

# WOW

WOMAN OF ♀ THE WEEK

A 2020 ANTHOLOGY



53 EXECUTIVE WOMEN'S STORIES ON BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP

Pharma**VOICE**  
A SPECIAL PUBLICATION

# Taren Grom

Editor  
PharmaVOICE

WOW

**NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD. INDEED, IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT EVER HAS. — MARGARET MEADE**

Welcome to the second Woman of the Week Anthology. This year we are gifted with an extra WoW. This is a collection of 53 stories showcasing 53 extraordinary leaders representing all facets of the life-sciences industry.

This special ebook is an extension of the popular WoW podcast series, which launched Jan. 2, 2019.

Over the past two years we have had the incredible privilege to interview more than 100 amazing executives who are committed to changing the world of healthcare. Their contributions to enhancing the process, moving the needle, and paving the way for future generations of women leaders are truly inspiring.

This year we are excited to launch this ebook in conjunction with International Women's Day 2021. This year's theme is #ChooseToChallenge at #IWD2021. According to the IWD website, a challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change. So let's all choose to challenge.

We will echo their challenge: How



will you help forge a gender equal world? Please email us your thoughts to: [tgrom@pharmavoice.com](mailto:tgrom@pharmavoice.com).

The 53 women featured in this second year of the series share a common ambition: helping patients.

We thank these women for being so generous and open to sharing their leadership and career journeys, and exposing their vulnerabilities. Many of our storytellers also relate their very personal reasons for joining the healthcare ecosystem and desire to make a difference.

The profiles featured in this anthology are just a snap-shot of their incredible WoW stories. If you have not yet listened to their podcasts, we encourage you to do so. We have provided a link to each of their recordings at the bottom of every profile page.

We hope you enjoy getting to know these women as much as we have. And we are pleased to continue this very popular series in 2021. Check out the current catalog of inspiring podcasts at <https://www.pharmavoice.com/wow-podcasts>. ○

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# Woman of the Week

## A 2020 ANTHOLOGY

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# Catherine Ivy

Founder and Board President  
**Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation**

**I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH FROM WATCHING WHAT OTHERS DO, BOTH FROM THEIR SUCCESSES AND MISTAKES.**

The story behind the Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation is deeply personal for Catherine Ivy, its founder and board president. In 2005, her husband Ben was diagnosed with glioblastoma, a rare and aggressive form of brain cancer. He died four months later.

"For the people diagnosed with brain cancer, advanced Stage 4, 98% of people survive 16 months on average," Catherine says. "Ben was on the shorter side of that, but his quality of life was so compromised that in the big picture it was a blessing that he didn't have to continue on like that."

At the time of Ben's death, there was only one drug to treat glioblastoma, Catherine recalls. "There are more options now, thank goodness," she says. "The life expectancy prediction has not changed, unfortunately, and that's what I'm working very hard on trying to change, but there are more treatment options that can help people."

Today, the Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation is the largest private funder of brain cancer research in the world, Catherine says.

The road has not been easy. In clinical research, progress can be slow, especially for a disease as difficult to treat as brain cancer. But a 2013 Phase 0 clinical trial of a custom drug showed enough promise that a few years later the foundation helped it scale up to 200 patients.

"Basically, the day before a tumor is removed, a patient is given a micro dose of a drug that matches their tumor," Catherine explains. "And the next day during surgery, the surgeon can determine if the medicine got through the blood-brain barrier and if it hit the cancer target. And if so, the patient

continues on that drug cocktail. And if it didn't work, the patient has lost nothing.

"We've invested a substantial amount of money, and we've been very thrilled with the results," she adds. "It's going to take some time, but we will see patterns of which drug cocktails are working based on matching these tumors. Eventually patterns will emerge."

Unlike other foundations, the Ben and Catherine Ivy Foundation doesn't rely on fundraising. "My husband had a real estate company, and I sold that and used the funds to start the foundation," Catherine says. "So, I have a finite budget, which motivates me to get this done. I'm actually grateful we don't fundraise because then we can be fast, and we can be aggressive and fill in what the NIH cannot do.

"I run very lean," she continues. "While there's nothing wrong with conferences and bringing people together, this money is for research. It's not for a bunch of airline tickets and hotels. I just

want to be very focused on changing the research.

"When I first started the foundation, a lot of people very passionately would say, 'oh, if you give us a lot of money, we'll find a cure,' and you cannot buy a cure," Catherine says. "It just doesn't work that way. And so, like any business, time reveals who walks their talk and you learn more and become more fluent in the science. I've learned a lot, and I'm continuing to learn as I go." ○

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**WOW MOMENT: Given how often people do not survive glioblastoma, it fills me up when I meet people whose lives have been extended because of the research we fund.**



# Mary Anne Greenberg

CEO  
Diligent Health Solutions

**I HAVE LEARNED THAT LEADERSHIP IS NOT ABOUT BARKING ORDERS.**

Mary Anne Greenberg took an unusual path to the healthcare industry — early on in her marketing career, she helped with film promotion and did work in high-end computing.

“But it just didn’t provide the same level of satisfaction as working with

**WOW MOMENT: My wow moments are about helping people advance. A year after I hire someone, I’m going to ask them what they want to do next and tell them we’re going to help you get there.**

healthcare clients,” she says. “In my first program I helped improve the enrollment in a clinical trial. And I had another one where we helped with educating parents on how to prevent issues with their children by improving their environment for asthmatic children. After I did those programs I was sort of hooked.”

Now, as CEO of Diligent Health Solutions, Mary Anne and her team focus on providing meaningful services that have a real impact for their clients. “I think in every area where we come in contact with both patients and caregivers it really boils down to communicating in ways that are impactful and convenient, easy to understand, and personalized for those individuals,” she says. “That’s true whether it’s our hub services or patient engagement programs or medical information.”

One example Mary Anne cites is a texting service for oncology patients and oncology nurses. “We have a group of oncology nurses who are mostly texting with patients who are new in their diagnosis and are using a medication that has some pretty devastating side effects,” she says. “And

the feedback on the program has been tremendous. The number of patients who have stayed compliant past the early adoption and getting through the adverse events has been fabulous.”

Mary Anne says her colleagues and teammates are what keep her going. “I’m surrounded by incredible people who care a great deal about the business, about the value of what they do, and when you’re in that situation you can’t help but be energized,” she says. “I’m also energized by how much we have accomplished. We set pretty aspirational goals, and each time I’m confident we’re going to be able to do what we’re setting out to do.”

In terms of aspirations, Mary Anne describes herself as restless. “I’m always thinking about the next improvement that needs to be made,” she says. “We’re always researching new technology, finding ways to attract the right people as we grow. And it’s important to make sure each person isn’t just trying to tick the box that they’ve done what they have been told to do, but that they listen intently and help find clever solutions.”

Mary Anne defines success as being able to gain and retain the trust of clients and colleagues and having a strong reputation for providing high-quality services. “It’s also myself and the company’s ability to attract and continue to retain great talent, as well as to help the next generation find their way,” she says. “And it’s knowing that you’ve always showed them to do the right thing with clients and colleagues.” ○



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# Kaisa Helminen

CEO  
Aiforia Technologies

**I WANT TO BE LIKE A COACH TO HELP OUR TEAM MEMBERS TO SHINE AND SUCCEED; THAT'S THE WAY WE CAN REACH OUR COMMON GOALS.**

The year 2019 was a big one for Kaisa Helminen as CEO of Aiforia Technologies, as the company began applying its AI technology to clinical diagnostics after its success in the R&D space.

“This was a significant and important move for us, as it’s been our goal ever since we founded this company,” Kaisa says. “I think it’s a very important thing, as the clinical diagnostics market in pathology has been suffering from manual and slow analysis methods that are often biased and pose a risk for delays in diagnostic workflows, as well as risk for misdiagnosis. There is actually a big global need to improve the efficiency and accuracy of these workflows, and we have the solution to this need.”

Over the longer term, Kaisa believes AI will have a fundamental role in several medical diagnostic tasks, including image-based diagnostics. “We can already support pathologists very well with the diagnostic tasks, but we actually believe that AI will become a mandatory tool for doctors,” she says. “In 10 years, they won’t make a diagnosis without the help of AI.”

Kaisa has been interested in medicine since high school and was especially intrigued by the mechanisms behind diseases. That led her to study biochemistry at the University of Helsinki.

“But during my master’s thesis research project that was related to molecular mechanisms of immune systems, I realized that perhaps the work by the bench is not really for me after all,” she recalls. “I also wanted to see the commercial side of the market and combine my interest with technology for the role.”

Kaisa feels privileged to have grown up in Finland, which she considered to be an equal society providing both genders with the same opportunities for education and work.

“Still, for some reason, the number of women in leadership positions has not been as high as one would expect,” she says. “Luckily, this number has been growing in the past few years, which is, of course, a very positive sign.”

Kaisa believes her gender has not played as big a role in her becoming CEO as her skills and personality.

“This is also the principle by which I like to operate — selecting the right talent for the right role,” she says. “It’s the most important thing regardless of gender. However, I have to say we have a pretty good gender balance in our technology company — 35% of our team members are women, and I’m expecting that to grow a lot going forward.”

As far as the next generation of C-suite women, Kaisa offers the



following guidance: “I would advise all the young women in technology or science-related roles who are early in their career to fearlessly target the roles they want the same way as men do.”

In general, Kaisa would like to see more women build communities and collaborate more and support each other like men typically do.

“There’s still a lot of work to do in that area for women,” she says. ○

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**LESSONS LEARNED: I've always had a desire to learn new things and listen to and learn from people. Listening is very important in a CEO role.**

# Dr. Susan Dorfman

President  
CMI Media Group

**PEOPLE HAVE OFTEN CALLED ME A FORCE OF NATURE, FOR GOOD OR BAD. I TEND TO NOT NECESSARILY TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER AND CONTINUE TO PUSH FORWARD.**

The past decade at CMI Media Group has flown by for Dr. Susan Dorfman. She brought to the agency her fascination and expertise with data and what it could mean to the world of pharmaceutical marketing from a CRM and field-force effectiveness perspective.

“Ten years ago, big data wasn’t a topic of conversation, and certainly no one talked about agile marketing or precision performance,” Dr. Dorfman says. “We did just that, and it’s evolved ever since,

as has my journey from owning the data to ultimately owning more responsibility not just for the data but what we do with the data.”

Now, as president, Dr. Dorfman remains as excited about her work as ever.

“I often say to people I work with I feel like a child in a candy store,” she says. “When most people on the weekends go away and they’re all excited for Saturday and Sunday, I’m kind of sad because my candy has been taken away. I truly mean it; I love every single day coming to work and spending time with our CMI/Compass family.”

Dr. Dorfman credits her upbringing for preparing her for her current position. She says she grew up with a strong mother in an Eastern European culture whose background and roots mean women tend to be far more dominant.

People have often called her a force of nature, for good or bad. “I tend to not necessarily take no for an answer and continue to push forward,” Dr. Dorfman says.

“I think ultimately this has helped me not to necessarily see gender, but always be me, always be real, always push for the truth, and always do the right thing,” she continues. “I was taught don’t do something to be right, do something right, and I think that’s a really strong way of growing up. You could be wrong and that’s okay, but as long as you’re doing the right thing.”

She notes that as a female leader, she has seen how the circle of peers starts to narrow to an extent where gender differences become more apparent. “There are imbalances, and we owe it to ourselves to make sure we don’t let them paralyze us,” she says. “We owe it to ourselves to make sure we as women

don’t allow it to stop us from achieving what we need to achieve, but also we need to allow ourselves to be able to call it out in a kind, sensitive way. Most people, women included, don’t even realize when they’re doing something that makes you feel like, ‘hey, you would not have done this if I was a male.’

To that end, Dr. Dorfman mentors both women and men, saying her No. 1 mentee right now is her son.

“I want him to be a respectful professional and human being,” she says. “I want him to know that truly when he looks at people and he works with people he should be looking at them based on capability and opportunity and not on gender, race, religion, or orientation. I want him to think about what are his opportunities, what are his capabilities, what are his strengths, and how can everyone collaborate together.”

Working with so many other personalities throughout her career, something that has stayed with Dr. Dorfman is always to try to find the other person’s why, and to never ever get stuck in the negative.

“My advice is to just let the negative go, and try to find out why someone acts in a certain way, and make this a reason for you to continue and thrive and bring them to your side and thrive together. ○

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**ADVICE: When you start from nothing and you have to work every single day to be better, this teaches you that everything is possible.**



# Rauha Tulkki-Wilke

Senior VP, Product Management  
Signant Health

**I LIKE TO LISTEN AND LEARN, BECAUSE THAT'S THE WAY I CAN DEVELOP AND HOW I CAN HELP DEVELOP MY TEAM.**

Rauha Tulkki-Wilke, senior VP, product management at Signant Health, is an advocate for electronic clinical outcome assessment (eCOA) because of its increased accuracy and convenience over traditional COA methods.

In fact, one of the wow moments of her career involved electronic patient diaries. "In the days when we first started working with electronic diaries, we had a study that was going live in Colombia, one of the first countries outside the United States, where they were being used," Rauha says. "The day we received the first electronic day diary from Colombia via an analog modem was a wow moment because we knew the technology had worked."

Today, she says when she and her team start a drug development program, they begin with a clinical outcome assessment. "When we are developing new drugs for, say, Parkinson's disease, before we start measuring how these drugs are working, we establish an understanding of what's meaningful to Parkinson's patients and what they would consider to be an improvement in their condition," she says. "Then, after we've established that, eCOAs are a way for us to measure the outcome accurately. For example, patients might be using a diary at home on their smartphone that captures data exactly at the right time and presents questions to patients at exactly the right time, and no one other than the patient can answer these questions. So, eCOA has been significant in ensuring that we are able to conduct these clinical research studies much more accurately than we could before."

Ms. Tulkki-Wilke says these types of technologies enable sponsors to collect more data from those patients in relation to their everyday lives in the home setting. "So, in addition to asking them

questions about their symptoms or their well-being, we can also utilize sensors and wearables to collect additional data and get a more well-rounded or comprehensive understanding of how the drug is actually impacting patients," she says.

One of the challenges with eCOA solutions is having to make sure they serve the needs of different patient populations. "It's not the same to a parent whose children are receiving a vaccination, or a patient with a terminal illness, or a patient who is diabetic," Rauha says. "There are a variety of conditions that impact patients in different ways. And then, of course, patients can be young or old, highly educated or barely able to read. We need to design these solutions for patients who have very different skills and abilities. It requires sophistication to be able to design solutions that work for everyone as well as, of course, for the indications."

Rauha, who is based in Finland and whose team members are located in the United States and other countries in Europe, says managing a virtual team means it's even more important to get to know your teammates.

"When working from remote locations, it's important to keep connected on whatever digital methods are being used in various companies," she says. "As a leader of the team, I try to touch base with everyone, ask how they are doing, and help them with things that



go on in their daily work. In a virtual environment, what usually happens is that people can contact one another about really big challenges or some great milestones. But they aren't connected about the everyday little things, and those are the things that actually matter a lot to people."

Her advice to others: be patient, be resilient. "When I was younger, I think I was perhaps a little impatient," Rauha says. "If you patiently work towards your vision, you'll get there, but you have to take those steps every day while you are striving for that longer-term vision." ○

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**LESSONS LEARNED: Keep your eyes on the stars, but your feet on the ground. The whole idea is to patiently work toward your vision, you'll get there.**

# Lindsay McNair, M.D.

Chief Medical Officer  
WCG



**WOW MOMENT: THE MOMENT THAT HAS MOST SHAPED MY CAREER IS WHEN I DECIDED TO LEAVE CLINICAL MEDICINE AND GO INTO RESEARCH.**

Lindsay McNair, M.D., is a busy woman. She serves both as chief medical officer of WCG and an adjunct associate professor at the Boston University School of Public Health. She says handling it all is a matter of balance.

**LESSONS LEARNED: I think being in an executive role as a woman, I can speak out about things that other people may not be able to because I am a little more protected.**



"I'm struggling with the same work-life balance issues that a lot of people probably struggle with," Dr. McNair says. "I think a lot of it is just deciding to make time for those things that are most important. That may change day to day, and some days the balance works better than others."

As part of her role at WCG, Dr. McNair is charged with developing strategic partnerships with pharma biotech companies for comprehensive ethical and clinical services. She also oversees a group that provides consultation on HRPP assessment and transformation, ethical trial design, protocol development, data request review and data transparency guidance, and the development of ethical clinical research policies and practices.

"I'm privileged to be able to work with companies and the clinical sites that are sponsoring clinical trials, conducting clinical trials, working on clinical research, and working on the developments of new therapies," she explains. "I see my role as

facilitating the conduct of that research so that it can be done efficiently and effectively but also with real scientific rigor and in a truly ethical way. I find that pretty much everybody working in the research enterprise — the biopharma companies, the investigators, certainly the participants of research studies — all want to do the best, most ethical job that they can."

Dr. McNair is determined to use her role as a female executive to speak out about the need for more women in leadership roles.

"We need diversity in boards of directors and diversity in leadership roles," she says. "If I can use my position and the protection that comes with being in an executive position, I will definitely do that."

"I also feel like I have a responsibility to act as a mentor to younger women within this company and within this industry," she continues. "I get a fair number of calls from women who are practicing medicine but are unhappy and want advice."

As a trained clinician who left medicine for research, Dr. McNair says she talks to a lot of people who are thinking about leaving clinical medicine for other careers, and she's happy to do so. "I think it is a failure of career planning in medical school that we teach people that if you do not practice clinical medicine, you are a failure as a doctor," she says. "That's one of the other areas where I see my responsibility." ○

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When the  
leaders  
developing  
COVID-19  
interventions  
chose an IRB,  
550 of them  
chose us.

*"Tremendous hard work, teamwork and collaboration for our COVID-19 studies! Prioritizing reviews, weekends and endless hours working in the night, I'm very thankful for the WCG IRB team in working so closely with us to meet the challenges we faced. You were always there to help and bring attention to our priorities."*

—SENIOR DIRECTOR, GLOBAL SITE START-UP, TOP 5 CRO



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# Kinnari Patel, Pharm.D.

Chief Operating Officer & Head of Development  
**Rocket Pharmaceuticals**

**I BELIEVE THERE'S A LOT MORE WE NEED TO DO TO GET WOMEN TO THE TABLE; I KNOW THERE ARE SO MANY FEMALES WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO DO THIS EVEN BETTER THAN I CAN.**

In her role as chief operating officer and head of development at Rocket Pharmaceuticals, Kinnari Patel, Pharm.D., is pursuing her passion for unlocking cures for rare diseases.

“For the last 15 years I've focused on rare disease drug development,” Dr. Patel says.

