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*in* Legal Leadership

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# Letter from the Editor



WE WELCOME a new WILL leadership team in this issue and have included brief introductions from each team member for you. The question we asked each woman to answer in her introduction is when and how it is a benefit or advantage to be a woman in our industry.

The articles in this issue discuss: (a) emotional intelligence-what it is and how you can improve yours, (b) women's risk tolerance and investment behavior, (c) multi-tasking tips, (d) views of a woman's role in the workplace and how women leaders can improve the workplace for women and men, and increase the opportunities women have in the workplace beyond traditional roles of the past, and (e) employee type and performance management matters for companies to consider to ensure the long-term success of his/her organization.

Finally, this issue includes a book review and entertaining "Lessons from the Road." A book about Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (RBG) is the subject of this issue's book review. While we have asked the leadership team to describe a benefit of being a woman in our industry, RBG's legal career has focused on eliminating the superiority of any sex in the eyes of the law. In her words, "[I] think that men and women, shoulder to shoulder, will work together to make this a better world. Just as I don't think that men are the superior sex, neither do I think women are. I think it is great that we are beginning to use the talents of all of the people, in all walks of life..." This mindset is consistent with the focus of WILL this year on diversity, inclusion, and mentorship.

2018 was a wonderful year for WILL and the leadership team wishes the WILL community a healthy, joyful and prosperous 2019. **W**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Thurmond". The script is elegant and cursive.

**LAUREN THURMOND**  
Partner  
Hutchens Law Firm LLP  
[Lauren.Thurmond@hutchenslawfirm.com](mailto:Lauren.Thurmond@hutchenslawfirm.com)



# TROMBERG LAW GROUP

A WOMAN OWNED FIRM SERVING FLORIDA AND PUERTO RICO



**Tromberg Law Group** offers a full range of litigation and default servicing solutions for mortgage lenders, servicers, banks, and savings and loan associations. We proactively protect our clients' rights in foreclosure, bankruptcy, eviction, and real estate litigation.

The firm is experienced in the areas of foreclosure, creditor litigation, the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, title curative issues, and general housing-related issues such as foreclosure liens, redemption, homeowner association matters, mobile home curative, and compliance issues.

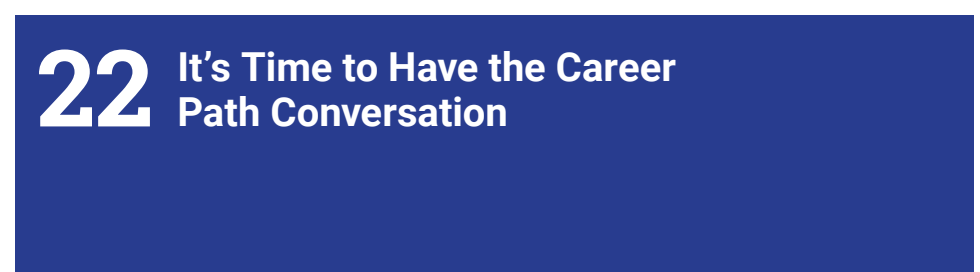
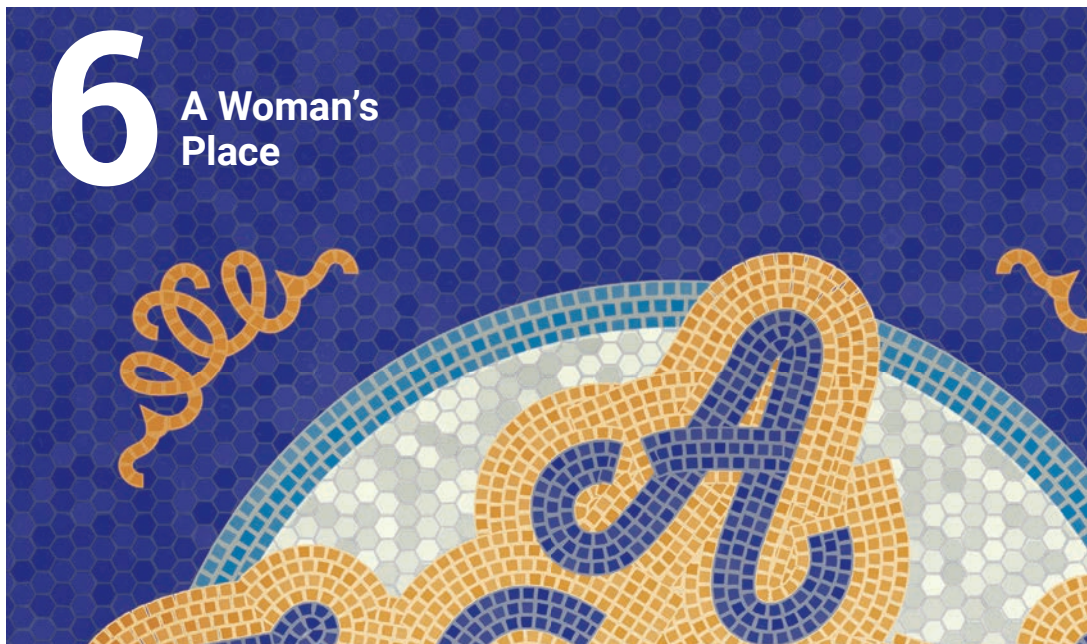
**Andrea Tromberg**, the firm's owner, purchased the firm which she had served as managing partner since 2011. This ownership change and subsequent renaming of the firm to Tromberg Law Group made Tromberg Law Group one of the largest woman-owned creditor firms in Florida that also serves Puerto Rico. Andrea Tromberg serves as the first elected Chairwoman on the Board of Directors for the American Legal and Financial Network (ALFN) and has served on numerous committees and is a current member of the leadership committee for Women in Legal Leadership (WILL).

