

LēadTM

Issue No. 10

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Women in Leadership

CEO Spotlight

Linamar Corporation's
Linda Hasenfratz shares
her advice for success

At the top of her game

Donna Wilson, VP for WorkSafeBC,
chose her path and walked it



Building on
Family Status Support

EXCLUSIVE:
WOMEN ARE MAKING IT
BIG IN SMALL BUSINESS

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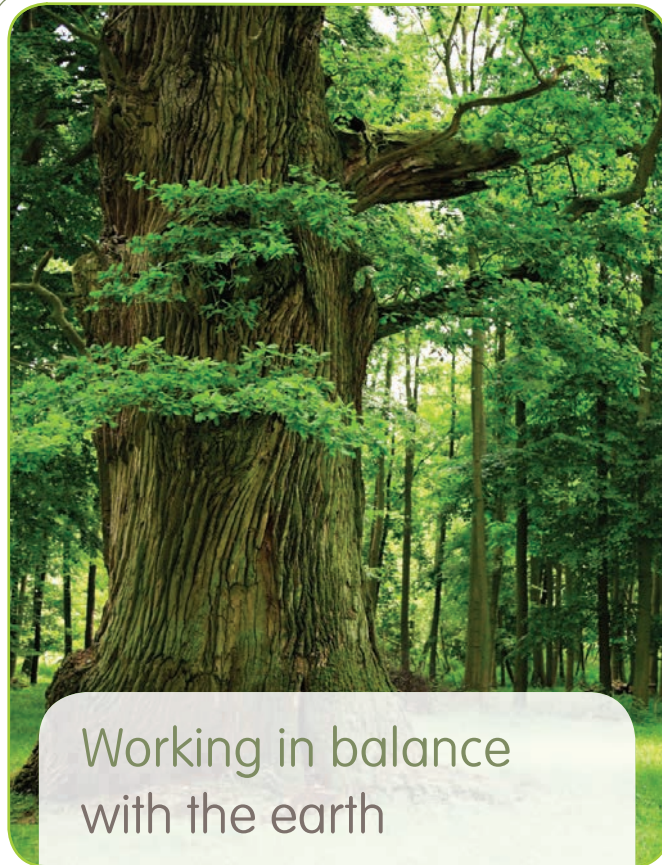
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Like many professional women, it has been important to me to have earned each position I've held because I was the best qualified person for the job, not because of my gender. However the subject of women in senior positions, and more importantly the lack of women leaders relative to the number of men in similar roles, does raise the question, are we doing enough to develop, support and sponsor women in leadership positions?

Canadian women make up almost half of our workforce and earn more than half of the university and professional degrees that are awarded each year, yet only a handful have been promoted to senior positions within Canadian companies.

According to Catalyst, a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding opportunities in business for women, only 17% of corporate officers and 13% of directors at Canada's top 500 private and publicly traded companies are women. This under-representation of female executives is not just a women's issue; it's a corporate challenge that could have long-term implications for the health of Canadian businesses. In an increasingly globalized economy, diversity is critical to engaging customers. Add to this the impending talent shortage that retiring baby boomers will leave behind and it's clear that companies need to reconsider what the picture of a typical executive looks like.

I have certainly benefited from being part of an industry that has a strong track record of promoting female executives. Female leaders offer a wealth of experience, knowledge and skill to employers. The staffing industry is uniquely positioned to provide women with access to rewarding long-term opportunities or flexible, temporary options as they re-enter the workforce after taking time off to raise families.

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And while we are not alone, as there are many female-friendly industries, the fact remains that while women represent over half of the workforce, we represent a much smaller amount of senior leadership positions.

Providing career options to women is only part of the solution, however. Mentoring and organizational sponsorship opportunities are essential to creating development programs that will see a meaningful change to the number of women who are selected for leadership roles.

This edition of *Lēad* is dedicated to the topic of women in leadership and I am pleased to share with you an interview with Linda Hasenfratz, Chief Executive Officer of Linamar Corporation, who provides us with her thoughts on the challenges that women face in business and how they can be overcome. We are also pleased to feature pieces from several other talented business women who are helping to re-define

the executive profile and are changing the face of corporate Canada, one organization at a time.

A stack of three light-colored wooden blocks, positioned on the left side of the page. The blocks are stacked vertically, with the top block slightly offset to the right.

