

WELCONNECTED

WOMEN EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP | QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

3rd QUARTER 2025

"Having more women in leadership roles is not just about fairness, it's about leveraging every ounce of talent to drive success."

- Indra Nooyi, former CEO of PepsiCo



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Cindy Kushner
WEL Founder & President

Powerful Summer Sets Up a Powerful Fall. I trust everyone had an opportunity to take a well-deserved break this summer to recharge. WEL hosted several outstanding events that provided inspiration, motivation, and valuable networking opportunities. In addition, WEL shared with all of our members six board search opportunities, and through Athena Alliance several executive opportunities for Florida Diamond members. Our membership is over 100 strong, with continued growth and momentum across South Florida and Tampa, and recent feedback indicates that WEL is recognized as a supportive, empowering environment for learning, sharing, and establishing/nurturing valuable connections. Both men and women are active members and program participants, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity. We acknowledge the important role men play in championing and advancing women in business, and each event continues to enhance the visibility of top female talent across Florida.

2025 Signature Event. Our board and committees have been diligently developing a range of programs (more details can be found below), including our must-attend Signature Event scheduled for the evening of November 4th at DCOTA. Our theme is "A View from the Top" which will showcase a Powerful CEO Panel featuring **Rita Case**, CEO, Rick Case Automotive; **Sharena Ali**, CEO, Cinch

Home Services; **Tom Walrond**, President, Raymond James & Associates; **Andrew Koenig**, CEO, City Furniture; with **Lisa Lutoff-Perlo**, former CEO of Celebrity Cruises and current director on the boards of AutoNation, Hornblower Group, and Amerant Bank, serving as moderator.

Our esteemed panelists will provide valuable perspectives on contemporary challenges, transformative strategies, industry evolution, and the changing expectations of executive leadership. This promises to be an engaging and empowering discussion not to be missed.

Memberships and Alliances. Our partnership with Athena Alliance and our membership with Leaderboard continue to provide additional benefits and enhance our members' experience. Florida Diamond Members can contact **Cristina Scharffenorth**, Athena Member Engagement Advisor, to plan their leadership and/or Board path. Both Sapphire and Florida Diamond Members can contact Chandra Tracy (admin@welflorida.org) regarding your WEL Membership plan. Here's to a powerful and very empowering fall for our WEL Members and Community. I look forward to connecting with you at one of our events soon!

Our Mission

*"Women Executive Leadership promotes and enables increasing **BALANCE** on **CORPORATE BOARDS** and in **EXECUTIVE SUITES** through **ADVOCATING, EDUCATING** and **CONNECTING ACCOMPLISHED LEADERS.**"*

PROGRESS UPDATE BOARD COMPOSITION AND DIVERSITY

KEY TAKEAWAYS: Opportunity remains vibrant for qualified women leaders! For those preparing for or searching for a board position, continue to empower yourself by building and emphasizing your executive "wisdom" and be ready to demonstrate that you are current on the impact of technology on business strategy and performance.

THE GOOD: Board Composition and Succession Planning remains the top priority for nominating/governance (nom/gov) committee chairs in Q2 2025 as **reported by Spencer Stuart** with a focus on elevating boards by adding new skills, replacing retiring director(s), and, with a big increase over previous years, applying the results from the board and director evaluations (performance!) as the top three drivers of board refreshment.

THE NOT-SO-GOOD WITH A SILVER LINING: The approach of nom/gov chairs to Board Diversity is more nuanced. While Board Diversity has declined as a priority (from 11% of respondents last year to just 1% of respondents this year), the positive news is, **"More than four-fifths of nom/gov chairs (83%) say they are maintaining the status quo** around how they approach diversity in recruitment and composition, and **nearly two-thirds (62%) of nom/gov chairs still actively consider diversity in board composition and recruitment.**" This means diversity

is still a vibrant part of the conversation! The report goes on to say, “Top executive wisdom and digital and technology experience remain leading recruitment priorities with increased focus on global perspective.”

Source: Spencer Stuart



PLEASE JOIN US IN
WELcoming THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS TO
THE WEL COMMUNITY!

