

# Session Title: Breaking Barriers in the C-Suite Narrative

## **Moderator:**

Renee Ure, COO & VP, Infrastructure Solution Group, Lenovo (Former)

## **Panelists**:

Hannah Testani, CEO, Intelligent Audit Ro Sequin, CEO, Good 360 Julia Bedanova, COO, Million Dollar Baby, *2024 SCWA Chair* Debi Gann, VP Business Development, Armada, *2023 SCWA Chair* Calvin Crosslin, VP Chief Diversity Officer, Lenovo Jayne Franchino, Senior Operations & Transformation Executive

## Abstract: Breaking Barriers in the C-Suite Narrative

In the evolving corporate landscape, attaining a position in the C-suite is not confined to gender considerations. The spotlight is shifting towards individuals who embody leadership, strategic thinking, and a proven ability to deliver tangible results. Emphasizing worthiness for the C-suite transcends gender dynamics, focusing instead on the universal qualities that set professionals apart in the competitive business world. Success in the executive realm is intricately tied to qualities such as vision, adaptability, and a commitment to driving meaningful change. By highlighting these attributes, we reshape the narrative, underscoring the broader qualifications that position individuals as formidable contenders for top leadership roles.

## **Key Takeaways:**

- 1. **Navigating Beyond Gender Norms for Universal Leadership:** Overcoming industryspecific challenges involves spotlighting leadership excellence beyond gender, with a strategic focus on establishing universal credibility in the workplace.
- 2. **Empowering Distinction** *and Visionary Leadership* in a Competitive Landscape: Empowerment lies in individuals distinguishing themselves within a competitive environment by redirecting focus towards proven abilities, irrespective of gender, fostering professional distinction. *A focus on fostering innovation, anticipating industry trends and driving transformation initiatives positions leaders for success, regardless of gender stereotypes.*
- 3. Soft Skills Universality in Effective Leadership or Shaping a New Leadership Narrative: Recognizing the universal significance of softer skills is essential for effective leadership, playing a pivotal role in navigating challenges, building credibility, and enhancing visibility across diverse professional contexts. *The discussion centers on*

qualities that transcend gender, providing a roadmap for aspiring leaders to navigate and succeed in a male-dominated environment, fostering an inclusive and diverse corporate culture.

4. Driving Meaningful Change and Adapting to Change - A Cornerstone of Executive Excellence: Leadership goes far beyond individual success and extends to the positive impact one can make on an organization and society. The ability to adapt to change in a rapidly changing landscape is a hallmark of successful C-Suite executives, highlighting the importance for both men and women aspiring to the highest echelons of leadership.