

# THE PRIME TODAY

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●  
**Carol Hanlon**  
 Founder and CEO,  
 Belmont Business  
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 (BBEC | BEC Global);  
 TCF WA Inc. (TCF  
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 Australia

**SHE LEADS,  
 SHE INSPIRES:**  
*A Story of*  
**COURAGE &  
 EXCELLENCE**  
 2026

●  
**The Rise of  
 Women in Leadership**  
 Breaking Barriers  
 and Building New  
 Pathways to Influence

●  
**Women Leading  
 the Future**  
 Driving Innovation,  
 Inclusion, and  
 Enterprise Growth

The Spirit of an Enterprising Leader:  
 From the Sewing Room to the Global Stage -  
*The Inspiring Story of How*

# CAROL HANLON

Built a Fashion Empire and Dedicated Her Life  
 to Lighting the Path for Small Businesses Everywhere





A cityscape at sunset with hands reaching up towards the sky. The background shows a dense urban skyline with various skyscrapers under a soft, orange and pink sky. In the foreground, several hands are visible, some reaching upwards, suggesting a sense of aspiration or reaching for goals. The overall mood is inspirational and hopeful.

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2026

# Leading with Purpose, Inspiring with Impact

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**L**eadership is often measured by milestones, achievements, and visible success. Yet the most powerful leadership stories are shaped long before recognition arrives—through resilience in uncertain moments, courage in the face of challenge, and a steadfast commitment to purpose. *She Leads, She Inspires: A Story of Courage & Excellence – 2026* celebrates women who embody these qualities and continue to redefine what leadership means in today's evolving global landscape.

Across industries—from business and technology to healthcare, education, entrepreneurship, and social impact—women leaders are shaping transformative narratives. Their journeys are not only about professional success but also about perseverance, innovation, and the determination to create meaningful change. These women challenge conventions, break barriers, and open pathways for others to follow.

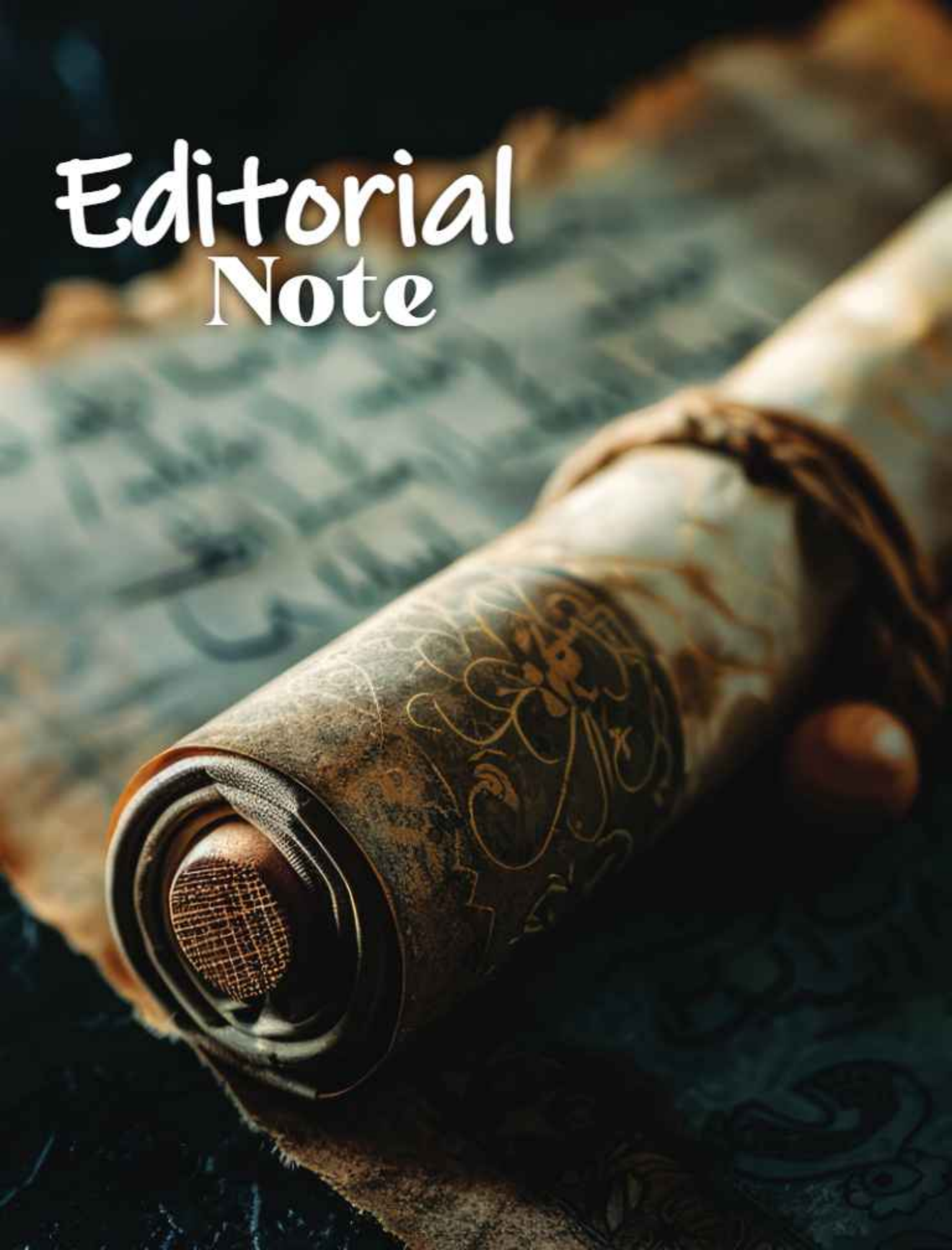
What makes these leaders exceptional is their ability to combine strength with empathy, strategic thinking with inclusivity, and ambition with responsibility.

