GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

Women Leaders Breaking Barriers

November 2024

SPECIAL EDITION

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ELIZABETH PERCY

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As the Co-founder and Chief Trainer of SMART INSPIRATION UAE TRAINING, **Elizabeth Percy** has been at the forefront of innovative personality development and behavioral skills training since 2019. The training methods incorporate cutting-edge genetic behavior analysis (RGB Analysis) alongside traditional training techniques, offering a scientifically grounded approach to personal and professional growth.

STRENGTH-BASED LEADERSHIP IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT: **MELDA CEBE'S** COACHING PHILOSOPHY

Melda Yasar Cebe is a distinguished leader with over 20 years of global executive experience across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

CECILIA D'CUNHA: PIONEERING BUSINESS LEADER TRANSFORMING THE UAE'S CORPORATE LANDSCAPE

Cecilia D'Cunha is a dynamic and influential business leader known for her substantial contributions to onshore/offshore incorporation and corporate compliance in Dubai and the UAE.

GLOBAL Leaders TODAY

From the Editor

Dear Readers,

It's with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose that we bring you our "Women Leaders Breaking Barriers 2024" issue, a celebration of the extraordinary women who are reshaping the world of business. This journey began humbly, with just three women leading major U.S. public companies in 1999. Today, we witness 52 inspiring women at the helm of Fortune 500 companies, each one paving the way for others to follow.

We are at an incredible inflection point. Women leaders around the globe are not only breaking glass ceilings—they're redefining leadership itself. These visionaries are rewriting the rules with bold ideas, unrelenting determination, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, forging a new blueprint for success that centers on inclusion, empathy, and resilience.

In this special issue, we bring you the stories of these pathfinders, exploring how they've navigated challenges, transformed their industries, and opened doors for those to come. Their successes are deeply inspiring, but even more so, they offer a glimpse into a future where leadership truly reflects the diverse world we live in.

And while we've made remarkable progress, the journey continues. Despite women making up over half of new professionals, only a fraction reach the executive suite. But with each trailblazer we celebrate today, that glass barrier becomes a little thinner, the path to the top a little clearer. The question is no longer about if women can lead—it's about how fast organizations can harness the unique strengths they bring to leadership.

Join us as we honor these remarkable women, not only for the ceilings they've shattered but for the structures they're rebuilding from the ground up. Their journeys light the way to a more balanced, vibrant, and prosperous future.

Warm regards,
Elena Arnaiz
Editor-in-Chief,
Global Leaders Today

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Written by contributing writer **Jennifer Eggers**
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Csilla Torma is a seasoned finance executive with nearly 30 years in telecommunication who recently served as Director of Finance (CFO) at Deutsche Telekom Global Carrier in Budapest. Csilla has built an impressive career marked by strategic leadership and a passion for talent development.

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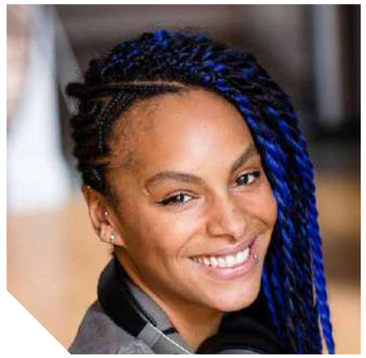
Dr. Debbie Stanford-Kristiansen is a distinguished leader in the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry with over 35 years of experience. Currently the General Manager of Exhibition World Bahrain, she has held prominent roles as CEO of Novo Cinemas and Vice President for PennWell in the Middle East and Asia.



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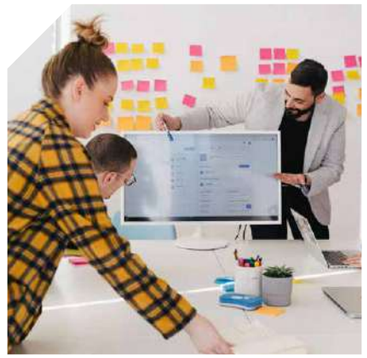
Written by contributing writer **Alexis Sikorsky**
As a founder, you have probably spent years, and often decades, building your business. It has been both a fulfilling and challenging process, but you're keen to preserve your legacy in the best way possible, so what happens now that you are considering your exit?



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Lucy Hedges is a prominent figure in the world of technology, journalism, and broadcast media. As the former Metro Tech Editor, presenter for the BBC Travel Show and BBC's The One Show, and Home Tech Columnist for House Beautiful Magazine, Lucy has established herself as a respected voice in the tech industry.

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BREAKING THE STATUS QUO: HOW DRIVING A CULTURE OF CURIOSITY DRIVES FINANCIAL SUCCESS
Written by contributing writer **Dr. Diane Hamilton**
In today's fast-paced business world, curiosity isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a must-have. As someone who works with organizations to improve financial outcomes, I've seen the magic that happens when curiosity takes precedence. Imagine a workplace where asking "Why?" and "What if?" is not just encouraged but celebrated.

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Women Leaders Breaking Barriers

Written by **Elena Arnaiz**

The face of corporate leadership is changing, and the numbers tell a powerful story of transformation. What started as a trickle in 1999, with just three women leading major U.S. public companies, has grown into a steady stream of female leadership reshaping the business landscape. As of 2023, 52 women head Fortune 500 companies – an all-time high that marks both significant progress and the distance yet to travel.

The statistical portrait of women in leadership reveals a complex picture of advancement and persistent challenges. While women comprise 58.4% of the American workforce, they hold only 35% of senior leadership positions. Women occupy 10.4% of Fortune 500 CEO positions at the top, with women of color representing less than 1% of these roles. The story extends beyond corporate boardrooms. In professional fields traditionally dominated by men, women are making steady inroads. Medical schools report 56.5% female enrollment, though women represent only 37% of practicing physicians. Similarly, while women make up 55.75% of first-year law students, they account for just 40% of practicing attorneys.

Perhaps the most compelling statistics come from performance data. Companies with women executives are 30% more likely to outperform their competitors, highlighting that gender diversity isn't merely about equality but business success. This performance advantage translates into tangible economic potential. Research indicates that achieving gender equality in business could boost GDP by 9% in the United States, 13% in Europe, and 16% in Japan.

The progress of women in leadership roles represents a significant shift from just two decades ago. In 2008, there were 10.1 million women-owned firms in the United States, with increasing numbers entering traditionally male-dominated sectors like technology and manufacturing. This growth continues today, though the pace of change varies across industries and leadership levels.

The most profitable Fortune 500 companies consistently show higher percentages of women directors, suggesting a correlation between gender diversity at the top and financial performance. Moreover, companies that actively promote and retain women employees are better positioned to tap into women's consumer spending power, estimated at $20 trillion globally.

While the current statistics show improvement from previous decades, they also highlight areas requiring attention. The jump from 35% of women in senior leadership to just 10.4% in CEO positions indicates a persistent bottleneck at the highest levels. The even smaller percentage of women of color in top positions points to intersectional challenges that require specific focus.

The numbers reveal both progress and potential. With women representing over half of new entrants in professional fields like medicine and law, the pipeline for future leadership is growing. The challenge lies in translating this educational and early-career progress into equivalent representation at senior levels.

In **"Women Leaders Breaking Barriers 2024,"** we honor these trailblazing women reshaping industries and redefining leadership across sectors—from Fortune 500 giants to innovative startups. Through their stories, we explore how they are breaking down barriers, setting bold new standards, and paving the way for a more inclusive and successful future. Join us in celebrating the vision, courage, and resilience of these leaders who aren't just breaking ceilings—they're building new paradigms of leadership that will inspire generations to come.

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Strength-Based Leadership in a Global Context: Melda Cebe's Coaching Philosophy

Melda Yasar Cebe is a distinguished leader with over 20 years of global executive experience across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Now a certified executive coach, she leverages her extensive background to help leaders tackle cross-cultural challenges and reach their full potential.

This interview delves into Melda's shift from corporate leadership to coaching, highlighting her strengths-based approach and diverse cultural insights. Through anecdotes and client success stories, she shows how her global experience shapes the next generation of leaders.

By Sherlyn Gomes

What inspired your transition from business leader to coach, and how has this experience shaped your coaching style?

For over twenty years, I have held leadership roles in which success went beyond achieving targets—it was about building teams, shaping the organization's future, and inspiring growth. Transitioning into coaching was a natural step for me.

As a woman leading across diverse regions—from Europe to the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—I often had to prove myself in ways my male counterparts did not. These experiences shape my coaching today. I empathize with those feeling overlooked or undervalued and strive to help them unlock their full potential.

Working across cultures has taught me the importance of adaptability and communication. Each region brought new challenges, and I use this global perspective to help leaders navigate cross-cultural complexities. My coaching is rooted in empathy, inclusivity, and real-world experience.

My active role in the business world sets my coaching apart, balancing fractional CXO roles, team coaching, and mentoring startups. This keeps me aligned with current trends, enabling me to offer practical, relevant guidance. I often reflect on how valuable a coach would have been early in my career, and now I'm privileged to provide that support to others.

> **My active role in the business world sets my coaching apart, balancing fractional CXO roles, team coaching, and mentoring startups. This keeps me aligned with current trends, enabling me to offer practical, relevant guidance.**

What is your core coaching philosophy? Can you share a success story?

As a Gallup-certified coach, I use the Gallup Strengths framework to help individuals focus on their innate talents. Research shows that those who leverage their strengths daily are six times more likely to be engaged at work and three times more satisfied with life. Reflecting on my career, I often wish I had focused on my strengths earlier rather than fixing weaknesses—it would have significantly impacted me.

Two of my key strengths are Input and Communication. My curiosity and love of learning allow me to deeply understand my client's challenges, while communication is more about listening than speaking to me. I practice active listening through a comprehensive lens, considering not just words but body language, emotions, and the context surrounding each situation. This approach allows me to translate insights into actionable strategies to empower my clients to take meaningful steps.

One of my most fulfilling coaching experiences was working with a young Asian female leader. She was navigating the challenges of a male-dominated industry and struggling with imposter syndrome. She doubted her abilities and felt undeserving of her position. We worked on dismantling her self-limiting beliefs and focusing on her strengths. Her exceptional ability to build relationships and think strategically had always been there, but she hadn't fully recognized its value.

By leveraging these strengths, we worked on enhancing her executive presence. As her confidence grew, she began to assert herself more in meetings, contributing her ideas with conviction. By the end of our coaching journey, she had transformed into a confident, self-assured leader, fully aware of her value and capable of commanding respect in a room of her peers. Witnessing her growth into her full potential was incredibly rewarding.

How do you help leaders adjust their styles for different cultures? Can you provide an example of this in action?

Leading across cultures is one of leadership's most challenging yet rewarding aspects. I take great pride in my global network, built on years of corporate friendships—so strong that I now have homes to stay in worldwide.

Having worked with individuals from over 35 countries, I've witnessed firsthand how cross-cultural dynamics can complicate even the best-laid plans. What works in one culture may fail in another despite good intentions.

I often use Erin Meyer's The Culture Map and Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions when coaching leaders on cultural adaptability. These frameworks shed light on how different cultures communicate and lead. For example, while European cultures often prefer direct communication, Middle Eastern cultures focus more on relationship-driven interactions. Navigating these differences is key to effective global leadership.

I once coached a European leader managing teams in the Middle East. His direct, task-oriented style, successful in Europe, didn't resonate in his new environment. In many Arab cultures, as Hofstede's framework shows, leadership emphasizes hierarchy and relationship-building, with decisions often made top-down.

Through coaching, we shifted his focus to building rapport before tackling tasks. This change strengthened his relationships, improved team dynamics, and led to better overall results.

What leadership trends do you envision, and what skills will be crucial?

