

DIVERSITY | How recognition can promote gender parity**Board of Trade honours outstanding women with its annual Wendy McDonald Awards**

BY BRIDGITTE ANDERSON

Because it's 2015." It was a statement that grabbed headlines around the world last November, after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made history by appointing Canada's first gender-balanced cabinet. The move was the right one, for many reasons. Women make up half of the population and are responsible for a majority of consumer decisions. A study by DDI in 2014 showed companies with women in leadership do better financially.

But the fact that Trudeau's move attracted as much attention as it did suggests there is much more work to be done before we achieve gender parity in leadership and executive roles.

Despite recent progress, there is an under-representation of women in business leadership and on boards. According to a 2014 Catalyst study, B.C. has one of the worst records in the country when it comes to women on boards. Vancouver

fared no better. It ranked only fifth-best in terms of leadership opportunities for women, out of 20 metropolitan cities in Canada.

One way to encourage change is through recognition and acknowledgement of good work that is already being done to increase opportunities for women in the workplace. This month, the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade's second annual Wendy McDonald Awards will recognize outstanding women and champions of women in business.

Wendy McDonald was a leader on many levels and a role model for so many women. She was a force to be reckoned with in business, as CEO of BC Bearings Engineers Ltd., who balanced professional achievements while raising 10 children.

It is in this spirit that these awards were created. In the hope that through recognition, there will be even more outstanding women and champions of women actively working to promote gender parity in leadership roles.



Bridgitte Anderson, Vice Chair, Women's Leadership Circle

And parity is achievable. Edelman has created the Global Women's Executive Network (GWEN) and set a goal that by 2016, at least half of the

company's leadership positions will be held by women. In Canada, Edelman has achieved that goal and we are well on our way to do so globally.

The topic of women in leadership and executive roles is no longer a women's issue, it is a business issue.

With International Women's Day this month, it is time for us to move the conversation from "it's the right thing to do" to "it's a strategic business advantage." The topic of women in leadership and executive roles is no longer a women's issue, it is a business issue. At a time when business is looking for growth, women are an untapped resource and can help drive profits higher. **SB**

Bridgitte Anderson is General Manager of Edelman Vancouver and a Vice-Chair of the Women's Leadership Circle at the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade.

Meet our Wendy McDonald Award winners March 30 at a reception hosted by Global BC's Jill Krop. Tickets at boardoftrade.com/WLC.

**Emerging Business Opportunities with India**

Tuesday, March 15, 2016 | 11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, 900 West Georgia Street, Vancouver

**Vishnu Prakash**

High Commissioner of India to Canada

India is emerging. Set to be the most populous country by 2025, India presents a generational businesses opportunity. This growth is being accelerated by the government's Smart Cities Mission of urban renewal, providing significant opportunities for firms the world-over.

Join us for a discussion with the High Commissioner Prakash on the current situation in India, and how other firms have taken advantage of these opportunities.

Following his keynote presentation, Mr. Prakash will be joined in a panel discussion to delve deeper into how opportunities with India can benefit local businesses.

Event Partner:

boardoftrade.com/india

In partnership with:

THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LA CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DU CANADAWORLD TRADE CENTERS
ASSOCIATION**Rekindling the Relationship:
Japan-Canada Chambers Council**

Monday, March 21, 2016 | 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Fairmont Pacific Rim, 1038 Canada Place, Vancouver

As the world's third-largest market and a dominant player in regional supply chains, Japan is an essential part of Canada's turn to Asia. The Japan-Canada Chambers Council is bringing together more than 100 business leaders, policymakers and diplomats for one of the most significant bilateral business events in over a decade.

Presenting Sponsors:



Delegation Sponsors:



Event Partners:

boardoftrade.com