In the years before Dr. Patel joined Rocket, she says she saw the entry of pharma solutions that extend the lives of patients suffering from some life-threatening rare diseases. However, she notes that only 10% of the roughly 7,000 rare diseases that have been identified have treatment options. And for her, the challenge is finding one-and-done cures for more rare diseases.

“This is how I ended up joining — where the focus is simple,” she says. “We want to help patients with rare diseases — mostly pediatric indications — and we want to do this from a scientific platform that is a one-and-done cure, hopefully, for these patients. My passion is about making an impact one patient, one disease at a time.”

Dr. Patel has been instrumental in leading Rocket's growth from a three-person company to a public company with five innovative gene therapy products in development.

“It's absolutely insane to think how far we've come in such a short time,” she says. “The first few months we actually didn't even have our own office space. So, for six months, four of us — our chief medical officer, our CEO, myself, and another colleague — were in the back conference room, sharing a table trying to figure out what products do we license? What are the monogenic

diseases out there? What gene therapeutic platforms could be applicable for them? It was like a little puzzle box.

“To get as far as we did so quickly was something we hoped for, but never expected this,” she says.

Despite being one of a handful of women in a chief operating officer role at a pharma company, Dr. Patel has never really thought of herself a role model. “To me, this comes with such a sense of responsibility and accomplishment, and I feel like I'm just getting started,” she says.

When she first became chief operating officer, Dr. Patel tried to reach out to other women leaders who were in similar positions, only to find that most startup companies had traditional all-male leadership teams. “So, it was quite a lonely job at first,” she says.



Then, her CEO recommended that she attend a Harvard Business School program designed for C-suite leaders. “At this program, I was able to interact with leaders from 40-plus countries, including a handful of female leaders,” she says. “I was able to formulate the skill sets and toolboxes needed to help us succeed in the next phase.”

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**WOW MOMENT:** My career has been shaped every time I interact with patients, or they get access to a rare disease therapy. I feel this huge sense of accomplishment and also this huge need to do more.

# Karmen Trzupek

Director, Clinical Trial Services and Rare Disease Programs  
InformedDNA

**THE NO. 1 THING THAT I DO TO INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE MY TEAM IS HELP THEM TO REALIZE HOW MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE WE ARE MAKING.**

Karmen Trzupek has a background in clinical genetic counseling, which serves her well in her position as director, clinical trial services and rare disease programs at InformedDNA, a provider of genetic counseling and genetics benefit management services.

“To me, genetic counseling is really



the core of what I do; it’s my center,” Karmen says. “I’ve been practicing as a clinical genetic counselor for more than 18 years, and in some ways I would say what I do today is not genetic counseling, but once a genetic counselor, always a genetic counselor.

“Over the years I’ve counseled literally thousands of patients, and those patients are really vulnerable,” she continues. “People really open up about what this disease means to them, what it could mean to them, and their fears and their losses. They go through a grief period about what a diagnosis means for their child’s future. Those conversations and those experiences, profoundly affect the way I now think about developing and implementing programs in support of clinical trials because all of it is very patient-focused.”

Genetic testing has come a long way since Karmen first began genetic counseling. “First of all, we didn’t know a lot about the genes that cause some diseases, so for those diseases all we could offer patients was to participate in research studies to help us try to find the genes that affect disease,” she says.

“In other cases, maybe we had identified some of the genes but not all. So, we would go ahead and order testing, but the likelihood of finding an answer might be 20% or 10%. That didn’t mean a patient didn’t have the disease; it just meant we didn’t

know enough about the genetics of the disease yet.”

Karmen says today that dynamic has dramatically flipped. “Genetic testing has gotten so much better,” she says. “It’s gotten so much cheaper. It has completely changed the way that we can utilize genetic testing to help obtain a really accurate diagnosis for patients.”

In fact, Karmen says one of her more memorable wow moments was an opportunity a couple of years ago to serve as an expert responder for Spark Therapeutics’ presentation to the FDA Advisory Panel in reviewing the data on the company’s gene therapy for RPE65-related retinal dystrophy. “This was such an honor,” she says.

As a leader, Karmen says looks for the strengths in others. “Some of the genetic counselors who I work with are clearly natural leaders for whom we try to find opportunities to help them develop additional skills,” she says. “But not everyone was meant to lead. So, I try to look for other strengths and other interests because, ultimately, I want every one to feel fulfilled.”

Karmen says she came to InformedDNA with a singular purpose: to deliver the same level of specialty care that she did in an academic research clinic. “And 10 years later, when I’m directing clinical trial services, this purpose still guides me, and it still guides our success,” she says. ○

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**ADVICE: When volunteering make sure its something that you’re passionate about, and that it’s something that fills a need.**

# Renee Ryan

CEO  
Cala Health

**IN THE LATER PART OF MY CAREER, WHEN I WAS THE PARTNER IN CHARGE OF BUILDING GROUPS, I NEVER FORGOT WHERE I CAME FROM.**

Renee Ryan, who joined Cala Health as CEO in 2019, says she was bitten by the healthcare bug back in her earliest days as an investment banker.

Over the years she's had the opportunity to work with life-sciences companies such as Johnson & Johnson, Medtronic, and Stryker.

"My journey has been an interesting one in terms of all the various opportunities I've had, and it's all been in healthcare," she says. "I talk about my journey being one as a way to get closer and closer to patients."

Renee met Cala founder Kate Rosenbluth five years ago at the Stanford Biodesign Fellowship Program and was so excited by the wearable neuromodulation therapy she was presenting that she became a lead investor in its Series A investment offering.

"I've been on the board of Cala since day one and really was a driver to help Kate think about founding the company and pursuing this exciting area," she says.

Cala's neuromodulation wearable, Cala Trio, is approved to treat essential tremor and last year received a breakthrough device

designation from the FDA to treat action tremors in the hands of adult Parkinson's patients.

"One of the things Kate and I knew we wanted to do a little differently when she was founding the company was to put the patient at the center of our

business model," Renee says.

"Cala Trio is a regulated medical device that needs a prescription. The other businesses that look and feel like us are similar to prescription insulin pumps or continuous glucose monitors that are directly shipped to the patient. So that was how we went to market. We're currently working on reimbursement.

"Once we get the prescription from the physician, we interact directly with the patient to train them on the device" she continues.

"They're paying for the device and the technology."

Over the long term, Renee sees Cala's technology expanding for use in the brain and other deep-organ targets.

"We see indications across neurology, cardiology, and others," she says. "But right now we're keenly focused on essential tremor and meeting our patients' needs."

In terms of her style, Renee sees leadership and management as two separate skill sets with some commonalities.

"A big thing for me is to lead by example in terms of work ethic and the standards we hold ourselves to," she says. "All of this is part of my leadership style.

"As part of my management style, which I do think is a separate category, I talk to my team a lot about bringing their best selves to work," Renee continues. "The reason I use that



language specifically is because your best self is not my best self, and so I like to get to meet people where they are and then help them advance. These are some of the principles that I've always followed whether I was partner at an investment bank or growing teams and building the group here at Cala." ○

Listen to podcast 

**WOW MOMENT: I've started other companies, but you never forget your first time.**

# Sandy Solmon

CEO and President  
**Celavie Biosciences**

**R&D AND MANUFACTURING ARE ESSENTIALLY THE SAME, WHETHER IT'S STEM CELLS OR LUSCIOUS CHOCOLATE CAKES.**

Sandy Solmon wears two drastically different CEO hats. She leads the stem cell therapy company Celavie Biosciences as co-founder, president, and CEO and she serves as founder, CEO, and chief innovator of Sweet Street Desserts, a global manufacturer



of frozen gourmet desserts, which she started in 1979 baking chocolate chip cookies from a two-bay garage. Her entry into the life-sciences came a bit later when she was named CEO of Celavie 13 years ago.

“Honestly, I’m still trying to assimilate how these two worlds have converged,” she says. “But it’s become clearer as I move out into speaking to the industry that R&D and manufacturing are essentially the same, whether it’s stem cells or luscious chocolate cakes.”

Sandy says as a leader she always brings her whole self to the table.

“I’ve always been a big picture thinker and I have a strong instinct, which leaves me no option but to follow my intuition — be it Sweet Street or Celavie,” she says. “These are big ideas that needed nurturing, and I’ve always had the patience to see the ideas I believe in to fruition.”

When a scientist introduced Sandy to stem cell technology, which would become the basis for Celavie, she immediately saw its elegance, power, and potential for disruption.

“I recognized that we had a chance to change the paradigm of healing,” she says. “I felt truly compelled to help out.”

At the time of her podcast, Celavie was seeking FDA approval to enter a double blind, placebo-controlled, randomized Phase I clinical trial of its

human allogeneic pluripotent stem cells in patients with moderate to advanced Parkinson’s disease — a cause near and dear to Sandy.

“I understood there was a great need, because I had just coincidentally watched my father-in-law die of Parkinson’s disease, and it was horrible to see,” she says. “Essentially he was encased in concrete, unable to speak or move at the end. He was once a voluble New York City dentist to celebrities, such as comedian Jerry Lewis. It was a horrible death to watch.”

Sandy considers herself an intuitive, instinctive leader. “I’m able to see opportunities that are less than obvious to support our direction,” she says. “And at Celavie, even though I’m not a trained neuroscientist, this might be a novel direction in research. I always lead with purpose and mission. I always come back to our goal, and how to stay focused.”

Whether she is in the midst of the greatest existential moments at Sweet Street or Celavie, Sandy is at her most calm, strongest, and most strategic. “I rarely look back,” she says. “I work to find solutions. I never blame. And I believe this builds confidence among team members to stretch and to take risks. That trust can particularly be harvested when the stars align and opportunities present themselves. So it’s about creating moments, and I will always be there to help find the way out of a difficult moment.” ○

**Listen to podcast** 

**WoW Moment:** When we received the five-year follow up for our human Parkinson’s disease trial. I just felt that calm, pure thrill of staying with something that would make a huge difference in the world and seeing that what we are doing could come to fruition.

# Susan Kalk

Senior VP, Chief Quality & Technical Operations Officer  
**Sunovion Pharmaceuticals**

**INTEGRITY AND RESPECT ARE KEY METRICS FOR ME, AS IS THE ABILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN AN ORGANIZATION.**

Susan Kalk's affinity with pharma began at the molecular level.

"I think I was probably born a chemist," she says. "I had a fascination with science from early on. In my childhood, I would run my own experiments at home, which surprised my parents because nobody else in the family had any science background or knowledge up until that point."

Susan applied her passion to science classes in high school, and carried this through in college, where she focused on biochemistry.

"I think my fascination stemmed from the fact that there's a whole world that exists at the molecular level that is invisible to everybody, but one that explains everything that we see in the world," she says. "This fascination drove me to science."

Now, as senior VP, chief quality and technical operations officer, for Sunovion Pharmaceuticals, she is helping to make sure the company's quality control mission extends to patients. She notes that Sunovion has a number of patient advocacy programs across multiple therapeutic areas, and that they incorporate the voice of the patient. Even in the R&D space, the company solicits feedback on product designs by asking patients what they find most meaningful.

"It's so important for us to interact directly with patients," she says. "I know a number of companies that choose to outsource certain parts of quality operations to third parties, but for Sunovion and for me, I've always insisted that the patient deserves to speak to a company representative who's an expert on the product. This access gives patients access to people who have an intimate knowledge about how to use the product and to receive the help they need. This approach and the resulting

patient perspectives have really helped our strategic approach," she says. "There have been some very heartwarming conversations that we've had with patients and caregivers over time.

"We know that in so many areas, such as devices and combination products, regulators are insisting that the patient voice is included in the design of products," she continues. "Patients are having a much bigger input into what they want based on their medical needs. We were one of the first groups to have focused on including patients from the beginning, so it's gratifying to see the patient voice included in more and more areas."

As a woman at the executive level, Susan believes she has a responsibility to blaze the trail at Sunovion for women and girls who will be the company's next generation of leaders.

"I take this responsibility seriously, and I want to make it as easy as possible for them to be successful when they reach this level," she says.

One of the ways in which Susan is trying to encourage women in leadership positions is by serving as the executive sponsor for a leading essentials program that is encouraging



women to strengthen their leadership skills and their confidence.

"We are starting an internal women's group that will allow for mentoring and networking among our senior women leaders to take their leadership to the next level and to support and encourage the next generation of women leaders," she says. ○

**Listen to podcast** 

**WOW MOMENT: Being appointed to Sunovion's executive leadership team was a key moment and a huge honor for me.**

# Smital Shah

Chief Business and Financial Officer  
ProQR

WOW

**I LEARNED VERY EARLY ON THAT YOU CAN'T TAKE THINGS FOR GRANTED, AND YOU HAVE TO WORK HARD AT WHAT YOU DO.**

Smital Shah sees joining ProQR as chief business and financial officer as coming full circle. "I grew up in India, where there are a lot of local entrepreneurs," Smital says. "My parents were entrepreneurs; they started their small business together, which was making APIs, the active pharmaceutical ingredients that go into medicines. From then I was exposed to business, I was interested in it. I saw them build their business; there was always a part of me that wanted to do that."

**WOW MOMENT: One of those moments was my ability to adapt to a different culture and navigate a different country when I came to the United States. My move to the U.S., in changed a lot of who I am today.**

After going to graduate school in the United States for chemical engineering, Smital chose to go into pharma R&D. She spent time at Johnson & Johnson before going to business school at Berkeley.

"Given J&J was my first job and being at such a big company, what I really missed was the strategic part of it: how portfolio decisions were made, what kind of financial metrics were being used, how did they decide where the company was going," she says.

From Berkeley, she spent the next 17-plus years in investment banking. "It was fantastic to be a financial strategist and investment banker, and I got a whole new perspective on how decisions were made," Smital says. "However, I was not really building a business. So, in a sense when I came back to ProQR it allowed me to do both — build the business as well as be on the strategy side."

Smital says it's not hard to be passionate working for a rare disease company like ProQR. "It's easy to be inspired just simply by the environment," she says. "Our founding CEO, Daniel de Boer, has a child with a rare disease. That's part of the reason this company was founded, and in a way it's in our DNA — or I should say RNA, because we're focused on RNA-based

therapeutics targeting rare genetic diseases that affect people's eyes."

Smital is excited by the prospects and positive impact that ProQR can have on underserved patient communities. "We're in an unprecedented time of innovation, a lot of people have called it the golden age of biotech," she says. "We are also on the cusp where health sciences is crossing into high tech. At ProQR we are making a lot of effort to generate what we call translational models, which can predict what we do in the lab can be done in the lab."

As far as advice to women seeking to enter the C-suite, Smital says she encourages them to be bolder. She cites a study that shows while women try to check all the boxes before they even consider applying for a job, men will think they're qualified and apply even if they only meet 50% of the criteria.

"I think confidence is a very, very big part of it," she says. "And I would say sometimes women just have to take the plunge."

Smital says when she was a first time chief financial officer, she leaned on a lot of other CFOs, and asked a lot of questions.

"And then I came to whatever decision I needed to make," she says. "I was nervous about it being my first role in an international company, but it didn't stop me from taking that first C-suite role." ○



Listen to podcast



# Sharon Shacham, Ph.D.

Founder, President, and Chief Scientific Officer  
**Karyopharm Therapeutics Inc.**

**I NEVER ASK ANYONE TO DO SOMETHING THAT I WOULDN'T DO MYSELF, AND I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE MORE OF A TEACHER THAN A BOSS.**

Sharon Shacham, Ph.D., tapped into her background in computational biophysics to use algorithms to create three-dimensional models representing complicated proteins, and then used those models to identify the proteins that are important for the survival of cancer cells, and then develop drugs that will inhibit them.

Karyopharm Therapeutics got its start when Dr. Shacham identified its first protein while sitting at her kitchen table. The resulting compound became selinexor, brand name Xpovio, which is now approved to treat multiple myeloma and relapsed or refractory diffuse large B-cell lymphoma. And Karyopharm Therapeutics has grown from one woman to 300-plus employees.

Throughout the company's evolution, Dr. Shacham says the company's mission has stayed the same: to develop new therapies for patients with advanced cancers.

"Selinexor was the first compound, and we hope to expand its use to many other cancers, and then to advance our other compounds," she says.

Dr. Shacham says moving selinexor through the pipeline is certainly one of the biggest wow moments of her career.

"When I met the first woman to receive selinexor, I was shaking when I shook her hand," she says. "It was so humbling for me. She told our employees she wouldn't be alive and standing there talking to them if not for selinexor. This gives you all of the energy, resilience, and the courage to move forward with what we do."

"Think of the biggest roller coaster you've ever been on, and now multiply that by 100, that's drug development," she continues. "Getting a drug approved, is a mission and a vision. It's consuming, and it should be. Every success and

every milestone achieved until the drug is approved is so big, and it's such a high."

For Dr. Shacham one of the most important values is to lead by example. "When we have a tough time, when we have a complicated problem to solve, we work together, and this gets us through," she says.

The New York Intellectual Property Law Association recognized Dr. Shacham's scientific research and achievements for Xpovio with the 2019 Inventor of the Year award, an honor that means a great deal to her. "I think I was the first woman that received this honor in maybe 10 years," she says. "But it's so important that this work is recognized, that we can speak about it. And I hope this encourages other women to pursue their dreams and to become leaders in an industry that still today heavily, at least at the top, includes mostly men."

One area where Dr. Shacham feels women executives can stumble is in not highlighting their accomplishments enough. "I know when I meet with my female leaders, they will ignore all of their success, and just talk to me about the obstacles they are facing in order to achieve their goals," she says. "When women move into executive levels, board seats, etc. it's really important

to come with a story and to highlight those successes," she adds.

To create opportunities for its female leaders, Karyopharm provides mentorship programs and other skill-building initiatives. Dr. Shacham says she recognizes that she has a responsibility to pave the way for the next generation of women leaders. "I hope I can be a role model," she says. "Many women entrepreneurs contact me, and I always try to help." ○

**Listen to podcast**



**WOW MOMENT: When I met the first woman who received selinexor, I was shaking when I shook her hand. It was so humbling for me. She told our employees she wouldn't be alive standing there talking to them if not for selinexor. When you hear this it gives you all the energy, resilience, and courage to move forward with what we do.**

# Kellie Malloy Foerter

Chief Clinical Development Officer  
OncoSec Medical

**I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERTISE AND HELP PEOPLE DEVELOP ON THEIR OWN CAREER TRAJECTORIES BASED ON THEIR INTERESTS AND FOCUS.**

For Kellie Malloy Foerter, transitioning from 20 years on the CRO side of the life-sciences business to the pharma and biotech side as chief clinical development officer for OncoSec wasn't a big leap. She had been leading clinical operations and activities for years and she had worked closely with many different partners, from small biotech companies to larger pharma organizations.

