

Changing the game

FORUM PROVIDES UNIQUE APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP, MENTORING

BY NICOLE BRADFORD
Contributing Writer

For the panelists in the upcoming Women's Leadership Forum, the theme, "Changing the Game," evokes a meaning as unique as their experiences in the corporate world.

"I've done a lot of thinking about the huge changes taking place globally, and how people can make the most of those changes," said Amanda Setili, managing partner at Atlanta-based consulting firm **Setili & Associates LLC**. "When things are in a steady state, you can stay in a dead heat with your competitor for decades. When things change, you have the opportunity to notice before your competitor does and respond in a way that can create an advantage that lasts for years."

Setili's soon-to-be-released book, "The Agility Advantage," addresses advantages of being keenly aware of these market changes, which include globalization and heightened visibility for businesses.

"Consumers and business buyers are much more aware of your company. They can see what you do," she said.



Amanda Setili

Another change creating opportunities is the evolution of what she calls microsegments.

"Groups of like-minded people can find each other more easily now. Companies need to be aware of these, because they can create opportunities of growth for you. People get together on the Web, crossing boundaries. I might have more in common with someone in Asia than with my next door neighbor."

It is these big game changers that will dictate future success, she said.



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
FORUM

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STRATEGIES

Changing the game with leadership



The 16th Annual Women's Leadership Forum is all about changing the game for female leaders.

The theme of this year's event, held April 11 at Cobb Galleria Centre, is "Changing the Game," and our panel of women leaders will explain how they did it and what we all can do to continue the process.

The forum, presented by Atlanta Business Chronicle and Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business Department of Marketing, will include thought-provoking panel

discussions led by top women business professionals on the hottest topics.

The program includes morning keynote speaker Alicia Philipp, president of The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, and luncheon keynote speaker Donna Hyland, president and CEO of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

New this year to the program is the BizWomen's Mentoring Morning, which will allow some one-on-one time with some of metro Atlanta's top women business leaders in various industries.

— Lisa R. Schoolcraft, Strategies Editor

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"People need to get really good at noticing what's going on in the market, with customers and other players, and they need to be quick about making the decision to act on it."

Fast-moving changes prompted by technology are not only the game changer, according to panelist Marjorie Singley-Hall, but the biggest challenge for business leaders today. This goes especially for social media, she said.

"It is difficult and time consuming to achieve the right balance with LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and all of the many apps out there that can be used in a business," said Singley-Hall, CEO of Ampersand Associates Inc. "I know women business owners who launch a blog only to find that while it is a great idea, it can be controversial and also requires a lot of time and thought to be updated and managed effectively."

Singley-Hall will serve as the moderator for the entrepreneurial panel that addresses the topic, "Building Alliances That Can Move Your Business Forward."

"I really like this topic," she said. "It will be interesting to hear from everyone about what has worked for them and how they have developed those alliances."

For some, the game changer is the evolution of women's roles in the workplace.

"It's accepted now that we are going to be in the boardroom, in leadership meetings and juggling calls from the day care," said panelist Tricia Mulcare, director at Atlanta-based Homrich Berg and mom to two young children. "Changing the game means everybody being more flexible."

"Because we are the second wave of women in the workforce, we've had people plow the road for us, and it's up to us to continue the momentum and provide mentorship to the next generation. The 1950s homemaker is not where we are, but we are challenged with, 'How do we make this work? How do we make sure women behind us feel there are opportunities and you can be successful and do it all?'"

"One of the things I'm excited about is sharing the journey through the illusion and materiality of the glass ceiling, and how do you, especially as a female, navigate that glass ceiling," said panelist Pamela Stewart, vice president of sales - East Region for Atlanta-based



Pamela Stewart
of The Coca-Cola Co. believes some leadership barriers are self-imposed.

JOANN VITELLI

The Coca-Cola Co. "Some [barriers] are self-imposed. And some are real, yet penetrable."

Young women moving up the corporate ladder may or may not like the paths to success they are presented - and that is OK, said panelist Elizabeth Levy Ward, who is involved in leadership development with the American Marketing Association and OnBoard.

"For women, the big question is: What do you want?" said Ward, a marketing specialist and principal at Atlanta-based Thought Partners

Consulting. "It's not, 'What should you want,' but how do you honestly, in the privacy of your own head, figure out if

Elizabeth Levy Ward

▶ EXPERTS FROM VARIOUS FIELDS AT FORUM PANEL

- ▶ **Sheila Ryan**, state director, March of Dimes
- ▶ **Tricia Mulcare**, director, Homrich Berg
- ▶ **Kim Anderson**, CEO, Families First
- ▶ **Tjuan Dogan**, Ph.D., corporate citizenship and corporate affairs manager, IBM
- ▶ **Karen Bremer**, CEO, Georgia Restaurant Association
- ▶ **Jennifer Daniels**, Access GE customer growth leadership
- ▶ **Donna Buchanan**, CEO, United Way of Metro Atlanta
- ▶ **Emily Boyle**, advertising director, Atlanta Business Chronicle
- ▶ **Pamela Stewart**, vice president of sales, East Region, The Coca-Cola Co.
- ▶ **Betsy Griswold**, attorney, United Parcel Service Inc.
- ▶ **Amanda Setili**, managing partner, Setili & Associates LLC
- ▶ **Elizabeth Levy Ward**, principal, Thought Partners Consulting and director, Georgia State University Marketing Roundtable
- ▶ **Mary Moore**, CEO, Cook's Warehouse
- ▶ **Marlene Kelly**, president and CEO, Exhibits South
- ▶ **Tara Murphy**, CEO, 360 Media Inc.
- ▶ **Marjorie Singley-Hall**, CEO, Ampersand Associates Inc.

you want to keep climbing the corporate ladder? How do you want to spend your time, and how much do you want your own time vs. allowing it to belong to another entity?"

In some cases, she said, women are opting out of certain leadership roles.

"Maybe they don't like what you have to do or who you have to be to be in those positions," she said. "They decide they aren't going to order off that menu. I find that refreshing. They see themselves as being able to change things more."

For Ward, the "the biggest challenge for everyone in business today, but especially for women, is how to manage time and attention. Many women already live more complex lives than men, with more things to juggle. And many people I know also want their lives to be as rich as possible on all fronts - a fulfilling work life, family life and personal life, friends, hobbies, nonprofit work. There are so many more options and things vying for attention that it's challenging to make sure that our choices match our bigger priorities, and that we don't plan as if there were 30 hours in a day and eight days in a week."

While change is evident in some areas, women do face challenges in earning parity, said panelist Karen Bremer.

Currently the executive director of the Georgia Restaurant Association, Bremer has worked in management since the late 1970s. Lending institutions, too, tend to

see female entrepreneurs differently.

"For women, there are questions they wouldn't ask of a man," she said.

Her goal for the forum is an open and honest dialogue about what women can do for one another in the business world.

"You hear about women not being supportive of other

women in some businesses," she said. "I think everyone in a leadership role has a moral responsibility to assist the people they are developing. The goals you have are crafted by the work of the people you manage."

"There is a pathway to being a leader, and you don't get there by being sneaky and backhanded. You get there by being honest and approaching it with integrity," she said.

After working the first 10 years of her career with only male supervisors, Bremer is among those who developed a direct style of management - considered a male trait but also a valuable one.

"If women can embrace a more direct style of communication, they can take a successful male aspect and combine it with the nurturing aspect - and they can be a very effective leader," she said.



Karen Bremer