubt the integrity of authentic people because their behaviour is consistent. This trust extends to the people around you and builds a foundation of respect over time.

When you trust yourself to make the best decision, you are being genuine. It takes an immense amount of courage to stand up for yourself in many situations and by doing so, you gain increased confidence and self-esteem. This, in turn, gives you a greater sense of optimism, empowerment, and satisfaction in the work you do.

Leading with greater authenticity unlocks our potential to pursue our projects with passion; work in lockstep with your values; lead with both head and heart; and foster meaningful, lasting relationships. People who are authentic bring their entire selves to the table. They contribute fully and honestly in the workplace, and exponentially increase their value.

Unsurprisingly, workplaces need difference – of opinion, talent, perspective, gender, expertise, background, and more; authenticity is the route to realizing the value of that difference. Why then, do we often seek to step into roles? Why not rewrite them to include our quirks, ideas, and aspirations? It is only when we seek new ways to actively be ourselves in any given setting, that our differences can thrive.

To be authentic, we may need to be unconventional, open, vulnerable, and innovative, and we must draw on immense courage to do so. This opportunity is, therefore, uniquely ours – to take our courage and the challenges we face and use them. Doing so makes us resilient. Cultivating resilience, doesn't necessarily mean confronting major issues and adversity every day, but it starts when we choose to be unapologetically individual. When we choose change.

Our true self is a journey of growth, learning, and development and in being open minded. It is a key that unlocks vast potential. Ultimately, we are a multiplicity of selves.



It is not uncommon to feel that we have many different roles to play in our personal and professional lives.

While the notion of an authentic self doesn't seem like it can coexist as we navigate the roles in our lives, we can still find a sense of a 'true self'. We all have complex layers that define us, and it is okay to find where we fit in any given situation. If we take the time to look inward and build a good sense of a true self, we can be authentic to it. It will always be worth engaging in this question of authenticity, because by making it a noteworthy experience to strive for, we all benefit; and this is perhaps the most significant catalyst for change ●

“To be authentic in the most genuine sense means to be true to yourself, your values, beliefs, goals, and ideals by living in such a way that these things are congruent with your actions”

Creating an equitable workplace

by Liz Whitla

This was not an ordinary year, one of those years that fades and mixes into memories blending across decades. Like 2020, it will be remembered by everyone who lived it. We, as a global community, continue to adapt to a world that has changed – social injustices, global threats, pandemic health crisis and a work environment that for many of us, we simply never envisioned. I was honored to have been selected by WorldCC in 2021 as an inspirational leader, especially during a time in history when people needed inspiration. Events around the globe shone a long overdue spotlight on equity in the workplace and this in turn, forced companies to really take a hard look at their diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) initiatives and results. What they saw is that we’ve made progress, but not nearly enough. As a female leader in the aerospace and defense industry, diversity is something I care deeply about. After all, for decades I have been acutely conscious of the lack of representation in conference rooms when I walked in.

According to research by Advancing Women in Product, Covid-19 led to a breakdown in the caregiving infrastructure, but even before the onset of the coronavirus and the ‘pink collar recession’, our 15 indicators showed that tangible progress toward gender parity had been uneven and that large gender gaps remained across the world. Covid-19 exacerbated the situation. Whereas in the past, working mothers had been able to lean on caregivers

to share the family responsibilities, they were often left without this support and as a result, we have seen record numbers of women exit the workforce or shouldering the majority of child rearing and elder care responsibilities.

This became extremely personal to me in November 2020 when I began fostering twin 15-month-old boys – Cameron and Cole, who like nothing more than to hijack as many work Zoom calls as they can. They have been with us for a year now and as I reflect on this time, I realize that I was very fortunate to have been far enough along in my career, supported and surrounded by my incredible team. Frankly, I’m not sure I could have stayed the course and continued to have been as successful, had I been balancing everything on my plate at an earlier stage in my career. The State of Massachusetts, where I live, also provides foster parents with daycare, which allowed us to work from home on most days without balancing childcare, but for many parents this option is cost prohibitive. For everyone out there who day in and day out shoulder the double duty of caregiver while navigating the workforce – you are my heroes.



