

D2L

Voices of Inspiration

Women Leading the Way in Learning and Ed Tech

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Women's Day
Spotlight

Celebrating and honoring the accomplishments of women leaders in learning, ed tech, and across D2L.



Amy Clark

Chief People Officer

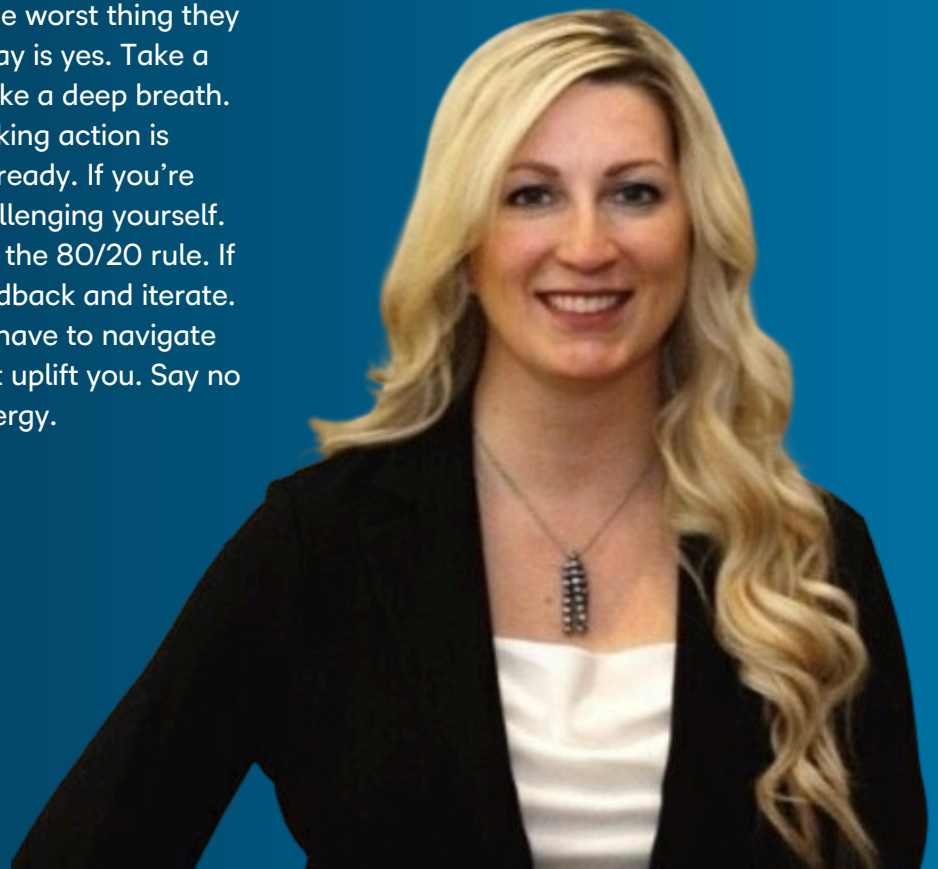
What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

I would say key moments are when I received critical feedback. When I was in a director role at a financial services organization years back, I was the most junior person on the team reporting directly to the head of the department as his chief of staff. He would give me feedback in the moment. This meant we would leave a meeting where I presented or shared a point of view and as we were walking out of the meeting together, he would give me feedback on the spot regarding what worked well and where I could refine for next time. Many leaders shy away from direct feedback. I thrived on it and would not be where I am today without it. I also believe I am where I am today because of people, more senior than me, taking a chance on me. They saw my potential and drive and offered to coach and mentor me as I grew. I had many mentors, most strong females that I keep in touch with today and who have become friends.

What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

- **Success is not linear:** Careers have detours, setbacks and pivots, and that's okay. Choose the path that's right for you in the moment/stage/phase of your life. You don't have to be 120% every second of every day.
- **Advocating for yourself is not arrogance:** I often get asked for advice on how to negotiate an offer. My advice is always to negotiate and ask for what you want—the worst thing they can say is no, but the best thing they can say is yes. Take a chance on yourself, do the research and take a deep breath.
- **Perfection is not the goal—progress is:** Taking action is more important than waiting to feel 100% ready. If you're not feeling uncomfortable, you are not challenging yourself. Baby steps lead to leaps over time. I follow the 80/20 rule. If it's 80% of the way there I share it, get feedback and iterate.
- **The importance of community:** You don't have to navigate your journey alone—build relationships that uplift you. Say no to toxicity or people that will drain your energy.