By 2025, Generation Z will constitute about 27% of the global workforce, bringing expectations that starkly differ from those of previous generations. Leaders must adapt to these new expectations to attract and retain top talent.

Gallup research highlights that Gen Z values transparency, authenticity, and purpose in their work. They seek organizations that reflect their values, offer flexibility, and foster a true sense of belonging. Their expectations of leadership are also distinct; they desire leaders who are genuine, inclusive, and willing to co-create solutions rather than adhering to traditional top-down methods.

This shift demands that leaders develop skills in collaboration and co-creation. Competencies such as active listening, empathy, and purpose-driven leadership will be crucial. Leaders must create environments where employees feel valued and understood and see how their contributions align with the organization's vision.

At the same time, artificial intelligence (AI) will significantly enhance leadership effectiveness. By automating routine tasks, AI allows leaders to focus more on building relationships and nurturing their teams. McKinsey reports that AI can improve efficiency by up to 20%, giving leaders more time to invest in team development.

Ultimately, the future of leadership will require balancing authenticity, collaboration, and empathy with the smart use of AI. Leaders who master human and technological aspects will thrive in this evolving landscape.

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NURTURING BEHAVIORAL SKILLS FROM THE WOMB: ELIZABETH PERCY ON RGB ANALYSIS AND LIFELONG GROWTH

As the Co-founder and Chief Trainer of SMART INSPIRATION UAE TRAINING, Elizabeth Percy has been at the forefront of innovative personality development and behavioral skills training since 2019. The training methods incorporate cutting-edge genetic behavior analysis (RGB Analysis) alongside traditional training techniques, offering a scientifically grounded approach to personal and professional growth.

Written by **Elena Arnaiz**

The interview explores the transformative edge of RGB Analysis in understanding and nurturing individual potential, from prenatal influences to adult behavior. Elizabeth shares her center's unique approach to personalized learning, emphasizing the connection between diet, physical activity, and cognitive development with emotional well-being. She also shares insights on achieving success through overall well-being and her vision for education and personal growth in today's ever-evolving world.

How did your early experiences shape your professional and personal development?

Growing up with a mother in the medical profession and being influenced by the royal families of Kuwait, Doha, and the UAE profoundly shaped my approach to both personal and professional development.

My mother was a multifaceted individual, but above all, she was focused and courageous and viewed her work as a sacred calling. Her passion for working abroad led her to a position in the Kuwait palace, as I was born in Kuwait. I've inherited her strength and endurance and cultivated a pragmatic approach to navigating life's challenges more effectively.

I'm deeply appreciative of the royal families and my career in aviation, which I've had the privilege to work with in the GCC region in my roles in PR, Corporate Communications and Royal Protocol. I've come to cherish the principles of life I've encountered, internalizing them to the point where they've become an integral part of my character.

How has your expertise in genetic behavior analysis, journalism, corporate communications, and international protocol contributed to your holistic approach to training and development?

SMART INSPIRATION UAE TRAINING began as a career-focused center, thanks to our visionary founder Dr. Eng. Mohamed Ibrahim Al Ali. We set out to guide both children and adults, teaching essential life skills.

As we worked with our adult students, I found myself thinking about opportunities my mother never envisaged in her career aspirations in the medical field. This reflection, combined with my background in journalism, PR, and corporate communications, led me to think about how I could include her medical understanding of life in personality development.

In our second year, during my signature course, "Power of You, Power of Thought, and Power of Words," a student introduced us to RGB Analysis. Something clicked within our management team. We realized that if there was a scientific approach to understanding behavior, we needed to embrace it fully. We committed ourselves to learning it thoroughly and being an affiliate of the research organization that trained us in the science.

RGB Analysis offers deep insights into a person's communication style, career potential, emotional state, and learning preferences. By incorporating this comprehensive method, we're filling a crucial gap in education. We're moving beyond exam scores to help each learner become more self-aware and grow.

Our goal is simple but powerful: to nurture well-rounded individuals who are prepared for life's personal and professional challenges. We believe this approach leads to more meaningful and lasting growth for everyone who walks through our doors.

As the Co-founder and Chief Trainer of SMART INSPIRATION UAE TRAINING, what major milestone has stood out since its inception in 2019?

Work is my calling, and I approach it with utmost dedication. This means I'm available when needed, even if it's a 9:00 PM office visit request. My experience working with GCC royal families has taught me the importance of being responsive, especially in emergencies. Some situations demand immediate attention and decisions.

I personally oversee every consultation, which allows me to carefully assess the information provided and determine the

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Growing up with a mother in the medical profession and being influenced by the royal families of Kuwait, Doha, and the UAE profoundly shaped my approach to both personal and professional development.

most suitable course for each learner, whether child or adult. I don't believe in prescribing a course outline without first understanding the individual who will be trained.

Our greatest strength lies in offering individual training sessions. Our learners appreciate this approach as it creates a relaxed environment where they can learn and communicate openly. We maintain strict confidentiality for each individual. The transformation we witness in these one-on-one settings is remarkable and often surpasses what can be achieved in group classrooms.

Even when I do conduct group sessions, I limit them to up to six participants. My co-trainer and I meet with each student individually and then compare notes to determine the best way to impart knowledge, always keeping our finger on the pulse of the student's needs.

At SMART INSPIRATION UAE TRAINING Center, we, ourselves are in a constant state of learning. Our diverse learner profiles keep us on our toes. We address a holistic approach to learning to fill the gaps that children face in schools, youth encounters in colleges and universities, or professional experiences in workplaces across the UAE and worldwide.

Interestingly, more international students travel to us for learning than those in the United Arab Emirates. Recently, I conducted a two-week session for a 17-year-old student from the USA who flew to Dubai for preparation before starting university in Texas.

Our podcasts, which feature the experiences of our learners, have gained popularity on various podcast channels, further showcasing the impact of our unique approach to education and personal development.

Can you explain how your use of RGB analysis for personality and behavioral skills development works and its impact on your trainees?

RGB Analysis is a scientific approach that traces a child's behavior back to their time in the womb. The fetal brain develops between 9.5 and 19.5 weeks of gestation, coinciding with the formation of unique fingerprints. During this crucial period, the mother's behavior, diet, emotions, moods, overall well-being, nervous system regulation, and digestive health directly influence the fetus. These factors influence the developing child's behavior and personality from the womb.

At SMART INSPIRATION UAE TRAINING, we have integrated this science into our Personality Development and Behavioral Skills approach. We share this knowledge base with all our learners. The RGB Analysis report provides a comprehensive overview of an individual's skills and competencies, positive and negative behavior scales, mental fatigue levels, tendency towards or away from depression, leadership potential, suitable disciplines for study or career paths based on genetic behavioral analysis, and much more.

With this information, we can then initiate a transformative training schedule. We start by addressing nutritional needs or deficiencies and recommending physical activities to help turn innate abilities into tangible capabilities. We have found that behavior can be effectively wired when the diet is managed according to the report's guidelines.

Ultimately, optimizing our brain's performance for a commendable lifestyle requires understanding which foods are genetically beneficial for us and which should be avoided until our gut microbiome is balanced. This personalized approach allows us to tailor our programs to everyone's unique genetic and behavioral profile, leading to more evolved personal development.

What emerging skills and competencies are you prioritizing in your upcoming training programs?

At our center, we start by getting to know each person's unique potential. Using RGB Analysis helps us see which areas of intelligence someone is good at, which ones they could improve, and which might need more attention.

Based on what we learn, we create personalized learning plans that last anywhere from 6 months to 2 years. These plans focus on building behavioral skills and behavior depends on healthy eating and exercise - food differs from person to person according to the genetic composition of each person and the corresponding requirement.

After this first step, learners can choose from a variety of more in-depth programs. These cover topics like how to communicate better, personal growth, different ways of thinking and learning, art classes, writing workshops, professional etiquette, public speaking, understanding emotions, business communication, and creative writing.

We have also developed special programs for people who work with children. These include courses for preschool and schoolteachers, as well as for parents, to help them understand child behavior and development. We even have a course for journalists who write about children to make sure they understand how to report on kids' needs responsibly.

One of our newest and most popular courses examines how our eating affects our mental health. Psychobiotics is an exciting area that's getting much attention lately.

What advice would you give to young professionals who aspire to follow in your footsteps and make a meaningful impact in their careers?

For parents and adults alike, I encourage you to embrace a balanced lifestyle. Eat nutritious meals, stay active, and take time to connect with nature – try walking barefoot on grass or sand. Practice meditation to find inner calm. By nurturing your body and mind through healthy habits and self-reflection, you can enhance various aspects of your intelligence. This includes how you understand yourself and others, how you perceive the world around you, and how you approach problem-solving and creative tasks. We offer guidance to help you develop these skills, which can benefit both your personal life and career.

To expectant mothers, I recommend exploring self-awareness techniques, such as those found in RGB Analysis. These methods can help you process your emotions and thoughts, preparing you mentally and emotionally for motherhood. And to spouses, I say, remember that a supportive and positive environment plays a crucial role in your wife's pregnancy experience. Creating a nurturing atmosphere can contribute to the well-being of both the mother and your future child.

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CECILIA D'CUNHA: PIONEERING BUSINESS LEADER TRANSFORMING THE UAE'S CORPORATE LANDSCAPE

Written by **Sherlyn Gomes**

Cecilia D'Cunha is a dynamic and influential business leader known for her substantial contributions to onshore/offshore incorporation and corporate compliance in Dubai and the UAE. With over 30 years of experience and a wealth of international exposure from living in countries such as India, Hong Kong, and the UAE, Cecilia has earned a reputation as a trusted expert in business consulting, particularly in the area of UAE Free Zones and Offshore Incorporation services.

Cecilia's journey began in India, where she built a solid educational foundation, earning dual degrees in Commerce and Law. In addition, she became a Chartered Secretary, which deepened her knowledge of corporate governance and compliance. Her early career included training with multinational companies like Boots Pharmaceuticals, Herbertsons, and the former Damania Airlines, giving her experience across diverse industries.

After gaining valuable experience, Cecilia moved to Hong Kong to broaden her global perspective. There, she worked for a company specializing in offshore companies and trusts, which exposed her to working with jurisdictions worldwide, including the UK, British Virgin Islands, Mauritius, Seychelles, Anguilla, and Hong Kong. This exposure marked the beginning of her journey into the offshore world, where she learned about setting up companies in jurisdictions offering specific tax benefits, asset protection, and streamlined business regulations. These corporate structures allow businesses to operate internationally while minimizing their tax liabilities.

In 1998, Cecilia moved to the UAE to establish operations for her Hong Kong-based company. This transition came with numerous challenges, including obtaining licenses and visas. At the time, the UAE was emerging as a global business hub, attracting companies from around the world. However, many of these companies struggled to navigate the local legal and regulatory frameworks, particularly when it came to offshore entities. Cecilia saw this gap as an opportunity to introduce offshore incorporation—a relatively new concept in the UAE.

> "I call myself a 'Messenger to Manager' because I'm not afraid of doing simple tasks"

She recalls, "Apart from international offshore companies, the UAE saw the establishment of local offshore companies in Jebel Ali, Ras Al Khaimah, and Ajman. The Free Zones were also very attractive for new companies and entrepreneurs as they offered 100% foreign ownership and flexi office packages. These are great advantages for newcomers wanting to test the UAE waters. The process of company formation in the UAE started slowly but surely, evolving to meet the needs of clients who wanted to trade locally and needed residency visas and bank accounts."