Flextime addresses the diverse needs of employees and enhances work-life balance.

I loved the discussion I had with Sally Guyer, Global CEO WorldCC, earlier this year and her passion that rang through on this subject. As we debated the merits of corporate initiatives that support women in the workforce, Sally and I touched on a few ideas for company focused efforts such as **flexible work arrangements** that address diverse needs of employees and businesses and enhance work-life balance that can lead to greater productivity as individual and organizational needs evolve. These type of arrangements can include flextime that adjusts the start and end time of a workday, compressed work weeks with fewer workdays within a one- or two-week period, and modified work weeks that provide for temporary schedule changes within the same workweek for non-exempt employees and over a rolling two-week period for exempt employees.

Sally and I also discussed our shared view and support for **part-time employment**, more common in Europe, that can attract strong candidates to organizations who otherwise would not be able to take on full time hours due to life demands. I was able to share some information on Raytheon’s *Re-Empower Program* that provides a unique opportunity for experienced professionals returning to the workforce after taking a career break. This 12-week paid program provides resources and opportunities that assists participants in re-entering the workforce and re-engaging into their professional career paths. We also highlighted the benefit of **subsidized backup care** for child and elder needs that some companies are offering when routine care is not available whether due to the pandemic, school holidays or travel.

My many discussions on workplace equity, with a focus on gender parity, have led me to believe that there is a brewing ‘Call-to-Arms’ as companies turn critical eyes toward equality in the workforce.

While we see a greater focus on creating infrastructure and resources to help women gain access to work opportunities, it can’t be without supportive means for primary caregivers to find the time to work, care for their loved ones and take care of themselves as well. The truth is, we might implement changes that help women carry it all, but we should not expect them to at the expense of their wellbeing. Company cultures and overall productivity will be better off for it in the long run.

Arguably, change is happening and with more commitment by corporate leaders than ever before. I know that it can feel like a slow moving aircraft carrier changing course, but as I reflect back over my career, I can honestly say that I feel optimistic for women setting out on their career paths. With that in mind, I truly believe that any drive toward gender parity arguably needs to start with efforts to change entrenched, widespread attitudes about women’s role in society. This is an extremely difficult and complex challenge that will require all stakeholders to play a sustained part over the long term. Among those stakeholders are the enlightened male leaders willing to step up and champion females in an effort to close the gender gap. They understand that a larger number of women at work represents socially and economically beneficial progress ●

“For everyone out there who day in and day out shoulder the double duty of caregiver while navigating the workforce – you are my heroes”

The power of optimal vitality

by Nicola Stott

As professional, ambitious women, we all have our challenges to find calm in the chaos of our busy lives. Between being successful at work, supporting our families and having a social life it can feel like there is little time left for us to focus on being our best selves.

And yet we know that when we feel great, our coping mechanisms – the tools and rituals we use to feel our best selves – become more powerful and we achieve that amazing feeling of being unstoppable.

I've had the privilege of building a business from a single service organisation, one location and five employees to multiple services, multiple locations and 500 employees. That in itself was pretty chaotic and required some fairly robust coping mechanisms! But what we've all experienced recently has reinforced how important those coping mechanisms and rituals are. We've had to hold it together and keep a clear mind to help our colleagues feel safe, our businesses thrive and show that we can confidently cope with the unknown – personally and professionally.

The way I've done this is by embarking on a personal quest to achieve optimal vitality. I'd like to share just five things I've learnt.

1. Feeling great on the inside

Feeling like my best self comes from the inside. It is amazing how much our bodies – especially our gut and digestive system – tell us. Everything from rashes

to weight gain, mood swings to swollen eyes can be a result of poor digestive health. And it's not just about *what* we consume, it's also about *how* and *where* we consume – I know how easy it is to grab and go, but this isn't always the best thing for our digestive system!

I also focus on loving my liver; it plays a vital role in our energy, vitality, hormonal balance and weight. I'm not averse to a glass of wine, so I counter this with plenty of water to rehydrate and start to flush out any toxins.