“Find your voice. Embrace continuous learning. Build a strong network. Remain agile and adaptable.”



Amy Clark

Chief People Officer

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

My key advice for any young leader starting out can be distilled to 4 core actions.

- **Find your voice:** Speak up and share your thoughts. Even if you think it's a silly idea or one that others won't understand, speak your mind. Your insights are valuable and can inspire others, which in turn can lead to better outcomes. It takes practice but pays off.
- **Embrace continuous learning:** Stay curious and don't become stagnant. I am deeply fascinated by artificial intelligence (AI). I've immersed myself in learning about it, joined discussion groups, and adopted the use of it in my personal and professional life every chance I get. Throughout my career, I craved learning. I earned as many designations as I could in financial services and obtained my MBA while raising young kids and working full-time. Learning fuels my ambition as much as it fuels my mind. The key is to never stop learning, never stop asking questions and always be curious.
- **Build a strong network:** As an introvert, networking in my early years was a terrifying concept. Thankfully, I had extroverted friends and colleagues I would link to and follow during these events. Increasingly, I learned how to strike up conversations with some practice. Join clubs, ERGs and networking events to continue to expand your network, brand and profile. Eventually, consider if you would take on a speaking engagement, the network then starts to come to you.
- **Remain agile and adaptable:** Don't rely on "well we've always done it this way." Be open, agile, creative and a professional problem solver. Be a change agent. Find ways to navigate change with a healthy mindset, and be flexible when things don't go your way. Help others navigate change.

How do you master your craft?

Staying curious. I read books, attend conferences, have coffee chats with new network contacts, ask lots of questions and use Chat GPT for a lot of things now. I also surround myself with an incredible team and LISTEN to them. I really believe in the African proverb that says "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." I also believe in "it's amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit" (Harry S. Truman). I live by this, actually. In fact, I prefer not to get credit as anything I do is a cumulation of many people and teams to achieve the output and result, not me alone. Ever.

If you want to go fast, go alone;
if you want to go far, go together.

Ira Stuchberry

SVP, Deputy General Counsel and Business Affairs

What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

Some of the most defining moments in my leadership journey have been the times when I've had to step outside of my comfort zone—whether that was taking on a challenge that seemed beyond my experience, advocating for a perspective that wasn't the majority view or navigating a crisis with resilience. My experience in private practice advising boards of directors involved in contentious negotiations taught me how to manage complexity, think strategically and communicate effectively under pressure. Returning early from maternity leave during the midst of the pandemic to work on D2L's IPO reinforced my ability to balance competing priorities, adapt quickly and lead through uncertainty. And my pivot from an experienced corporate lawyer in a private company to a securities lawyer in the public company setting pushed me to develop new expertise, embrace continuous learning and approach challenges with confidence. Each of these moments reinforced the importance of adaptability, resilience, and staying true to my values. To me, **leadership isn't about always having the right answers—it's about being willing to ask the right questions, learn quickly and make thoughtful decisions with integrity.**

What do you do to unwind?

Balance is a conscious effort for me that I am not always good at. I make a conscious effort to prioritize time with my kids and my husband, making sure to be fully present with them when we're together. Recently, I had a conversation with my daughter about how I have to divide my time into different pieces to ensure that everyone and everything I care about gets the right amount of attention—whether it's my kids, my husband, my work or my extended family.

In the process, I've realized that I sometimes neglect to prioritize myself. While different aspects of my life take precedence at different times, I've learned the importance of shifting priorities so that everyone, including myself, gets the right amount of attention. As a family, we also stay active and enjoy skiing, hiking, scuba diving and rock climbing together, which helps me feel recharged and connected.

What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

I wish I had known that **confidence isn't something you wait to feel—it's something you build through action.** Early in my career, I sometimes doubted whether I was "ready" for the next step, but the truth is, growth happens when you take that leap. I wish I had understood the power of advocating for myself—whether in negotiations, leadership discussions or career planning. No one will champion your success as fiercely as you will.

I wish I had known that shifting careers from wealth management to law would ultimately come full circle to a role that combines legal expertise with my business know-how. Every step, even those that felt like detours, contributed to where I am today.

I also wish I wasn't as hard on myself when I made mistakes because those mistakes led to my biggest opportunities for learning. And

I wish I had celebrated my successes more and stressed about my failures less—because as humans, we tend to take our day-to-day successes for granted while overemphasizing and stressing about every little failure.