In 2005, Cecilia left her job to start her own company, Zenesis Corporation, to provide boutique services in the corporate services sector. Reflecting on the early days of her venture, she says, "The start was challenging, especially as a woman and full-time mom. There were many barriers that led to inner conflicts. I often questioned whether I was doing enough for my family while also devoting sufficient time to my business, which was like another baby to me. Fortunately, the UAE provided an environment where I could excel in both spheres. With the support of my husband and my children, I was able to survive and then thrive."

As the UAE continued to evolve, so did the services offered by Zenesis Corporation. What began with offshore incorporation services expanded to include onshore services, bookkeeping, VAT registration, filing, corporate tax matters, and management consultancy. "I call myself a 'Messenger to Manager' because I'm not afraid of doing simple tasks," she shares. "This allows me to guide my clients with the experience and expertise I've gathered along the way. I believe that once you learn from the bottom up, you become independent and can weather any storm, having learned the basics." Today, Zenesis Corporation is considered one of the top boutique agencies in the UAE and the Middle East.

Cecilia believes that one of her key strengths as a business leader is her deep understanding of compliance. In today's globalized world, businesses must navigate a complex web of regulations that vary across jurisdictions. Cecilia's qualifications as a Chartered Secretary and her legal background give her a unique ability to manage these complexities. She has helped businesses ranging from small startups to large multinational corporations ensure compliance with both local UAE laws and international regulations, minimizing legal risks and ensuring smooth, efficient operations.

Cecilia is also known for her commitment to mentoring and empowering the next generation of business leaders. She is passionate about sharing knowledge and fostering a culture of continuous learning. She actively engages with young professionals aspiring to build careers in business consultancy and corporate compliance, guiding them as they navigate the complexities of the corporate world.

Through her pioneering efforts in business setup in the UAE and offshore incorporation globally, Cecilia has established herself as a prominent figure in the UAE's business community. Her legacy is one of innovation, leadership, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, making her a true trailblazer in the world of business.

Her advice to young women entrepreneurs is simple yet profound: "Yes, you can have it all! You can be a great mom, a great wife, and a great entrepreneur. This does not have to be an either/or choice. My advice is to embrace the power of planning, prioritize what truly matters, and surround yourself with a strong support system. Learn to give yourself grace—there will be days of challenges, but those moments will only strengthen you. Your dreams, ambitions, and love for your family are not in conflict; they are part of the beautiful tapestry of your life. But it takes passion, courage, and most of all, patience. It all works out in the end. It has for me."

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THE HUMAN ALGORITHM: CSILLA TORMA ON MERGING FINANCE, TECH, AND TALENT

Written by **Sherlyn Gomes**

Csilla Torma is a seasoned finance executive with nearly 30 years in telecommunication who recently served as Director of Finance (CFO) at Deutsche Telekom Global Carrier in Budapest. Csilla has built an impressive career marked by strategic leadership and a passion for talent development.

This interview offers an in-depth look at Csilla's professional journey; she shares insights that go beyond balance sheets, delving into the art of leadership in the digital age.

What inspired you to pursue this career path?

I was selected for specialized mathematics classes in primary and secondary school, challenging me beyond the standard curriculum.

My uncle was an accomplished mayor of a prominent county seat, and his talks of financial triumphs and leadership ignited my fascination with economics.

At the University of Economics, I immersed myself in various subjects: advanced mathematics, statistical analyses, financial models, and strategic business management. But what truly captivated me was our access to powerful computers — a rarity at the time.

Reflecting on your impressive career, what milestones stand out most?

My career began in 1994 at a joint venture between Deutsche Telekom and Ameritech International.

(now AT&T Teleholdings). For 14 years, I was involved in transforming Hungary's national telecom provider into a competitive market leader. This period was marked by extensive knowledge transfer and collaboration with the owners and the Hungarian top management. Together with the CEOs, I coordinated hundreds of American and German experts by overseeing high-level projects across all business functions, from technology, marketing, and sales to finance, HR, and legal affairs.

One of my key achievements was building the company's finance function from scratch. This involved developing accounting policies, establishing reliable relationships with financial institutions and regulatory bodies, implementing reporting systems, and ensuring the smooth operation of all financial processes. My efforts contributed significantly to bringing the company's vision to life, particularly during the challenging market liberalization and T-branding phase.

In 2003, I enabled a shift of focus to Deutsche Telekom's International Wholesale business expansion.

This initiative leveraged Hungary's nearshoring advantages by recruiting top-tier local and international talent. We developed global connectivity solutions, serving DT's international affiliates and external customers worldwide with a comprehensive portfolio that includes voice and mobile services, internet and content delivery, access and transport solutions, and innovative in-flight connectivity.

As the leader of the Finance and Shared Services Unit, I oversaw multiple functions, including Finance, HR, IT, Compliance, and Privacy. I am also committed to managing diverse teams, conducting external benchmarks, and developing new business models. Throughout this journey, I reported directly to the CEO and the Ownership Body while focusing on delivering exceptional end-to-end customer experiences.

> We had successfully replaced the lost workforce and put the integration back on track. This experience crystallized the importance of creating an environment of psychological safety to enable fearless execution during times of change.

Can you share a particularly tough obstacle you faced and how you navigated it?

Facing challenges, I often reflect on Einstein's wisdom: " You cannot solve a problem with the same mind that created it." This perspective helps me broaden my view, understand root causes, and develop innovative solutions.

I successfully negotiated the local frame agreement of the GTS acquisition. However, we faced an unexpected hurdle in the HR stream. Enticed by generous severance packages and gripped by uncertainty, key employees left. This threatened to derail the entire integration process.

Faced with this crisis, I sprang into action; I mobilized support from partners, tapping into their resources and -expertise. I established a specialized assessment center to evaluate potential recruits quickly and led by example, working extensive overtime alongside other leaders while implementing rapid onboarding and training plans.

Within just two weeks, we had successfully replaced the lost workforce and put the integration back on track. This experience crystallized the importance of creating an environment of psychological safety to enable fearless execution during times of change.

How do you cultivate talent development?

My approach to nurturing talent is:

- Having a Vision and Purpose
- Focusing on Skill Expansion
- Enhancing Reliable Employer Brand
- Creating a Personalized Approach
- Maintaining Open Communication
- Strategic Executive Engagement
- Leading by Example
- Talent Mobility
- Employee Recognition and Competitive Compensation
- Emphasis on Innovation Culture
- Promoting Physical and Mental Health for Longevity

I'm proud of supporting former trainees who now hold positions such as Head of Sales and Head of Sales Support in our global business. Additionally, through our International Talent Program, I've facilitated exchanges that have led to leadership roles, such as the Head of Solution Center Mobile/ Nordics.

What is the future of finance leadership, particularly within the telecommunications sector?

Finance leaders now drive business strategies alongside executives, expanding beyond traditional financial management. Their role now includes integrating sustainability practices and responsible risk management, adding complexity to traditional finance functions.

For telecom providers, the focus is on maximizing network potential and creating customer-centric solutions that ensure reliable, scalable services. This requires human-centered technology, digital ethics, security, data-driven decision-making, and predictive analytics.

Finance leaders must focus on long-term value creation, anticipate trends, and provide scenarios for smart business choices. Collaboration across departments and industries is vital. The key priorities include modernizing infrastructure, building partnerships, and adapting quickly to change without sacrificing accuracy.

What advice would you offer for those aspiring to follow in your footsteps and reach leadership financial roles?

My advice would be:

- Embrace continuous development and curiosity with a forward-thinking mindset to tackle challenges and drive meaningful change creatively, focus on impact over position, and consider the whole ecosystem.
- Build solid and trust-based relationships with executives and key talent, recognizing that crucial decisions are often made in your absence.
- Invest in cross-functional education to foster a common organizational language and communicate plans that inspire and offer actionable solutions.
- Engage in development programs that balance technical skills, empathy, leadership, and customer experience. Mentor, coach, and influence outcomes.
- Master data-driven tools AI and collaborate to envision and build a better future for all.

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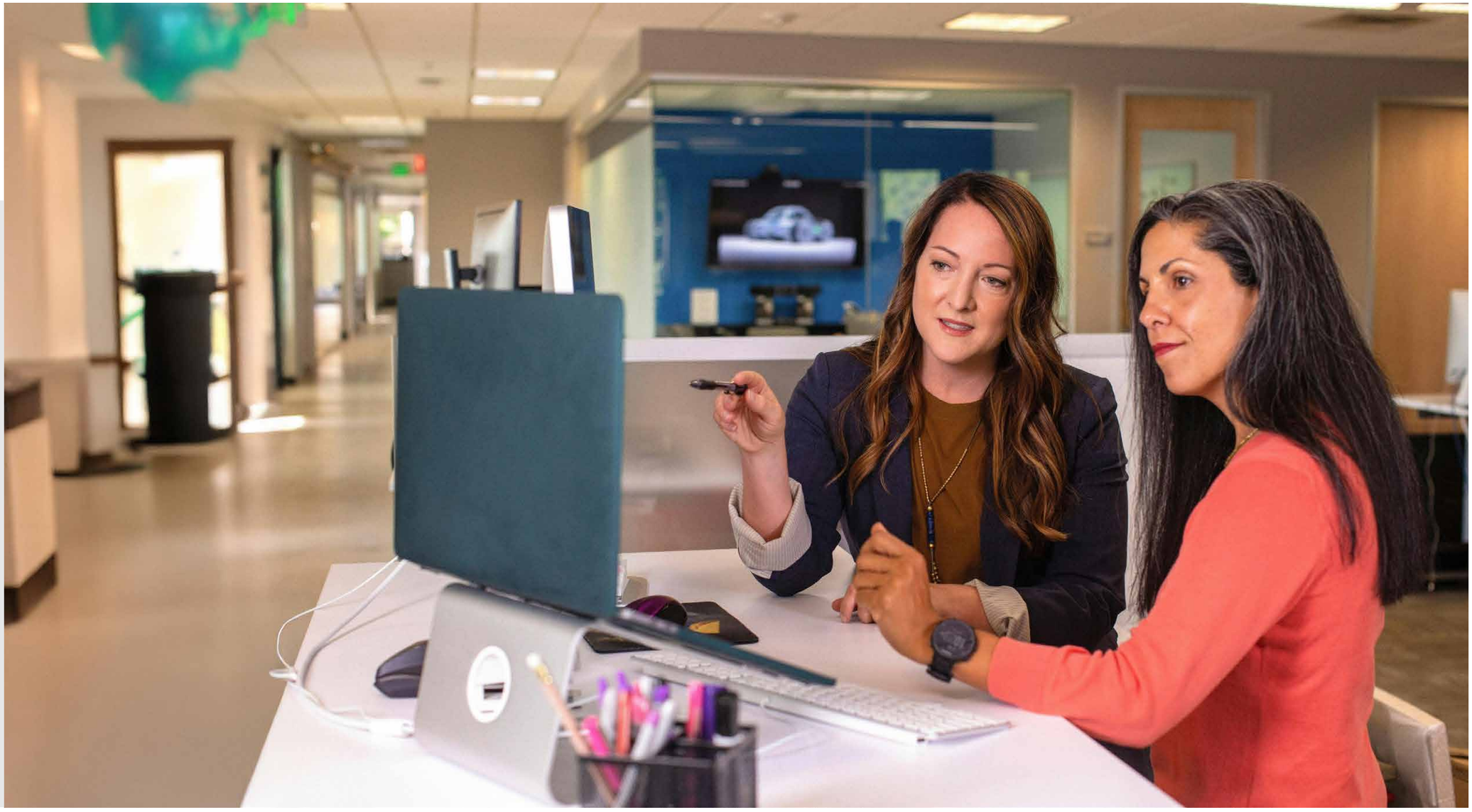
5 EXPECTATIONS OF THE C-SUITE

Written by contributing writer **Jennifer Eggers**

About the Author:

Jennifer Eggers is the President of LeaderShift Insights® Inc. and a C-level executive coach. She works with senior leaders and organizations dealing with disruptive change who want to increase their capacity to adapt so they can emerge stronger and more effective faster. With 30+ years of executive coaching experience in over half the 50 states and 11 countries, Jennifer has coached entire leadership teams as well as officers and directors of many Fortune 500 companies. She is known for repositioning personal brands, driving behavior change and increasing senior leader's ability to drive performance through others.