They lead organizations through complexity, inspire teams with clarity of vision, and cultivate cultures where collaboration and creativity flourish. At the same time, they remain deeply connected to the communities they serve, recognizing that true leadership extends beyond boardrooms and business metrics.

The women featured in this edition exemplify the evolving face of leadership—one that values authenticity, courage, and the power of collective progress. They are entrepreneurs building innovative enterprises, executives guiding organizations through transformation, and changemakers advocating for equity, opportunity, and sustainable growth.

In a world where the pace of change continues to accelerate, these leaders stand as powerful reminders that courage and excellence are not abstract ideals; they are lived values that shape industries and inspire generations. Their stories illuminate the path forward for aspiring leaders everywhere, proving that when women lead with conviction and vision, they do more than achieve success—they inspire a movement toward a more inclusive and empowered future.

# Editorial Note





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C O V E R S T O R Y

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**“** *I learned first-hand the many barriers that women face when trying to grow a small business. Because I had to teach myself everything, I realized exactly where the hurdles were and why so many people felt stuck in the dark.* **”**

**E**mpowering others with empathy is one of the ultimate powers in the universe. And leaders with passion, resilience, and determination to support others are much needed in our world today.

With that passion and a resolute mind, Carol Hanlon leads and inspires. Her story is that of courage and excellence. Her heart, mind, and entire being are inspired to do what she does, always—making a difference to the entrepreneurial, micro, and small business sector, whether that is local, state, national, or global. “My passion is supporting and empowering women in business and also fashion and creative entrepreneurship,” she shares.

In the heart of Western Australia, Carol stands out as a well-known figure of entrepreneurial support through her many small business projects. Today, she is globally renowned as the **Founder** and **CEO** of several transformative organizations, including the Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc. (BBEC | BEC Global) and TCF WA Inc. (TCF Australia | TCF Global), which drive innovation from their headquarters in Belmont, WA, across Australia and its global networks.

Her leadership extends further through the **BPW Business Incubator**, where she provides business support opportunities for women in business. By weaving together these powerful networks, Carol has created a legacy of empowerment that connects entrepreneurs with international opportunity, ensuring that small businesses and creative industries have the tools they need to flourish on the world stage.