"In doing so, I got a good appreciation for the perspectives coming from the

pharma side of the business, as well as the passion driving those in this industry to find solutions for patients," Kellie says. "I have to say, it was a pretty easy transition to this role with OncoSec Medical. I felt like I could bring the years of experience and expertise that came from the CRO side of the business to delivery of our oncology portfolio."

A typical day for Kellie involves focusing on bringing OncoSec's studies forward, making sure that the investigative sites have all they need to manage their trials, and that the company is supporting their efforts and as well as trial participants.

"I think it's been a little bit more challenging right now with the COVID outbreak," she says. "We're really focused on finding ways we can lessen the burden for patients and ensure we maintain safety of the site staff and all of the trial participants."

Kellie says the pandemic has prompted OncoSec to look more closely at leveraging electronic medical records (EMRs) wherever possible, including some remote monitoring. "I see this as a trend that will come forward in a more meaningful way over the next few years," she says. "Patient data will go directly into a study database from the EMR without the interim need for sites to enter data separately," she says.

Kellie says another trend is the increasing focus on personalized medicine and its accompanying technology.

She notes an interesting anecdote involving leveraging astronomy and galaxy mapping technology that Drs. Janis Taube and Alexander Szalay had developed for the microtumor environment. "I think this will significantly change our understanding of solid tumor cancers as the data begins to build within that database they have created," she says. "I think there's a lot of exciting new data that's going to be coming from initiatives such as this, which will help us battle cancer in a more personalized way."

Kellie doesn't consider herself a role model, but she does focus on mentoring individuals within the industry. "This is one of the most rewarding aspects of my role and was important to my career journey, she says.

"I think there is an approach to strong team building that women excel at," Kellie continues. "Not to say women are the only ones who can build a strong and effective team, but I think there's a level of sensitivity that women may bring to the table that may not have been present previously. Women have an ability to really build consensus within team structures."

In October 2020, Kellie was named VP, global clinical trials strategy and operations, NRDG & ISR at Bristol Myers Squibb. In her new role, in addition to focusing on clinical excellence she is concentrating efforts on improving diversity, inclusion, and equity as part of the healthcare equation. ○

Listen to podcast 

**LESSONS:** I've learned that there are times you don't have to have all the answers, there are experts in the field who are willing to help, so don't be afraid to ask questions.



# Sharon Callahan

CEO  
CDM

**WOMEN TEND TO THINK THEY HAVE TO DO SOMETHING BEFORE THEY CAN BE SOMETHING — GET THEIR MBA OR GET GLOBAL EXPERIENCE TO QUALIFY FOR A JOB. MEN DON'T THINK THAT WAY.**

A leader in the healthcare communications space and the 2019 Healthcare Businesswoman's Association woman of the year, Sharon Callahan is an inspiration for many women in the industry. Today, she is CEO of CDM and chief client officer of Omnicom Health Group.

She is focused on ensuring that CDM is an even better and more storied agency network than it's ever been. To make this goal a reality, Sharon is looking for the next round of talent from many different places. Sharon and her team continue to build the team with talent from big consumer agencies and consumer digital agencies.

"There's lots of talent out there and I'm interested in people who can get really excited about the industry, especially amongst millennials who want their work to have a higher purpose," she says.

At the same time, she is seeking to balance the needs of seasoned professionals, adjusting to their needs and wants with more flexible hours and different ways of working. Indeed, the past year with the pandemic has been one of huge change for everyone and Sharon says things aren't going back to the way they were before.

"We have to reinvent our whole industry and there's a ton of work to be done," she says. "What is the future going to be like? I think that's a lot of fun."

The past year has been one of change for everyone, but what does concern Sharon is a sense that the movement of women in leadership positions in corporations has stalled.

"I think that's being caused by a few factors," she says. "Women tend to get to a certain point in their career where

their experience is superb, but they don't really understand the importance of their network and of their relationships and the personal traits that they need to bring forth to be at the top of a company."

She says her experience as the Healthcare Businesswomen's Association's Woman of the Year in 2019 has energized her to be much more of an evangelist about bringing one's whole self to work and understanding what is required to get to the C-suite.

"I hear how frustrated women get about not rising to top roles despite all their achievements and it's really because they don't know how the game is played," she says.

Sharon understands this frustration all too well and says if she could go back and give her younger self one piece of advice it would be to stop worrying that she was going to do the wrong thing.

"I was so worried about getting everything perfect that I didn't focus on the bigger, more important things," she says. "I also wouldn't work so hard or so much because some of that hard work didn't really pay off until I realized that that's not what it's all about."

A wow moment for Sharon in her own career occurred when she wasn't chosen to oversee the Omnicom Health Group four years ago. "I decided to be confident and ask why not," she says.



"When I was told why it made sense — what I brought to the table was not what they were looking for in that job. At that moment, I really realized that you can be more powerful when you are able to express yourself. It also helped me to understand what I needed to do to raise my profile and do better. It's really hard to do, but the only way to get results is to take action, and you can't be effective in taking action if you don't know what's happening beneath surface and having honest conversations with people. You don't get good results without any of that." ○

Listen to podcast 

**ADVICE: Building your network and your support system is very important. Senior women don't need mentors; they need sponsors to raise their profile when a big job becomes available.**

# Jessica Grossman, M.D.

CEO  
Medicines360

**IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE TENACITY AND GRIT AND BE OKAY THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE EVERYONE'S BEST FRIEND.**

As CEO of a nonprofit pharma company and research organization Medicines360, Jessica Grossman, M.D., is focused on providing women with access to the medicines they need. The company started out before the Affordable Care Act to address the huge inequities for women in terms of access to birth control by bringing an affordable hormonal IUD to market.

The company has received FDA

**ADVICE: I've had many moments where I'm the only woman executive in the room, and sometimes people who don't know me gravitate toward the males. An important lesson has been to take a step back, take stock, and let yourself shine in an authentic manner.**

approval for six years of contraception for its IUD and clinical studies are continuing on the product, including a concurrent study to add heavy menstrual bleeding to the label.

"We're continuing to enhance the value of the product and enhance the access attributes for women across the globe," Dr. Grossman says.

She says barriers to access aren't only insurance status but also cost and geography, as well as limited knowledge about contraception options, and the company is looking to launch the product in some countries in Africa.

"One of the other big things that we do as a nonprofit pharma company is education and advocacy," she says. "We launched a national campaign on social media called #notawkward, where we're encouraging women to have open conversations about their reproductive health."

As a leader in women's health, Dr. Grossman is working to influence healthcare policy by advocating to support the 340(b) drug pricing program, as well as to protect the federal Title 10 Program for family planning.

In addition to helping women get the healthcare support they need, Jessica is also committed to empowering the next generation of women leaders. Indeed, the company's chief business officer is a woman, the chief operating officer is a woman, and more than half the board is female.

"I'm very lucky, I have a lot of female

board members, as well as senior female members of my management team, but we all need to look around and raise up the women around us," she says, adding that as a woman leader she can see how good women are at juggling families and careers. "Women are amazing in their ability to multitask and their diversity of talent, so it's important for us to stand up and recognize each other."

Dr. Grossman says she has had amazing male and female mentors throughout her career, but often women don't get the sort of breaks given to men. To get that break, she says it's important for women to find a mentor and a sponsor and to put their hands up for stretch projects whenever possible.

"Also be your own megaphone and talk about your strengths and what you've accomplished," she says. "I don't think that women do that as naturally as men do, but it's important to advocate for ourselves."

As a leader, Dr. Grossman believes in creating a culture of transparency and eliminating hierarchy as much as possible. To that end, Medicines360 has an open office, with everyone sitting together and approachable. She adds that, particularly in current times with the stress of COVID-19, it's important to be sensitive to what's going on in employees' lives. "As leaders we need to make sure that we're being open and inclusive and try to keep a smile on our face, even in hard times," she says. ○



Listen to podcast



# Margret Yu, M.D.

VP, Disease Area Leader, Prostate Cancer  
**Janssen Research and Development**

**I WANTED TO BE ABLE TO MAKE MORE OF AN IMPACT WITH PATIENTS AND I FELT THAT I WASN'T ABLE TO DO IT FAST ENOUGH IN ACADEMIA. THAT WAS THE FORK IN THE ROAD WHEN I DECIDED TO GO INTO R&D FULL TIME.**

Early in her career, Margaret Yu, M.D., realized she wanted to develop more and better treatment options for patients. Her experience working as a physician in Veterans' Affairs caring for men who had metastatic prostate cancer led her to R&D, and, ultimately to join Janssen as a clinical researcher and now VP, disease area leader for prostate cancer.

"My experience at VA taught me that it's not just about generating the best data and getting approval by the health authority, it's also important to have the expectations of the payers met so that the medicines can get into the hands of the patient," she says.

Dr. Yu says what drew her to prostate cancer was that it is a fascinating field and the second-most common cancer in men, yet a disease with unmet need.

"While we've made lots of advances in treating prostate cancer, we're still trying to figure out how to best translate the differences in tumor biology from one patient to the next patient, and develop personalized care for each patient based on that understanding," she says.

In her search for drug candidates, Dr. Yu says a medicine must not only extend progression-free survival but also be well tolerated, maintain quality of life, and be convenient for the patient.

Aside from the complexity of the disease itself, one of the barriers to bringing products to market is how long clinical trials take. One of the benefits of the pandemic, she says, is that it has pushed organizations to incorporate remote study monitoring into clinical trial conduct.

"In the past patients had to come into the clinic to receive their study medicines, and now we're talking about

patients receiving study drugs at home," she says.

Going forward, Dr. Yu says her hope is that it will be possible to develop very specific therapies to treat each type of cancer.

"Currently, we tend to treat all prostate cancers the same way, but the more we learn about how prostate cancer is segmented, the better we'll be able to figure out what specific therapies we could use to treat each subtype," she says.

Beyond her research role, Dr. Yu is committed to advocating for women researchers.

"It's important that we work on getting more women into R&D as an organization, instead of just talking about diversity and inclusion," she says. "At Janssen, we're working to implement this into a broader goal."

Her leadership style is to empower the people around her, sometimes working to draw people out to support their career. "I've had men and women provide me with resources, support, and ideas and I try to take what they taught me and encourage women to build connections, even if informal, because this helps build better teams," she says.

The one piece of advice she would give her younger self is to be more thoughtful about what work-life balance



really meant to her and to really reflect what she wanted for her career.

"It's hard to do because you don't always know what you don't know," she says. "However, I'm very happy with where I am today. Each experience has taught me a lot and I wouldn't trade anything for the path that I've had." ○

**Listen to podcast**



**ADVICE: Girls should be encouraged by parents, by teachers, by their family, even the media to explore science, to be really curious about science. There's this perception that girls are not good at STEM subjects. We need to talk to girls about science early so that the culture changes over time.**

# Cinda Orr

CEO  
SCORR Marketing



**EACH CAREER HAS ITS CHALLENGES, BUT IF YOU KEEP FOCUSED AND POKE AT OPPORTUNITIES IT PROPELS YOU FORWARD.**

From a personal journey that took her to Nebraska, to the decision to build a drug development marketing agency in the state, Cinda Orr has been on what she describes as “a crazy ride full of good fortune.”

Starting SCORR was, she says, a bit disarming because she liked being behind the scenes helping others to achieve their goals. She also had to expand her accounting and operational skills and become

a jack-of-all-trades, but she quickly learned where she needed help and to seek out the talent to fill those skill sets.

She recalls early in her career while working at Harris Laboratories, she hated giving presentations and wasn't comfortable in leadership meetings being the only female. “Bob Harris, president of Harris Labs, told me while I was probably the most analytical person on the team, he couldn't promote me because of my reticence to speak out,” she says. “He and his wife Marilyn, who was the head of training, mentored me to help me grow. That was the greatest gift I was given and I try to pay it forward to this day.”

Perhaps the most rewarding part of the journey has been watching young talent grow and today many people who started their careers at SCORR are now in senior roles.

“We're investing in industry veterans working alongside young talented people who bring knowledge of the changing tactics and technologies within the industry,” she says.

Much has changed in the industry since Cinda started out.

“I remember the first barcoded label and the first study management system and how long it took for those to become standards, and I compare that to where we are right now and the future is here,” she says. “COVID-19 has been a catalyst for change — from the diversification of IT to how we conduct trials. Virtual and decentralized trials will become more popular and

essential to efficient research.” She adds that one problem that persists is the small number of physicians and patients who participate in clinical trials. As president of Bridging Clinical Research & Clinical Healthcare Collaborative, Cinda is striving to improve access to clinical research as a care option for patients. She collaborated with John Potthoff, president of Elligo, to bring together stakeholders from regulatory, technology, healthcare, and research to improve participation in clinical research. They are now working with The Conference Forum to merge their respective events in order to broaden the spectrum of discussion, entertain more diverse viewpoints, and rally companies to act. As a seasoned entrepreneur, Cinda says if she were to do it again she would tell herself not to wait until she was 50 to start her own business and to be ready to do every job in the organization, while knowing she won't enjoy every aspect of it.

“I'd also advise any entrepreneur to learn how to sense when a storm is coming,” she says. “Refine your instincts so you can see the trends that are coming before they emerge and act on them before others are even aware of them. My last and biggest piece of advice is that life is a competition; you need to be ready to work harder than you have ever worked before.”

This is what makes her leadership style and the SCORR culture different. ○

Listen to podcast 



**ADVICE: One of the keys to whatever success I've had is that I don't dwell on the past, but I do recognize that I don't know what I don't know.**

# Mary Szela

CEO and President  
TriSalus Life Sciences

**I ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO GET INTO THE SMALLER COMPANY ENVIRONMENT; IT'S JUST SO RICH WITH EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES.**

During her career, Mary Szela has made a name for building billion-dollar businesses, turning around faltering businesses, igniting growth in stagnate businesses, and devising innovative and differentiated strategies for undistinguished products.

Mary says there are two key factors that determine how she chooses opportunities: First, are the people involved committed and with the highest integrity? And two, will the product do something meaningful for patients?

One of Mary's big achievements was growing Humira into a global brand while she was at Abbott. She and the team took a different path to what other companies were taking at the time by engaging patients digitally to share issues they were facing and discuss what solutions they needed.

"It helped us collect a lot of data and then figure out how do we help patients," she says. "When I was running the U.S. pharma business for Abbott in 2009, first-quarter sales were incredibly low. We didn't realize what the financial crisis was doing to patients, who either couldn't afford the co-pay or had to meet a huge deductible. It was a hugely humbling experience because while we can create innovative medicines, they also have to be accessible. This was the first time we launched some aggressive co-pay assistance and support programs."

Today as CEO and president of TriSalus Life Sciences, Mary is looking at new ways to create value for patients, such as how to integrate technology and therapeutics to create transformational solutions.

TriSalus is developing investigational treatments to attack liver metastases and pancreatic solid tumors and

stimulate the immune system by delivering a combination of immunotherapies directly to the site of disease.

"In our preclinical models, as well as our clinical models, we get up to 10 times the effect with the therapy directly injected into the solid tumor," she says.

Mary's motivation at TriSalus is also personally driven, having lost her sister to breast cancer.

"She was being infused with all these toxic drugs, but the treatment wasn't helping her at all and ultimately, we learned the therapy never even got to her tumors," she says. "That's just unconscionable, we have to fix that."

As someone who has made it to the top of the C-suite, Mary says her advice to women is to believe in what they can do.

"I encourage every woman to think she absolutely has the capability and skill level to go as far as she wants to go," she says. "Don't exclude yourself from the opportunity to be in a boardroom. We need more women on boards to bring diverse approaches. Women have strong team-building and camaraderie skills that help mobilize people around the table toward a result."

She says women need to think about



their brand and the capabilities they bring to the table. Mary says she learned that she excelled at turning around struggling companies by figuring out the value and then bringing in a team to execute on that value.

"I tell people to pick something you're good at," she says. "Every experience is going to teach you things that you never thought you could ever do. Having a very prescriptive defined path may not serve you as well as just looking for what you're good at and trying to learn." ○

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**LESSONS: I never really went after the job everybody thought I would go after. I usually chose the job that no one wanted and tried to make something valuable out of it.**

# TriSalus Life Sciences Proudly Supports Women Leaders in the Life Sciences Industry

Not only are we committed to creating better treatment options for cancer patients, TriSalus Life Sciences is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for women in life sciences to reach their potential and become strong leaders for the future of innovation.

This International Women's Day, we celebrate all women breaking barriers and recognize their contributions to the healthcare industry, especially our own CEO and President, **Mary Szela**, who is personally committed to creating better treatment options for patients suffering from solid tumors.

**To learn more, visit [TriSalusLifeSci.com](https://www.TriSalusLifeSci.com)**



# Susanne Munksted

Chief Precision Officer  
Diaceutics

**I'D LIKE TO SEE WOMEN FOLLOW THE PIPPI LONGSTOCKING MOTTO, WHICH IS "THIS IS NEW, I'VE NOT TRIED IT BEFORE SO I'M SURE I'LL BE VERY GOOD AT IT."**

As chief precision officer at Diaceutics, Susanne Munksted is driving the company's agenda of incorporating precision medicine into the intersection between testing and treatment. Built as a virtual company, Susanne says the Diaceutics model has been able to draw the best experts from across the globe to create a great team.

"The knowledge power that can be harnessed

when passion and diverse expertise come together to drive precision medicine is amazing," she says.

While cancer remains the dominant focus of precision medicine, Diaceutics is working in neurology, multiple sclerosis, and ophthalmology to match the right drug with the right patient.

Susanne says while the first companion diagnostic was launched more than 20 years ago there is still a long way to go to improve biomarker testing. What is needed, she says, is a more holistic and transparent approach between the pharmaceutical drug developer and the diagnostic company developing the test as well as the physicians requesting the test and the labs performing the test.

"We are seeing good initiatives and improvements such as FDA's new guidance document allowing for a broader label approval for companion diagnostic devices, which allows companies to approach a group of oncology therapeutic products at the same time," she says. "These steps are moving us in the right direction, but they won't be enough to fix the ecosystem."

To help tackle these challenges, Diaceutics is designing a platform to enable coordination of information, data, and stakeholders.

"Everyone wants to improve the situation for patients, and there are many ways of getting there, but they are not always well lined up," Susanne says. "A drug can offer life-changing and even life-saving opportunities to a niche patient group if the subpopulation can be identified and their unique genomic profile can be understood. This is what is gratifying about precision medicine."

In addition to the company's commitment to driving precision medicine, Susanne says she appreciates the Diaceutics management approach, which is to recognize talent regardless of gender or race and this has led to women being well-represented in the company's senior ranks.

To manage the virtual teams she leads to achieve those precision medicine goals, Susanne says the key is staying true to herself and her core values.