Are you running a company and wondering what expectations you can have for your team? Do you sometimes scratch your head and wonder if they really "get" it? Or do you ever feel like you're playing whack-a-mole trying to resolve issues that should never get to the CEO in the first place?

After spending 30 years working with and coaching C-Level leaders in large global companies, there are a few things I've observed that should be crystal clear expectations of that level and, particularly, that team. It's up to you, the CEO, to create these expectations and hold your team accountable to them.

Steward the Organization

No matter how good they are at their designated role or how they got there, the biggest differentiator of a senior leader must be that they are now a steward of the organization. As a steward, they must now understand the big picture, how the pieces come together and be able to use their knowledge to influence the success of the whole organization, even when it requires a sacrifice in their area. Stewards of the organization take a larger, strategic view and are able to act as business owners in influencing decisions. They are looking forward beyond the next quarter or sales cycle, planning for scenarios, and seeing around corners that others don't.

Align To a Shared Agenda

Members of any C-Suite team should be aligned with where the organization is going and how they plan to get there. This should not necessarily mean that they agree on everything, but what it does mean is that once decisions are made, this team acts and conveys a unified approach and makes decisions according to what they've aligned to. This is NOT an area where internal competition is helpful. To run an effective organization, a CEO must be able to trust that their team will do what they would do when they aren't in the room and that any decision that is made is moving the organization towards a collective goal. This includes investment decisions, resourcing, staffing, and all sorts of decisions that come up.

Collaborate

A C-Suite team should be collaborative, not siloed. If they are operating more in silos, it is likely because they rose through the ranks specializing in critical areas and have arrived at the C-Suite as experts. This is a case of 'what got you here won't get you there'. You likely need that specialized expertise, but at this level, you also need (and should expect) more. This team needs to be open to giving and receiving input from each other. If they aren't, there is simply no way they can fulfill their role as stewards of the organization. In order to see and influence the big picture, they've got to deeply understand each other's areas and not only be willing to, but actually good at, collaborating and working together. The power of collaboration is strong, even in pharmaceutical or technical companies where specialized expertise is critical.

Know the Numbers

It shouldn't have to be said, but well, it does. This team needs to understand the numbers. Many organizations have very

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complex business models. We've dealt with airlines where pricing is as much of an art as a science, and global freight companies where charging back the cost of fuel is incredibly complicated. Banking is another one. In consumer products, this has necessitated the addition of a revenue growth management function to drive focus to it. In all cases, C-Level leaders MUST understand the flow of money, costs, and expenses. It is not enough to have a great finance leader. This team should be expected to do what it takes to get out and learn what drives the business. If they can't do this, there is almost no way they can be effective in running the company.

Look Out For Each Other

In addition to collaborating and being stewards of the organization, this team should actively be trying to cover each other when things get tough. Every day is not everyone's day, and there will be times when someone's area comes up short. This can be detrimental when the organization has made commitments to the street. But if there is an expectation that the entire team will jump in to help cover the shortfall without even being asked, the organization stands a much better chance of getting through it with a just hiccup rather than a major downturn.

If your C-Level team is costing you time, if you're involved in things that shouldn't rise to your attention, or if your team could just generally perform better as stewards of the organization, there is room for a shift that will drive exponential value and free you up to make a more meaningful contribution.

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SHAPING BAHRAIN'S EVENTS LANDSCAPE: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. DEBBIE STANFORD-KRISTIANSEN

Written by **Sherlyn Gomes**

Dr. Debbie Stanford-Kristiansen is a distinguished leader in the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) industry with over 35 years of experience. Currently the General Manager of Exhibition World Bahrain, she has held prominent roles as CEO of Novo Cinemas and Vice President for PennWell in the Middle East and Asia.

In this interview, Dr. Stanford-Kristiansen shares insights from her remarkable career, currently shaping Bahrain's events landscape. She reveals how she leads diverse teams across cultures and what drives her success in the dynamic world of global events.

How did you discover your passion for the MICE industry and event management?

My journey in the MICE industry and event management has been an exhilarating adventure, taking me around the world countless times. It all began in tourism, but I quickly became captivated by the fast-paced world of business tourism, events, and exhibitions. I still remember those early days working with my first managing director, Paul Flacket. He saw potential in me that I hadn't recognized yet and offered me opportunities that shaped my career.

One of my most cherished memories is from the major tourism exhibitions we organized in Geneva and Frankfurt. Our chairman would always stand at the bottom of the stairs on the final day, personally thanking everyone as they left. Those small but meaningful gestures have stayed with me throughout my career.

The MICE industry has the unique power to unite people and fuel economic growth. There's an indescribable satisfaction in witnessing an event come to life—watching months of planning unfold into a vibrant, buzzing reality. I've always believed in giving my all to whatever I do, and this industry demands just that kind of passion. My guiding principle has always been: "Whatever you do, do it with passion, or don't do it at all." That mindset has served me well in this dynamic and ever-evolving field.

Can you share some of your career's most significant milestones or achievements?

One of my most cherished milestones was helping establish the Bahrain Exhibition and Convention Authority. I still remember the timing of that opportunity—I received the call while I was in the hospital, about to give birth to my son! It was a pivotal moment, not just professionally but personally. Building the Authority wasn't merely about the job; it was about giving

> **Whatever you do, do it with passion, or don't do it at all.**

my children the chance to grow up in a multicultural environment. And Bahrain didn't disappoint—those eight and a half years were truly fulfilling.

Then came my time as CEO of Novo Cinemas. That experience was a whirlwind! I gave myself just six months to learn an entirely new industry language. It felt like being back in school, only this time with the responsibility of leading a company. But we did it, rebranded, and expanded, and before I knew it, we had 17 locations across four countries: Qatar, UA, Bahrain, and Oman.

But what truly fills me with pride isn't just the business successes; it's the team I built. Thirty different nationalities working together—that's the real magic. Watching people grow and helping them believe in themselves has been the most rewarding part of my journey.

As General Manager at Exhibition World Bahrain, I've come full circle. I'm back in the MICE industry, this time leading a venue positioning Bahrain as a premier destination for global events, which has been both exciting and rewarding.

How do you approach cross-cultural management to ensure effective collaboration and success?

Cross-cultural management has been a defining aspect of my career, shaped by my experience with diverse teams across various countries. My approach is grounded in cultural sensitivity and open communication. Understanding and respecting cultural nuances is essential for building trust and effective collaboration.

I view cultural diversity as a major asset, using varied viewpoints to drive innovation and problem-solving. We develop more comprehensive strategies by building inclusive teams and ensuring a balance of perspectives. Adaptability is key; I adjust my leadership style to fit cultural contexts while maintaining core principles, which might involve modifying communication styles or decision-making processes.

I actively educate myself and encourage my team to do the same, fostering mutual respect and reducing misunderstandings. While respecting cultural differences, I ensure the team is united by common objectives and a shared vision, bridging cultural gaps and aligning toward shared goals.

How do you contribute to your community and make a positive impact?

Making a positive impact in the community has always been a driving force in my life. It's not just about achieving business success; it's about creating a ripple effect of positivity that reaches far beyond the boardroom.

Advancing gender diversity and inclusion, especially advocating for women in leadership, is a cause close to my heart. My experience in the Middle East has been eye-opening in this regard. Contrary to some misconceptions, I have found more opportunities as a woman here than I did in the UK. I've witnessed so many talented young women in this region excelling as entrepreneurs or in multinational corporations.

Through my speaking engagements and initiatives, I aim to inspire others and challenge preconceived notions about women in business, particularly in this part of the world.

What advice would you give to budding leaders looking to enter the industry?

I advise aspiring leaders entering the MICE and event management industry to cultivate a genuine passion for your work. Success takes time. Be patient, persistent, and confident in yourself. You can achieve remarkable things in this exciting field with passion, dedication, and a commitment to growth. Embrace every opportunity, learn from each experience, and remember the impact you can make by bringing people together and creating unforgettable experiences.

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BREAKING THROUGH THE DIGITAL NOISE: A CONVERSATION WITH DR. NIMRITA S. BASSI

Written by **Elena Arnaiz**

Dr. Nimrita S. Bassi leads Marketing Essentials Lab, a B2B marketing agency specializing in social media and content marketing. Her academic background includes a Ph.D. from the University of Exeter, where she studied Online Customer Experience.

In this candid interview, Dr Bassi shares key moments that drew her to B2B marketing and the social media industry and the story behind founding Marketing Essentials Lab. She discusses her unique approach to making B2B marketing more relatable and engaging, drawing from her experiences with well-known brands.

Can you share a key moment that sparked your journey into B2B marketing and social media?

It all started with a phone call back when I lived in India. A friend convinced me to join Facebook, and as I browsed, I noticed how quickly people scrolled through their feeds, barely pausing. This observation became the central focus of my doctoral research at the University of Exeter, where I majored in Online Customer Experience. I saw firsthand how businesses struggled to grab users' attention in those fleeting moments.

I was driven by the challenge of helping brands tell their stories in those precious seconds. In today's digital age, it's not enough to simply be present online—it's about creating moments that linger in people's minds long after they scroll past. It's about crafting stories and experiences that resonate on a human level, even in the fast-paced world of B2B marketing.

This realization pushed me to dive deeper into the psychology of digital interaction. I began identifying patterns in how people engaged with content, what made them stop scrolling, and what caught their attention.

What drove you to establish Marketing Essentials Lab?

I had the idea one evening while sitting on my couch. I had been observing how B2B companies were struggling to connect with their audiences online. Within ten minutes, I had the name Marketing Essentials Lab, and soon after, I built a simple five-page website. I was 30, still completing my PhD, but I knew there was a pressing need for change in how businesses communicate online.

I wanted to create something different from the typical agency model. Rather than being just another service provider; I envisioned a partner who could truly understand and extend a company's internal team. Today, after delivering over 100,000 social media messages and 2,000 blogs, we work with remarkable brands like Amazon Business, CitizenM, and Tata Steel. Each collaboration reinforces our original mission - helping businesses forge genuine connections in the digital space.

Your focus on 'humanizing' B2B marketing is intriguing. How does this work in practice?

There's a misconception that B2B communication has to be strictly formal and impersonal. But at the heart of every business interaction is a person making decisions—whether for steel beams or software solutions.

At Marketing Essentials Lab, we have devised a three-step methodology to fill this gap. We spend two hours researching a client's social media strategy understanding their online presence, business goals, corporate culture, and future vision. After that, we diagnose their target audience—exposing aspects of demographics, motivations, pain points, and aspirations.

Then comes the curation of bespoke content across all platforms that makes each brand stand out with its distinctive voice. Whether thought leadership articles, infographics, or short video pieces, we believe content should speak to the audience where they are most active.

Finally, we execute a strategy month over month to push engagement and reach the next level; most importantly, we publish content, engage with the audience, and continually adapt our approach based on data in a very agile and customer-centric approach.

Beyond your work, what causes are you passionate about?

Beyond the world of B2B marketing, I'm deeply passionate about giving back to the community. Growing up in India, the value of giving back was instilled in me from a young age, and I've carried it with me throughout my life and into my business practices.

One of the causes I am very passionate about is education, particularly for women, minorities, and those from low-income backgrounds. Education provides a powerful resource through which transformational life changes can be made- where one can create a future, not just for themselves but for their family as well. This belief drives our commitment at Marketing Essentials Lab to sponsor the education of six girls in India annually.