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# I'VE GOT A LOT OF BAGGAGE

BY SALLY GARRISON

MANAGING MEMBER FOR THE MORTGAGE LAW FIRM, PLLC

It is really inconvenient when you pack for a 3-week trip to Africa and, upon landing, discover the wheels on your suitcase have broken off. It is a major bummer to schlep 70lbs of off-the-rack separates on safari. At least that is what I've heard... In that moment, and the following 21 days of doing a Sherpa impression, you reflect upon your choice of luggage and try to figure out where you went wrong. There are several essential considerations for any road warrior:

## *Color*

My father would be so annoyed I'm listing this first. There is a valid reason: I want to be able to spot my bag on the carousel from 4 terminals away. I have a barely-suppressed hostility for people who stand with their toes touching the carousel, waiting for a bag they haven't seen yet, causing a mire of humanity. I like to spot my bag, and dart through the masses, retrieve said bag with a flourish, and retreat into the Uber line before they know what hit them. Like a luggage ninja. You can only act with this type of special-ops precision if you can identify your bag from a distance. So, color and pattern can be useful. If you have ever had the joy of describing your black, no-name roller bag to the lost luggage representative, you know exactly what I mean. #GoodLuck

## *Type*

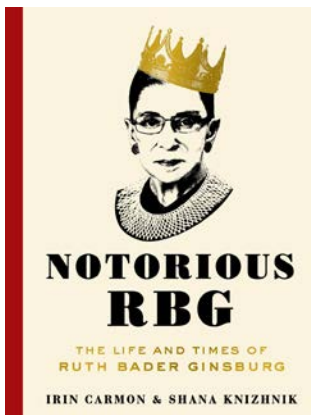
Most road warriors have a selection of travel bags: a carry on, a rolling duffel, and one or two roller bags. But, there are other considerations: hard side v. soft side, and standard wheel v. spinner. These can be deeply-held personal preferences. I have often been lured by the siren song of soft side luggage because I like to over pack and soft sides seem more forgiving – until the zipper bursts. I am also a recent convert to spinner wheels because they give your arms a

rest in transit. The most important thing in making these decisions is to find a bag whose wheels won't break off in Africa. #NeverForget

## *Cost*

This is usually where my decisions are made. Would I like an entire suite of Louis Vuitton luggage? Yes, but only at a deep discount. We put locks on our bags because we don't trust people; so, I'll be cold, dead, and 6 feet under before I send a \$4,000.00 bag through the baggage handling system. That said, the cheap alternatives might leave you wheel-less in Africa. This is where, like Buddha, we should follow the middle path. Thankfully, there are so many new and innovative companies filling this space.