"People will instantly be able to tell if you are being authentic, and that will hinder a good relationship," she says. "Also, working with different teams and organizations in a global environment means one needs to be sensitive to the different cultures represented. It's important to know the people you work with, and most of all, you need to be respectful. One other important lesson I have learned is to seek win-win solutions. You will be more successful if you understand the motivation that others have and try to look for those solutions where everyone will gain something and everyone can — to some degree at least — achieve their goals." ○

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**ADVICE:** Early in my career a manager told me that you don't need to be friends with everyone, but you do need to be respectful. That's a good rule to live by professionally or privately.



# Holly Kordasiewicz, Ph.D.

VP of Neurology Research  
**Ionis Pharmaceuticals**

**I SEE MY JOB AS HELPING PEOPLE ON MY TEAM FIND THAT FIT WHERE THEY CAN ENJOY WHAT THEY'RE DOING AND SUCCEED.**

Holly Kordasiewicz, Ph.D., is focused on finding treatments and cures for devastating gene-based neurological diseases.

Dr. Kordasiewicz says her family experience with neurodegenerative disease drew her to the field and as she learned more about inherited neurodegenerative diseases and the impact they have on families, her commitment to find solutions to fix genes grew.

After working in academia in a lab at the University of California in San Diego that was focusing on Huntington's disease, Dr. Kordasiewicz joined Ionis, which is using antisense oligonucleotides (or ASOs) to alter RNAs and turn down the Huntington gene.

"When I made the change from academia to industry, I thought I was going to lose some of the freedom that I had in academia to be my own boss," she says. "My only regret was that I didn't do it sooner."

The potential for RNA therapeutics to address inherited neurological diseases is huge, Dr. Kordasiewicz says. Ionis' Spinraza has taken children who were fated to die from an inherited neurodegenerative disease, to meeting normal developmental motor milestones, she says. The company also has programs focused on Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, ALS, and others that have the potential to be game changing.

To best advance its programs, Ionis has partnered with Biogen for its neurological drugs, and for those areas that Biogen isn't interested in developing, Ionis will drive forward independently.

With so much going on, there is always something exciting for her team

to work on and the fact that there is so much need among patients with neurodegenerative diseases means Dr. Kordasiewicz doesn't need to do a lot to motivate her team.

"I do make the point to share the wins and celebrate the wins when they happen," she says.

Having enjoyed a successful transition from academia to industry, Dr. Kordasiewicz says her advice to other women scientists is to ask the right questions, follow the data, dream big, and push the envelope.

"Also, be sure to find your voice," she says. "Have a vision and an opinion and know when to share it. I've learned to always walk into a discussion with a recommendation and a position. This does not mean you are unwilling to change your opinion based on data, but think about the question and the data, have an opinion, and don't be afraid to share it."

A significant moment for Dr. Kordasiewicz was winning the Young Investigator Award from the Oligonucleotide Therapeutic Society.

"I'm not an RNA biologist by training, I'm a neuroscientist," she says. "I've learned RNA biology based on my job and working in this field. So, to be recognized by an organization that's

focused on the chemistry and the technology was really special."

The one lesson Dr. Kordasiewicz has had to learn is how to delegate. "The work we are doing now is so big, it's just not possible to be intimately involved in every aspect," she says. "I needed to learn when to let somebody else take the reins. It's a skill I'm still working on, but it's definitely one that I wish I had started developing earlier." ○



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**LESSON: When my younger scientists ask what I think about something, I encourage them to give their opinion first and push them on their logic to help them refine their rationale. This helps them find their voice and helps me to think about things from a different perspective.**

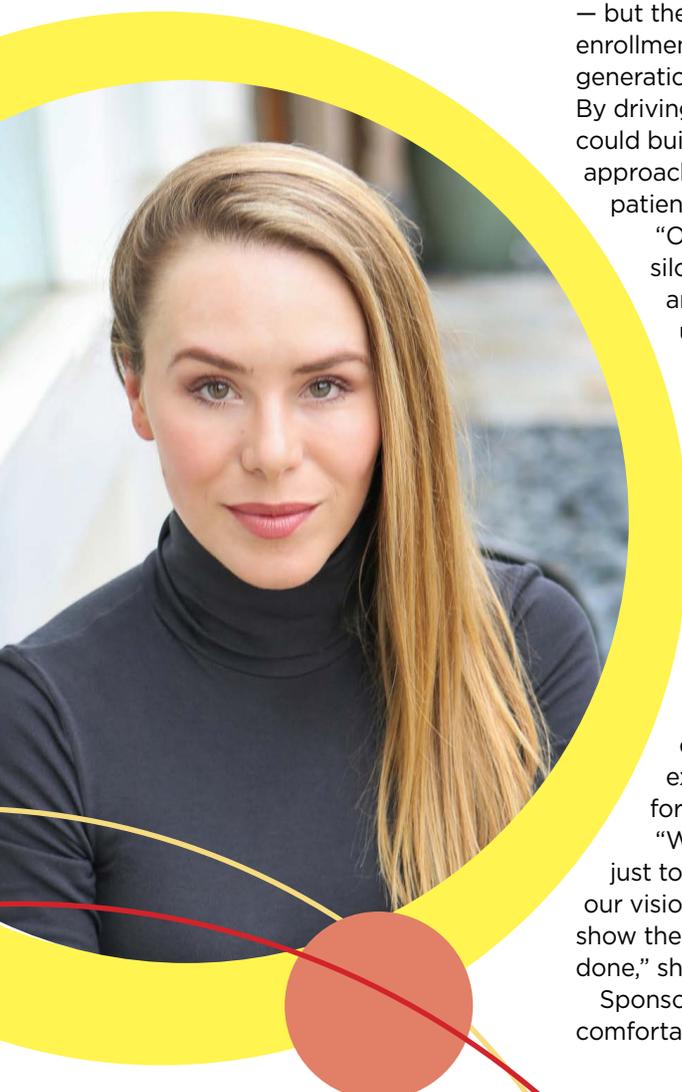
# Michelle Longmire, M.D.

Co-Founder and CEO  
Medable

## WOMEN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A BIG IMPACT.

Early in her career while leading research in rare disease, Michelle Longmire, M.D., came up against a challenge: how do you connect those hard-to-identify patients with researchers looking into rare conditions? It prompted her to start a company that could capture data from anyone, anytime, anywhere, and use that information to gain a better understanding of health and disease as well as to deliver better medical care to patients.

The result was Medable, which



**ADVICE:** It's important to establish boundaries and be really transparent when something isn't good enough, and to share this feedback in a respectful way.

was built on the mission of enabling effective therapies to get to clinical trial participants and patients faster.

"This experience has been very different than my medical training where there was a very clear playbook, but the journey itself has been incredible," she says. "Clinical drug development exists in discrete processes — but the trial design, recruitment and enrollment, consent, and evidence generation are separate processes. By driving synergies, we believed we could build a patient-first, tech-enabled approach to get effective therapies to patients faster.

"Our vision is to break down the silos of clinical drug development and I think it can be done under the umbrella or lens of decentralized or digital trials," she says.

Dr. Longmire says technology can be used to design better trials, connect participants to those trials, and enable a more convenient process, and then ensure more robust evidence generation.

Certainly, the current era has moved the concept of decentralized trials from the exception to being the only way for trials to move forward.

"We have never worked harder just to meet the demand and realize our vision; now is the time that we can show the importance of what can be done," she says.

Sponsors are growing increasingly comfortable with virtual trials, with more

alignment around lessons learned, and greater cohesion around what works and what doesn't, she says. The company has also been leveraging AI to address gaps, for example, identifying when there is missing data or data that is errant.

"Because patient diaries have different schedules, assessments run on different schedules, different devices are used on different time frames, so we've established what we call a data garden framework where we create a study-specific set of algorithms that are able to monitor data on an ongoing basis to identify potential missing data or issues around the study logistics," she says.

As an entrepreneur, Dr. Longmire says she has had to learn to be resilient and stay the course.

"Starting a company is extremely risky, but if it is in your bones and blood and you know you want to be in a position to navigate that uncertainty and build something that you think is important, then you should do it," she says.

If there was one thing Dr. Longmire could do beyond Medable in her life, it would be to help women make that leap and build their own business because it is one of the most exciting adventures. "This gives you the opportunity to make a big impact and create a world that you believe needs to exist."

Creating the culture at the company has been very much about building a team that is as strong as the individuals themselves. "Our values are to be the best teammate and the fiercest competitor," she says." ○

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# Oreola Donini, Ph.D.

Chief Scientific Officer  
Soligenix

## ALL THE HARD WORK HAS TRANSLATED INTO REAL BENEFIT FOR REAL PATIENTS.

As chief scientific officer of Soligenix, Oreola Donini, Ph.D., is directing the company's R&D strategy to address unmet medical needs in the areas of inflammation, oncology, as well as biodefense.

She realized early in her industry career that she would be better able to contribute to many different aspects of drug design and development studies by working in a small company. Through her professional career serving in a number of different roles at several small companies, Dr. Donini developed a broad range of skills across many indications — from research to speaking with investors and engaging with others across the industry.

As a scientist, Dr. Donini says one of the biggest challenges in biotech is deciding which experiments are the most worthwhile, not just in terms of success but also to generate the most amount of knowledge possible in the scope of limited funds and timelines.

“What we're looking for is not only a great outcome, but if the compound happens not to work, what will we can learn from it, and I think that's very important,” she says.

One of her great achievements is as co-inventor and team leader of SGX94, a defense regulator technology that targets the innate immune system.

“We're now developing SGX94 for the treatment of oral mucositis in head and neck cancer patients, which is a debilitating side effect of cancer treatments” she says. “With oral mucositis the patient has sores in his or her mouth that are so painful that even opioids can't control the pain. It's really hard on patients; sometimes they'll even stop their cancer treatment because of the pain. Currently, there is no approved drug to treat oral mucositis so it's an unmet medical need.”

Dr. Donini says when they received the first biological proof in humans that SGX94 drugs worked and they knew they and could help people it was a mind-blowing moment. “There is a long list of people who contributed to that outcome — at Soligenix, at Inimex, and at the University of British Columbia,” she says. “We were all so pleased that all the hard work had translated into real benefit for real patients. It is the moment that I will always remember.”

Dr. Donini and her team at Soligenix are also focused on emerging infectious disease and biodefense, including work on a ricin toxin vaccine. The same technology is also relevant in the context of the company's COVID-19 vaccine effort. And beyond vaccines, Soligenix is developing its innate defense regulators again in the context of infectious disease and antibiotic resistant bacteria.

While all these projects mean Dr. Donini is working in many diverse areas, she points out that the company's focus is really on addressing rare disease and unmet medical need

“Our goal is to address those needs as efficiently as possible,” she says. “We have a core group and core skill set that understands the non-clinical, clinical, and regulatory requirements to operate

specifically in these orphan indication spaces.”

Dr. Donini says the key to advancing in biotech is to never be afraid to take on new challenges. “Don't be afraid to share your ideas, to speak up, and to be confident in your own knowledge and your own understanding of the data,” she says. “It's also important to take the challenging path, the one that interests you as opposed to perhaps the safe path.”



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**LESSONS LEARNED: Surprises always happen in research, and the motivation for myself and my teams over the years has come from those surprises and knowing there is always more to learn.**

# Rebecca Kusko, Ph.D.

Chief Strategy Officer  
Immuneering

**I'VE HAD TREMENDOUS MENTORING FROM A VERY YOUNG AGE AND I WANT TO MENTOR THE NEXT GENERATION.**

Rebecca Kusko, Ph.D., loves solving problems, especially ones with non-intuitive solutions. In fact, problem-solving has been at the heart of her career and path to the C-Suite.

One example of Dr. Kusko's ability to address complicated challenges involved a project she and her team worked with Teva to understand: Teva was developing a drug called pridopidine for Huntington's disease that was helping patients feel better but it wasn't clear what the mechanism of action was. Dr.

Kusko and her team discovered that the drug worked by first hitting its target and reversing disease-associated changes in gene expression.

There was a lot of back and forth between the teams, Dr. Kusko says.

"We would analyze data and then show Teva our computational results, and they would go and do experiments in their own labs, and we would look at those results and that would drive further analysis," she says. "This back and forth helped us to sharpen our use of bioinformatics to better arrive at actionable insights."

Dr. Kusko had initially planned to follow a career in academia. She began by spending a couple of hours a week consulting for Immuneering, and over time, the exciting research and the impact on patient's lives led to her increasing her hours until she became a full-time employee at the company.

During her time at Immuneering, she has contributed to bioinformatics services, to drug discovery pipelines, and to projects as diverse as writing code, writing papers, writing grants, drafting budgets, managing teams, leading client engagements, raising funds, and supporting business development.

"The company went from being a bioinformatics services business to having our own proprietary tools that accelerate drug discovery, as well as having three

separate pipelines — one in oncology, one in immuno-oncology, and one in Alzheimer's" she says. "Eventually, the company needed someone who could be forward-looking and make sure we were moving in a good direction by gaining buy-in across all of the different business units and sectors, and that's what I do as chief strategy officer."

An engineer at heart, Dr. Kusko is also a founding member and the current deputy board chairman of the FDA-led Massive Analysis and QC Society, which is committed to promoting reproducible science and best practices for the analysis of massive datasets.

Dr. Kusko says her advice for other women is to catalog their contributions to the company as they progress. "Write a short email with bullets that summarizes the value you bring to the company every month," she says. "Then when you go to ask for that promotion you have a nice history of outlining the value of your contributions."

For those looking to make a career transition outside of their organization it's important not to get hung up on having all of the qualifications for a certain job. "For example, a lot of positions, especially C-suite positions, require previous C-suite experience," she says. "You don't necessarily have to have that previous C-suite job title on your résumé, rather show how you have experience that is the equivalent of a C-suite job," she says." ○

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**ADVICE:** Be your own advocate. I was able to advance in my career through other people really believing in me and championing for me. But I wish I had been brave enough to advocate for myself instead of relying on all of these other fantastic humans who helped to push me and my career forward.

# Carol Addy, M.D.

Chief Medical Officer  
GenFit

## FOLLOWING MY HEART HAS GOTTEN ME TO WHERE I AM TODAY.

From pre-med to professional bike racing to a passion for the role of physical activity and nutrition on health to medical school and clinical research, Carol Addy, M.D., has taken a broad and rich path to her role today as chief medical officer at GenFit.

Dr. Addy says the metabolism and regulation of body weight has long been a focus for her to better understand how body fat distribution contributes to conditions such as type 2 diabetes. After completing her endocrinology fellowship, she took a role with Merck, which was looking at an investigational drug to treat obesity. While the drug failed, the experience was invaluable for Dr. Addy and led to her role as chief medical officer at Merck subsidiary HMR, which was focused on helping people make behavioral changes to optimize physical activity and food intake for weight regulation.

“It was in the course of that work that I had a discussion with some folks at GenFit and the work they were doing related to metabolic diseases, and specifically liver disease, as a manifestation of metabolic abnormalities,” she says. “The opportunity to get back into the scientific aspects and look for opportunities to fill unmet medical needs really excited me and brought me to where I am today.”

While some professionals are very methodical about their career paths, Dr. Addy says she has always followed her heart and those decisions have served her well.

One of the things that drew her to GenFit is the company’s support for diversity, including gender parity.

“Almost 50% of our board members are women and our VP and executive level is almost 50% women,” she says. “Having said that, I do think being in the

C-suite can be more isolating for women than their male colleagues.”

To counter this, Dr. Addy maintains networks, such as her involvement with the Healthcare Businesswomen’s Association and with an informal chief medical officer network that is comprised mostly of women. “These relationships have been invaluable to me during my career just to bounce ideas off of people in an informal manner,” she says. “One of the things that I found in speaking to some of my women colleagues is that we as women sometimes are more averse to taking risks. Often there are opportunities that present themselves that initially may feel as though they are outside of our comfort zone, but that’s often where the growth is happening. Seeking these opportunities is a critical success factor in terms of career development.”

In leading her teams, Dr. Addy says she feels strongly about empowering and ensuring those team members who work with her are encouraged to drive strategy, to identify issues, and to offer problem-solving recommendations.

“That’s not to say that those recommendations are always going to be spot on, but it ensures teams partner with senior leadership and helps to create a sense of ownership at the team level,” she says.



One challenge Dr. Addy has had to overcome is a lack of confidence.

“As I’ve gotten older, I find that I trust myself more and more,” she says. “I wish I could have had a talk with myself years back to say, you know you’re the real deal, you’ve got this, trust yourself, just go with it.”

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**LESSONS: My career journey has been heart-driven in terms of the decisions that I’ve made and I have to say that those gut-based decisions never served me wrong.**

# Shobha Parthasarathi, Ph.D.

VP External Innovation & New Ventures  
Xontogeny

**TAKE TIME TO REFLECT, SEPARATE THE DAILY EXECUTIONS FROM THE STRATEGIC ONES.**

As VP, external innovation and new ventures at Xontogeny, Shobha Parthasarathi, Ph.D., is applying her wealth of scientific knowledge and keen business instincts to identify and advance technologies and companies from early development through clinical proof-of-concept.

Dr. Parthasarathi grew up in India, where she completed her master's in medical microbiology before moving to the United States and completing her Ph.D. in molecular genetics and

microbiology. She began her industry career at Millennium Pharmaceuticals, where she focused on drug discovery before shifting gears into business development and investing in early-stage startup companies.

After spending a few years as VP of strategic alliances and business development for Harrington Discovery Institute, which helps to translate scientific discoveries into medicines, Dr. Parthasarathi joined Xontogeny, which provides seed money and series investment to life-sciences companies.

"It's been a joy to be in this space, conducting diligence, working closely with entrepreneurs and academic founders, making decisions on funding, connecting with the investor community, as well as the pharmaceutical industry," she says.

The landscape for drug discovery is hot, Dr. Parthasarathi says, with change happening in every aspect of the industry, from the type and amount of funding, to the types of entrepreneurs emerging, clinical trial timelines, the regulatory approval process, the use of AI, precision medicine, and the interest in rare diseases.

When evaluating opportunities, she says Xontogeny looks at multiple factors such as medical need, the market for the product, platform, novelty, and if it's a good fit.

"We want it to be a win-win partner for all, so we pay attention to relationships, trust, and rapport," she says. "Sometimes we talk about

just simplistic elegance. When we look at the data and we just go wow, and then we meet the people and we know it's going to be a good fit."

When startups that Dr. Parthasarathi has backed succeed, it is hugely satisfying, but particularly when it is a gene therapy.

Moving into the VC space as a woman was a bold move, and Dr. Parthasarathi believes the fact that there aren't many women in the VC space comes down to two main reasons. "The first is that women like to be qualified for any role they take on and there are no degrees to become a VC," Dr. Parthasarathi says. "The second is that women just don't have the network. So much in life comes down to human connections."