Over the past five years, we have actively supported various causes, such as disaster relief efforts like the Izmir Earthquake Relief Fund and Pakistan Floods Appeal and healthcare initiatives through NHS Charities Together and Feed NHS. We have also donated to humanitarian aid organizations such as British Ukrainian Aid, the British Red Cross, and UNICEF. I believe that as business leaders, we have a responsibility to protect and preserve our planet for future generations.

What emerging trends or technologies do you see shaping the future of B2B marketing?

One major trend shaping B2B marketing is the rising importance of executive presence. LinkedIn research shows that 56% of professionals consider an executive's social media presence when making decisions, and 66% are more likely to endorse a company they follow online. At Marketing Essentials Lab, we're responding by creating executive programs that focus on authentic thought leadership and engagement.

There's a misconception that B2B communication has to be strictly formal and impersonal. But at the heart of every business interaction is a person making decisions—whether for steel beams or software solutions.

Another shift is in how B2B brands use social media. The pandemic has pushed digital commerce forward, making brand-building essential. The future of B2B marketing is about striking the right balance between professional expertise and authentic human connection. It's no longer just about what brands say, but how they say it. The ability to communicate with authority and genuine relatability will truly make brands stand out.

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THE FOUR KEY ELEMENTS TO **GROW AND GUIDE YOUR COMPANY TO A SUCCESSFUL EXIT**

Written by contributing writer **Alexis Sikorsky**

About the Author:

An entrepreneur since the age of 15, **Alexis Sikorsky** started a software development company called New Access in Switzerland in the year 2000. Twenty years later, he sold the company to a PE firm for a nine-figure sum and set up Alex Sikorsky Consulting Ltd, enabling SMEs to build their business and develop effective growth strategies leading to a PE exit. He has now distilled decades of insights into his new book Cashing Out to equip and empower entrepreneurs through the PE process.

As a founder, you have probably spent years, and often decades, building your business. It has been both a fulfilling and challenging process, but you're keen to preserve your legacy in the best way possible, so what happens now that you are considering your exit?

The prospect of exiting your business can create a whole host of emotions. From excitement for what the next chapter might hold, to fear of letting go and anxiety about what the exit process might entail, these are all common feelings.

To manage these emotions, it is essential you have a clear exit plan in place and the earlier you define this plan the better. There are four key elements which are encompassed by the APEX strategy; assessing your company, planning the growth, executing the plan and subsequently exiting. In this article I will cover each one in turn to help you set yourself up for success.

Company assessment

To be able to move forward, you have to first understand your current position - What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? And what is your plan for managing these weaknesses in particular?

There are a number of different aspects you should consider. Firstly, analyse the type of business you have and the uniqueness of what you do. If there are many others doing exactly the same thing it might be more challenging to secure a high-yield exit, so take time to understand your key differentiators. Asking for client feedback can help you to ascertain what makes you different. NPS and satisfaction surveys will also help you celebrate the wins and understand what it is that you need to do to improve so you can increase the value of your business when you do decide to sell.

If you're looking to a Private Equity exit in particular, knowing your numbers is essential. What is the month-to-month performance? Annual recurring revenue or non-recurring revenue? These numbers will be a key contributing factor to what investors offer you.

Furthermore, reflect on the effectiveness of your team and whether they are in the right positions to maximise their strengths. If not, you may want to shift your team or recruit others to plug any existing gaps so you have a full A-Team prepared for the exit process.

Growth plans

After the strengths and weaknesses analysis is complete, you will have a clearer idea on your key areas of focus pre-exit. Perhaps you are looking for ways to increase current client spend, therefore encouraging upsells and cross sells can capitalise on and build those positive existing client relationships.

You could use your client satisfaction surveys as an opportunity to understand further services or products they would like to see from you and build these into your offering. Once this has been established, it could be a key driver for new clients also. Unexpected downturns can hit hard, so its important to have client diversification.

Your new client acquisition strategy could also include market expansion,

perhaps internationally. Initial market research is essential to understand if foreign markets would purchase from you as opposed to local options. It is also mission-critical to understand any legal or people requirements for that territory. When you are planning growth before exit, you do not want to have recent failed expansions due to lack of due diligence of operational hurdles.

Making the growth happen

How you make that growth happen depends on your individual business. Your timeline will also be individual, but be wary of making seven to ten year plans because you never know what internal and external forces could impact your business during this period. Instead, focus on two to five year time frames.

You might opt to try and grow organically, drawing on cross sell and upsell opportunities you have identified, for example, but often this relies on having impressive sales people. Checking the hard numbers is essential to ascertaining whether this strategy is working. It's great to have lots of interested clients, but if they are not converting then you may need to reevaluate the process.

Another option is growth through acquisitions. By purchasing complementary companies, you can expand into new geographical locations, or might even get the option to acquire a competitor. If this is your path of choice, work closely with specialised lawyers and experts who can help you navigate the process.

Execute the exit

There are a number of factors to consider when preparing your exit plan. On a business level, you will need to know the current value of your business in comparison to the number you had in mind. This might be based on your EBITDA with an added multiple, which is dependent on a number of factors including industry, size and growth. If this is not what you desire, how will you get there and how much time do you have to reach your desired number. The number you need your business to be might be dependent on your end goal. Knowing what you are personally aiming for post-exit gives you the motivation to reach that goal.

Even if one buyer is proposing you a big number straight away, I would encourage you to do your own due diligence and see who else might be interested. Who has this firm worked with previously? Are you able to secure references? Also clearly understand the terms of sale, such as what might be expected of you post-sale and how the deal will treat your key players and wider team.

When thinking about Private Equity sales in particular, if in the terms of sale you are only selling a percentage of your business then find out who the shareholders will be - do they have key industry knowledge that will unlock new opportunities for your business?

Conclusion

Building, scaling and exiting your business is certainly not an easy process, both practically and emotionally, but it can generate a plethora of exciting opportunities for you and your business. Start by doing a full company assessment, planning your growth trajectory, execute this effectively and prepare for your exit. If private equity is your desired exit route, taking a PE Readiness quiz can help you to understand your current position and prepare effectively. When you have invested so much time, energy and money into your business, it is important you put ample preparation into your exit plan also.

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ADAPTING TO THE TECH TSUNAMI: LUCY HEDGES ON STAYING RELEVANT IN MEDIA

Written by Sherlyn Gomes

The pinnacle of my journey at this point was perhaps the surreal experience of appearing on national television as the resident gadget expert on BBC Two's Something for the Weekend, amongst several others, bringing tech discussions and my tech-savvy insights to millions of viewers and into living rooms across the country.

Lucy Hedges is a prominent figure in the world of technology, journalism, and broadcast media. As the former Metro Tech Editor, presenter for the BBC Travel Show and BBC's The One Show, and Home Tech Columnist for House Beautiful Magazine, Lucy has established herself as a respected voice in the tech industry. Known for her engaging personality and deep knowledge of gadgets, the latest innovations in tech and emerging technologies, she has become a familiar face in the UK and international tech scene, as well as on national television.

In this interview, Lucy shares her compelling insights into the future of tech journalism, exploring the challenges and opportunities brought by emerging technologies like AI and blockchain. Her perspectives on staying relevant in an ever-evolving media landscape offer invaluable guidance for aspiring journalists and tech enthusiasts.

How did you discover your passion for technology and journalism?

From a young age, I've always dreamed of being a writer. I was the kid with my head buried in books and constantly crafting short stories. After university, I took a chance at an opportunity with lifestyle magazine, EMMA (Ethnic Multicultural Media Academy), where I worked for £5 a day, which barely covered my travel, but I was determined to get my foot in the door as a journalist and gain the experience I needed to move forward with a career in this field. During this time, I learned the digital and journalistic skills that continue to serve me well today.

Around the same time, I also had the chance to work part-time with an established journalist who regularly wrote for national newsapers like the Daily star, the Sun and the Daily Mail. His mentorship helped me secure a foothold in the industry, as well as contribute to his project, toyology.co.uk, writing about the latest battery-operated toys and robots. With this growing experience, I landed my first formal role as an editorial assistant at Shiny Shiny, marking the start of my journey into technology journalism.

What are some of the significant milestones and turning points in your journey?

A significant leap came when I joined Stuff magazine as their multimedia editor after Shiny Shiny, expanding my expertise and industry recognition, managing other journalists on the team, and creating a much-watched video section showcasing the latest gadget reviews and news. The pinnacle of my journey at this point was perhaps the surreal experience of appearing on national television as the resident gadget expert on BBC Two's Something for the Weekend, amongst several others, bringing tech discussions and my tech-savvy insights to millions of viewers and into living rooms across the country. Suddenly, I found myself not just writing about technology, but becoming the voice of tech for a massive audience, which included a weekly segment on BBC 6 Music with Lauren Laverne, to delve into the latest in technology, gadgets and news in order to offer a fresh perspective on the ever-evolving world of tech, blending informative commentary with lively discussion.

It was an unexpected setback—being made redundant at Stuff magazine —that ultimately pushed me to new heights, though. This challenge led to what I consider a career-defining moment: becoming the technology editor at Metro for an audience of 3.4 million readers – a role that I remained in for eight years, until I was unfortunately made redundant.

As a self-confessed side hustler, I have continued to present videos, host podcasts for the likes of Canon and Unilever, and step onto stages to present at major tech conferences all over the world for some of the biggest brands, including Google, Adobe, Sony, Samsung, LG, intel, Polestar, Shutterstock, Curry's and Ernst & Young, while feeling the rush of engaging directly with industry leaders and enthusiasts alike. Most recently, I had the pleasure of interviewing Lewis Hamilton on behalf of IWC Schaffhausen to talk all things watches and Formula 1.

Each new role - presenter, host, TV personality - has added a new dimension to my professional identity, allowing me to connect with audiences in ways I never imagined. It's been a journey of constant reinvention, pushing me out of my comfort zone and into the spotlight of the tech world.

With the rise of new media formats, how do you innovate storytelling techniques to keep your audience engaged and informed?

With the diverse array of new media formats available today, I continuously innovate my storytelling techniques to engage and inform my audience effectively. The shift away from a one-size-fits-all approach means that journalism can now be tailored to various platforms, each with its unique strengths and targeted audiences.

In technology journalism, where topics quickly become overwhelming or tedious, I focus on distilling complex subjects into clear, engaging formats. I break down long, detailed paragraphs of information into engaging, digestible formats, whether through written articles, videos, or live presentations. I also leverage social media to promote content and interact with readers and audiences, address their questions, and provide extra insights, making technology accessible and intriguing for an ever broader audience.

How do you manage the demands of a high-profile career while maintaining a work-life balance, especially in such a fast-paced industry?

Balancing a high-profile career with my personal life in this fast-paced industry is a constant challenge, but I've found it's absolutely crucial for long-term success and well-being. I make a conscious effort to carve out quality time with friends and family, often over dinner, drinks and trips abroad. I'm fortunate to have people in my life who are equally ambitious and driven, and their support has been a significant source of positive reinforcement, pushing me to strive for more in my career.

Travel is another key component of my balance strategy. I prioritize getting out of the UK as much as possible, whether it's a weekend city break or a longer adventure. These experiences often spark creativity and ideas that benefit my career in unexpected ways. I'm also a firm believer in the importance of physical health, which is why I've adopted what I playfully call my "gym followed by gin" approach. It's about striking that sweet spot between staying active and allowing time for relaxation and enjoyment.

What do you believe are the key trends and challenges that tech journalists will face in the next five years, and how can they stay relevant in an ever-evolving landscape?