Building on FAMILY STATUS SUPPORT

In some European countries, in order to address the low numbers of women in leadership positions, there are laws being considered which are intended to improve the gender balance in corporate leadership roles. Canada faces similar problems with the representation of women in leadership positions. In fact, the 2010 Catalyst Census: Financial Post 500 Women Senior Officers and Top Earners reveals that Canadian women hold only 17.7% of corporate officer positions. One of the issues facing women in leadership roles is the competing obligations associated with work and family. While it is essential that all women are supported in the workplace during both their rise to leadership and also during their time spent in leadership roles, women with family obligations require even more support at work. Some employers will offer support naturally to nurture their female leaders; others require assistance understanding the legal protection around family status.

All of the provincial human rights legislation in Canada, except for in New Brunswick and Quebec, provide protection to employees against discrimination on the basis of family status. However, Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, R.S.Q., chapter C-12, does provide protection to employees from discrimination based on civil status. The statutory protection against discrimination in employment protects employees during the recruitment phase, during their employment with an organization and also in termination.

Although most of the case law on family status surrounds the parent-child relationship, family status protection can extend to a range of relationships beyond the biological parent-child relationship.

All employees who claim that their right to be free from discrimination on the basis of family status in the workplace has been violated must first prove that they have in fact experienced discrimination before an employer is obligated to accommodate their needs. However, a look at the case law raises uncertainty with respect to what is needed in order for an employee to prove a case of family status discrimination.

One of the views that emerges from the case law on family status is that, in order to prove discrimination and trigger the employer's duty to accommodate, an employee must show that the employer has changed a term or condition of employment and, in doing so, there has been a serious interference with a substantial family obligation. In addition, the case law suggests that employees may have a duty to search for reasonable alternatives in an attempt to "self-accommodate" their needs. This means that employees may not have the right to have all of their family obligations accommodated, especially those based on preference. This requirement to establish discrimination sets a higher standard for family status claims than that which has been established for other grounds of discrimination.



On the other hand, another body of case law takes a more liberal approach to the definition of family status which just requires that an employee show that a work requirement has a differential impact on him or her due to his or her family status. According to this view, the change which triggers accommodation by the employer could be a change made by the employer or a change in the employee's family situation.

While the discrepancies in the state of the law on family status remain unresolved, there are ways that employers can deal with the family status concerns of women in the workplace and thereby support them in their growth to leadership.

The Definition of Family Status

Keep an open mind when determining which relationships are covered by family status protection. Although much of the case law considers the parent-child relationship, Human Rights legislation must be given a broad and liberal interpretation and the protection may not be limited to the parent-child relationship.

Treat Family Status Accommodation Requests Seriously

Treat family status accommodation requests just as seriously as you would treat requests for accommodation based on other prohibited grounds of discrimination. Although there is divergent case law on this point, employers would be well advised to err on the side of caution and give the same

attention to an accommodation request based on family status as they would to any other request for accommodation based on a prohibited ground of discrimination. The duty to accommodate must be fulfilled to the point of undue hardship unless the requirement is a bona fide occupational requirement.

Changes Requiring Accommodation

The law is still unclear as to whether it is just a change in a work requirement that attracts the duty to accommodate or whether a change in an employee's family obligations may also trigger the duty to accommodate. If an employer is making changes to a work requirement, consider the potential impact on employees and how flexibility could be incorporated into the change in order to allow for accommodation if required.

Avoid a "Blanket Approach" to Family Status Claims

With all accommodation requests, employers should avoid a blanket approach and rather speak with the employee about their particular situation. In particular, employers should ask employees why the accommodation is necessary and also inquire as to what other options are available to them. Employers should then assess the accommodation options available to them that will not cause undue hardship. Conduct a case-by-case analysis in order to respond appropriately and reduce the risk of liability associated with these claims.

Assess Unwritten Policies

Unwritten policies can also result in allegations of discrimination based on family status. Employers should ensure that both their written and unwritten policies are applied consistently and do not result in discrimination based on an enumerated ground.

Clear Communication

Employers should ensure that they foster an environment in which communication channels are as open as possible. This can help employees feel that they have an outlet to discuss issues of concern. At the same time, employers should make a concerted effort to communicate expectations, including relevant policies, to the workforce. This approach can help to reduce tension and misunderstanding with respect to employer intentions.

Sarah Vokey is an employment lawyer at Rubin Thomlinson LLP. She supports employer and employee clients in all areas of employment law and also in human rights issues that arise in the workplace. Sarah brings a calm, thoughtful and results-oriented approach to complex legal problems while always considering the overall business strategies and needs of the organization and the values of the people involved.