- » Away is the current darling of my travel crew. The Away Carry-On is a hard-side roller bag that includes a built-in battery with 2 USB ports for your devices, but the price point is much lower than other similar bags because this company follows the direct-to-consumer model. They are also selling the Away x Tile, which will allow you to track your bag's location anywhere through the Tile app. What shocked and amazed many of us was Away's commitment to customer satisfaction. Broken bags are replaced. Even stolen ones! Amazing.
- » Raden's has a comparable roller bag with a sleek, stylish look. It provides many color options and battery. Moreover, it boasts a water-proof seal with its reverse zipper closure.
- » G-Ro might be the answer to broken wheels. Its soft-side roller bag, with battery option, has two large-diameter rubber wheels which can handle difficult travel terrain like curbs and stairs and safaris with ease. There is no way you can break those bad boys, and its soft sided – so, let the over packing begin. ■



# Notorious RBG

The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Author: Irin Carmon & Shana Knizhnik

A BOOK REVIEW BY LAUREN THURMOND  
PARTNER AT HUTCHENS LAW FIRM

I AM A NEW RBG GROUPIE (as usual, I am a little behind the times)! Justice Ginsburg has been written about a great deal recently and there are several fabulous books and movies about her life worth checking out. My favorite book so far is “Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg” by Irin Carmon and Shana Knizhnik. There are ten chapters in this book, and each chapter title comes from a Notorious B.I.G. lyric. The book is derived from interviews of RBG and RBG’s archive at the Library of Congress. The authors are millennials, one a law student at the time the idea for the book was created, and the other a journalist. It includes photographs of RBG throughout her life and exceptional illustrations from artists who wanted to show their support of RBG through their contributions to this book.

The book is part story about the life of a “fierce and knowing” woman, and part legal analysis of RBG’s seminal opinions eliminating sex as a legal classification, so that women could be recognized as people under the Constitution, and so that neither sex is considered superior under the law.

Before her mother’s death in 1950, RBG’s mother told her to “always be a lady” and “always be independent.” Good advice then and now. May we all be described one day as RBG is described in this book as intelligent, independent, thoughtful, collegial, precise, and elegant, a person who approaches life’s tasks “with a ferocious determination and without complaint.” Similarly, may we promote her vision of equality in our dealings with others, that being the “equal opportunity to aspire, achieve, participate in and contribute to society based on...[a person’s]...individual talents and capacities.”

Go forth in your reading about RBG aka TAN “tough as nails,” and her illustrious legal career.

Other RBG films and books to check out: *On the Basis of Sex* starring Felicity Jones, *Ruth Bader Ginsburg: A Life*, a biography written by Jane Sheeron De Hart with the justice’s cooperation, and the documentary *RBG*. [W](#)

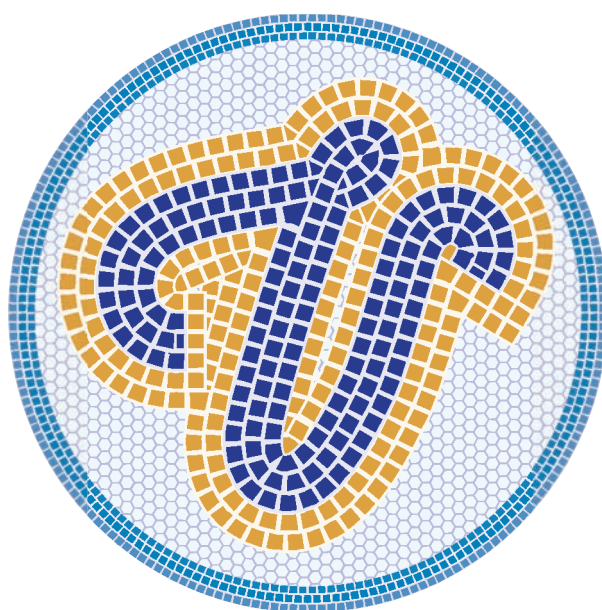






# A WOMAN'S PLACE

BY ANDREA TROMBERG  
OWNER OF TROMBERG LAW GROUP, PA



VARIATIONS OF THE phrase “woman’s place is in the home” can be found dating back to the ancient Greeks. One from playwright Aeschylus, in *Seven Against Thebes*, 467 B.C., where it was written, “Let women stay at home and hold their peace.” Later, in Thomas Fuller’s *Gnomologia: Adagies and Proverbs*, written in 1731, it was stated, “A Woman is to be from her House three times; when she is Christened, Married and Buried.” Throughout history, all similar variations were written by men.