In the coming years, tech journalists will face the challenge of keeping pace with rapid technological advancements, particularly in AI and machine learning, Extended Reality (XR), cybersecurity, blockchain, automotive and sustainable tech. Maintaining expertise across a broad array of technologies will be crucial, necessitating continuous self-education and specialization, while retaining a comprehensive understanding of the tech landscape.

The convergence of technology within sectors like healthcare, IoT, finance, and environmental science will require journalists to develop interdisciplinary knowledge to cover these intersections effectively. Additionally, while AI presents opportunities in content creation, journalists must balance leveraging these tools, while emphasizing the irreplaceable human elements of storytelling and analysis.

With the rise of misinformation, tech journalists will play a vital role in fact-checking and providing reliable information about emerging technologies and their impacts. To remain relevant, journalists should hone strong analytical skills, embrace a curious and adaptable mindset, and cultivate a distinctive and trustworthy voice that stands out amidst the deluge of tech news.

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MEDHA TAWDE'S APPROACH TO MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE AND PURPOSE-DRIVEN BRAND BUILDING

Written by **Alexis Miller**

With over two decades of experience shaping brands and driving growth, **Medha Tawde** stands at the forefront of marketing innovation. As the India Marketing and Business Development Head at KONE Elevators, she leads strategic initiatives to elevate the brand's presence and market share in the region. A passionate DEI advocate, Tawde brings a unique perspective to her role, integrating these principles into her marketing strategies.

In this exclusive interview, Tawde shares her journey, from her initial attraction to the field to the pivotal moments that shaped her career; she shares insights on digital transformation, the integration of DEI principles in marketing, and her vision for the future of the industry.

Could you share with us what initially drew you to marketing and business development?

The profound impact of marketing on a business has always fascinated me. Marketing is not merely a function; it forms the backbone of a sustainable and profitable company. It is a dynamic and ever-changing field where trends shift constantly, offering fresh challenges and opportunities each day. Navigating the evolving preferences of consumers, creating winning value propositions, and selling them effectively requires a perfect blend of creativity and strategic thinking.

What excites me most is understanding what drives consumers and crafting value propositions that resonate with them. It's about delving deep into people's motivations and connecting with them on a personal level. Marketing also allows me to tap into my creative side, bringing disruptive ideas to life and building purposeful brands.

Building brands is not just a job for me; it's a passion. The thrill of influencing consumer behavior and seeing the tangible results of a well-executed marketing campaign keeps me motivated and inspired.

Could you highlight a few pivotal moments or projects that were particularly transformative for your career?

Early in my marketing career, I had the opportunity to be part of a core team responsible for repositioning an existing product for a new market segment. This project was transformative in a holistic manner and shaped my approach to learning, strategic thinking, and creativity. It set the trajectory for my professional journey.

For over 20 years, I have been involved in various strategic initiatives, launching and building some of the most renowned brands in India - Business World, Tata Motors, Westside, Burger King, Mahindra, and HomeTown. A particularly proud moment was the launch of Burger King in India, a milestone that truly stands out in my career.

In your opinion, what are the most critical aspects of digital transformation that companies often overlook?

Most companies fail to place the customer at the heart of their digital transformation efforts. Digitalization is no longer optional for businesses; it's essential in today's day and age to create seamless customer experiences. Staying ahead requires a deep understanding of customer journeys and embracing technology to achieve substantial gains in operational efficiency, productivity, and customer experience. However, digital transformation goes beyond merely acquiring new technology; it entails seamlessly integrating it into both business operations and customer strategies.

Adopting technology without clear goals and objectives is ineffective. Many companies overlook the importance of investing in the right technology and fail to recognize that successful digital transformation hinges on prioritizing customers, employees, and company culture. Digitization is a culture and not just a tool or an App.

As a DEI advocate, how do you integrate DEI principles into your marketing and business development strategies?

Integrating diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into your brand strategy is essential. It shapes how consumers perceive and connect with your brand. Recent studies indicate that 70% of millennials and Gen Z favor brands that prioritize inclusivity. Burger King and KONE are exemplary in embedding DEI into every facet of their brand and marketing strategies—from product and packaging to branding and advertising.

Inclusivity is at the heart of the Burger King brand. The Burger King "Your Way" and more recent "You Rule" campaigns celebrate this core value. At KONE, we actively promote diversity, equity, and inclusion through training, raising awareness, career enhancement programs, and establishing employee-led resource groups.

As a DEI advocate, my work starts internally by fostering a diverse team and creating inclusive designs and communication concepts. I strive to produce content that speaks with an inclusive tone, ensuring our brand resonates with a broad and diverse audience.

Looking ahead, what trends do you foresee dominating the marketing and business development landscape?

Several trends poised to dominate the spheres of marketing and business development include a paradigm shift from product-centric to customer-centric strategies, the ascendance of AI-driven conversational marketing, data-informed personalization, and the increasing significance of social channels in driving commerce through captivating content. Also, brands with a strong purpose will increasingly be favored by the next generation of consumers.

> **Building brands is not just a job for me; it's a passion. The thrill of influencing consumer behavior and seeing the tangible results of a well-executed marketing campaign keeps me motivated and inspired.**

What advice would you give aspiring marketing and business development professionals, especially women aiming to achieve a leadership position like yours?

Women frequently excel as leaders due to their inherent empathy and nurturing qualities. My counsel to emerging women leaders is to uncover their passion, relentlessly pursue knowledge, and assert their presence. Channeling my passion for marketing into substantial contributions to the business world has been instrumental in my success.

Distinguish yourself by being a dependable and valuable contributor, Nurturing your team to become the leaders of tomorrow. Lead by example and cultivate a supportive network both at home and in the workplace. This robust support system is essential for achieving success and propelling your career forward. And most importantly, learn to prioritize. Balance is all about prioritizing.

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BREAKING THE STATUS QUO: HOW DRIVING A CULTURE OF CURIOSITY DRIVES FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Written by contributing writer **Dr. Diane Hamilton**

In today's fast-paced business world, curiosity isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a must-have. As someone who works with organizations to improve financial outcomes, I've seen the magic that happens when curiosity takes precedence. Imagine a workplace where asking "Why?" and "What if?" is not just encouraged but celebrated.

From my research, I've discovered that curiosity can lead to some pretty impressive financial gains. In a survey of C-Suite executives, those from smaller companies reported saving over $100,000 a year by fostering curiosity-driven initiatives. For larger organizations, the savings jumped to over $1,000,000 annually. The benefits range from improved engagement and innovation to reduced turnover and higher productivity.

Yet, despite these wins, many organizations are still hesitant to fully embrace curiosity. Why? Because it's not always easy to measure or see the immediate payoff. But the payoff is there, and it's massive. Consider the impact of just improving engagement, alone, and curiosity is linked to innovation, and just about everything else that leads to productivity. We need more companies to take the leap, foster curiosity, and then share their success stories with the world.

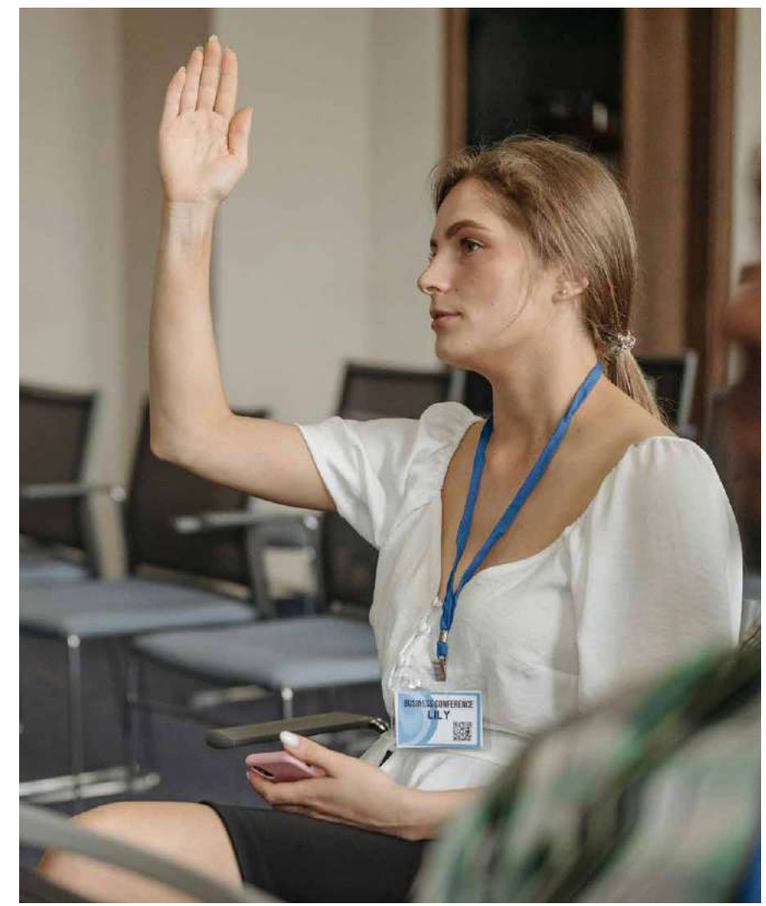
Creating a culture of curiosity starts with understanding where you are. It's as simple as measuring curiosity levels within your team. Once you have a baseline, you can develop training programs that target specific curiosity inhibitors. Employees can set personal goals to overcome their challenges, and, over time, you can reassess to see the growth. This isn't just about curiosity for curiosity's sake—it's about driving engagement, sales, and innovation.

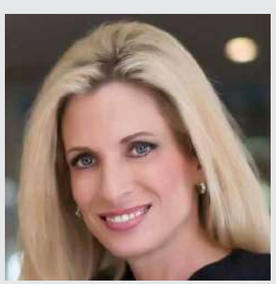
One of the biggest hurdles to fostering curiosity is overcoming the comfort of the status quo. What worked yesterday won't necessarily work tomorrow, especially in a world where AI and technology are constantly evolving. Think of companies that failed to adapt—Blockbuster, anyone?—because they clung to old ways. Instead, we need to encourage our teams to ask questions, explore new ideas, and think outside the box. This kind of mindset keeps organizations nimble and competitive.

In my workshops with organizations, I emphasize the importance of setting and revisiting goals to overcome curiosity inhibitors. When employees create and work on their development plans, they start seeing real changes. Imagine regularly checking in on your team's curiosity levels and correlating improvements with boosts in engagement, innovation, and sales. It's not just effective; it's transformative.

With AI becoming more prevalent, there's never been a better time to nurture curiosity. AI can handle the repetitive stuff, but it's human curiosity that sparks the big ideas and innovations. By building a culture where curiosity thrives, we equip our teams to not just work with AI but to harness its full potential.

The bottom line is curiosity drives success. It leads to financial benefits, enhances engagement, and keeps organizations ahead of the curve. By measuring and fostering curiosity, we unlock our teams' potential and set our companies up for long-term success. My hope is more organizations will make curiosity the norm, and that leaders will celebrate questions, explorations, and the resulting breakthroughs that will make their organizations thrive.





About the Author:

Dr. Diane Hamilton is one of the most prominent voices in curiosity, perception, and behavioral research. She is the former MBA Program Chair at the Forbes School of Business and Technology, a Fulbright Specialist, and faculty for several USA-based universities, including Duke Corporate Education. She is the author of Cracking the Curiosity Code, Curiosity Unleashed, The Power of Perception, and the Curiosity Code Index® assessment, the first and only assessment that determines the factors that inhibit curiosity. Her groundbreaking work helps organizations improve innovation, engagement, and productivity. Thinkers50 Radar, based in the UK and considered the Academy Awards for Leadership, chose her as one of the top minds in management and leadership.

