



WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
CIRCLE®

New Action Plan makes waves across B.C.

WLC proud to partner with WEB Alliance on landmark report released last month

BY JILL SCHNARR

Last month, the **Women's Leadership Circle** celebrated the release of a new milestone report, *Women as a Catalyst for Growth: A B.C. Action Plan*, which identifies key barriers and solutions to increasing the economic impact of women across the province.

The report was prepared by the **WEB Alliance**, following an unprecedented collaboration with **The Vancouver Board of Trade** last fall to present a full-day working forum that featured remarks from high-profile politicians such as B.C.'s Minister of Tourism and Small Business **Naomi Yamamoto**, B.C.'s Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training **Shirley Bond**, Canada's Minister of Labour and Minister for the Status of Women **Dr. Kellie Leitch**, and Premier of British Columbia **Christy Clark**.

During that sold-out event, attendees (including many members of the Women's Leadership Circle) participated in small facilitated group discussions. The feedback gathered during those discussions was then incorporated into the Action Plan that was released on May 6, 2015.

The power of collaboration

This Action Plan represents an incredible collaboration of people and organizations from across British Columbia who aim to grow the economic impact of women in this province.



Jill Schnarr, Chair, WLC

The plan outlines key steps that government, businesses, and individuals can take to enhance opportunities for women, beginning today. The impact comes from every organization and individual taking action now.

The Vancouver Board of Trade has been collaborating with the WEB Alliance over the last 18 months to help bring this report to fruition, and we're exceptionally proud to have played a role in moving the dial forward on this issue, which is essential for our continued economic prosperity.

During our October 2014 forum, more than 400 community leaders and influencers from across the province came together to generate ideas and actionable recommendations for change. The focus was on three areas: growing the number of women in senior leadership



Want to become a Change Champion? Download the Action Plan at boardoftrade.com.

positions, growing the number of women entrepreneurs, and growing the number of women in non-traditional jobs and emerging sectors.

Key recommendations from the report

As the report demonstrates, a number of common recommendations surfaced during our working forum. Those include the importance of promoting and supporting diversity policies and practices in organizations, the positive impact that champions can have on career advancement for women, the need to foster positive and affirming mindsets in women, the need for early education to sustain cultural change, and the importance of involving men in this conversation.

Below are five key recommendations that can be implemented

by government, industry, and individuals alike:

- 1) We need to advocate for diversity, which includes policies to support flexibility for all British Columbians towards better work-life effectiveness.
- 2) We need to champion women, to help them realize their full potential by identifying opportunities they may not see for themselves. In addition, we need to recognize and acknowledge these champions.
- 3) We need to foster positive and self-affirming mindsets among women, both as employees and as entrepreneurs.
- 4) We need to incorporate a diversity focus starting in early education, this is essential in order to sustain a cultural change.
- 5) We need to engage men as active participants and critical partners in this important action.

How to get involved

So, what's the next step?

You can start by downloading the Summary Report or the full Action Plan from the news section at boardoftrade.com. We encourage you to share this report with your friends and colleagues, in order to help advance the number of women in leadership positions.

Want to take it even further?

You can also become a Change Champion by taking the WLC's Leadership Challenge—a short five-minute survey available at boardoftrade.com, which will help you discover how you can apply report recommendations within your own company.

What's more, all survey participants will be entered to win free tickets to hear **RBC Chair Kathleen Taylor** speak at The Vancouver Board of Trade's 128th AGM on June 26!

And finally, be sure to save the date of Oct. 23, 2015, for the return of the next B.C. Economic Forum, presented by **Deloitte**. We're excited to announce the follow-up to this successful forum. Watch for more details to be rolled out in the coming months!

Jill Schnarr is Vice-President of Community Affairs at TELUS and Chair of The Vancouver Board of Trade's Women's Leadership Circle. For more information on the program, visit boardoftrade.com/WLC.

Snapshots from the Morning Leader speaker series



Event attendees look on during the May 27 Morning Leader panel discussion, which focused on the parallels between building a strong sports team and a strong business team. For more photos from this event, visit facebook.com/vancouverboardoftrade. **Photos by Tyson Jerry**



From left to right: Alex Trisoglio, Leadership Faculty and Coach, THINK School of Creative; Donna Wilson, SVP, People, LifeLabs Medical Laboratory Services; Janet Austin, CEO, YWCA Metro Vancouver; and Jim Murphy, Former Professional Baseball Player and Olympic Coach.



WLC Chair Jill Schnarr (left) is presented with an honorary Wendy McDonald Award by Vice-Chair Fiona Douglas-Crampton (right), in recognition of Schnarr's volunteerism and dedication to growing The Vancouver Board of Trade's Women's Leadership Circle program.