While one may read this and think that this sentiment is outdated and sexist, there are still those who find women should be at home taking care of the family. According to a Reuters poll conducted in 2010, one in four believe a woman’s place remains in the home. But, in 2018, Reuters reported that a third of the respondents to a British Social Attitudes poll believed mothers with children under five years old should continue working. “A woman’s place is no longer at home – unless she is a new mum, Britons say,” by Sonia Elks (July 10, 2018).



## WOMEN VALUING WOMEN

Women understand the value of women. There are often tasks or an approach to a project that are better suited for women. This does not mean a man cannot accomplish the task, but rather that women possess certain strengths by nature and nurture. For example, experience has shown that when there is a large project or a task that is highly administrative in nature, women tend to have the patience and ability to get the job done efficiently and timely. It is important to note, this is not to imply secretarial tasks, but rather tasks that require attention to detail, a high level of focus and collaboration. Too often women are assumed to take the “administrative assistant” role. However, it is critical that women in leadership ensure other women are given opportunities, and that each woman’s strengths are recognized. This leads to promotion and growth, which is how we break the cycle of women continuing to earn less pay with fewer opportunities.

the workplace of old stereotypes. If there is only one woman at the table speaking among large groups of men, it is more likely that women will continue to be negatively judged. To make matters worse, traditional roles are being turned upside down, making many men in the workplace feel less relevant and intimidated by stronger women in leadership. However, with a more-balanced workplace, the dynamic immediately changes. I see this every day. Both vendors and other professionals in the industry respond differently, in a positive way, once they learn and fully appreciate who I am and that I am actually the sole owner of a well-established law firm. As a result, I experience less sexism and certainly more respect from men, as it is clear that nothing but equality will be tolerated.

## WOMEN ENFORCING WOMEN’S RIGHTS

It is hard enough for women to walk into their male employer’s office to ask for time off to pick up kids, or to stay home for a sick child, but imagine what it is



A WOMAN WHO SPEAKS UP IS ASSERTIVE. A WOMAN EXPRESSING HER EMOTIONS IS COMPASSIONATE. A MOTHER WHO IS JUGGLING WORK AND PARENTING IS SIMPLY RESPONSIBLE. MORE WOMEN NEED TO BE IN LEADERSHIP ROLES TO REINFORCE THESE POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES AND RID THE WORK-PLACE OF OLD STEREOTYPES.



## WOMEN UNDERSTANDING WOMEN

We have all heard women referred to as bitchy, moody, or difficult. The best way to combat these stereotypes and to put an end to these misnomers is to have more women in the workplace and in leadership roles. A woman who speaks up is assertive. A woman expressing her emotions is compassionate. A mother who is juggling work and parenting is simply responsible. More women need to be in leadership roles to reinforce these positive attributes and rid

like for a breast-feeding mom to ask for special accommodations. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) amended the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to require employees to provide reasonable break time for an employee to express milk for up to a year after her child’s birth. Employers must also provide a private space other than a bathroom where the employee can pump breast milk free from intrusion of the public or coworkers.

Employers with fewer than 50 employees may be exempt from these requirements if it imposes an un-



due hardship causing the employer significant difficulty or expense when considered in relation to the size, financial resources, and nature or structure of the employer's business. However, employers with 50 or more employees are required to provide space and must comply with the law. A request from a woman who wishes to breastfeed, or pump may be met with a response that space is not available. However, if a private space is not available, the employer is required to create a temporary space for the employee to use. This could create unexpected costs for the employer and anxiety for the women who need accommodations. Women owners and managers are more likely to empathize with and understand the needs of mothers in the workplace.

As a business owner, I have run into this issue. It is difficult for the women in our office to have this conversation, and they are very grateful when their requests are received by other women that understand the situation and can provide a positive and receptive environment.

#### THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORKFORCE

While working on this article, I thought about my own staff. How do they feel? What is their experience? Does it really make a difference having women owners and in leadership roles? Sampling roughly 1 in 5 of my staff all with different roles including top managers to hourly workers, the responses were encouraging and progressive. All were asked about the importance of having women in management. Here is a sample of the responses:

"Empathy and compassion are the key building blocks to relationship and whether it is work or school, every relationship needs both. Oftentimes, a workplace is devoid of this, but when a female's perspective is in place, the work has a touch of emotion."