Try and make it a ritual to... start your day with a cup of hot water and lemon to kickstart the rehydration process and wipe out that first cup of coffee or tea.

2. The magic of basic movement

Another way of mobilising the toxins in our bodies is movement. One of the things I noticed working from home is how little movement I was getting. Without having to go to the office and move from one meeting to another, I wasn't getting the usual 'hidden' movement I used to take for granted.

This isn't about going for a 5km run or doing an hour HIIT class. It's about moving for lymphatic stimulation – whether that's a walk at lunchtime, dancing around your kitchen or prioritising your yoga class. Any mobility helps.

Try and make it a ritual to... turn one of your phone calls into a 'walking call' outside. Do your meeting on the move and in the fresh air – two natural hits in one.

3. The power of restorative sleep

We all know how good sleep is for us – and how rubbish we feel if we don't have a good night's slumber. But aside from the chronic health conditions sleep loss is linked to, it's the way it affects our cognitive function, decision making and coping mechanisms that is most vital.

Put simply, everything works better with restorative sleep! It improves our mood and hormonal function, enhances our physical and emotional resilience and ensures that the chemicals strengthening our immune system circulate around our blood, boosting our immunity and helping us recover.

Try and make it a ritual to... get to bed when you can before 10pm. The 90 minutes phase before midnight is the most powerful sleep we can get because it's when the body is replenished – every hour of sleep before midnight is worth two after.

4. Breathing and our nervous system

You're always 'on' because you always give everything your all. It's 100% ON for work, for family, for exercise, for a night out. Sound familiar? What this is doing is constantly activating your *sympathetic nervous system* which triggers the fight-or-flight response and gives you energy.

Being constantly 'on' is exhausting, releases stress hormones and raises our heart rates – even if you're enjoying what you're doing. I've learnt to engage my *parasympathetic nervous system* using breathing techniques, which promotes the rest-and-digest response in my body.

Breathing is so powerful and yet we constantly take it for granted. By doing different breathing exercises, I found I could clear my mind when it was too busy; to help me sleep or energise me.

Try and make it a ritual to... purposefully breathe once a day. Take five deep breaths feeling your tummy go in and out so your body is moving with your breath.

5. Nurturing our souls

When was the last time you did something that truly nurtured your soul? Doing something that makes my unconscious mind smile is essential to my well-being. It might be as simple as a bath, reading a book for 20 minutes or cooking your favourite meal – taking time for yourself is part of reaching your optimum vitality.

Creating the best environment for yourself with positive energy and the right support is hard – it means being ruthless with energy vampires and remembering it's not selfish to look after yourself too.

Try and make it a ritual to... do something that nurtures your soul every day, no matter how small.

Conclusion

As ambitious professionals we use our grey matter a lot; my journey has led me to love engaging with the amazing machine we call our body. No matter whether I'm convincing my doctor that I'm fine and telling myself I'm not stressed, my body and my subconscious will tell me otherwise – and I've learnt to listen!

We're all made up of a series of rituals, so make them good ones! For me, optimal vitality is about knowing I can take on the world; that there's nothing I can't cope with; and about being the absolute best I can be for myself, my loved ones and my global team ●



Nurture your soul. Take time to read a book or cook your favourite meal.

Deconstructing imposter syndrome

by Emma Rees and Kayleigh Kuptz

Imposter syndrome is loosely defined as **doubting your abilities and feeling like a fraud**. It disproportionately affects high-achieving people, who find it difficult to accept their accomplishments¹ and is also known to apply more to under-represented groups, who feel an especially intense pressure to perform.²

Reflecting on our own encounters with imposter syndrome, we want to share some personal experiences without trying to match the academic heft that many psychologists have already written and expressed. Indeed, being asked to write about imposter syndrome as high performing founders from an under-represented group still left us feeling like imposters. Yikes!