NEWEST SAPPHIRE MEMBERS:

Gayle Catropa | CHRO, Perry Ellis International

Jo-Anne Kunin | Managing Partner, Kunin Associates

Mihal Nahari | Retired - Chief Audit Executive

Christina Trocino | District Manager, Insperity

NEWEST FLORIDA DIAMOND MEMBERS:

Anila Nicklos | Director of Strategic Partnerships, iCare Mobile
Medicine

Michelle Holmes | Executive Advisor & Leadership Strategist

Susan Ball | Executive VP, Cross Country Healthcare

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

RAVE REVIEWS



SUMMER NETWORKING BREAKFAST | MIAMI | JULY 16

A good time was had by all! It was inspiring to come together and connect as a community to support and empower women leaders.

Thank you to Debra Lage, Partner at Mercer and one of WEL's Board of Directors for WEL and Co-Chair of Programs and Events, for hosting with Mercer and Marsh.



EXPLORING THE RETURN TO OFFICE MANDATE - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES | FT. LAUDERDALE | AUGUST 5

We enjoyed wonderful, in-person connections and vibrant discussions during our full house at Berger Singerman as our esteemed panelists engaged with our leaders to discuss the challenges and opportunities around the return to office mandate! A warm thank you to our panelists **Bettina Deynes**, Global Chief Human Resources Officer, Carnival Corporation; **Rosanne Mathews**, Vice President of Global Human Resources, Basic Fun!; **Gayle Catropa**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Perry Ellis International; **Sylvia Henderson**, Principal Consultant, Mercer.

A very gracious, “thank you”, to Berger Singerman and Jessica Pavlik, Chief Strategy Officer and WEL Board Member and Membership Chair for hosting!



POWERFUL UPCOMING PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

WEL Event: Fostering Intergenerational Relationships for Collaboration

September 11, 2025 | Noon - 1:00 pm

Virtual

In today's multigenerational workplace, the contrast between Gen Z employees and Millennial managers is reshaping team dynamics and workplace expectations. From communication styles and work-life boundaries to feedback preferences and career motivations, these two groups often approach work through very different lenses. Participants will gain insights into effective strategies for engaging Gen Z talent, supporting Millennial leaders, and fostering intergenerational collaboration.



[Reserve HERE](#)



WEL EVENT: WOMEN WHO LEAD – CEO PERSPECTIVES

featuring **Stephanie D. Conners**, CEO -
BayCare Health System

OCTOBER 21, 2025 | 7:30 am
CENTRE CLUB | TAMPA

[Reserve HERE](#)

**WEL 2025 SIGNATURE
EVENT:
A VIEW FROM THE TOP
NOVEMBER 4, 2025
DCOTA | SOUTH FLORIDA**

You'll be immersed in how leaders are looking at, leveraging, and inspiring their teams, related to today's key topics and opportunities. Our panel features these distinguished leaders: **Rita Case**, CEO, Rick Case Automotive; **Sharena Ali**, CEO, Cinch Home Services; **Tom Walrond**, President, Raymond James & Associates; **Andrew Koenig**, CEO, City Furniture; with **Lisa Lutoff-Perlo**, former CEO of Celebrity Cruises and current director on the boards of AutoNation, Hornblower Group, and Amerant Bank, serving as moderator.

**WEL 2025 SIGNATURE EVENT:
A VIEW FROM THE TOP**

Join us for an engaging and empowering
not-to-be-missed CEO PANEL EVENT!

SAVE THE DATE!
NOVEMBER 4TH | DCOTA



**WEL DESERVED
APPLAUSE**

If you have received a promotion, award, or other celebration-worthy recognition, we want to be among the first to congratulate and celebrate YOU!

Please email Admin@WELFlorida.org if you would like to be featured in our newsletter or social media.

READY TO ELEVATE YOUR CAREER?

[LEARN MORE ABOUT FLORIDA DIAMOND - CLICK HERE](#)

LET'S GET SOCIAL!

FOLLOW US

To enjoy the latest on leadership events, member spotlights, community highlights, and other resources to elevate your leadership journey.



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Email our amazing Administrator Chandra Tracy: Admin@WELFlorida.org.

Update Your Membership Profile at WELFlorida.org.



EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR EXECUTIVE & BOARD LEADERSHIP

ADVOCATE | EDUCATE | CONNECT

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