WOMEN ARE MAKING IT BIG IN SMALL BUSINESS

It's not often that you hear of women getting the top jobs at Corporate Canada—the ones leading the company; the ones where they can influence and set direction. In March of 2011, Catalyst Inc. shared the dismal facts that of the Financial Post 500, only twenty-six women were currently in the role of CEO/Head of Company. If these figures leave you feeling a little time warped, you're not alone. I actually had to check the research date a couple of times to ensure I wasn't reading the March 1989 report! Being a woman who owns her own business, I am all too familiar with the barriers that women face and became quite interested in finding out more about this phenomenon. I discovered a great book by Lynn Harris called *Unwritten Rules* whose research reminded me of why many talented women do not stay within the corporate environment.

Let's be clear: women are not moving to the head of companies for reasons of education, commitment or talent. Women are opting out of corporate life for a variety of reasons, but the main ones seem to be focused within their desire to

1. influence corporate culture in a way that would support creativity and innovation;
2. achieve greater flexibility in their working conditions and hours;
3. create a more equitable work-life balance;
4. not waste time on bureaucratic treadmills.

In spite of the fact that the statistics for women executives are not representative of the number of women who are an active part of the workforce, I do find it satisfying to see that the number of employed women has been steadily growing and the number of self-employed women has been growing even faster.¹ We are all familiar with wage inequities and the dismal showing of women in top jobs, but then we see information about the number of women who own small businesses, solopreneurs and seniorpreneurs (women starting a business over the age of fifty-five). This seems to be where all the action is and these women are getting great traction. Now that we have examined the challenges women face in the corporate world, let's take a look at what women are doing in the area of small business. This is the exciting part of this story.

CIBC reports that small business ownership by women has been growing at 3.3% per year since 1989, which puts female business owners at a 60% faster growth rate than male business owners. If this pace is



maintained, women-run businesses will top the one-million mark by the end of the decade.² Now that is impressive.

Furthermore, women who are more educated and over the age of fifty-five are taking the small-business market by storm. British Columbia and Ontario are leading the charge on this and research indicates that they have survived market fluctuations.³ I am a proud member of this demographic, and I am thrilled to see that we are able to produce for ourselves, our communities—and it seems—our economy. Not bad!

I work with a number of women who have great ideas for new businesses or buy franchises to meet their personal and professional needs. We know it takes a great deal of ingenuity, dedication, and creativity to build and maintain a small business—not to mention addressing the financial, IT and marketing needs that go along with operating a growing business. Running a small business is not only personally rewarding, but also affords women the opportunity to learn skills and develop competencies—opportunities they would not receive in a more traditional corporate environment.

I recently spent a week with 240 glorious women and about ten e-men (our tongue-in-cheek nickname for the “evolved men” who joined us) at a coaching conference. The event was marketed for women—something I have never experienced. I had my corporate skeptic hat on and wondered if it was going to be too touchy-feely for me. While there were certainly activities that brought the

communities of women together, I have to say that I was thoroughly impressed by this conference. A very large group with 6- and 7-figure business owners who make 6 and 7 figures were on hand to provide advice and answer questions to those of us who asked. This group was inspiring, available and incredibly gracious. Every night after the full-day session, I would wander down to the beautiful patio and

So maybe small-business ownership is where we outshine our male counterparts.”

look for a group of women I hadn’t talked to before. I would introduce myself and ask if I could join the conversation. It is a toss-up as to whether I learned more from these informal conversations or the actual conference! We talked of the “how” of business, connected through our experiences, shared our triumphs and asked for feedback on our challenges. There wasn’t much touchy-feely stuff there, just amazing support and guidance that was genuine and valuable.

So maybe small-business ownership is where we outshine our male counterparts. The statistics on women in business look very different when we quantify the women in top roles within small and entrepreneurial business. If you have

been to a women’s networking event lately you will know what I mean. I belong to a couple of great groups that are made up of women business owners, and I am always energized by the meetings I go to, even when the thought of putting on makeup and going out after a long day doesn’t really appeal to me. I know that once I get there, I will meet like-minded ladies who will be receptive to new and innovative thinking.

I think our time has come and our mission is calling. Small-business ownership is worth the effort and sacrifice. We are making a real difference in our lives, the lives of those around us and our economy. Let’s go!