Recently *Nature magazine* published an interesting article that is now taped to our office door.² It talks about a feeling of ‘imposterism’ from another unlikely group: Scientists. This is driven largely from the same motivation as entrepreneurs; scientific inquiry “attracts people who want to get to the bottom of important questions, but that few things in science are ever fully solved.” What resonated the most for us, and why the paper adorns our office wall, is that imposter syndrome hits when it’s **“hardest to measure success”**.

We want to deconstruct imposter syndrome from our perspective by sharing our journey of growth, how we embraced challenges, and set our own measures of success: “The finish line isn’t strongly defined unless you define it for yourself”.²

Setting the scene

We started brainstorming an idea in 2018 and launched Deployed with full force in 2019 with two UK Innovation grants for design and research. The concept was simple; that the world of work is shifting to blended workforces and that market trend towards services procurement would continue, even though existing systems and processes could not support this new way of working.

We spent years researching, consolidating, grafting, meeting, inspecting, and creating and, in that time, confronted all sorts of blockers, but also many opportunities and support of advocates. The progress each quarter kept us reflecting on our successes and failures, and how we could learn as we grew. The result is a product called a **Work Author** that creates instant and compliant Statements of Work with an easy-to-use interface. It’s now being used to create millions of dollars of well written scope and compliant statements of work.

Here is our advice:

Fact check your doubts

Imposter syndrome is driven by emotions. When you think you don’t deserve your position, success, or praise – look at the facts and empirically challenge what you are feeling. Did anyone tell you that you didn’t present well? Do you see it as a failure, where it is only a few things that need changing?

Look at the accomplishments that lead you here and the external validation you’ve received; they can’t all be wrong. If you’re “in a competitive field, but constantly getting messages that you aren’t good enough, that you shouldn’t be here, that you barely made the cut. There’s a chip on your shoulder to prove yourself.”²

Fix the place, not the women

We have to fix the places where women work instead of trying to ‘fix’ the women. Women don’t need fixing and this phrase feeds into stereotypes that harm women in the workplace. Instead, we need to build sustainable solutions to make every employee feel they can be curious and confident.

Building a company from scratch is a unique opportunity to foster culture and values such as ‘Elevate each other’ and ‘Be proud of your achievements’. Deployed is a team of 15 and we created our company values together, talk about them, and publicly praise each other when we meet our values. We credit work efforts and don’t let anyone discount someone’s successes.

A secret superpower

We both had moments thinking “we just got lucky” or “we had a lot of help” when we were invited to pitch to Melinda Gates and a committee of Silicon Valley investors. Imposter syndrome can also be a humbling sensation; one that makes you work harder and go the extra mile. It spurs you to prove yourself. It can be a powerful position because that extra diligence, attention to detail, and preparation might make you more successful than those coming from a privileged situation of assuming they are a success.



To build sustainable solutions we have to fix the places where women work.

We worked hard preparing for our pitch and in the end Deployed was announced the Global Winner of the Female Founders Competition.

Kayleigh “Successes increase confidence and self-worth, and they often encourage a brave step into discomfort. If you choose to look at discomfort as a driver to grow, learn and succeed, nothing else can stand in your way.”

Share the load

Many believe the path to leadership, competency, and achievements is a solo one and asking for help is a weakness. True leaders have advisors, mentors, and a great team to help share the load. Working collaboratively, asking for support, and sound boarding ideas leads to better outcomes, less stress, psychological safety, and confidence in your decisions.

Emma “My personal learning is that gifts of support can come from anywhere. Some of our biggest supports were our male colleagues as well as each other. It has made me wonder how many people don’t share their experiences or struggles because they need to be seen to have unwavering confidence always.”

Finally

You define the finish line! Lift each other up. The piece of advice that matters most when faced with imposter syndrome, is to begin building a positive connection with your success. Take time to truly celebrate and acknowledge your accomplishments. We tend to dwell on the negatives, thinking through what we could have done differently or better. If you only ever connect with your failures, by nature you’ll always feel uncertain or out of place. We all have successes, loads of them – we just need to recognize them ●

1. Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome by Ruchika Tulshyan and Jodi-Ann Burey, *Harvard Business Review*, February 2021

2. How burnout and imposter syndrome blight scientific careers by Chris Woolston, *Nature Magazine*, November 2021

Writing your own story: Intentional goal setting

by Jennifer Geiling

Two years out of law school, an attorney has a vision for a different approach to legal services. Her boss responds, “You’re too young, you have so much to learn, just stay the course – you’ll be a partner one day”. Holding an alternate perspective, she forges ahead – establishing a new practice and bringing along the clients who believed in her.