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SIMMI DHUSSA VERMA'S REFLECTIONS: EVOLVING INTERSECTION OF HEALTHCARE, TECHNOLOGY, AND HUMAN TOUCH

Written by **Kyle Goldberg**

With over two decades of expertise in IT solutions and healthcare technology, **Simmi Dhussa Verma** explores the evolving synergy between healthcare and technology, championing a blend of human compassion and digital innovation. As Co-Founder and Director of Aarian Health and SmaartHub, her roles at NIIT and Mother's Pride have deepened her commitment to integrating technology with compassionate care. In this engaging conversation, Simmi shares her inspiring journey of co-founding Aarian Health—a company built on integrity and innovation. She reflects on her move to Australia, the evolution of her leadership style, and the vital role of technology in enhancing healthcare efficiency and accessibility, all while preserving the essential personal touch in supporting those in need of care.

Your path to healthcare entrepreneurship has been quite distinctive. Could you share how this journey began?

My journey into healthcare began in 1992 at Delhi University, where I first discovered the power of knowledge and collaboration. From there, transitioning into technology felt like a natural next step. This journey took me across borders, spanning IT, education, training, and data analysis. At Roche, Boehringer Ingelheim, NIIT, and Mother's Pride, I led global IT projects on customer insights and engagement, specializing in business development and data analytics.

In 2018, life took an unexpected turn when I was diagnosed with a rare cerebrospinal fluid leak, which reduced my working capacity. With the steadfast support of my family and ongoing treatment, I learned firsthand the challenges that patients face and saw significant gaps in healthcare processes. This experience deepened my determination to make a difference in the field.

Driven by the desire to leverage our strengths and experiences to deliver exceptional solutions, create opportunities, and make a positive impact in the healthcare sector, my husband Hemant and I founded KnowDiabetes in 2019 to address the unique challenges of diabetes care. As we delved deeper, we quickly recognized that patients' needs extended far beyond any single condition. In 2023, we rebranded as Aarian Health, a name inspired by the Sanskrit word Arya, meaning "noble," symbolizing our commitment to integrity and compassion. Today, Aarian Health represents our vision of technology-driven, people-centered care focused on transforming healthcare experiences for everyone.

> **Life has had its ups and downs, but I've come to see joy and contentment as a constant companion. With each challenge, I've learned that self-confidence, courage and inner peace adds warmth to every step forward.**

The transition to Australia marked a significant point in your career. How did this influence your professional trajectory?

Moving to Australia in 2009 was more than just relocating—it was a life transformation. For 15 years now, I've built a home where my heart and mind truly connect. Leaving behind the familiar wasn't easy, but Australia embraced me with its warmth and inclusiveness, inspiring me to give back to this wonderful community.

In those early years, I made the intentional choice to prioritize our family's transition. Watching Saarthak and Samarth, our children, adapt to a new culture and settle into new surroundings felt like my most important role. Even our dog Gabbar became part of our unfolding Australian story.

Life has had its ups and downs, but I've come to see joy and contentment as a constant companion. With each challenge, I've learned that self-confidence, courage and inner peace adds warmth to every step forward.

What drives Aarian Health's innovation strategy, and what key milestones define your journey?

Our innovation strategy at Aarian Health is anchored in creating impactful healthcare experiences that blend human connection with technological advancements. Our flagship program, KnowDiabetes, is a pharmacist-led initiative for Type 2 diabetes prevention and remission, leveraging the latest scientific advancements to enhance diabetes care. Through PharmacyDiabetes, we integrate cutting-edge healthcare innovations with existing community pharmacy systems, creating a comprehensive diabetes hub that not only improves service offerings but also expands revenue opportunities.

The SmaartHub platform, our proprietary digital tool, plays a central role in acquisition, activation, and retention. Its robust CRM capabilities and modular design meet diverse needs across healthcare organizations, supporting new customer engagement and facilitating seamless communication among providers.

Presenting our diabetes prevention program to the Australian Parliament was a significant milestone, but we define true success by the daily, tangible impact our work has on people's lives. Recognition, such as being named among the top four finalists by the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia, is gratifying. However, our ultimate measure of success lies in reshaping healthcare experiences for both providers and patients.

How has your leadership philosophy evolved throughout your career?

My leadership philosophy is rooted in a deep awareness that we're all contributing to something greater than ourselves. My roles as a mother, sister, daughter, and wife have taught me how each perspective enriches the whole, a truth I carry into my work. In leadership, I see each team member as an individual with their own story and unique potential, and I strive to create an environment where they feel valued and empowered.

I lead with authenticity, compassion, and a commitment to high standards. My mantra—progress over perfection—stems from a belief that real innovation happens when people are encouraged to take thoughtful risks. I believe that by supporting my team with empathy and purpose, we can drive meaningful change together.

Looking toward the future, what's your vision for Aarian Health?

At fifty, I'm standing at a powerful intersection of experience and possibility. What drives me now is a desire to make healthcare more accessible, more effective, and always human-centered. Research indicates that peer support significantly enhances well-being by reducing hospital visits, expanding support networks, and boosting self-esteem. This is precisely where Aarian Health is making an impact—creating a peer-support-based model that can be embraced by future generations to transform the way healthcare is both delivered and experienced.

My family is my greatest source of strength, with the traditions and cultural values we share providing a solid foundation for both our lives and the vision of Aarian Health. At home and in the workplace, family photos sit alongside professional milestones and children's achievements—a blend that tells a meaningful story. This serves as a constant reminder that true success lies not in choosing one part of life over another but in integrating all aspects to create a personal and far-reaching impact.

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DECODING IBS AND IBD: INSIGHTS FROM NUTRITIONIST VINEESHA REDDY

Written by **Justin Roberts**

Vineesha Reddy, India's first SIBO Doctor-Certified Practitioner, brings extensive expertise to her role as a Clinical and Gut Health Dietitian. With a Master's in Dietetics and Food Service Management and FODMAP Dietitian certification from Monash University, Australia, Vineesha is a leading authority in chronic gut disease management.

In this interview, Vineesha discusses her transition from traditional hospital dietetics to specializing in functional nutrition. She shares pivotal moments that led to the founding of The Functional Nutrition Clinic and explores how this approach significantly impacts patient's lives.

What inspired you to venture into functional nutrition and specialize in gut health?

I started out working in a hospital, thinking dietetics was all about weight management and hormonal issues. But my stint in critical care opened my eyes to a whole new world. There, I saw nutrition become a lifeline, even for those on the brink of death. Doctors leaned on us heavily, seeking guidance for patients facing life-altering conditions.

This revelation sparked a question: Why didn't we focus on prevention and gut health? After four years, I took the leap, opening my clinic in 2016. At first, I stuck to familiar territory—weight loss programs and fitness plans.

Then came 2020, and COVID-19 forced me online. The ocean of nutrition content floored me, much of it from untrained influencers with massive followings. It was gut-wrenching. How could I make a real difference in this sea of misinformation? I realized then that my calling wasn't to follow the crowd but to raise the bar for health guidance.

Can you share a pivotal moment that led you to establish The Functional Nutrition Clinic?

A watershed moment in my practice came when I treated a PCOS patient with severe abdominal pain. Traditional methods failed, leaving me frustrated and desperate, especially since she was in the US and medical appointments were slow. My research led me to realize she had IBS, a condition unfamiliar to me at the time.

Seeking deeper understanding, I enrolled in a program at Monash University, known for its IBS research. There, I learned that IBS is a functional disorder requiring more than conventional medicine. This inspired me to specialize in IBS and IBD. I furthered my knowledge by studying SIBO, IBD, and advanced biochemistry, enhancing my diagnostic skills.

Now, my practice is dedicated to managing IBS and IBD through detailed consultations and thorough analysis of medical histories. While conventional medicine often misinterprets IBS as a mental health issue, I view it as primarily a physical condition involving an imbalanced gut microbiome, which can also affect mental health, causing anxiety and depression.

Can you explain what functional nutrition is and how it differs from traditional dietary practices?

Traditional methods often treat symptoms with medication, suppressing the symptoms temporarily but not addressing the root cause.

In functional nutrition, we go beyond treating individual symptoms. We focus on root causes like infections, inflammation, low stomach acids, digestive enzyme insufficiency, and nutrient deficiencies and consider factors like chemical and metal loads that conventional medicine often overlooks.

Our approach starts with comprehensive diagnostic tests, including blood work, differential diagnosis, and GI mapping. These help us identify infections, assess gut function, and pinpoint the root causes of your symptoms.

Our clinic stands out in Hyderabad due to our specialized focus on managing IBS and IBD. We provide comprehensive blood work analysis and detailed reports highlighting imbalances and their potential causes. This ensures that our patients fully understand their health issues and can take the necessary steps to address them. IBS and IBD often come with co-morbidities such as hormonal imbalances, chronic acid reflux, poor metabolism, weight loss, and malnutrition. We treat all chronic infections and gut and hormonal issues.

Can you share a recent client success story?

Every client who walks through our doors has often exhausted conventional treatments. By the time they find us, their bodies are typically depleted, burdened by the overuse of antibiotics and antacids, and struggling with severe nutrient deficiencies.

One particularly poignant case involved a 28-year-old woman who weighed just 41 kg with a height of 5'5 feet. During our first consultation, she was overwhelmed with emotion and cried inconsolably for 20 minutes. She revealed that, despite not being married or having children, she was lactating due to taking 20 different medications daily for various symptoms. Her physical and emotional pain had driven her into isolation.

We immediately began her customized treatment plan. Within a month, she noticed significant improvements in her symptoms and mental health, allowing her to reconnect with people and regain her strength. Over six months, she gained 5 kg, began strength training, and was able to discontinue all medications.

Now, she's medication-free, engaged, and looking forward to a brighter future.

What advice would you give aspiring nutritionists who want to specialize in functional nutrition and gut health?

My advice is to master physiology, pathophysiology, and biochemistry, as these subjects are the foundation of functional nutrition. Take relevant courses, read medical books, and gain extensive practical experience. Dedicate at least an hour daily to reviewing and deepening your knowledge.

Participate in webinars to learn about nutritional interventions, supplements, and therapeutic diets. Focus on understanding the pathophysiology and biochemistry to develop effective nutritional strategies.

Specialize in a niche area like pediatric nutrition, geriatric nutrition, or autoimmune disorders. There's a significant need for specialists in these fields. Additionally, understanding the importance of gut health is crucial as it plays a vital role in overall well-being. Lastly, find a mentor for guidance, especially from international experts, as functional nutrition is still an emerging field in India.

I started out working in a hospital, thinking dietetics was all about weight management and hormonal issues. But my stint in critical care opened my eyes to a whole new world. There, I saw nutrition become a lifeline, even for those on the brink of death.