**“Entrepreneurs often do not know what they do not know. My mission is to take the complex world of business and break it into small, simple steps so that busy owners can find the skills they need to grow.”**

### **A Journey of Empowering Enterprising Spirit**

Standing apart from the crowd in her mission to create not-for-profit projects across many small business and industry sectors, Carol's drive provides opportunities and business skills that entrepreneurs and MSMEs need to know. According to her, entrepreneurs and MSMEs 'do not know what they don't know.' She creates small business support topics broken into smaller topics, so busy business owners can access the skills they need to grow and expand their business.

In her *five-and-a-half decades* of a vast career that began in the early seventies, Carol's leadership expertise regarding empowerment of women, including organizing projects, speakers, and events, spans numerous sectors. To date, these sectors have included exporting, importing, cyber security, disability employment, fashion and creative industries, innovation, energy efficiency, racing industry, global supply chains, sustainability, trade exhibitions, fashion incubation, small business awards, innovation festivals, global conferences, networking events, and global village sewing projects, to name just a few.

### **From a Sewing Machine to a Fashion Empire**

Carol's journey did not begin in a boardroom but at a sewing machine. At the age of thirteen, she was already taking in orders to earn her own income, a testament to her early drive and independence. By fifteen, she had left both school and home to find her own way in the world. This bold start led her to establish the Carol Hanlon fashion label in the early 1970s. During an era when very few women dared to run their own companies, Carol built a brand that would eventually find its way into hundreds of boutiques across Australia and international markets for over two decades.

Her life was a constant juggle of high-stakes responsibilities, mastering the art of managing people and operations simultaneously. While she grew her fashion label, she also managed the administrative side of her former husband's racing stables. For twenty years, she looked after the business admin and the apprentice jockeys and stable hands who lived with the family, including her two children, Rachel and Luke, born in the '70s.

She was entirely self-taught, learning through trial and error how to navigate a world that was often stacked against women. “I learned first-hand the many barriers that women face when trying to grow a small business. Because I had to

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teach myself everything, I realized exactly where the hurdles were and why so many women felt stuck.”

Carol's divorce resulted in her closing her fashion business and relocating across Australia.

### **Lighting the Way for Others**

In 1994, her change of direction resulted in her being the founding manager of a not-for-profit community organization providing support to entrepreneurs and small businesses, a support centre she wished she had access to during her early years.

This has become a thirty-two-year journey that continues to grow and evolve every day. She focuses on helping entrepreneurs and MSMEs to see that there is light at the end of the tunnel, providing them with the specific tools needed to jump over the many hurdles of the business world.

She understands that for a busy business owner, large problems need to be broken down into small, manageable pieces. Her work is more than just giving advice; it is about creating an environment where micro and small business owners can access specific skills exactly when they need them. Carol's life has become a bridge between the lessons she learnt, growing her own small business that she now shares on the global stage where she empowers thousands. “My goal is to support entrepreneurs who need to know



they can make it through. I want to help them find their way over the many hurdles they encounter so they can grow without the same struggles I faced.”

### **A Global Mission for Local Success**

Carol's reach now extends into countless sectors, from projects that include cyber security, exporting, global supply chains, and trade missions. She remains deeply connected to the creative roots of her career, often working on projects that involve fashion incubation and sewing initiatives in small villages. Her ability to translate complex business issues into simple steps for a local designer or a tech startup is what makes her leadership so unique.

She continues to look for the next project to assist the emerging entrepreneur who feels overwhelmed by the unknown. By focusing on her small business projects that include training, mentoring and networking linked with community support, Carol is ensuring that the next generation of entrepreneurs have a clearer path and a

**Economic empowerment is the key to a better future for everyone. By helping one person gain the skills to run a business, we are creating a ripple effect that touches families, communities, and the global market.**

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***I create  
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stronger foundation than the one she started with all those years ago. The story of her impact is still being written across every industry she touches.

#### **A Lifetime of Industry Expertise**

With over fifty-five years of experience in the small business world, Carol has seen the industry evolve from every possible angle. Her career is split between twenty years as a fashion designer and over thirty-two years as a leader in the global non-profit community. She is the founder and CEO of two major organizations: the Belmont Business Enterprise Centre Inc. and the Textile Clothing Footwear Resource Centre of WA Inc. Through these hubs, she coordinates annual award programs and innovation festivals that shine a light on the hard work of local entrepreneurs and small businesses.