1 CIBC Small Business research paper on Small Business Canada

2 CIBC Small Business Report on Women entrepreneurs: Leading the Charge

3 CIBC Small Business Report : Canadian Small Business : Back in High Gear

Judy founded TEVO Consulting Inc. in 2007 to focus on leadership development and talent management. Judy’s background has been primarily in Human Resources where she spent the last ten years as an Executive. Combined with her strong strategic HR background she has combined Executive and Leadership Coaching to her winning formula. Judy can be reached at judy@tevoconsulting.ca.



LINDA HASENFRATZ
CEO, Linamar Corporation



ONE ON ONE

LINDA HASENFRATZ SHARES HER ADVICE FOR SUCCESS

Can you identify any challenges that you felt were specific to your situation as a woman in a leadership role?

The automotive industry is male dominated but I have found that gender isn't an advantage or disadvantage, it's just a reality. I'm so used to the industry dynamics and players that I don't feel uncomfortable; it's just a part of my job and I don't let it faze or intimidate me.

The recent recession has forced most Canadian companies to evolve their processes to meet a changed business environment. What changes did you face with your business and what resources informed your decision-making process regarding those changes?

Like all companies, Linamar was impacted by the recession and had to make some tough decisions. We developed a simple mantra to help us maintain focus on finding our way through the worst of the financial

crisis: cut costs, keep people motivated and pick up new business.

Operating on lean processes is a fundamental principle at Linamar. We do regular cost reviews and have been doing so for the last ten years. Finding new efficiencies is a function of being part of the auto industry; the increased competition forces companies to constantly find ways to become more efficient, so Linamar didn't have that much fat to trim to begin with. We were able to identify some areas, but we didn't have to completely redesign our operating model as our processes were already highly evolved and our business was fairly diversified. By the time the recession hit, we were ahead of the curve.

Women are responsible for starting 4 out of 5 new businesses in Canada, and yet their representation at the executive level and CEO level has declined since 2007. Does your personal

experience suggest any reasons for this seeming contradiction?

This is an excellent question: one that I don't really have an answer for, and one that prompts even more questions as you really begin to consider the issue.

There are more educated women working than ever before, so why does this not translate to executive representation? Is it a timing factor? Are the women too young?

And why aren't we seeing more growth with the businesses that entrepreneurs are launching? What is impeding their growth? Is it experience, or not being able to take it beyond a start up? Is it access to venture capital?

There are many questions that stem from this issue. We need to first understand the data before we can even begin to think of solving the problem.

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What are the qualities, that you feel from your own experience, that leaders need to develop in order to adapt to new market realities?

The most obvious thing that comes to my mind is the ability to embrace change. Few people are comfortable with change, but truly embracing it will enable you to respond to shifting market conditions and ensure the continued success of your organization.

This is especially true if you're a growing company—which is every company today. When you're in a period of growth, the dynamic within your company is constantly evolving; you have to grow your strategies, develop a competitive plan, and invest in new technology.

An effective leader also needs to demonstrate insight and business acumen. Businesses don't operate in a vacuum; you have to really understand what's going on in the market and anticipate how external events and conditions will impact your strategy and growth plans.

What business resources and associations do you feel provided value in your path towards a leadership role? Are there areas that you feel are lacking in terms of support for the development of female leaders in Canadian business?

I think we look to a variety of places for inspiration and knowledge when developing our own leadership style. The Young Presidents' Organization (YPO) is a tremendous resource for young leaders. It offers programs and seminars that teach attendees how to develop strategies, lead companies and become better communicators.

I also learn from the leaders I work with at Linamar. I have incredibly talented professionals on my team who motivate me every day and, of course, my father has been a constant source of inspiration throughout my career.

What can Canadian businesses do to provide more leadership opportunities for women?

I think that Canadian companies first need to understand their employee numbers. Are 50% of their employees women but only 10% in management, or is the level of representation in line with the number of women in the organization?

These numbers have to be representative and proportionate. Once areas of under-representation have been identified, the next step is to understand the reasons why. Are not enough women coming into a specific area of the company? What can be done to encourage more women to apply to those positions?

Mentorship programs are also important. Women professionals need access to formal or informal programs where they can learn leadership and business skills and benefit from the mistakes and successes of people who have been there.

You've held a variety of positions within Linamar ranging from machine operator to overseeing operations. How has this experience influenced the way you lead your company?