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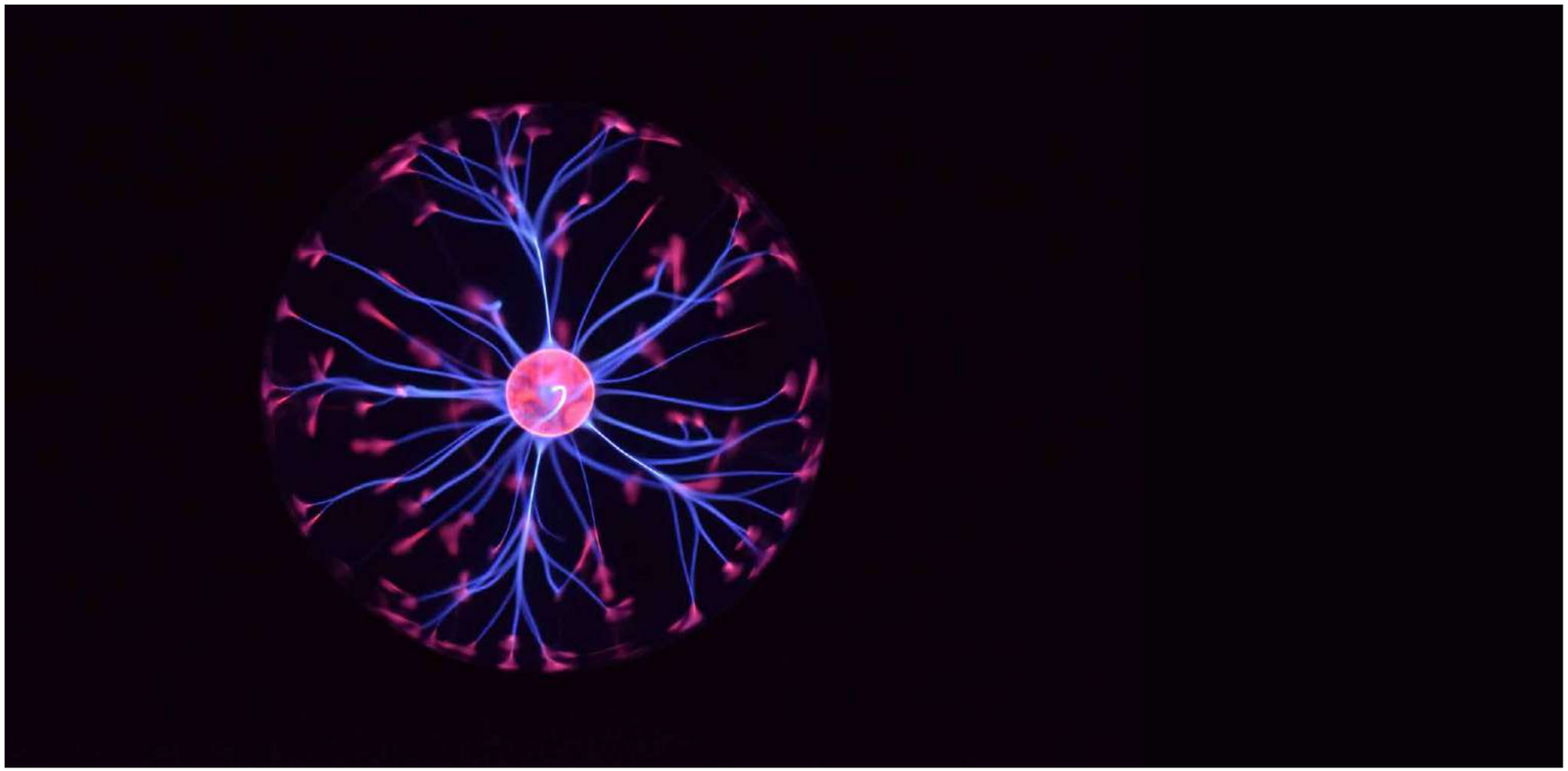

NEUROSCIENCE HACKS: HOW TO MASTER YOUR RESPONSES TO CHANGE WITH NINJA MOVES

Written by contributing writer **Dr. Tammy Watchorn**

About the Author:

Dr. Tammy Watchorn trained as a scientist before moving into the complex landscape of healthcare to lead change. After some slow starts she began to realise that her hard-won accreditation in the process of change leadership was meaningless: the only way to achieve success was to focus on people. By understanding those involved in change as individuals, not 'stakeholders', she developed a pragmatic way of making progress by stealth using 'ninja' moves. Her own neuro-atypical approach allows her to see things differently, to look at the whole rather than the parts, and to help others to see things differently too.

Many of us say we like change but change can also bring the feeling of terror, particularly if it's unexpected or we can only imagine a bad outcome. That physical churn in the pit of your stomach, an increased heart rate, dry mouth, panic, nausea or just a feeling of complete overwhelm. These physical feelings, caused by the flood of adrenalin and cortisol, are triggered instantly by any type of change that our brain has predicted could be bad for us and anything new could be bad for us. If it has no data to be certain of a good outcome then it triggers the fight/flight response that makes us physically feel the way we do. Then we attach an emotion (story) to the physical feeling such as scared, anxious, worried, uncertain. We are mostly not conscious that this is happening because it happens so quickly. Logic is hijacked in favour of emotion and we respond emotionally rather than rationally. It's called the amygdala hijack. If you don't believe me then tell me how you reacted the last time you felt angry and someone told you to just 'calm down'.

The good news? You can hack this process with these stealth-like Ninja hacks.

Part 1: Get the logical you switched back on.

Write down a current challenge you have that requires a change and think about this for each hack listed.

Hack 1. How do you physically feel?

Notice the physical sensations like the stomach knots and racing heart. This is the first indication your subconscious brain is predicting danger. Your body is being flooded with adrenalin and cortisol.

Hack 2. What is the story (emotion) you are experiencing?

Scared, anxious, worried, uncertain? These are the emotions you've attached to the physical feeling. This is the story your brain is creating for you about the change.

Hack 3: Remember that emotion beats logic. Every time.

If you are feeling and responding with emotion it's hard to respond logically.

Hack 4: Calm the emotion down using the physiological sigh.

Two breaths in through the nose (it will feel weird) and one long exhale through the mouth. Repeat x4. It uses your diaphragm to hack your brain and convince it that all is well. It's a self-soothing method and it works. Every time.
Now you are ready to apply some logical thinking

Part 2: Changing your response.

Hack 5: Don't focus on the problem/change.

Instead do something tactile, make bread, go for a run, clear out a cupboard. Do something that will use your brain in a different way, ideally with physical movement too. It gives your subconscious brain time to think about the change in different ways which can provide fresh insight.

Hack 6: Remind yourself that your reality isn't everyone's reality.

Reality is just your perception of the outside world. The great news is this means you can change your reality! You can choose, to some degree, the story you tell yourself about something. That scary feeling in the pit of your stomach is no different to the excited butterfly feelings of something that you're excited about. The only difference is the story you've attached to the feelings. For many things in life, you can, with practice, choose the story you want to tell.

Hack 7: Tell everyone.

Once you've reframed the story write it down. Now say it out loud. Next tell other people. The more you repeat a story the more it will 'feel' real and you will start to lean into the change rather than trying to run away from it. This is because your brain now has some 'good' data to suggest the change isn't quite as bad as it originally thought. You will also start to feel like you 'own' the change.

Hack 8: The brain likes certainty.

This means it can trick you into sticking with the status quo even if the status quo

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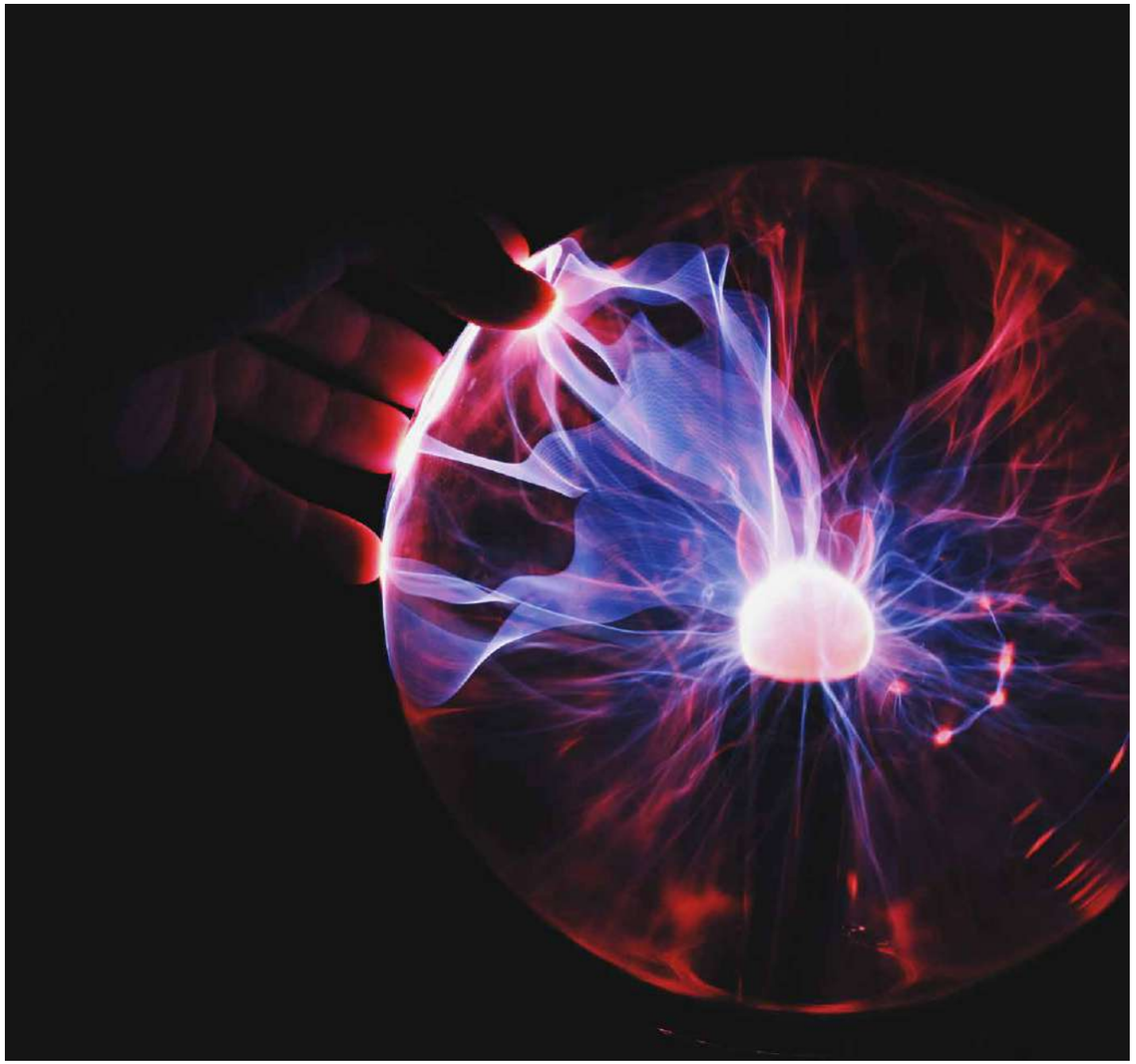

isn't good for you. The familiar feels safer than an unknown, even if the familiar is bad we can predict how bad it will be and know what we are dealing with. This is why we put up with bad bosses and jobs for so long rather than leaving for an unknown future.

Hack 9: Treat your doubts like difficult people.

We all know people who get in the way of the things we want to do, and we all have a way of getting past them. Treat your doubts the same way. They aren't real, they're just predictions the brain has made. It's hard to imagine the unknown, but it's really easy to imagine what might go wrong. It's also very hard to challenge your own thinking but if you think of the doubts as difficult people you'll soon find a way past them that reduces their impact.

Hack 10: Even change you are excited by can be scary.

This is again because it's easy to imagine the things that could go wrong, and you are leaping into the unknown which your brain has little information about. You can hack your brain on this one by imagining that future, once the change has happened. Sense the future as much as you can, what it looks, sounds and feels like. You want to have the 3D technicolour version in your mind. Again, tell others about it. The more you can do this the more new 'positive' data the brain has in relation to the change which will ultimately reduce the feelings of panic, worry and anxiety because it will start to feel more familiar.

These are 10 simple hacks you can learn to do but you need to practice. Practice on small things. If you fail, don't beat yourself up, just try again, and again. Each time you try it will get a little easier. Each step you take will reduce the (subconscious) brain induced fear. Each step is a stealth like move to trick your brain into thinking differently enabling you to maximise the opportunity and reduce the uncertainty of almost any change you are facing.

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