D2L



Georgina Zehr

VP, Business Development



What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

Your goals are only achievable on the process, people and culture you build. It's never one person or one process that will get you there. It's your ability to work with your cross functional team members. When your team wins, you win.

What does leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?

I see leadership as a duty and a responsibility to develop talent, achieve business goals and build the best team culture. I would describe my leadership style: People first, high performance expectations, and duty to growth and development.

Where do you find inspiration and motivation?

I love the small wins more than the big wins. I am so inspired by my team members who come to my desk and tell me that after so much effort they finally broke into an account or when my manager has a breakthrough coaching session with a rep. Inspiration is around me daily, and I'm grateful for my team everyday.

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Your goals are only achievable on the process, people, and culture you build.

What do you do to unwind, de-stress, and balance work and personal time?

I'm a mom (5-year-old and 3-year-old) outside of work, so I'm not sure this even exists! Spending time with my family and friends is a priority outside of work. I am lucky to live close to family and we get together every Sunday for family dinner. It's the best way to start/end my week.



Kristina Tsiriotakis

Senior Director, Learning & Organizational Development

What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

The moments that have shaped me the most are the ones I wanted to say no to, because I was afraid I wasn't able to rise to the occasion. I have learned the things that terrify me the most are the things that I truly need to grow. For me, this is where the learning moment is found. When that little voice inside my head tells me "no," I now hear the call to go bravely there, and I talk back to it and say "YES."

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Intention and action
are the magic equation
that fuel possibility.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

Focus on the work, the craft and the next step. I never set out to move into a leadership role in L&D. I have always wanted to do the best work and the most I could to support my organization and its people. This has opened up doors for me I never dreamed possible. I have learned that intention and action are the magic equation that fuel possibility.

I have included my favorite quote on advice below. I return to this daily and try to see to remain present and to see the good and the gifts in even my most difficult moments:

"I have no advice for anybody; except to be awake enough to see where you are at any given time, and how that is beautiful, and has poetry inside. Even places you hate."

— Jeff Buckley

What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

That saying yes to everything means you are saying no to the thing. I wish the younger me had understood the power and wisdom of focus. The best leaders know how to cut through the noise. As Covey says, the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.

To choose joy. To be more present while the moment is happening. I wish I knew that joy is a matter of perspective and a choice. In the words of Nick Cave, "Now is the time for joy."



Kristina Tsiriotakis

Senior Director, Learning & Organizational Development



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[Leadership] is all in, and from the inside out. There is no halfway leadership.

What does lifelong learning mean to you?

It means staying humble enough to understand that learning is not linear. We grow and progress, and then life happens, and we can be entirely set back in ways we didn't see coming. This isn't something I understood in my 20s and early 30s, as life hadn't dealt me as many blows. I now understand learning and growth is not a straight path, but a bit of a zig zag, where we learn and unlearn, succeed and fail, form and reform. For me lifelong learning is turning the zig zag into a dance – it means being humble enough to surrender to the fragility of being human, and bold enough to keep striving, to rise and to recreate anew.

What does leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?

I think leadership is about inspiring belief, connection, commitment, meaning, action and growth. It requires genuine and deep care for the mission, the work and the people. It is all in, and from the inside out. There is no half-way leadership.

I try to shift my leadership styles to reflect the needs and the individual, as leadership isn't about you, but your people. I would describe my style as responsive and contextual.

What mistakes have become your most meaningful lessons on your learning journey?

Trying to do too much. Fewer, better things is my mantra these days.



Lindsay Shipman

Director, Release and Product Enablement

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

Don't wait until you feel 100% ready before stepping into a new opportunity. Challenging yourself can be the best way to learn and grow, and there is no replacement for learning on the job and putting yourself in situations that test your limits. You should feel okay about taking on a new role before you feel like you have mastered every skill required. Your confidence will grow alongside your experience, and you cannot get the experience without saying "yes." Commit to consistent learning and connect with mentors who will support you and colleagues who will complement your strengths. We hold ourselves back when we wait for the perfect moment to take on a new challenge.

What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting her career?

Sometimes, big opportunities come disguised as casual coffee chats. You might be invited to meet someone for a conversation about career paths or potential roles that don't immediately align with what you think you want. Go for the coffee. Be open to the conversation. Even if the opportunity isn't what you expected, you'll gain insights, expand your network and maybe even discover a path you hadn't considered. Don't let fear of change or self-doubt hold you back—sometimes the best career moves start with simply saying yes to a coffee.