Her success began in the 1970s in Victoria, Australia, where she took her fashion label through the entire business lifecycle. She managed everything from design, manufacturing and wholesaling to retail and international export. This deep, practical background means that when she gives advice today, it comes from a place of real-world experience. She knows what it feels like to be on the factory floor and in the designer's chair. "True expertise is born from doing the work. I have spent decades being 'hands on' working across all aspects of running a small business, and that allows me to speak the same language as the entrepreneurs I support today."

### **Global Impact and Economic Empowerment**

Since moving into the non-profit sector in the mid-nineties, Carol's impact has reached staggering proportions. Her organizations have assisted over forty thousand entrepreneurs and small businesses from Belmont, WA, across Australia and the globe. She has made it her mission to ensure that women in business have access to the mentoring and training they need to thrive. Her reach is truly international, taking her from local workshops in Western Australia to the United Nations Commission Status of Women (CSW) range of events in New York.

Every year, she hosts NGO Forums as part of UNCSW parallel events focused on the economic empowerment of women and gender equality. She uses these platforms to showcase global role models, and how small businesses can contribute to SDGs global goals and how to remove the barriers that stop women from succeeding. Whether she is helping with a small sewing project in a rural village or speaking to global leaders, her focus remains on giving people the skills to change their own lives. "Economic empowerment is the key to a better future for everyone. By helping one entrepreneur gain the skills they need, we are creating a ripple effect that touches families, communities, and eventually, the entire global market."

### **A Continuing Legacy of Service**

Carol's work shows no signs of slowing down. She continues to bridge the gap between small businesses and the vast opportunities of the global economy. By organizing small business awards and innovation festivals, she provides a stage for new talent to be discovered. Her life is a testament to the fact that when a leader combines a practical business mind with a heart for service, the results can transform thousands of lives.





She is still actively involved in training and mentoring, always looking for new ways to make complex business topics easy for busy owners to understand. As the world of commerce continues to change with new technology and global shifts, Carol remains at the forefront, guiding entrepreneurs through the challenges of the modern market. Her story of service and excellence continues to unfold with every new project she launches.

### A Legacy of Global Recognition

Carol's lifelong commitment to small business and the empowerment of women has earned her a place among the most respected leaders in the world. Her mantle is filled with accolades that span continents, reflecting her reach from Belmont, Perth, Western Australia to international stages in Europe and Asia. She has been named a National Small Business Champion in Australia and recognized as one of the Top 50 Small Business Leaders by Inside Business. Her induction into the WA Women's Hall of Fame stands as a testament to her deep roots in her home community.

Her influence stretches far beyond Australian borders. She was honored as one of Australia's Women Icons of APEC in the Philippines and has received multiple awards from the Women Economic Forum, including the Iconic Women Creating a Better World for All award in India and the Exceptional Women of Excellence award in the Netherlands. From being named the Woman of the Decade in Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Perth to receiving a Bronze Hall of Fame honor at the Women Changing the World Awards in the United Kingdom, Carol has proven that a compassionate heart can spark a global movement. "Recognition is not just about a trophy on a shelf. It is proof that when we work to empower others, the world takes notice. These honors belong to every small business owner who dared to start something new."

### Service Beyond the Boardroom

A formidable list of professional roles and board positions backs Carol's expertise. She has served as a local government councillor, an accredited business facilitator, and an accredited company director. Her leadership has guided organizations like Business and Professional Women WA, where she served as State President, and she remains a vital voice on the boards of BEC Australia and the AIBEF. Her skill as a BEC manager was also highlighted when she was named the Best National BEC Manager in Australia.



Her dedication to service is further highlighted by her role as a Paul Harris Fellow with The Rotary Foundation of Rotary International. Whether she is working with the G100 Australia MSMEs or acknowledged as 100 Champions of WA, Carol brings a wealth of knowledge and a steady hand to every project. She has successfully balanced the demands of creating and delivering small business projects with the practical needs of the many thousands of entrepreneurs and MSMEs that she assists. "True leadership is about service. Whether you are sitting on a national board or helping a local startup, your goal remains the same: to provide the skills and the support that allow others to shine."