To build that network and help other women, Dr. Parthasarathi is involved with Women in Bio. "Women are looking for answers and they don't know where to go," she says. "I work with graduate students, postdocs, entry-level, middle-level management, and executive women. It's been very rewarding."

Dr. Parthasarathi also mentors for Babson College's Center for Women's Entrepreneurship and Leadership program and Equalize 2020, working to address disparity among women inventors and startups.

As a leader, Dr. Parthasarathi develops and empowers her team and provides tools for a positive environment.

"I've been called a servant leader," she says. "I've also been told I can very annoying because things could be falling apart and I would still be smiling," she says. ○



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**ADVICE:** You have to seek out, you have to reach out, and you have to build out a network.

# Elizabeth Jeffords

Chief Commercial and Strategy Officer

**Alkahest**

**AS A MENTOR, I TRY TO BE THERE WHEN PEOPLE ASK, AND EVEN WHEN PEOPLE DON'T ASK.**

Elizabeth Jeffords has made it her mission to never say no to awesome opportunities, and that decision has taken her in some exciting directions.

After a short time as a bench scientist and a brief detour working at a software startup, Elizabeth joined Genentech first in market planning and then as part of the pricing and contracting team working across the portfolio. The next step was a big move — professionally and geographically — to Roche in Switzerland, where she ran commercial operations and led the established products business unit.

“This was \$9 billion in sales, so it was my first big real P&L responsibility,” Elizabeth says. Next, she ended up running country operations for Roche in Norway before returning to the United States to run the U.S. ophthalmology team at Genentech.

However, it was the leadership role in Norway that prompted Elizabeth to search for a C-suite position.

Her role at Alkahest, which is focused on neurodegenerative and aging diseases, includes a focus on commercial development planning as well as a strategic focus as to where the company wants to be in the future.

This is where Elizabeth’s skills as general manager and CEO of Roche Norway come to the fore. She is bringing her experiences from working with the board and doing investor relations, to fundraising meetings, to running legal, compliance, and quality, to helping the clinical operations team understand how to make sure that patients and sites are safe — a huge priority during COVID.

“This is one of the things I was absolutely looking for in making the move to a biotech company — every day is different,” she says. “I love that I get to be part of building something. Alkahest is such a fantastic company from a great science perspective and a great culture.”

When building a team. Elizabeth looks for people who work well with other people. “I also look for people who are willing to challenge each other and myself, what in Norway we called a sparring partner, somebody to poke holes in my theory or stop me from drinking my own Kool Aid,” she says. “I love the idea of a constructive criticism-based leadership team.”

Change and the need to adapt also excites Elizabeth.

“What makes me happiest is when I can innovate, ideate, and start something big,” she says. She cites as an example her involvement in helping Genentech set up the personalized medicine initiative, which then led into some of the Foundation Medicine and Flatiron Health programs.

As a leader, a parent, and partner, Elizabeth sees herself as a fierce and galvanizing leader but also someone who is warm and empathetic.

As a mentor and an executive leader committed to women’s development, Elizabeth is a volunteer with the Healthcare Businesswomen’s Association.

She is also involved with Springboard, an organization that helps women founders and executives get their companies the attention, funding, and resources that they need.

“As a mentor, I try to be there when people ask, and even when people



don’t ask and I celebrate people a lot,” she says. “I believe that if you’ve had blessings in your life provided to you by people who have given you help to grow, then you need to pay it forward. ○

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**WOW MOMENT: Everything I’m doing right now is a wow moment — from what Alkahest is doing around aging, the work that I do for Springboard for women-run companies, and thinking about women’s health.**

# Kimberly Stephens

Chief Financial Officer  
Appili

**I THINK THAT WOMEN WANT TO HELP EACH OTHER, BUT WE'RE TOO AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.**

Kimberly Stephens had no plans to join the biotech industry. She was in a senior role with a broad industry group when the VP of Immunovaccine presented data on a vaccine that eradicated tumors in mice.

"It was a moment of awe, I thought how can I not want to be part of this," she says.

She learned a lot from her experience as chief financial officer at the company, particularly how to translate scientific

**WOW MOMENT: Becoming a CFO at the age of 32 was my biggest accomplishment. At my first board meeting I was the youngest person in the room, the only female in the room, and I joke the poorest person in the room. I'm so proud that I decided to lean in and learn to be uncomfortable and just take that challenge head on.**

language into layman's terms to relay the company's message to the investment community.

She then joined Appili, which was founded by an investment bank with the ultimate goal to go public. Appili's focus is on expanding a pipeline of products in the infectious disease space.

"I was not looking to leave Immunovaccine, but with multiple years of experience working with public-company reporting and compliance, I saw this as a new challenge for myself," she says.

Since successfully achieving the transition, Kimberly and her team have been working to educate the investment community on the life-sciences space, in particular the infectious disease space that had been neglected until COVID-19 hit.

"The pandemic brought light to the fact that infectious diseases are critical and that we need to have companies such as Appili working on potential solutions," she says.

Her advice for companies looking to raise capital is to lay out the business plan of the project so funders can see the end goal and determine whether the benefits outweigh the risks.

"At Appili we put a lot of time and effort developing the business plan, understanding what the risks were, and determining what the return on investment would look like for investors,"

she says. Another key element is relationship building since investors need to trust the people they are investing in. And then there is accountability, proving to investors that you can be trusted to deliver on the business plan.

As a leader, she says it's important to help team members understand the strategy and to keep them informed through regular touchpoints. Kimberly looks for team members who are dedicated, flexible, and passionate.

"I look for that grit, that passion to want to work hard and be up for a challenge," she says. In addition, she looks for problem solvers and accountability. "If there is an issue or error, it needs to be elevated and escalated to ensure that we have the right data. And we need to know that people are operating ethically."

Kimberly says although she broke through the glass ceiling, she realizes this is still an issue for women. Kimberly says she broke through by working hard and delivering on results to get noticed.

"I've also learned to be comfortable with being uncomfortable and being in over my head," she says. "When I was first offered the role of CFO, I didn't think I was ready, but I now realize that there's no such thing as being ready. You have to forge ahead with as much confidence as possible. Men don't have the hesitation that women do. Women need to just learn to accept opportunities when they're given and go for it and learn to be uncomfortable." ○



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# Uma Sinha, Ph.D.

Chief Scientific Officer  
BridgeBio Pharma

**IT HELPS TO FOCUS ON THE SCIENCE. TRYING TO BE ONE OF THE BOYS DOESN'T REALLY WORK IN THE LONG RUN.**

As chief scientific officer of BridgeBio, patients are at the heart of everything Uma Sinha, Ph.D., does as she prepares the company to take multiple shots on goal with an extremely focused approach to drug development in the rare disease space.

Dr. Sinha's passion has always centered around science and the idea of making a difference in the lives of patients.

Not only does she gain professional satisfaction from this focus, but she never forgets how biotechnology made a difference in her personal life. For many years, her mother battled blood cancer, and through her own courage and great biotech drugs, her mom lived longer than expected. This made a huge difference to Dr. Sinha's whole family. Her mother lived long enough to meet her grandchildren, one of whom was not even born when she was diagnosed.

Dr. Sinha uses this story to not only motivate herself, but to remind her team members how important the work they are doing in drug development is to patients. Dr. Sinha feels privileged to have been able to pursue her science passion and her career and to have had multiple successes along the way.

She credits a supportive environment in which achieved milestones were celebrated with other teams and team members.

There have been failures as well over her 30-year career, but Dr. Sinha has learned to take those in her stride. She encourages team members to remember they are all in it together and the team will actually be stronger from the experience. That attitude plus the idea that patients are always waiting keeps her moving forward.

Dr. Sinha began her pharmaceutical career at COR Therapeutics, which at that time had funding for only six

months. However, this turned into an incredible learning opportunity. Dr. Sinha was able to follow the science, and 13 years later her small team had one approved drug and several others in the clinic or ready for the clinic. The company was eventually sold to Millennium.

Intrigued by BridgeBio's science-focused mission, Dr. Sinha took on the position as chief scientific officer at the company almost five years ago. BridgeBio, which was established in 2015, is focused on helping patients with rare diseases.

The company's model appealed to Dr. Sinha's sense of urgency to get drugs to patients as quickly and safely as possible.

Dr. Sinha's work has led to countless discoveries and developments of treatments for hematologic, cardiovascular, and inflammatory diseases. This has included filing for 22 Investigational new drug (IND) applications and was on track to hit 25 by the end of 2020 — a rare and exceptional milestone in the industry. Five of these programs have become approved treatments, including Oxbryta (voxelotor) from Global Blood Therapeutics.

In fact, one of Dr. Sinha's major career achievements was the development of Oxbryta, the first of its kind oral medication for the treatment of sickle cell disease.

There had not been a new treatment for sickle cell developed in more than



30 years. The fact that she was part of creating a new therapeutic modality for these patients was a dream come true for her, not only in terms of drug development, but being able to help a neglected population with serious unmet needs.

Most recently, she helped advance BridgeBio subsidiary Eidos Therapeutics' drug AG10 from molecule in the Stanford labs to Phase III clinical trial in less than three years. ○

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**WOW MOMENT: I had the incredible opportunity to be co-inventor of an agent that reverses anticoagulation and stops bleeding in elderly patients.**

# Dawn Fallon

Practice Lead Health  
Makovsky

## THE HEALTHCARE SPACE PROVIDES THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

With her skills and career experience, Dawn Fallon could be working in any industry she chose. But she chooses healthcare because she believes all patients need a voice. Working in the healthcare space gives her the opportunity to make a difference not only to her clients but all of the patients that they serve as well. She

### WOW MOMENT: Changing the narrative of morbid obesity.

takes her role in public relations and communications and its capacity for shaping the narrative around critical diseases very seriously.

The award-winning public relations professional with more than 20 years of experience, leads a variety of healthcare campaigns and educational awareness programs for a wide range of clients, including medical devices, biotech and pharma companies, health insurers, pharmacy benefit managers, hospital systems, and health-related nonprofit associations.

Dawn actually began her career working with nonprofits, food and wine, travel and tourism spaces until she was exposed to various healthcare accounts, and hospital systems and pharmaceutical companies. She believed this was the space where she could really make a difference working with patients and clinicians.

Before joining Makovsky, she had worked for many years with the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery — the largest

bariatric surgery nonprofit organization — and that was a pivotal experience in her career. It was there that she was instrumental in changing the way people talked about morbid obesity. Working with a nonprofit organization and elevating it as an expert in that space was really rewarding. As a result of her efforts, the group decided to change its name from the American Society of Bariatric Surgery to the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, which garnered national press and furthered the discussion on obesity not being a health condition, but a disease. She says that experience illuminated for her just how important it was to improve the narrative of diseases and she began to look at campaigns differently in terms of their greater purpose.

Dawn also has worked on initiatives for cancer, COVID-19, type 1 and type 2 diabetes, cardiology, pediatrics, spine, respiratory, gastroenterology, optometry, orthopedics, sports medicine, neurology, endoscopic imaging, point of care testing, facial reconstruction, trauma, obesity, heart disease, and healthcare disparities.

In addition to her role at Makovsky, she co-leads the DE&I initiatives with IPREX, a global network of more than 1,200 PR professionals started by president Ken Makovsky, who wanted to bring a collected group of independent agencies together for a common goal. IPREX strives to encourage not only dialogue but also action by sharing resources between teams and agencies globally. ○



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# Kate Cronin

Global CEO

Ogilvy Health, a WPP company

**YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO BE PERFECT. WORRY ABOUT WHAT MATTERS.**

Kate Cronin is an experienced leader who has generated award-winning work in public relations, marketing, and advertising industries.

Kate possesses strong business development skills in brand strategy and communications, digital strategy, crisis management and communications, corporate social responsibility, and media strategy.

Recently, her extensive health experience, focus on client partnership, and mentorship of talent earned her the appointment as CEO of Ogilvy Health, where she is responsible for driving all aspects of Ogilvy Health's business globally. In this new global role, she also serves as a member of Ogilvy's global leadership team.

"There is no better time to work in health and I'm excited about the many ways Ogilvy Health can partner with clients to help them solve a range of unmet needs we are seeing in the marketplace," Kate says. "The heart of Ogilvy is creativity and there is no better place to get creative than in health where we can develop big ideas that promote life-saving therapies and motivate consumers to change behaviors to create a healthier society."

A child of a military family who grew up surrounded by male leaders at West Point, Kate was living at West Point the first year the academy began accepting women into its program.

She never forgot this experience, and made mentoring women leaders a lifetime goal.

She is a proud member of Chief, a private network built to drive more women into positions of power and keep them there. She is a founding member of Ogilvy's Women's Leadership Professional Network and a member of WPP's Women's Leadership faculty. Kate attended the inaugural class of 30 for 30, an internal support program that started with 30 men sponsoring 30

women in their career growth. Today, the 30 sponsors are both male and female leaders.

Diversity is another concept that both Kate and Ogilvy take very seriously, with a D&I team that develops initiatives around diversity and inclusion for young professionals and for people of color. There are several affinity groups within Ogilvy that have programs specific to those members.

When Kate noticed women were dropping out of healthcare communication or advertising or PR at a certain stage in their life, for example, when they started having children, she encouraged them to stay on but in a capacity they could handle. She is committed to helping women work through this life stage and create a flexible workplace so as keep them as part of the team. She fully recognizes the challenges of being a working mother. She remembers the words of her own mentor, Shelly Lazarus: "You're never going to be perfect. Don't worry about the dust bunnies that are building up under your bed because that doesn't matter. Worry about what matters." Kate took that advice to heart and hopes to inspire other women to be easier on themselves.

Kate has an impressive 20-plus year resume in PR healthcare marketing, and 16 of those have been at Ogilvy. She has seen many changes, challenges, and disruptions in her career, and she has met each one of these with innovation and grace.



She encourages women who want to move into leadership roles to go for it: Don't get complacent. Be fearless. Be curious. Hard work gets you far for sure, but it's never enough. ○

*Kate was named Global CEO of Ogilvy Health in October 2020.*

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**WOW MOMENT: Earning an award from SmithKline Beecham early in my career boosted and solidified my professional confidence.**

# Barbara Enger

Associate VP, Clinical Science  
Signant Health

**PEOPLE COME TO WORK BECAUSE THEY WANT THREE THINGS: CAMARADERIE, COMPENSATION, AND CHALLENGE.**

Barbara Enger is responsible for the management and performance of Signant's internal clinical science team and of Signant's external network of clinical consultants as well as the clinical support of Signant products, services, business development, and research efforts.

Barbara started her career as a nurse, graduating with a BSN degree. She worked first in the burn center of an

intensive care unit and then moved to in-patient psychiatry. She earned a master's degree in nursing, taught psychiatric nursing, became a family therapist, and lastly landed in clinical trial research.

Her nursing education and experience have been foundational both in her professional and personal life. These experiences affected every aspect of her life as they trained her to always do two things: think critically and act systemically. No matter how far away she is from actual nursing, she has carried these valuable lessons with her wherever she goes.

Barbara entered the clinical trial space about 20 years ago, and has been at Signant for 15 of those. She has seen a myriad of changes in the field during this time.

As the industry moves toward more decentralized trials and remote assessments, she notes that technology platforms are becoming more crucial.

For example, Barbara admits that 15 years ago she never thought she would be video recording psychiatric interviews between study subjects and investigators, yet by doing so she is seeing an actual increase in data reliability.

For example, if data from a video recording shows a high error rate based on the administration of a certain item on an endpoint scale or exam, a message can be added to the eCOA screen reminding the

investigator of the correct administration protocol. The goal is to increase data reliability, and Barbara and her team strive continually to blend the clinical science with the tools to support study investigators and patients in this research alliance.

"This is the source of scientifically sound and reliable data," she says.

Another big change she has witnessed of time, is the amount of marketing that is done around clinical trials and clinical trial recruitment.

"When I first started, there were no marketing departments, but now they are a big part of the process," she says. "However, the nature of clinical trials hasn't change very much, because research principles are basically the same as they've always been."

One thing that has changed is the practice of putting the patient first. While patient-centricity is today's buzzword, as a nurse Barbara has always been sure to integrate both the patient and the investigator perspective in all phases of the process.

"The goal is to support investigators working at the sites in every way possible," she says. "Part of our job is to help them to be able to form a trusting and secure research alliance with their study subjects."

She says patients don't return for study visits because they want to be reliable partners to Signant Health; they return because they want to act as reliable partners to the clinical investigator. ○

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**WOW MOMENT:** I was working with an international group of investigators who were all working on the same study but in different languages, yet it resulted in reliable data and a successful study.



# Teri Loxam

Chief Financial Officer  
**SQZ Biotech**

**IF YOU CAN LIVE WITH THE WORST-CASE SCENARIO OF A DECISION, THEN YOU SHOULD TAKE THAT RISK.**

Teri Loxam pivots well. She has done it several times over her career, and she always lands on her feet. After getting her degree in marine biology and working for an expert on killer whales on the west coast of Vancouver Island in British Columbia right out of college, her next stint was starting a stockbroking company. Next came a role in investor relations for IMAX Films. Eventually, she worked at several healthcare companies, including Merck, and she now serves as the chief financial officer of SQZ Biotech.

When Teri became aware of SQZ's unique science and the potential the cell therapy company possessed, she was very impressed and wanted in. Merck provided her with tremendous learning experiences across a number of areas that are directly helping her at SQZ. Her time at Merck included a deep dive into immuno-oncology, which piqued her interest in the field. Also, working with Ken Frazier at Merck was an inspirational and learning experience. "His words of wisdom always stay with me: 'Do right by the science, do right by the patients, the rest will follow,'" she says.

Teri says his leadership has influenced her own style. "Ken taught me to be flexible, as well as how to prepare for any type of scenario," she says.

SQZ Biotechnologies is a clinical-stage biotechnology company developing transformative cell therapies for patients with cancer, infectious diseases, and other serious conditions. Using its proprietary technology, SQZ Biotech offers the unique ability to deliver multiple materials into many patient cell types to engineer what could be an unprecedented range of potential therapeutics for a variety of diseases. The concept in the science and the elegance of the approach really intrigued Teri, and given her background

at Merck she knew just how transformational this could be.

"Because of the combination of the incredible science, the scientists, and the management team, I believe SQZ could transform the cell therapy space," she says. "And I wanted to be a part of that transformation."

Teri's leadership style embodies teamwork and identifying the unique talents in individuals, sometimes talents they don't even know they have. She calls herself a talent seeker, often evaluating an individual in terms of his or her strengths and putting them in the right position so that each individual is elevating the team as a whole.