What does leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?

To me, leadership is about paving the way for others and shining a light on their accomplishments. A good leader is not just focused on their own success, but is committed to helping their team grow, embrace new opportunities and gain recognition for their contributions. Leadership is about creating an atmosphere where people feel valued and like the work they do has meaningful impact. I am thrilled to be able to lead a passionate team at D2L who bring their best selves to work every day to make a real difference. There is a saying that is generally attributed to Theodore Roosevelt: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." I believe this wholeheartedly and lead with it in mind. Empathy and appreciation are part of every interaction I have, whether it's with colleagues, students or customers. Knowledge and expertise are important, but meaningful connections are what lay the foundation for lasting impact.

“We hold ourselves back when we wait for the perfect moment to take on a new challenge.”



Kim Loebach

Senior Director, Learning Services

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

Don't be afraid to ask questions and don't underestimate yourself—you wouldn't be given an opportunity if you weren't ready.

Whenever I have started a new role, there is a period of time where I feel like I don't know anything and won't be able to do the job (insert imposter syndrome). Embrace these moments of being uncomfortable, ask lots of questions and be confident in what you bring to the table. Being uncomfortable means you are growing, and all of a sudden you will start tying everything together and contributing confidently at a new level.



What does leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?

Leadership means that the ship can keep sailing even if I am not there. I feel most successful as a leader when my team and leaders are empowered to make decisions, understand our goals and how to achieve them, know what is expected of them and are excited about what they are doing.

I think my leadership style is most closely tied to servant leadership. My goal is to be approachable, supportive and collaborative while still being structured, efficient and clear on my expectations so that the team is empowered to run with things.

What do you do to unwind, de-stress and balance work and personal time?

I went through a period in my life where my work and life were totally out of balance and the result was not pretty. I now hold a fairly hard line when it comes to work and life and make sure that I am making time to do the things I want (and need) to do outside of work. Once I am done for the day, I am typically done-done. It is only in very rare circumstances that I hop back online in the evenings. Could I work every night? Absolutely—but I would be burnt out by Wednesday, grumpy and not very fun to be around, so it is better for me to protect my time after work to give it my all through typical workday hours.

Ultimately, I have learned that I do my best work when I have looked after myself first through making sure I have time at night or in the morning to go for a walk, go to the gym, make nutritious food, spend time with my family and friends, or just spend some time outside. You cannot pour from an empty cup, and I cannot do my best work when my work-life balance is off.

Tracey Arndt

Senior Director, Proposal Management

What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

A lot of seemingly small moments have shaped my leadership journey. Some highlights are:

- Watching peers demonstrate leading with influence, relying on experience and collaboration to rally people around an idea or goal. Skills, cleverness and information are important, but they become superpowers when combined with kindness, humor and allowing others some grace in their day to day.
- Being appreciated. Someone taking the time to say thank you or acknowledge my hard work (even if the outcome wasn't a win) quietly built my confidence early in my career. I look for opportunities to do this for others, knowing how meaningful it can be.
- Knowing that when people had high expectations of me, which helped me unlock potential I didn't know I had. That's what leaders do—they help you uncover what you're capable of.

What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

I never had an answer to “what do you want to be when you grow up?” Some people know from a young age, some figure it out early in their career, and some (like me) still don't know. However, what I wish I had known when I was younger is that you don't know need to know the answer to be as driven as those who do. By following where my capabilities and interests led me, and by trusting myself, I have discovered so many fulfilling opportunities and potentially walked through new and different doors than I would have had I been committed to a specific pathway to achieve a certain goal.

What mistakes have become your most meaningful lessons on your learning journey?

My most meaningful lesson regarding mistakes is learning to sit with them. Not dwell on them, but to sit with them long enough for my reaction to pass (you know, the initial gross feelings, the panic and stress), so that the learning can happen. Despite my occasional thinking that the world will end if “X” happened, that has yet to transpire, so I've learned to be kinder to myself when something goes wrong. Also, because I know of the learning that can come from those missteps, I also really respect people who own a mistake, so I do my best to model that too.



Jennifer Thai

Senior Director, Corporate Accounting & Finance Operations

What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

As I reflect back on my career, the moments in my leadership journey that have shaped who I am today relate to those moments where I took a risk and became uncomfortable—being promoted from an individual contributor to a people manager for the first time, moving from a role in a public accounting firm to a role in industry, transitioning from one department to another department where I had to rely on my transferable skills as I built expertise in the new area, and more recently joining D2L and being open to embracing the incredible changes that the company has experienced since its initial public offering (IPO) in 2021. Each of these transitions in my life has allowed me to gain new perspectives as I dealt with new challenges and created strong relationships with a variety of people and learnt from them. One of the core sayings I remind myself from time to time is as follows: “I never said it was going to be easy; I only said it would be worth it.”