This same professional, curious and eager to expand her career, transitions her law practice and embarks on a global journey to consider and explore opportunities. Pushing back warnings from colleagues, “You’re throwing away your career”, she incubates a social innovation that changes the lives of a marginalized community of adults living with developmental disabilities.

As a budding non-profit founder, this entrepreneur sees systemic risks in the business environment that she is determined to change. Industry executives cautioned, “You are too aggressive for a woman”.

Acquaintances suggested to go slow, “You can tackle these issues when your children are older”. The executive sometimes wondered, “Am I in over my head? Will I be able to make change?” Persevering, this woman followed a vision, set goals to reach along the way and joined a team of champions that established a roadmap for national reform.

This is my story, but you may recognize it as your story, too. Every day we are up against obstacles and pressures – some from society and others of our own making. The pursuit of personal fulfillment is neither a straight line nor is it easy. Intentional goal setting has allowed me to write my own story, take control of my journey and sustain motivation along the way.

As a young attorney, it was a relatively simple set of goals to realize my vision – find a work environment that supported innovation and bring clients along. Looking to impact an industry required a more complicated set of goals that included returning to graduate school, cultivating a different professional network and identifying opportunities to lead change.

No matter the level of effort or series of steps to realize personal success, writing your own story requires courage. Vulnerability is essential and mistakes are certain. Every day I am working on being gentler and kinder to myself. I find it helpful to keep a list of accomplishments and a diary of lessons learned. Gratitude for friends and mentors abounds.

The beauty of intentional goal setting is that it keeps you looking ahead and propels you forward. Over the past 18 months, our lives have been overturned. The hamster wheel of Covid left many of us feeling stuck or in limbo. For me, setting goals was grounding, uplifting and allowed me to take control of a situation that could feel unpredictable and uncertain. Some goals were specific to the time – step away from the computer three mornings a week to walk with friends and create personal connections. Some were more focused on long term professional development – read articles and books that have been on my to-do list for months, acquire and build skills that I’ve never made time for, engage in new professional networks.



The hamster wheel of Covid left many of us feeling stuck or in limbo – 18 months of overturning our lives.

Intentional goal setting is a tool to build the life you want. Without it, we open the door for others to define us and circumstances to dictate our journey. Often, we believe that experience or credentials are necessary to realize our dreams, success and happiness. Goal setting has shown me that intentionality can put you in the driver’s seat, cultivating experience, credentials and the life you want along the way.

With a new year on the horizon, I’ll be turning a fresh page in my book and will start writing the next chapter in my story, I’m already setting my goals ●

“No matter the level of effort or series of steps to realize personal success, writing your own story requires courage”

Gender and AI bias

by Christina Demetriades

Addressing bias in artificial intelligence

You might say AI is inherently neutral, however, according to *Harvard Business Review* there have been many incidences of AI adopting gender bias from humans. AI is made by humans after all which means that it internalizes the same biases that we have – AI is a direct mirror of ourselves.

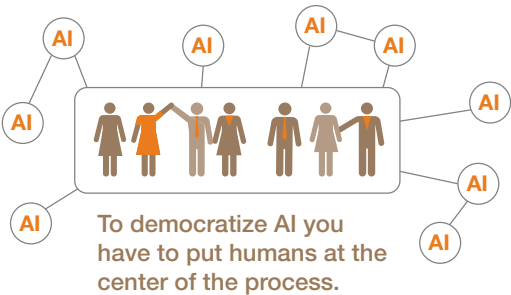
Gender bias may occur during machine learning. AI systems learn to make decisions based on training data, which can include biased human decisions or reflect historical or social inequities, even if sensitive variables such as gender, race, or sexual orientation are removed. Machine learning is of course led by humans, which explains why such biases can be inherited by the system. This does not reflect modern society or the way that we want to progress. It is therefore incumbent upon us to ensure that we are creating responsible AI and this is something we must actively work to achieve.