"I learned to operate this way as a young girl playing a lot of team sports," she says. "This taught me how to look at teams in a unique way. Also, I was very often



the only female on an otherwise all-male team. This may be why I am very comfortable being the only woman in a boardroom or business meeting." 

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**WOW MOMENT: When I made the transition from marine biology to starting a stockbroking company; I had never traded a stock in my life. I was 180 degrees from where I had been before. This move really defines how I approach my career.**

# Linda Marbán, Ph.D.

CEO and Co-founder  
Capricor Inc.

## IT IS ABSOLUTELY POSSIBLE TO HAVE IT ALL.

For more than 12 years, Dr. Linda Marbán has been leading Capricor — her second early-stage biotech startup — on an incredible journey.

She is combining her background in research with her business experience to create a path to commercialization for the company's novel therapies in the rare disease space.

Dr. Marbán was the lead negotiator in procuring the license agreements that are the foundation of the company's intellectual property portfolio. Under her

direction as CEO, the company has been awarded approximately \$30 million in non-dilutive grant awards, which have funded research and development programs.

Through disappointments and successes, the young company is working toward developing cell and exosome-based therapeutics for serious diseases, such as COVID-19 and Duchenne's muscular dystrophy, among other diseases with unmet needs.

Capricor's dedication to developing its exosome-based RNA delivery platform is enhanced by the invention, development, and access to new, cutting-edge approaches to companion diagnostics.

Capricor's lead candidate, the off-the-shelf cardiac cell therapy CAP-1002, treats Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD). The company announced positive top-line data from its HOPE-2 trial — the world's first study that assesses heart function in DMD patients.

"The heart is often the first organ to show signs of DMD, and most DMD boys die from cardiac problems," she says.

The DMD program is one that is very close to Dr. Marbán's heart. The company has become intricately woven within the advocacy community to the point of knowing the families and their sons, who are affected. For Dr. Marbán and her team, searching for a treatment is as much a labor of love as it is a labor of science.

Capricor is also working on two versions of a COVID-19 vaccine using

exosomes as a platform. The company entered into an agreement with Johns Hopkins University. This platform, which is amenable to a vast array of serology applications, has been applied to the analysis of patient antibodies to multiple SARS-CoV-2 proteins, including spike, nucleocapsid, and membrane.

Before joining Capricor, Dr. Marbán worked at Excigen, a biotech startup, where she was responsible for business development, operations, pre-clinical research, and supervising the development of gene therapy products in a joint development agreement with Genzyme Corp. Dr. Marbán began her career in academic science, first at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation working on the biophysical properties of cardiac muscle. That work continued when she moved to a postdoctoral fellowship at Johns Hopkins University.

Equal to her passion for developing novel drugs is her desire to mentor other women. She went through graduate school as a single mother with four children, so she knows how difficult it is to juggle home and work.

Many of the women she has mentored have gone on to have very successful careers, mostly in science and medicine.

"I believe that women can be there for their family and children and also achieve career milestones," she says.

Over the many years she has found ways to come home to dinner with the kids, get them settled, and then go back to work. "It isn't easy, but it can be done," she says. It's absolutely possible to have it all." ○



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**ADVICE:** One of the favorite parts of my job is interacting with Wall Street and investors, which is often considered the most challenging.

# Maria Tender

Head of Strategy  
Syneos Health

**TRUST YOUR GUT. BE BRAVE.  
BE GROUNDED.**

Maria Tender is a creative strategist with a passion for health and wellness. Over her long-standing career, she has made a name for herself with her ability to build and lead teams, and to win and service businesses in the healthcare, pharmaceuticals, entertainment, personal care, kids/teens, and packaged goods segments, as well as global corporate 100 brands.

Across her career, she has been involved in some of the most significant launches in healthcare history. She was instrumental in the launches of brands that were world changing, such as Gardasil and Keytruda.

After nearly 25 years at the advertising and marketing firm DDB, she decided to move to a new role at Syneos Health to fully embrace her healthcare passion.

She sees her role at Syneos as an extension of her work at DDB, as she plans to bring together all the disparate agencies into one cohesive whole.

A goal she has set for herself is to break down any remaining silos that might exist across strategy, creative, data analytics, and behavioral sciences. She also hopes to cultivate teams made up of the best talent and to help them grow professionally.

“Building a team is not so much about finding people with X number of credentials or X number of years’ experience, but rather about who has passion, who has a good instinct, who is willing to work hard, and most importantly, who volunteers and brings really interesting ideas to the table,” she says.

Her philosophy on dealing with gender bias in the industry is to focus on consistently delivering effort and value, and knowing that it is okay to be competitive and to stand firm for your ideas and the values that you think are right. “This is especially important in

healthcare, because so much is at stake, making sure that the patient’s best interests are always in view is crucial,” she says.

Maria’s leadership style is to keep things simple, and not get too many layers in a process so that it is impossible to move things forward.

“I like to create an environment that doesn’t overpower or squash big ideas,” she says. “I like to keep the process simple so that the content can shine and, where possible, use interesting tools like behavioral science and data analytics to help unlock or unleash something that maybe had never been thought of before.”

Her WOW moment came from the work she did on the launch of Merck’s cancer drug Keytruda. “To be a part of all the promise Keytruda holds for people who need it most was a privilege,” Maria says. “I got to talk with patients and HCPs to understand their Herculean struggles, accomplishments, and even setbacks. Through these conversations we created a strategy that comes from their strengths and resonates with them and for them.”

This experience shaped her career, by

making it clear her true passion centers around health, which led her to make the leap to an all healthcare company like Syneos.

The biggest difference in her role at Syneos compared with DDB is that she is now surrounded by about 24,000 like-minded people who have the same commitment to health that she does.

“Healthcare isn’t a condiment at Syneos, it’s the full meal,” she says. ○



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**LESSON: I’m really truly proud of working in so many therapeutic categories and being a part of the promise; talking with patients and HCPs to understand their unique struggles and to be able to create a strategy that resonates with them.**

# Eloiza Domingo

Global Head of Diversity & Inclusion  
Astellas

**THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT DAYS OF YOUR LIFE ARE THE DAY THAT YOU'RE BORN AND THE DAY YOU FIND OUT WHY.**

In her position as executive director of global head of engagement, diversity & inclusion at Astellas, Eloiza Domingo sits squarely in the middle of two of the biggest societal game changers in generations: COVID-19 and the current cultural crisis. But she's got this.

Her background as a proud Filipino immigrant, the daughter of physicians, someone who has withstood bullying and racism, and a person with a high work ethic who is not afraid to take risks fully equip Eloiza for her

place in the world. Plus, she's the mother of two sets of twin boys.

Since November 2018, she has been leading Astellas' first formal diversity program. She has helped the company develop a very strong identity in terms of diversity and inclusion.

In terms of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, the company has created support for all employees who are working from home. "We started out by ensuring that our people have all of the resources they need, whether it be support from a mental health perspective or making sure that their managers recognize all of the unique issues of working from home.," Eloiza says.

In addressing race in the pandemic, the company has worked with the African-American Employee Impact Group and asked for its members' partnership and support in ensuring that all employees feel psychologically safe and that Astellas maintains an inclusive environment.

Eloiza understands that it is critical for medical facilities, healthcare organizations, and partner organizations to be thinking about cultural competency as a skill.

"Everybody needs to understand how to work with people who are different from themselves," she says. "This skill allows for building efficiency for patients, a higher level of awareness of what affects adherence to treatment plans, all of which increases the positive nature of the medical outcome."

Eloiza believes the greater levels of cultural competency Astellas can provide to its staff will actually drive better patient outcomes.

"Cultural competency is the art of learning about someone who is different from yourself, finding a level of acceptance, and using that as a skill to drive Astellas forward and create a competitive advantage," she says.

Eloiza came by her cultural competency from her own experiences and the experiences of her family. She credits her parents' professions and being around medical clinics at a young age for her passion for healthcare as well as her patient-focused approach, which has served to guide her path and career trajectory.

"Being in clinics, witnessing the drive to help patients and their families, gave me a very high level of comfort and confidence in the work I do," she says.

Marrying the idea of healthcare systems with the diversity field became second nature to her. As a kid who didn't like to stand out, Eloiza has grown to own her place in the intersection of healthcare and diversity. ○

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**WOW MOMENT:** The 9/11 the terrorist attacks in New York impacted about 76% of the faculty, staff, and student population at Bucknell University, and I was the new director of diversity at the time. I had no clue what I was doing, but I just went with my gut and it turns out I was good at crisis management and major social issues. I said, okay, wow, maybe this is an opportunity to continue to make a difference.

# Tzvia Bader

CEO and Founder  
TrialJectory

**IT'S NOT A COMPANY, IT'S NOT A JOB, IT'S A LIFE MISSION.**

Tzvia Bader is an advanced metastatic melanoma cancer survivor and a three-time clinical trial participant who learned first-hand the importance for all patients to have access to the best treatments possible for their individual needs. She is also a person who was not about to give up when given her diagnosis. As co-founder and CEO of TrialJectory, her mission is to democratize cancer care and expand access to new treatments.

A techie by trade, she asked lots of questions of her oncologists, and pretty quickly she learned the ropes of advocating for herself and discovering all of the trial options that were available to her, not just the ones the doctors were aware of. What started out as a bothersome spot on her foot ended up changing her career and her life.

Diagnosed in December 2013, the mother of three was not going down without a fight. After participating in three clinical trials, she's been in remission for four years.

She learned from her experience that the process in which patients gain access to advanced treatments through clinical trials is completely broken. "I decided to use my experience in the technology field to create another way," she says.

After spending 20 years building technology companies, it was clear to her that AI would offer the only viable path to empowering every individual on the planet with the knowledge and tools they need to receive the best treatment possible. Before co-founding TrialJectory, Tzvia headed the global business unit at Amdocs, a Fortune 500 company, where she was responsible for building a new product growth strategy, as well as for global sales and marketing. She also served as a VP at NICE Systems, another multi-billion dollar technology company. Tzvia was the COO of Talkspace, an online therapy platform,

as well as the founder and CEO of KIDDOapp, a family scheduling solution, and Vocativ, a start-up that identified fake news in social media using machine learning and advanced analytics.

In founding TrialJectory, she wanted her own journey to have meaning, and she needed a way to make some sense out of her diagnosis. She enlisted the help of friends (a cancer researcher, a doctor scientist, a product specialist, and a machine learning/artificial intelligence expert) to build a platform for patients that will help them — in just a matter of minutes — see all of their relevant options.

"Of course, it wasn't easy, even with all those expert friends on board," Tzvia says. "In order to develop the platform, the team had to invest a lot of time in developing the technology. In the end, we developed an AI engine that can read through treatment protocols. We had to train the machine to understand treatment protocols, to read through eligibility criteria, extract the terminology, and understand the different combinations, drug names, genetic mutations, biomarkers, and overall health conditions."

Tzvia's ultimate goal for TrialJectory is for it to become the Zillow for all chronic diseases. She wants it to be the place where a patient goes after receiving a diagnosis to determine his or her treatment options. She also would like it to become the go-to source for oncologists before patient meetings



so they can review options together, analyze them, and make a decision that is based on data and information.

Tzia's vision is for TrialJectory to become the vehicle for bringing the patient voice and data to the pharma industry, so all patients from all over the country, from diverse race and demographics, can be understood, and their input can be used in decisions about eligibility criteria, participating in trials, etc. ○

**Listen to podcast** 

**WOW MOMENT: My wow moment came when I realized there was no tool out there to help oncology patients find information about trials that are relevant to them, and I wanted the next person to have a tool that provided options and hope.**

# Beenu Kapoor

VP, IT Trial Management, Products Lead  
IQVIA

## JUST GO WITH THE FLOW — AND OPPORTUNITIES WILL OPEN UP.

Beenu Kapoor's 25-year-plus professional life has been filled with successes, risks, and good and bad decisions, and through it all she managed to learn crucial lessons that guided her to an impressive career at IQVIA.

She says her mantra has always been to just go with the flow, and that mindset has opened opportunities as well as risks. She followed her gut, and moved from her first position in IT in

the financial industry to the pharma industry, aiming to have a better work-life balance when her kids were young. She had a very stable and rewarding IT job at Bristol Myers Squibb, which she left to join a CRO against the advice of all. "Not one single person advised me to join a CRO," she says. "I did it anyway."

Not having a science degree proved to be a disadvantage for growth in that position, so she capitalized on the experience by using the business acumen that she had gained and made yet another big move to join a consulting firm.

"Consulting was the sweet spot between business and IT, primarily helping both the business and IT leaders strategize and operationalize their vision," she says.

Ten years into her career, she attended Rutgers Business School and earned her MBA.

"This exposure to a completely novel, non-technical world, the world of micro and macroeconomics, finance, business strategy, sales and marketing, opened my eyes to the business side of the industry," she says.

After completing her the MBA, which was a transformative moment in her career, she was inspired to pursue more of a role in business. She jumped from clinical IT to the business world of managing clinical trials and lives by the phrase "do not do technology for the sake of technology."

Beenu was instrumental in building TransCelerate's Shared Investigator Platform, a common collaboration IT platform for investigators and sponsors.

That experience was a springboard to her current role at IQVIA, where she is responsible for the trial management suite, leading teams to embrace digital transformation and commit to bringing intelligent, intuitive and interoperable trial management technologies that orchestrate better patient outcomes and speed to market.

Since technology solutions are generally built for a very specific set of stakeholders that result in very siloed process and related data, her daily focus is to transform the operational world of clinical trials by providing a digital trial management suite of products for enabling a seamless experience for all stakeholders, not just the sponsors, not just for the sites, not just for the patients, but all stakeholders.

She quotes Steve Jobs to sum up her career path: "You have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in the future."

Over Beenu's R&D clinical business and IT leadership career, she has had much success at creating clinical business operational strategies, business models and road-maps, business process transformation, business operations and technology solutions to create unique and differentiated enterprise value.

Her uncommon blend of business and IT skills combined with strategic thinking and analytical skills allows Beenu to translate strategy into action and goal achievement. ○

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**WOW MOMENT:** My executive MBA from Rutgers changed the shape of my career.

# Shonda Anderson-Williams

Senior VP Healthcare & LifeSciences  
Salesforce

## COLLECTIVELY, VOICES ARE POWERFUL.

Wherever she goes, Shonda Anderson-Williams is all about blazing trails. The experienced technology leader who has worked for IBM and Microsoft during her nearly 25 year career also uses her soft skills to create an environment of diversity and inclusion in her workplaces.

An avid mentor and advocate for diversity and inclusion, no matter what company or what job she holds, she always looks for ways to make career paths easier for those around her.

She strives to connect with younger colleagues, early in their careers, to mentor and share her experiences and provide them with a perspective on what they may encounter, how to think about entering into an organization and what that will mean to their career.

“I think it’s important as I’ve been in this industry for quite some time, in the tech world specifically, and I have developed a vast network of some really, really smart folks,” she says. “I want to pay it forward by connecting women who are early in their careers to my network so they can explore and ask questions.”

She also finds great value in connecting individuals from her network who have different backgrounds to create opportunities for them to broaden their perspective.

Her career got started with this type of mentoring and she plans to always pay it forward.

At her former position at Microsoft, she took every advantage to “bring others along.” In her own words, she is “really big” on mentoring. Shonda was instrumental in bringing a focus on diversity and inclusion at Microsoft by leading the company’s D&I efforts for the U.S. healthcare and life sciences business. She spent a lot of time just making sure the company was building opportunities and remained open to having challenging conversations. In the

year 2020, the pandemic, along with the well-publicized racial and social injustices, brought the Microsoft leadership to the table to talk about how those events were affecting the organization, team members, and what role the company should play to continue to develop young women and men of color.

Topics of conversation also included the impact on the broader organization and how it could be better at being an advocate and an ally in the world today.

“It was really important to ensure that we had a diverse team of resources to help support this priority, so it wasn’t just me,” Shonda says. “I have a passion for it, but I also know that I can’t do it alone.”

As part of her efforts, the company started to go into different communities, universities, and organizations to create opportunities for people to learn about technology. This was big initiative, with Microsoft looking to reach 25 million people.

At Microsoft, Shonda participated in a community called Blacks at Microsoft. These types of communities create



an awareness and education across the board so the organization can understand exactly what the cultural challenges are in a way it couldn’t before because leadership had never experienced it themselves.

After 15 years at Microsoft, in January of 2021, Shonda took a new position at Salesforce as senior VP of healthcare & life sciences. ○

Listen to podcast



**WOW MOMENT:** My ability to play a part in someone’s development and see them do bigger, better things and be great leaders, are always moments I relish.

# Georgette Pascale

Founder and CEO  
Pascale Communications



**PASSION IS STILL MY NUMBER 1 TOPIC FOR EVERYTHING I TALK ABOUT.**

Georgette Pascale always knew she wanted to work in public relations, and she expertly developed her craft in many different industries before finding her passion in healthcare. The 2009 PharmaVOICE 100 honoree worked for public relations firms in the music, fashion, corporate, and high-tech industries before landing in healthcare.

She enjoys the educational aspect of her job, especially when it means learning something new and working with leading scientists, and then

translating that knowledge to the public. "There is something new to learn every day, and I like that," she says.

When Georgette left her job as director of a healthcare practice in a big New York PR agency to start her own company about 16 years ago, she knew she wanted her agency to be virtual. She knew working in her own space would be more productive for her, and she sought out others who worked the same way. She found it so helpful to have "work" be just wherever she was, so when creativity struck, she could get to it immediately. This was the early days of virtual offices and way before COVID-19 drove everyone home to work, so others had their doubts.

"Being virtual has been advantageous," she says. "We never called it work from home; we've always said virtual because, honestly, that was the whole concept that we are able to work from anywhere, whether that's another continent or on a boat.

"Now we have this amazing team of more than 40 team members from coast to coast in the United States as well as associates over in London," she says. "We are also now heavily into digital and social media management, so we have morphed beyond traditional public relations."

To be in PR she says, you have to be a life learner, and that is where she gets her

motivation. She thrives on networking, mentoring, building out new business initiatives, developing partnerships, thinking strategically, implementing crisis management, and supporting the amazing Pascale team.

The firm has partnered with household names, savvy startups, thought-leaders and physician experts serving the U.S. and global healthcare marketplace. The company mantra, "Responsive AF," sums up both Georgette and the spirit of her company. "Being responsive and being consistent and being authentic are what have made us successful as well as so many of the people we have worked with. Everything you do from client service to how you deal with your partners is so important, Reputation can be ruined in an instant.

"The whole reason I got into this line of work was to connect people," Georgette continues. "So, my wow moments happen every day, when I meet new people and can make a connection to them or for them."