“I never said it was going to be easy; I only said it would be worth it.”

What does leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?

Great leaders recognize that they are privileged to lead and consider the needs of their overall team and doing the right thing ahead of their own self-interest. They create supportive environments in which people naturally work together to do great things—the team feels inspired, motivated and valued each day. They create a circle of safety where there is unity and a strong foundation of trust, so they are better able to survive and thrive despite what’s happening on the outside.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

Think about the leaders you’ve worked with, the personality/character traits you liked about them, and adopt those traits to make it your own style. Some leaders have unique approaches to problem-solving and executing on projects. Some have different communication styles. Some demonstrate more empathy and positivity. I try to take aspects of different leaders I admire and use those traits, applying them in various situations where I thought they fit best. They are like tools in a belt you can use for any situation that may arise.

Anna Forgione

Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary



What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

I wish I had understood the value investing in myself earlier. While I was dedicated to achieving company goals and success, acquiring 75 companies in seven years, I was primarily focused on the tasks at hand, expecting that results alone would be sufficient. However, I've realized that success is also about the relationships you build. I built a strong, cross-functional team that executed the company mission with excellence. But expanding my network, engaging with influential people and learning from others could have accelerated my impact even further.

Now, I encourage women to actively seek out colleagues, mentors and professional organizations. Don't wait for opportunities—create them. Speak at events, share your expertise and ask those you admire about the challenges they've overcome. These conversations build your confidence, raise your visibility and help to make a meaningful impact in your industry. Leadership is not a solo journey. Developing a network of colleagues and mentors can enhance your effectiveness as a leader. Collaboration and shared knowledge are important and leveraging the wisdom and support of others can lead to greater success.



What mistakes have become your most meaningful lessons on your learning journey?

Maintaining work/life balance can be challenging. I have learned that the more time I give myself for wellness, family and friendships, the more I am able to deliver at work and feel fulfilled. It has made me a better leader. After every busy period, I advise my teams to prioritize personal time to promote happiness and success and incorporating joy into their lives.

What does leadership mean to you? How would you describe your leadership style?

To me, leadership is about inspiring and guiding others while creating a supportive and collaborative environment. As the Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary and leader of the Proposals business unit, I pride myself on attracting, nurturing and retaining outstanding talent. My leadership style revolves around fostering open communication, teamwork, and mentorship to help others grow. Projects can start with a great deal of enthusiasm and falter if not supported with clear direction, achievable goals and the resources required to execute. I ensure that the team knows that they will receive support and guidance and then I let them come back and demonstrate their achievements. I strive to build a collaborative culture where everyone feels empowered to contribute and take ownership of their work. I believe in recognizing and celebrating successes on a regular basis while facing challenges with confidence, resilience and adaptability. Even when great people move on to other leadership opportunities, I honor their contributions and ensure the team remains strong and forward-focused. Ultimately, leadership is about learning, evolving and achieving success together.

Linda Feng

VP, Architecture



What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

Early in my career, I was invited to join a work group for an industry standards council. Given the relevance of the standard to the product I was working on, I volunteered to co-chair the workgroup. This experience was pivotal in developing my leadership and facilitation skills. It also allowed me to build a network of industry contacts, many of whom I later collaborated with as colleagues. Through this role, I learned how to motivate and align people towards a common goal, even when it wasn't their primary responsibility. This experience has positioned me alongside key leaders across the industry, helped me forge numerous personal and professional connections and earned me the affectionate title of "edu-celebrity."

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Embrace your curiosity and find diverse ways to connect with people. [This] will help you grow and succeed in your leadership journey.

Where do you find inspiration and motivation?

Lately, I've been reflecting on the influence of my mother as a role model. She worked full-time as a computer scientist at NIST while still being present for all my after-school activities. Even at the age of 90, she continues to inspire me with her passion for quilting, knitting and organizing within her senior community. Her dedication and enthusiasm motivate me to pursue my passions and stay engaged in my work.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

The ed tech industry is a close-knit community with many opportunities for collaboration. My advice is to actively seek out these opportunities and engage with the community. Embrace your curiosity and find diverse ways to connect with people, not just within your team but also across your organization and the broader industry. Building these connections will help you grow and succeed in your leadership journey.