#### **A Journey That Never Stops**

Even with a lifetime of achievements behind her, Carol continues to look for new ways to make a difference. Her

story is not a closed book but a continuing journey of excellence and empathy. She remains focused on the belief that entrepreneurs do not know what they do not know, and she strives to create projects providing support for those missing pieces of the puzzle. Her life stands as a powerful example of how one person can start with a simple sewing machine and end up contributing to the face of global entrepreneurship.

As she continues to facilitate awards, host international forums, and mentor the next generation, Carol Hanlon remains a beacon of hope for small businesses everywhere. She is a leader who understands that the best way to predict the future is to create it, one small business at a time. Her small business empowerment projects have touched the lives of over forty thousand, and her impact will be felt for decades to come.

## **The Rise of Women in Leadership**





# Breaking Barriers and Building New Pathways to Influence

**T**he current leadership structure across all industries is experiencing dramatic changes because women now hold major positions that help them control organizations, economic systems, and social groups. The increasing number of women who enter leadership positions today signifies more than just an increase in their presence; it demonstrates a fundamental change in how people comprehend leadership.

Women leaders create new paths that focus on developing new ideas through teamwork and creating lasting effects by eliminating the obstacles that previously restricted their ability to lead.

The presence of women in leadership roles across various fields, including technology, finance, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and public policy, demonstrates that organizations achieve better results when decision-making processes include diverse perspectives and experiences.

The growing number of women who occupy leadership roles today establishes new standards for determining modern-day success and influential power.

## **Overcoming Historical Barriers**

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### **Leadership Beyond the Organization**

The women executives who lead their organizations show their power through their organizational work. The women executives use their time to lead projects that help their organization and the community through development work, social innovation, and public policy development.

Through their leadership efforts, they show that leadership works to create both economic and social development.

The industry and community development, together with social equality and access to opportunities, are affected by her power to lead. The leaders use their leadership role as a way to create significant transformations.

### **The Role of Education and Skill Development**

Education and professional development have been essential for helping women achieve leadership positions. Advanced education access, together with leadership training programs and international professional networks, has permitted women to acquire the necessary skills for demanding leadership positions.

Continuous learning serves as a vital support system that enables leaders to adjust their skills according to the fast-changing needs of technology and digital transformation and worldwide business strategies.

The ongoing development of leadership abilities stands as a fundamental requirement for maintaining progress in leadership representation.

### **Resilience as a Leadership Strength**

Many women leaders demonstrate exceptional resilience as they navigate demanding professional environments. Executives need both perseverance and adaptability to handle their duties while keeping their strategic objectives intact.

Leaders use resilience as a tool to recover from failures while they develop better approaches that enable them to keep progressing through tough times. The strength of this quality motivates teams while it helps build trust in organizations across times of transformation.

### **Expanding Representation Across Industries**

Women leaders are now present in all business sectors, which include technology startups, multinational corporations, healthcare institutions, and public service organizations.

The presence of women leaders in executive positions enables organizations to achieve better decision outcomes while maintaining proper representation of their community demographics.

The ongoing increase in representation results in leadership systems that operate with greater inclusiveness and adaptability.

### **The Future of Women in Leadership**

Future leadership needs to develop greater skills in working together with others while adapting to change and maintaining moral standards. Women leaders show how organizations need these qualities to become innovative and resilient while maintaining their commitment to social responsibility.

The organization needs to establish an ongoing commitment towards three essential elements, which include providing equal opportunities to all employees, creating inclusive work environments, and implementing leadership development programs that benefit diverse candidates.

### **Conclusion**

Women leaders have achieved a significant impact on the international business environment through their rising presence in executive positions.

Women leaders create new possibilities by their ability to overcome obstacles, which leads to fundamental changes in organizational leadership methods used across various industries.

Organizations become more powerful and inventive while developing future readiness through their dedication to resilience and teamwork and their efforts to establish inclusive development programs.