A self-described entrepreneur and philanthropist, Georgette contributes in some way to many organizations, such as Boxing is Love as a board member; Ophthalmic World Leaders, where she was a past president and current board member; Mid Fairfield AIDS Project; the Fashion Institute of Technology, where she is an instructor; and Prevent Blindness, where she is part of the marketing committee. ○

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**ADVICE: Keep being humble. Don't take things personally. Ask for help. Everyone is an expert in something and that's why we collectively work well together.**

# Jody Casey

Director, Customer Business Outcomes  
Microsoft

**WHEN YOU'RE A WORKING MOM, IT'S A JUNGLE GYM, NOT A CORPORATE LADDER; IT'S OKAY TO STEP SIDWAYS AND HANG WITH YOUR KIDS WHEN THEY ARE YOUNG.**

Since Jody Casey's WoW podcast aired in October 2020, she changed positions, just one of the various opportunities she has grabbed along her career trajectory. Last fall, she took on the role of director, customer business outcomes at Microsoft.

Along her career journey, she has held positions of increasing responsibility, including various titles at General Electric, where she spent eight years, a two-year stint as campaign manager for Texas Congressman Beto O'Rourke, and two years serving as VP, healthcare partnerships, at Elligo Health Research, a healthcare-enabling research organization.

As a woman in the technology field, Jody knows all too well there are few role models for other women to look up to, which is why mentoring young women who wish to pursue a career in STEM is especially important to her. "I think we should start as early as the high school years," she says. "When I was in high school, I didn't even know that a technical field could be an option for me until my high school science teacher convinced me that it could. She took me to Georgia Tech, which is where I ended up attending college."

Creating awareness of what lies ahead for young women is the first step in mentorship. Once women are in the field, out of college and in their careers, mentorship is still extremely important in the male-dominated STEM field, as mentoring gives necessary support to navigate corporate waters, including promotions and salary raises.

"Many women don't know how to make the ask," Jody says. She wants to help the next generation of leaders who is she is mentoring to be able to develop that ability and develop their careers so they can move up.

When she was early in her corporate career, she was extremely focused on getting ahead, and she wishes now she had looked at life in a more balanced way, because she discovered, as many do, that you don't live to work, you work to live. Once she began her family, she became more cognizant of the need to balance work and home life, and she now has that important perspective to pass on to others. "Reading Sheryl Sandberg's book *Lean In* had a big impact on me, it made me realize that a career is a journey, and motherhood may require a woman to take a pause on the corporate ladder, especially when the children are very small," she says.

One of the jobs that really tested her life balance was being the senate campaign manager for Beto O'Rourke in 2018, who at the time represented Texas's 16th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives. She was volunteering for him, when he called to ask her to run his senate campaign. She was totally shocked and declined, but then agreed to do it about a week later. "My kids were 5 and 7, which was a crazy time to become a campaign manager for a major U.S. senate race,"

she says. With no clear path but a ton of support from her spouse and kids, it became the best decision she ever made and the hardest job she has ever done. When she started, O'Rourke was a 20-point underdog and a year later he was within two points of Ted Cruz. The campaign raised over \$8 million and became the largest raising senate race in the history of the United States. ○

Listen to podcast 



**WOW MOMENT: My boss gave me the opportunity to present to the former CEO of General Electric Jeff Immelt and his executive staff; I want to pay that forward and give people who work for me that kind of opportunity.**

# Amanda Powers-Han

Chief Marketing Officer  
Greater Than One

## MAINTAINING YOUR INTEGRITY WILL SERVE YOU AS A LEADER VERY WELL IN THE LONG TERM.

Amanda Powers-Han has spent her entire career — 20 years — at Greater Than One (GTO) and as the recently named chief marketing officer, she looks forward to shaping the future vision and further success of the agency.

An established healthcare marketing and communications leader, Amanda has a proven track record of building brands, leading clients, and helping propel GTO into its leadership position today.

“Clients recognize our digital roots and our deep expertise is a key differentiator in many ways,” she says.

“Our clients, in many cases, also see digital as a centralized component of their marketing strategy.”

As chief marketing officer, Amanda is responsible for building strategic alliances, identifying new client opportunities, and leading GTO’s marketing efforts.

The agency focuses on imagination — the word, the concept, and the execution. Even in something as common as day-to-day meetings, the company aims to invite diversity in thought. “We aim to avoid having the same three or four folks speak up, and really try to bring out the best ideas in all of the staff.”

Amanda drives GTO’s mission of always advocating for imagination within the organization by leading by example. She sees this as an opportunity to really set the bar and to push and inspire people to think creatively and to make sure that they know they are in a safe environment to do so.

Her honest leadership style helps facilitate this environment, even during those times when the truth is hard. She strongly believes that being honest and maintaining integrity will serve you as a leader very well in the long term.

As a leader, she also believes that people will rise to the challenge if you believe they will.

So she provides every opportunity she can to allow that

to happen for her staff.

Another important aspect of her leadership is developing relationships. “While this takes time, the relationship and the chemistry that results across the team serves us well,” she says.

One of Amanda’s mentors has a phrase that she has taken forward: “If you’re going to fall, fall on your nose and not on your rear.” “So when I look for leadership traits I’m looking for people who we’re going to have to pull back versus push forward,” she says. “I also look for people who have great instincts. Marketing is an art and a science and great instincts are necessary.”

Amanda’s WoW moment occurred when she partnered with a client to create the first-ever branded social media program in pharma marketing.

She and the digital partner had lunch to discuss the project, and it was then she came up with the idea for the two of them to co-lead the project.

“I said let’s lead this together, we can do it,” she says. “Let’s blaze the trail together, we can do it.”

To go all the way from concept development to evaluation to approval to launch and then to see the impact that the program delivered for the business was really exciting, Amanda says.

What they were able to accomplish together was really incredible. Greater Than One. ○



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**WOW MOMENT:** Working on the first ever branded social media program in pharma marketing.

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# Saundra Pelletier

CEO, President, and Executive Director  
**Evofem Biosciences**

**WHEREVER YOU ARE AT THIS MOMENT, REMEMBER THAT YOU DECIDE WHAT YOU DESERVE.**

WOW podcast guest and 2020 PharmaVOICE 100 Saundra Pelletier grew up in a small town where no one expected her to do anything more than get married and have children. Last year, under her leadership as CEO, president, and executive director, her company Evofem Biosciences launched Phexxi, the first and only non-hormonal prescription vaginal gel for use as an on-demand method of contraception.

“What I know and what I knew then was that women make the world rotate,” Saundra says. “We do. And that when we’re happy, everybody benefits. But when we feel invisible or we feel boxed in or we feel forgotten about, nobody is served.”

Saundra has always been determined to accomplish anything she decided on. “When I talk about my story, one of the things that has been so important for me, particularly for younger women moving through their career to hear, is that my career was unexpected,” she says. “I certainly didn’t end on the path that I started on. So, my career was really driven by me.”

Saundra also reminds women to remember that they decide what they deserve. “If you are in a place where you wish it was something different, then you need to focus on who you want to be and what you want to do. I know those are just words, but intention translated into my actions. And I feel fortunate that I drove my career to end up here, and I’m so happy and really proud.”

Launching Phexxi was a big moment for Saundra, as her goal was to give women the choice of a non-hormonal birth control option, and she did it. Her priority is to improve birth control for women around the world, and she wants what she does to matter to women.

Saundra led Evofem’s transition to

the public market in January 2018. She has also led multiple equity financing rounds, through which she raised in excess of \$400 million.

In her more than 25 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry, she has launched pharmaceutical brands worldwide and expanded indications on female healthcare brands in multiple countries. Her experience includes a comprehensive range of women’s healthcare products, cardiovascular, pain management, sleep therapies and medical devices.

She began her career as a pharmaceutical rep calling on ob-gyns, working in women’s health.

Her exposure as a sales rep opened her eyes to how doctors treated their patients and how women expected doctors to inform and help guide them in their decision making. That is when she saw a gap and knew she had to bring a better contraceptive choice to market.

You might think that the launch was her WoW moment, but actually it was surviving cancer, and not so much the survivorship, but that everyone expected her to survive is what impacted her deeply. During her treatment process, she worried that colleagues might think she wouldn’t be able to do her job, when

in fact, that was the farthest thing from their minds.

Surviving and observing how others viewed her was a big turning point in her career because instead of doubting her, people stood by her. “Look, if anybody can beat cancer, it’s you,” they said.

For the first time she had finally become aligned with who she wanted to be because these people believed that if she said she could do it, they took her word for it. And it was a big moment in her career because she had proven that she was enough and other people thought so, too. ○

**Listen to podcast**



**WOW MOMENT: Surviving cancer: for the first time I had finally become aligned with who I wanted to be, because people believed that if I said I could do it, I could do it.**

# Helen Hyun Jung Lee, M.D.

President and CEO  
Samyang Pharmaceuticals USA

## I DISLIKE MICROMANAGEMENT AND WORK TO DEVELOP TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY WITH MY COLLEAGUES.

Drawing on her extensive biotech experience, Helen Hyun Jung Lee, M.D., convinced Korean company Samyang Pharmaceuticals to establish a U.S. subsidiary in the innovation hub of Cambridge, Mass., and to have her serve as the president and CEO of the new entity.

"I recognized that if the Samyang was serious about developing new biologics, the company needed to come to the

United States, where the resources — people with experience — existed," she says. "Being in Cambridge gives us access to numerous small biotech companies, research institutes, and hospitals in the area."

That's just one of the bold moves Helen has made in her career.

She decided to leave medical practice as an ob-gyn to become a biopharmaceutical scientist.

While she loved the practice of medicine, she realized early in her career that the research environment was the right place for her. "I love medicine," she says. I recognized early on that I had a heart for research because the research team environment provides me with an opportunity to learn something new on my own as well as from other scientists, which was very exciting."

She began her industry career at Pfizer and worked at a number of leading biopharma companies. At Eli Lilly she worked as a medical lead for head and neck cancer indication for Erbitux, which received FDA approval in 2011.

Then at Baxalta she was one of the initial members of the oncology startup, where she developed strategies for the oncology therapeutic area and then executed evaluation of external licensing opportunities while overseeing clinical programs from registration to commercialization. Next, at Shire, she served as global head of solid tumor clinical development and successfully led Onivyde to receiving

market authorization in pancreatic cancer from the European Medicines Agency.

"When Samyang approached me, senior management was looking for someone who is a scientist with business development experience in addition to R&D experience," she says. "My experience in drug development and approval, setting an oncology therapeutic strategy and executing it through licensing activities, fit their profile."

As a president and CEO of Samyang Biopharm USA, she says she is in the position to lead the business and R&D team that can make life-altering medicines available to tens or hundreds of thousands of patients globally. "This is a far cry from the thousands of patients I may have treated as a physician," she says.

Leading a small company also means wearing many hats, which Dr. Lee finds interesting but requires constant study to ensure she understands each area.

As an Asian woman leading a biopharma company, Dr. Lee says she is often the only female and person of color in the room, but at the end of the day she says that's not what is important. Rather it's about focusing on people. One of the big challenges for a leader is hiring the right people. "It takes time to get the right people in place and you need the patience, especially when starting a company," Dr. Lee says. "We have a great team. I look for a fit in terms of both experience and personality to fit the corporate culture." ○

Listen to podcast



**LESSONS LEARNED:** Being a working mom is one of the most difficult jobs in the world. But at the same time, having kids around gives me the motivation and encouragement to commit to healing patients.

# Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, Ph.D.

CEO  
Cancer Research Institute (CRI)

**I'M HONORED TO REPRESENT AN ORGANIZATION THAT I KNOW DOES THINGS THE RIGHT WAY.**

Since its inception, the Cancer Research Institute (CRI), has been dedicated to the field of cancer immunology. The advances made in this area are hugely significant, says Jill O'Donnell-Tormey, Ph.D., who has been CRI's CEO since 1993.

CRI is a small nonprofit organization whose goal is to help develop and fund the production and development of immunotherapies that will impact all cancer patients.

Dr. O'Donnell-Tormey is extremely proud of the role CRI has had in transforming the oncology field. "The fact that cancer immunotherapy has now become standard of care for cancer patients is an enormous milestone," she says. "CRI has been involved in the development of checkpoint blockade immunotherapy, which is an innovative treatment that uses medications known as immune checkpoint inhibitors to address several types of cancer. And we have been part of CAR-T cells development programs for B-cell leukemias and lymphomas. I'm very proud that CRI can take credit for getting the field to where it is today."

Immunotherapies have been miraculous for some patients, Dr. O'Donnell-Tormey says, but not for all. "However, with more knowledge and advanced technologies it's become easier to ask questions as to why treatments work on some patients and not others, understand what is happening at that tumor site, and potentially come up with combinations of drugs that might be able to turn a non-responding patient into a responder," she adds.

Dr. O'Donnell-Tormey recognizes that CRI relies on academic centers, other nonprofit organizations, and pharmaceutical companies, and most importantly, patients to enroll in trials to make progress.

Dr. O'Donnell-Tormey says one of the challenges is that only 4% of eligible cancer patients enroll in clinical trials.

"CRI works with patients and caregivers to speak with their physicians about clinical trials and we offer a free clinical trial finder for cancer immunotherapy on our website," she says. "There are a lot of misconceptions about clinical trials and I'm very proud of the work CRI has done with patient summits to bring patients and their caregivers information directly from the leaders in the field."

For Dr. O'Donnell-Tormey, it's the stories of patients who have gone through treatment that inspire the organization.

"I tend to like to play these stories at the beginning of my board meeting every quarter so that our trustees can say this is why we do what we do," she says. "They appreciate that their dollars are having impact."

Dr. O'Donnell-Tormey has spent 34 years at CRI, 22 at the helm, and says she is blessed to work with so many dedicated people, from her staff, to the scientists on the scientific advisory council, to the board of trustees.



She leads by example and doesn't micromanage.

"I trust the people who work for me and I expect them to get their jobs done," she says. "I value each individual employee. I make a point to give credit and recognize people's contributions. I'm pleased that I have many people who have worked with me for more than 20 or 25 years." ○

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**LESSONS LEARNED: I expect people to committed to their work, work hard, but also to be aware of what is happening throughout the whole organization and step up to the plate when others need help.**

# Donna LaVoie

President and CEO  
LaVoie Health Science

WOW

**I'M EXCITED ABOUT THE BREADTH AND DEPTH OF WHAT WE DO.  
THE WORK IS INFECTIOUS AND INCREDIBLY DEMANDING ALL AT THE**

Donna LaVoie never imagined she would start her own business, but after moving from venture capital to Genzyme and working with the entrepreneurial team under former Genzyme's CEO Henri Termeer, she found herself excited by the industry and eager to form her own agency, LaVoie Health Science.

"Henri and the original team at Genzyme were phenomenal to work with," she says. "It was like going to Harvard or MIT."

Donna and her team support the journeys of biotech companies. She says her background in venture capital

has been helpful in understanding the behind-the-scenes activities and how investors think.

"When I started my agency in the basement of my house with just my computer and only one other person working with me, I had to figure everything out myself and have the tenacity to take it forward," she says. "I'm in a much different position, but it's about getting through every passage of the journey. It's always a new challenge."

Donna says two decades ago there weren't many women in her area of specialty, which led to some push back.

"When I was at Genzyme leading communications, we worked with a couple of fairly high profile male PR professionals, and one person said to me, 'You know, you ought to think about working in fashion or in general healthcare or something like that,'" Donna recalls. "I thought to myself, no way am I going to do that and just for that comment I'm going to keep going."

The world of PR has changed significantly and over the years there has been a shift from product stories to platform stories, back to product stories again.

"Now we're in the platform promise of the future time," she says. "But regardless of what time we're in, it is about putting the story together and building awareness."

Right now there is a lot happening in cell and gene therapy but each company's website is much the same as the next.

"Differentiation is critical and that means really powerful articulation of how you tell that story to make it different," Donna says.

While Donna's agency has been operating since 2001, in 2019 she entered into a strategic alliance with Omnicom Public Relations Group.

"Omnicom had reached out to me as it was interested in coming together around innovation with a desire to work with companies earlier in the development cycle, which is what we do," she says. "So that was their interest, and ours was how do we work with companies as they continue to mature."

As a leader, Donna is driven, curious, and tenacious. "I'm committed to ensuring that other people succeed," she says. "I'm always learning and thinking about a new approach to the way we're doing something, for example, or how we could do something better."

She says training and development are integral to taking the company forward, particularly given the complex nature of early-stage biotech companies.

Looking back, Donna says if she had known what it was going to take to start an agency, she would have found it daunting.

"This industry has become far more strategic and complex — it's no longer about throwing out some press releases," she says. "As an agency, we have a critical role to play and need a seat at the table, to craft the message, and be part of the conversations about what is and isn't credible." ○



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**WOW MOMENT: Henri Termeer at Genzyme said to me that I would have my own agency one day, and here I am 20 years later.**

# LaVoieHealthScience

Celebrates Women Across the World  
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As a woman-owned business, LaVoieHealthScience is proud to support women leaders across the health and science industry. Celebrating International Women's Day to us means honoring the dedication and passion women bring to our industry in their journey to improve patient lives while raising awareness against bias and working toward equality for all. LaVoieHealthScience, through its strategic alliance with Omnicom Public Relations Group, brings 2,000 health consultants across 14 agencies in more than 100 countries.

LaVoieHealthScience is an award-winning, strategic communications agency for emerging growth companies from launch to commercialization and beyond. A special shout out to our own CEO, **Donna LaVoie**, for her influence as a corporate leader, passion and conviction for the industry, and her ability to think outside the box to develop and implement breakthrough, integrated communications strategies. Her inspiration and motivation drive our team to deliver award-winning communication solutions for our clients.

To learn more about LaVoieHealthScience and our work advancing health and science innovations, contact Lisa DeScenza, Head of Business Development, at (617) 351-0243 or [ldescenza@lavoiehealthscience.com](mailto:ldescenza@lavoiehealthscience.com).



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# Tanya du Plessis

VP of Data Strategies and Solutions

**Bioforum the Data Masters**

**WE HAVE A LOT OF WOMEN IN OUR SENIOR MANAGEMENT ROLES AND THAT HAS REALLY HELPED ME TO BE THE BEST I CAN BE IN MY CAREER.**

The world of data management has changed hugely in the 15 years Tanya du Plessis has been in the industry. It's moved from a paper-oriented industry in all aspects, toward electronic data capture (EDC), which has accelerated since the COVID-19 pandemic.

As VP of data strategies and solutions at Bioforum the Data Masters, Tanya recognizes the advantages that technology is bringing to bear. "EDC platforms and e-sourcing bring big opportunities for data analytics because the data and metadata are right in front of you, this allows us to look at things differently, such as how many queries are there or how far along is the clinical team with reviews," she says. "There's also a drive for standardization and being able to see and do more with the data."