Melissa Crouch

VP, Product Operations



Where do you find inspiration and motivation?

My inspiration and motivation come from the educators and learners that we serve at D2L.

After university, I spent a couple of years teaching at a low socioeconomic high school. What I thought was an opportunity to teach math and coach ended up being a major inflection point in my life and career. I saw first-hand the power of education to create hope and opportunity. That experience sparked a passion for me. Every person deserves access to high-quality education—regardless of where they live, their status or their unique abilities. Every educator benefits from tools and support that empower them to meet students where they are in their learning journey.

That's where ed tech comes in. It provides scalable solutions to the unique needs of today's learners and educators. After 15+ years, my passion remains consistent, fueled by the impact stories of the products I've had the privilege to help build.



What moments in your leadership journey have shaped who you are today?

Who I am as a leader today has been shaped through everyday moments:

- helping a team member overcome a tough challenge
- seeking formative feedback on how I could improve in the future
- learning from mentors and other leaders

Competitive sports significantly shaped my formative leadership experiences. I experienced the power of a team working together to reach a common goal. I learned how to show up for my team and always cheer each other on. I developed a strong appreciation for hard work and dedication.

What advice would you give to young women aspiring to take on leadership roles, particularly in learning and ed tech?

We are all unique. Discover your superpowers. Be confident in who you are.

Find a mentor. A great mentor openly shares their experiences, helps you refine your superpowers, and expands your network.

Find your people—those who will be your biggest fans but aren't afraid to share hard truths when you need to hear them.

Be fearless. It's typically the hardest things that help us grow and shape us into who we are.

“Lead now—from wherever you are.” -Abby Wambach

Heather Baker

Director, Product Marketing



What do you wish you had known as a young woman starting your career?

One thing I've heard throughout my career is that I'm not assertive or aggressive enough—that being empathetic somehow makes me weak. I firmly push back against that belief. You can be both compassionate and strong, and in fact, I believe the best leaders are. Leadership isn't about dominance or aggression. It's about making tough decisions while staying true to your core values. Showing empathy, kindness and being authentic doesn't make you less effective—it makes you a leader people trust and want to follow. Strength doesn't come from being the loudest in the room or the most forceful; it comes from having the confidence to lead with integrity, to listen as much as you speak and to bring people together rather than push them apart.

For young women coming up in their careers, I would say this: Don't ever let someone tell you that kindness is a weakness. It takes real strength to lead with empathy, to create space for others and to stay true to yourself in environments that may try to shape you into something else. The world needs more leaders who are both compassionate and strong—so don't be afraid to be one of them.

What does lifelong learning mean to you?

The leaders who thrive in today's world understand that learning never stops. Brené Brown said it best, "We have to be learners, because leaders are learners." Great leaders don't assume they know everything; they listen and adapt and empower others to do the same.

Lifelong learning isn't just professional development—it's a mindset that transforms how I approach every challenge. It means creating space for reflection, seeking diverse perspectives and having the courage to question my own assumptions. It's about embracing the vulnerability that comes with saying "I don't know" and viewing setbacks as data, not failure.

Lifelong learning is a habit that requires intentional investment. For me, this means staying curious through asking questions, challenging assumptions, embracing discomfort and surrounding myself only with people who inspire and challenge me. It's not a skill; it's how I approach everything I do, believing that I can always grow, always adapt and always improve.

What mistakes have become your most meaningful lessons on your learning journey?

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that the most meaningful growth happens when you push yourself beyond what feels safe. Early in my career, I made mistakes because I hesitated to take on challenges that felt too big or outside my comfort zone, thinking I needed to be fully ready before stepping up. Letting others take the lead and the spotlight.

Growth demands that you trade certainty for challenge. The moments that felt the most uncomfortable—whether it was taking on a stretch project, changing roles, speaking up in a high-stakes meeting or navigating uncertainty—were the ones that shaped me the most. I've learned to lean into discomfort, knowing that's where real learning happens.





Voices of Inspiration

“I encourage each of you to reflect on the role you can play in this journey of building a highly collaborative environment where we can all bring our personal best to work and uplift each other. Whether it’s by giving timely feedback, mentoring a colleague or encouraging your teammate to take ownership of a new challenge—all your efforts are invaluable. Together, we can create a workplace where all women feel valued, respected and empowered to reach their full potential.”



John Baker, CEO