



## IN FOCUS: B.C. Economic Forum 2015

– Photos by Sara Borck Photography –



# Launching the Leadership Challenge

WLC initiative aims to increase the economic contribution of women in Greater Vancouver

BY KATERINA ANASTASIADIS

Over the past two years, **The Vancouver Board of Trade's Women's Leadership Circle (WLC)** has made promoting and advocating for women in their pursuit of senior leadership positions a top priority.

Great strides have been taken, including on the WLC's Call to Action to increase the number of women in leadership and board positions in Greater Vancouver.

Last fall, working in collaboration with the **WEB Alliance**, the WLC hosted the first B.C. Economic Forum.

The WLC's Call to Action informed both the forum's contents and its final report of key recommendations to industry, government and individuals. In addition, the WLC used the B.C. Economic Forum's key recommendations to develop its own



Katerina Anastasiadis

Leadership Challenge, which was launched in Spring 2015.

The Leadership Challenge was a questionnaire and best practices survey that gathered valuable insights and data on organizations and individuals and their promotion of women's leadership.

The WLC asked participants what they have been doing to grow the number of women in senior leadership, as entrepreneurs and in non-traditional jobs and emerging sectors.

According to the survey's results, here are the top three areas in which organizations and individuals are performing well:

### Organizations

- Offering flexible work practices to support work-life balance, family needs, and to increase work satisfaction.
- Developing champions, advisors and sponsors for women entrepreneurs.
- Integrating flexibility and respect into workplace culture, policies and practices.

### Individuals

- Taking up opportunities to challenge and re-frame ingrained

practices towards greater inclusion of women.

- Mentoring and championing young women.
- Being a leader in creating a respectful workplace.

The survey also identified the following top three areas for improvement:

### Organizations

- Having talent management systems, practices and policies to support a pipeline of women leaders and diversity in business.
- Providing funding to and investing in women-led ventures.
- Developing policies and practices to increase participation and inclusion of Aboriginal and immigrant women.

### Individuals

- Focusing personal investment and consumer power on

companies with diverse boards and senior leadership teams.

- Engaging with youth through local high schools to provide mentorship in learning about entrepreneurship/business.

• Speaking to elementary and secondary schools about personal experiences, career and opportunities in STEM and skilled trades.

The WLC is pleased to be re-launching a second round of our Leadership Challenge this year, on the heels of B.C. Economic Forum 2015, which was held on Oct. 23.

For more information on the WLC Leadership Challenge or how you can get involved, email [wlc@boardoftrade.com](mailto:wlc@boardoftrade.com) or visit [boardoftrade.com/wlc](http://boardoftrade.com/wlc).

*Katerina Anastasiadis is Director, Immigration and Government Relations, for the Vancouver International Maritime Centre. She is also Chair of the WLC's Policy Sub-Committee.*