# Driving Innovation, Inclusion, and Enterprise Growth

The future of global enterprise is being shaped by leaders who can navigate complexity, inspire innovation, and build organizations that are both competitive and inclusive. Women leaders are increasingly playing a central role in this transformation. Across industries, they are driving strategic change, fostering collaborative cultures, and redefining how businesses pursue growth in an interconnected world.

The rise of women in leadership positions reflects more than progress in representation. It represents a shift toward leadership models that integrate innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable enterprise development. Through their vision and determination, women leaders are helping organizations adapt to new challenges while unlocking opportunities for long-term success.

## **Innovation as a Strategic Foundation**

Innovation has become one of the most important drivers of enterprise growth. Markets evolve rapidly, technologies advance continuously, and customer expectations shift quickly. Organizations must therefore cultivate cultures that encourage experimentation and creative problem-solving.

Women leaders are increasingly recognized for their ability to foster environments where innovation thrives. By encouraging open dialogue and cross-functional collaboration, they create spaces where new ideas can emerge and develop into transformative solutions.

This focus on innovation enables organizations to remain competitive while exploring new markets and business models.

## **Inclusion as a Driver of Organizational Strength**

Inclusive leadership is another defining characteristic of modern enterprise leadership. Women leaders often champion workplace



## **Women Leading the Future**



environments where individuals from diverse backgrounds feel empowered to contribute their perspectives.

Diversity within leadership teams enhances decision-making by incorporating a broader range of experiences and viewpoints. Inclusive organizations also tend to attract and retain talented professionals who seek workplaces that value fairness and opportunity.

By promoting inclusion, women leaders help organizations build stronger teams capable of addressing complex global challenges.

### **Enterprise Growth Through Collaboration**

Enterprise growth increasingly depends on collaboration rather than isolated decision-making. Organizations operate within interconnected ecosystems that include employees, partners, customers, and communities.

Women leaders frequently emphasize collaborative leadership approaches that strengthen relationships across these networks. By fostering trust and shared purpose, they enable organizations to align efforts toward common goals.

Collaboration also accelerates innovation, as diverse perspectives contribute to more creative and effective solutions.

### **Mentorship and Leadership Development**

Women leaders often play a crucial role in developing future leadership talent. Through mentorship programs, leadership initiatives, and professional networks, they support the growth of emerging professionals.

Mentorship not only helps individuals build skills and confidence but also strengthens leadership pipelines across industries. By investing in the development of others, women leaders contribute to the long-term sustainability of enterprise leadership.

This commitment to mentorship ensures that progress in leadership diversity continues to expand.

### **Expanding Influence Across Industries**

Women are increasingly occupying leadership roles in sectors such as technology, finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and entrepreneurship. Their presence

across diverse industries reflects the growing recognition of inclusive leadership as a strategic asset.

As more women lead organizations and innovative ventures, their influence continues to reshape corporate cultures, governance structures, and business strategies.

This expanding influence signals a broader transformation in how leadership is practiced and valued.

### **Redefining Enterprise Leadership**

Traditional leadership models often emphasized authority and hierarchical decision-making. Women leaders are helping redefine enterprise leadership through approaches that emphasize collaboration, transparency, and shared accountability.

These qualities are particularly valuable in modern organizations where agility and collective intelligence are essential for navigating uncertainty.

By redefining leadership practices, women leaders are helping organizations become more adaptive and future-ready.

### **The Future of Women in Leadership**

As businesses continue to evolve, the contributions of women leaders will remain essential in shaping the future of enterprise. Their focus on innovation, inclusion, and sustainable growth aligns closely with the demands of the modern global economy.

Organizations that embrace diverse leadership perspectives are better positioned to anticipate change and create meaningful impact.

### **Conclusion**

Women leading the future are redefining enterprise leadership through innovation, inclusion, and strategic growth. Their leadership approaches emphasize collaboration, resilience, and purpose-driven development—qualities that are increasingly vital in a complex and rapidly changing world.

By driving transformative change within organizations and industries, women leaders are not only shaping the future of business but also contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable global economy.





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