What is responsible AI?

Accenture’s Chief Technology Officer defines responsible AI as being made up of five elements:

- Honesty
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Accountability and
- Human centricity

I believe those five principles are critical to an understanding of what it is to have responsible AI. We need to move from just having those ethical principles into being able to actively apply responsible AI and I think you do that in several ways.



First you must have the right governance in place when you deploy the AI. We must ensure that the training samples are as diverse as possible both in terms of gender but also ethnicity, age, sexuality, and so on.

Second, when you’re architecting the AI, we must ensure that trust by design is built in. We can do this by ensuring that the people developing AI have a variety of backgrounds. Like all industries, the AI industry also needs diversity.

Once you’ve completed that stage, have deployed the technology, and the technology is in practice you need to monitor and audit thoroughly, really look at your outcomes and make sure you haven’t got unintended consequences, you haven’t got bias built in. You need that feedback loop.

Finally, when you’ve done all of that, as an enterprise, to be responsible I think you still need to consider “how do you bring AI and democratize that learning across communities?” – that means your employees, your shareholders, your other human stakeholders. You do all of this by having humans at the center.

There is huge potential in AI and the new technologies at our fingertips give us a unique opportunity to start fresh. AI can help us improve upon human decision making.

However, without the right training and the right approach AI algorithms will always reflect exactly what we teach. Bias reduces the potential of AI for both organizations and society by fostering mistrust and producing distorted results. Bias is all our responsibility. We must consciously carry with us the essence of decades worth of fights for civil rights and equality where they are so easily lost in a few lines of code.

It is, therefore, up to people, and not machines, to drive this change. The unbiased future of AI starts here, starts now, and, importantly, it starts with us ●

“We must consciously carry with us the essence of decades worth of fights for civil rights and equality where they are so easily lost in a few lines of code”

Thank you to the Committee Members

Working on this book has provided me with plenty of opportunity to reflect on all that we have achieved in just our first year of the World Commerce & Contracting Inspiring Women program. None of this would have been possible without the support of this wonderful group of women who formed our very first ‘Inspiring Women Committee’.

Being part of the Committee has been another uniting experience. Together we have navigated the unknown and learned so much. I am so grateful for the time that each of them has given to help make this program the success that it is and equally for the time that we have been able to spend together in the process.

There is no doubt that every one of these women would themselves be worthy of a place on our ‘List’. Together they bring so much diversity of thought, of experience and of community. As I said in my preface, I am so proud of this initiative, and so thankful to have been supported by such an enthusiastic and committed team.

Sadly, these times prevent us from meeting in person, I sincerely hope that will begin to change and I look forward to the opportunity of bringing this esteemed group together in person in 2022, to celebrate this program and importantly, the women behind it.

#StrongerTogether

Sally Guyer
Global Chief Executive Officer,
World Commerce & Contracting

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About World Commerce & Contracting

World Commerce & Contracting is a not-for-profit association dedicated to helping its global members achieve high performing and trusted trading relationships. With 70,000 members from over 20,000 companies across 180 countries worldwide, the association welcomes everyone with an interest in better contracting: business leaders, practitioners, experts and newcomers. It is independent, provocative and disciplined, existing for its members, the contracting community and society at large.

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About Icertis

With unmatched technology and category-defining innovation, Icertis pushes the boundaries of what's possible with contract lifecycle management (CLM). The AI-powered, analyst-validated Icertis Contract Intelligence (ICI) platform turns contracts from static documents into strategic advantage by structuring and connecting the critical contract information that defines how an organization runs.

Today, the world's most iconic brands and disruptive innovators trust Icertis to fully realize the intent of their combined 7.5 million+ contracts worth more than \$1 trillion, in 40+ languages and 90+ countries.

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in Commerce and
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