She says the industry is becoming more trusting of technology for managing trial data.

One big driver of this trend, Tanya says, is the need to take a risk-based approach to clinical research, which requires that companies have their data and insights aligned and a high-level understanding of where they are in the process. This trend, she says, has pushed analytics and data management to the center of clinical trials.

"We encourage our clients to bring us to the table at the beginning of the clinical trial process to start to have those conversations," she says. "We're a data-focused CRO with experience in analytics, reviews, visualizations, and risks monitoring."

Bioforum works with smaller biotech and biopharma companies that increasingly are bringing products to market, which means having adaptable processes to support these companies in novel ways, first in terms of budget

as well as providing the expertise they need without overwhelming them.

"Bringing a partnership mentality to these relationship is really key for these companies," Tanya says. "Often, small companies think they can't have services such as analytics and strategic alignment, but if we're invited to the table early on we can share exciting ideas about their development plans, all of which can be adapted to their budget."

While Tanya is based in South Africa, she says every company she has worked for, including Bioforum, is global and with that comes an understanding of different cultures and ways of working toward a common goal.

"We have colleagues in Israel, in Australia, the United States, and in Europe too," she says. "So regardless of where a project manager sits, we as Bioforum need to make sure that our delivery is of the highest quality and this really starts with our people."

With the lockdown forced by the global pandemic, the company had to think about creative ways to give people



recognition and connect with project managers to see how they are doing.

"We have what we call workless meetings, which we try to do at least every second week on a global level," she says. "One example was a bring your pet to the call. Everybody joined the call with their pets. This helps bring that human factor back, which I think we all miss." ○

**Listen to podcast** 

**ADVICE: It's important to focus on keeping your team happy and making sure they are heard and noticed. From my perspective, it's important that people are placed in the right roles; that they are enjoying their job; that they have all the tools that they need for that job, and we're not just giving them tasks and leaving them high and dry.**

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# Elaine O'Hara

Chief Commercial Officer, Head of North America Commercial Operations  
**Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi**

## PEOPLE COME TO WORK BECAUSE THEY ENJOY THEIR WORK.

According to Elaine O'Hara, chief commercial officer, head of North America commercial operations for Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi, it's a challenging and exciting time to be part of a vaccines company.

"Vaccines tend to be underrepresented among the major pharma companies, and yet they are among the most powerful tools we have in our toolbox regarding infectious disease," Elaine says. "I think we can see that playing itself out right now as, unfortunately, we're going through



**WOW MOMENT:** The trajectory of my career changed when I moved from what was essentially a single-focused product to managing an organization more broadly. It became a lot more complicated, and I had to learn to multitask and compartmentalize constantly.

the worst health crisis in the last 100 years.

"As prepared as we thought we were going to be for this, we weren't," she adds. "Globally, we have a massive crisis on our hands, and so every major manufacturer that is able to manufacture, develop, and produce vaccines is in the throes of doing that right now. So, a category that was very underrepresented in the past is now coming to the forefront in terms of everybody's attempts to work on potentially what will be a lifesaving vaccine. Because as COVID-19 progresses, having a vaccine to actually intervene and stop the progression of the disease and the spread of the virus is really of the utmost importance."

Elaine notes that not everyone appreciates what vaccines can do. "I think there's a lot of misinformation that's circulating at the moment," she says. "There is so much access to immediate information, whether it's through social media or the TV, etc., so, it's difficult to try to turn the paradigm for some folks that vaccines actually really do prevent significant disease."

Some of the difficulty is due to the fact that in a lot of developed countries, including the United States, some of the diseases prevented by vaccines have almost been eradicated. "Polio is a great example," Elaine says. "Measles, while there have been outbreaks, for all intents and purposes

is close to being eradicated, along with many other infectious diseases, which not only our society doesn't see anymore, but certainly doctors don't even see anymore.

"We have a broad portfolio of vaccines and each of these vaccines are created to prevent essentially either a bacterial or a viral infection, whether it be influenza, meningitis, diphtheria, tetanus, or pertussis," Elaine continues.

She believes manufacturers need to play a vital role in continuing with educational efforts around infectious diseases. "We spend a lot of our time creating educational materials for constituents, for public health, for healthcare practitioners to be able to provide to their patients, etc.," she says.

Elaine recognizes that no leader can do everything on their own, and to achieve any collective goals it's important to have a diverse team, one that has a diverse way of thinking, and where you can respectfully challenge each other. "Our CEO talks a lot about creating an environment where you can bring the best version of yourself to work everyday," she says. "I think that's a great mantra."

Elaine says she was drawn to the pharma industry because of its ability to change somebody's life for the better. "The medicines that exist today, which didn't exist 10, 20, or 50 years ago, have the power to change people's quality of life and in some cases cure them, and that's a noble profession to be a part of," she says. ○

Listen to podcast 

# April Lewis

Executive VP  
Hū, a W2O company

**WHAT MATTERS TO ME IS PEOPLE BRINGING THEIR BEST THINKING, PEOPLE CHALLENGING ONE ANOTHER AND EMPOWERING ONE ANOTHER TO WORK FROM THEIR STRENGTHS.**

Hū, the company where April Lewis is executive VP, calls itself a first-of-its-kind patient activation organization.

“Patient activation itself isn’t really a new concept,” April says. “It’s been done in marketing. It’s been done in politics. But activation with regard to clinical trial participation is new. And the way we’re approaching patient activation is through the use of behavioral economics to understand what motivates patients toward the active state of choice and commitment in clinical trial participation.”

This is definitely an area that’s ripe for change. A recent CenterWatch study on clinical trial recruitment reported willingness to participate in clinical trials has plummeted from 85% to 49%.

“I’ve dedicated my career to clinical trials, and this drop in willingness is really disturbing, and in my opinion it’s the sensationalizing of all this chaos around the pandemic that’s the driving force in that drop,” April says. “Quite frankly, I don’t think we’ve done a very good job as an industry combating that.”

April sees three factors that can help push Hū to the next level. “Timing is everything,” she says. “There needs to be a level of market readiness and market willingness to be successful.”

“The second piece is around data and evidence, which are only part of the story,” she continues “I think we often fail because we look at data as an answer or the answer when really it should be looked at as directional guidance. I know there’s been a lot of push over the past 10 years around big data, real-world data, and real-world evidence, and that’s great, but I think data becomes most valuable when we balance it with experience and with instinct.

“And the third takeaway is that patients aren’t waiting for us,” she adds. “If we consider a trial as a product, we have to stop and think is that product attractive? We often focus on attractiveness when we think about our study sites and can we get a study site to choose our study over somebody else’s, but we neglect this with patients. We’ve done a bad job thinking about attractiveness from the patient perspective, and that’s a key opportunity I see moving forward.”

April’s career is marked by incredible success and she looks to pay what she has learned forward to the next generation of leaders. She likes to tout lessons she learned from one of her mentors, Linda Hand, who was the CEO of a company called DecisionView back in the 2000s. “She taught me to define my own success, that my success is mine to define and nobody else can do that,” April says. “She taught me that success is only really an experience when it’s shared and it can’t be owned by a single person. She pushed me to only do the things that I’m passionate about and I think most importantly, she has reminded me over and over and over again that family comes first always.



“I think that the greatest moment that shapes my career happens every day when I look around the table at the team that’s by my side, and when I talk to my three daughters who watch me and cheer me on and join me in the world of what’s possible,” April continues. “I’m humbled by the commitment and the care and the solidarity and the continued empowerment I feel from

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**ADVICE: What matters to me is when people bring their best thinking to the table, challenge one another, and empower one another to work from their strengths.**

# Natalie Douglas

Co-founder  
RareTi

**I'VE BEEN IN BUSINESS A LONG TIME, AND I KNOW WHEN YOU HAVE TO LEAD BY EXAMPLE, LEAD FROM THE FRONT, AND WHEN YOU HAVE TO GIVE SPACE TO THOSE AROUND YOU.**

Natalie Douglas, co-founder of RareTi, is recognized as a pioneer in the managed access market, having built IDIS in the late 1990s.

"The desire to build that proposition so many years ago was born out of the personal experiences I had gained working in industry and seeing that there was just no suitable way that some patients could access therapy," she says. "So, I was personally driven to build and

create a new model to improve access to much-needed therapies."

Natalie says she and Wendy White co-founded RareTi as a different kind of managed access company.

"Our vision for RareTi is to inspire and change the way that healthcare is delivered, particularly for patients with rare disease, wherever they are, to provide equitable access to new therapies as well as supportive healthcare for rare patients," Natalie says. "Fundamental to this model, is our desire to work collaboratively with pharmaceutical companies to help navigate the complexities of access for patients with rare disease to their new therapies."

Natalie sees a couple of key changes having occurred in the managed access world over the years. "One change I see is greater acceptance by the pharmaceutical industry and a recognized need to make a level of provision available to patients post-trial and preapproval," she says.

"These conversations were really hard when I started talking to pharma for the first time because I was bringing a concept to the table that was unfamiliar and a bit scary for some of them. I definitely see that there's been a huge shift toward greater acceptance.

"At the same time, most of the examples that we see today are

in the therapy area of cancer," Natalie continues. "So, it was obvious in starting RareTi that there was a real need to focus in rare and enable more access to rare patients. Of course, there's complexity, but greater acceptance. There's also more competition in the market in terms of third-party providers offering their services to the industry, and I think this is an indicator that this is a legitimate marketplace."

Natalie is driven and determined to make a difference. "I have a passion for this space, this journey is something I understand," she says.

Natalie is a big fan of supporting women entrepreneurs. "We're not always great at recognizing our skills," she says. "We don't always believe we will be taken seriously, especially if we want to go down a route that other people haven't already been down. In general, I find that women are a bit timid sometimes about taking that big leap forward."

One piece of advice she has for those looking to become entrepreneurs and venture out on their own is to double-check the reason why you want to be part of a startup.

"Think about why you think it's a good idea and why it matters to you," Natalie continues. "Most of the time you'll be able to check all of the boxes because you'll discover that it is a good idea and there is a gap in the market. You'll also find out that you can do it. And that's a good place to be." ○

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**WOW MOMENT:** My first job in the industry at Johnson & Johnson is probably my wow moment, this is when I realized that what I was doing wasn't just selling drugs to doctors; I was selling hope for patients, real people with real, incredible challenges with their health.

# Lourdes Felix

CEO, Chief Financial Officer, and Director  
BioCorRx Inc.

## I ALWAYS NOTE IN THE ROOM WHO'S REALLY PAYING ATTENTION AND WHO'S NOT.

Lourdes Felix says her current role as CEO, chief financial officer, and director of BioCorRx is the most challenging and rewarding assignment of her professional career.

“From the moment that I stepped into this company eight years ago, I felt a passion and desire to help it expand and to be able to help as many individuals as possible who are suffering from substance use disorder,” Lourdes says. “Honestly, I don’t think I realized what I was taking on at that time, but I had the energy and saw clearly what needed to be done and began to tug on the reins.”

Lourdes says BioCorRx offers and markets its Beat Addiction recovery program to licensed medical professionals, who in turn offer the program to their patients.

“Our recovery program has evolved over the last eight years substantially,” she says. “Our Beat Addiction recovery program today is a comprehensive medication-assisted treatment (MAT) program that combines medication with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and peer support. And doctors can choose to use the program with their patients for both opioid use disorder as well as alcohol use disorder.”

Opioid use disorder is where Lourdes sees the greatest need. “The drug overdose rate in 2020 was on pace

for a record year,” she says. “The U.S. death rates from suicides and overdoses are expected to reach an all-time high in 2020. And all that is happening along with what the country and the world are going through with the pandemic and COVID-19. Use of prescription opioids is down, but then you have synthetic and illicit drugs that are still on the rise.”

One piece of good news Lourdes cites is the growing awareness of the barriers to treatment access. “The AMA released a research brief in September that corroborates the concerns that companies like ours have about the barriers to access to treatment for individuals suffering from substance use disorder,” she says.

As a Hispanic female chief executive, Lourdes says she doesn’t consider herself a role model per se. “I am a 52-year-old, first-generation American-Hispanic female who grew up in a house with 10 people — mom and dad and seven siblings — with many obstacles growing up in an inner city with parents who didn’t speak English,” she says. “I look back and then look at myself and where I am now and this is my ongoing wow moment. I know I am an underrepresented minority and have always felt that I don’t always fit in, but I feel an enormous sense of accomplishment. Lourdes says she is an executive who’s always been focused on the end result and not necessarily individual accomplishments. That’s just



who I am. I truly hope I can inspire other female entrepreneurs and show what Hispanic women can achieve.” ○

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**LESSONS LEARNED: I create a culture of inclusion with commitment and leadership that recognizes the value of everyone’s voice, their life experiences, and the expertise they bring to the table.**

# BioCORRx<sup>®</sup> Celebrates *Inspiring Women*

BioCorRx<sup>®</sup> is proud to support International Women's Day and celebrate leaders like BioCorRx<sup>®</sup> CEO & CFO **Lourdes Felix** who are making an incredible impact on addiction recovery care around the world.



From advancing women leaders within our own company to focusing on how women are affected by substance abuse disorder, **BioCorRx<sup>®</sup> is committed to making sure women have a seat at every table and every research study.**



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# Valerie Palmieri

President and CEO  
Aspira Women's Health

**TO BE AN ENTREPRENEUR, YOU HAVE TO BE DRIVEN BY THE WHY.**

Valerie Palmieri is a champion for women's health, which comes as no surprise as she is president and CEO of Aspira Women's Health, which is striving to globally transform women's health, starting with ovarian cancer.

"Women's health has been an underserved population in terms of dollars, resources, and focus," she says. "The experience to lead Aspira has been amazing as a woman, as a mother, as an aunt and as a woman's health activist has been a dream come true."

Further emphasizing the company's



commitment to this area of therapeutic need, it underwent a rebranding in June from Vermillion to Aspira Women's Health. "We wanted to put first and foremost women's health as our middle name," she says. "We're focused on diseases that require a surgical diagnosis. The first disease we focused on was ovarian cancer. There are 20 million women in the United States who have a pelvic mass of some sort, but only 22,000 who have ovarian cancer."

Over the course of 10 years, the company with the help of Johns Hopkins and other corporate sponsors, created the first FDA-cleared algorithm specific for ovarian cancer.

At the time of Valerie's podcast, more than 120,000 women had been tested, with the most common diagnosis as endometriosis.

"Our goal is to bring non-invasive therapies to market that will just require a simple blood test to give doctors and patients insights to the disease, whether it's ovarian cancer or it's endometriosis," she says. "By doing so, we can reduce the time to treat and get patients to the right doctor and to the right treatment course as quickly as possible."

According to Valerie, who is a numbers-based leader, the mortality rate of ovarian cancer is extremely high at about 50%.

"Just as a point of comparison to other gender specific disease, such as prostate cancer or testicular cancer, where the mortality rates are in the 10% to 20% range. Ovarian cancer is the only gender-specific cancer with greater than a 50% mortality rate."

**ADVICE: I am a consensus leader, meaning I hire people who are stronger than me for my cabinet.**

Valerie says almost 65% of patients are diagnosed at late stage, which is why the mortality rate is so high. "The goal is to develop a test that can detect the cancer much earlier, when a patient can actually fight the fight — and change the survival rate to 75% to 92%."

Valerie's passion to get to the root cause of how things work is part of who she is. "I wanted a microscope at 8 years old," she says. "Science is the heart of who I am. I'm also a data person who wants to understand the 5Ws — the who, what, where, why, and how of everything. I've always wanted to understand what makes the human body tick from almost a laboratory perspective. I have spent my entire career understanding that laboratory offering and how I can make a difference."

Aspira is Valerie's third startup, and as a serial entrepreneur she relishes being a pioneer. "I think it must be part of my internal profile in terms of personality, but I like figuring out the whys," she says. "I'm part of a group of women who belong to Springboard Enterprises, there are about 800 of us and we've raised more than \$20 billion over the last 20 years."

Valerie is also convening a women's health coalition — a group of companies focused on all of the different diseases — autoimmune, oncology, ob-gyn, reproductive medicine — that are specific to women's health.

"This has become a movement of its own; it's also a group of women who want to pay it forward to other women to lift them up," she says. ○

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# Jessica Bosc

Director of Business Development  
Selexis

WOW

**I LOVE BEING ABLE TO SEE ALL OF THE NEW AND INTERESTING PROTEIN-BASED THERAPEUTICS THAT SCIENTISTS ARE WORKING ON IN OUR INDUSTRY.**

Jessica Bosc, director of business development at Selexis, was originally drawn into the biotech industry by a desire to help people and patients gain access to new medicines.

“This was coupled with a strong scientific curiosity,” Jessica says. “When I entered the field back in 2000s, we were just beginning to unlock the possibilities of what our industry could do, and I feel so fortunate to have seen the growth of

the industry over the past few decades. I love having a small part to play in developing new and innovative ways to support drug developers and get products to patients.”

Jessica is on the business development team at Selexis, and her work is focused on connecting with partners who need technology to produce any recombinant therapeutic protein. “Because we have the ability to understand and modify our cells to address productivity and expression challenges. Often those partners are right on the cusp of transitioning a molecular lead from development and really starting to move that drug toward patients for the first time,” she says. “It’s an exciting time to be involved in the process, and I love being able to see all of the new and interesting protein-based therapeutics that scientists are working on in our industry.”

What Jessica really likes is the company’s combination of a strong established technology platform and the continued focus on innovation.

“We have helped our partners advance more 130 molecules into clinical development and even advanced a few into commercial products,” she says. “Our industry keeps

innovating to combat disease with pipelines that contain all types of non-natural scaffolds, such as fusion proteins and bi- and multi-specific antibodies, and these are proteins that have real promise as treatments. At Selexis, we continue to develop our platform to enable our partners with solutions to express these proteins. There’s a lot of opportunity with these new molecules and it’s important to have a strong expression technology when you’re working with what I sometimes call, Franken-molecules.”

In addition to developing strong relationships and furthering Selexis’ mission, Jessica served as the 2020 president of Women in Bio (WOB), which was established in 2002 to help women entrepreneurs and executives build successful bioscience-related businesses.

“We promote increasing inclusion across the life sciences for all women throughout their career trajectory, and we do that through our 13 chapters across North America,” she says. “We currently have more than 3,000 active members. Our organization is fueled by volunteers across all sectors of the life sciences. We’re very broad. So we have R&D scientists, regulatory affairs professionals, business and legal professionals, along with C-suite executives.”

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**WOW MOMENT:** I’ve had a number of roles that have given me the chance to introduce a new technology in the lab or provide a platform that enables faster advancement to the clinic and through those roles I’ve had the opportunity to gain a wider view of the development space and to make a broader impact within the industry.



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