"Women are great communicators and handle their work with both compassion and an intuitive nature. Women are also more patient."

"It is important to have women in the work place and in leadership positions to provide different perspectives. It will also likely lead to less discrimination, abuse and harassment."

"It is important to have women in the workplace to show that it is something that should be viewed as normal and not something extraordinary."

"Working women make great role models for their children."

This internal survey of my staff's opinions and experiences is proof positive that discussions like this one are welcome in the workplace. In fact, just asking about this topic made many employees more comfortable talking about other issues of great importance to them such as unrepresented minorities.

#### BUSINESSES THRIVE WITH WOMEN

During my 25-year career I have watched how businesses improve when women take the lead and participate. Early in my career, I worked in a law firm where the leadership was comprised solely of strong-willed men. The women were clearly intimidated and not included in decision-making or in workplace activities. However, as soon as an opportunity arose for a talented female attorney to take a leading role, things improved in many ways. We saw new ideas that had been suppressed, the workplace conversation expanded and even men who had not been as vocal before, were now sharing creative ideas for improvement. Seeing this motivated me to raise my hand for new projects, take leading roles and make sure that everyone understood that I was not only willing but competent to lead.

#### MESSAGE TO WOMEN (AND MEN)

Attribute my successful career to many things and not solely due to my gender. In fact, I would say much of my success is due to my competence, being a strong and experienced attorney, my willingness to step out of my comfort zone and working well with others, no matter the gender. I pride myself on encouraging everyone to step up and take on whatever challenges arise. This approach has served me very well over the years and I suggest that women continue striving for more and for our male colleagues to welcome and recognize the benefits of having strong and smart women in the workforce at all levels.

So, where is a woman's place? A women's place is wherever she wants it to be. **W**



**WHAT'S THE**  
*advantage*  
**OF BEING A**  
*woman*  
**IN OUR**  
**INDUSTRY?**

**THE 2018-2019**  
**WILL LEADERSHIP TEAM**  
**ANSWERS**



“

I THINK WOMEN HAVE A GREATER SENSITIVITY TOWARD THE CHALLENGES FACED BY PEERS, AS WELL AS AN OVERALL AWARENESS OF THOSE CHALLENGES, WHICH CAN BE UTILIZED AND DIRECTED TO ENCOURAGE THE YOUNGER MEMBERS OF OUR INDUSTRY COMING UP IN THE RANKS. WOMEN ALSO HAVE A GREAT SENSE OF "COMMUNITY," WHICH IS ESSENTIAL WHEN WORKING IN ANY ENVIRONMENT THAT REQUIRES TEAM WORK. THIS SENSE OF COMMUNITY IS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT WHEN WE WORK TOGETHER TO ACCOMPLISH SHARED GOALS – WHICH IS AN ASSET TO ANY BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION!"



**WILL CHAIR: JULIE BEYERS**  
MANAGING MEMBER  
HEAVNER, BEYERS & MIHLAR, LLC (ILLINOIS)



## **WILL VICE CHAIR: ERICA FUJIMOTO**

DIRECTOR OF DEFAULT SERVICES AT AFFINITY CONSULTING GROUP

"In this industry, I don't think I have ever seen being a woman as a particular advantage or a disadvantage. It will probably come as a surprise to no one that I am an A Type Personality, Dominant on the DISC Wheel, and that Achiever is my highest strongest theme on the Gallup Strengths Finder. So, I may be different than many women in that I don't hide my light under a bushel. I am outspoken, but the industry has grown to accept that and embrace that type of woman as an asset."



## **ALFN BOARD MEMBER LIAISON: NATALIE GRIGG**

PARTNER AT WOODS OVIATT GILMAN LLP (NEW YORK)

"When women get together, great things happen. The mortgage servicing industry has a high level of women moving up the ranks and working together to break the glass ceiling. That type of momentum is exciting and challenging, yet a rewarding experience to be involved with."



## **ALFN BOARD MEMBER LIAISON: ANDREA TROMBERG**

OWNER OF TROMBERG LAW GROUP, PA (FLORIDA AND PUERTO RICO)

"The advantage of being a woman in the industry is the ability to bring new ideas and change. Women tend to excel in administration and detail, which is truly an asset to creditor litigation. The increase in women in the industry has brought a new energy to the conversations about how we can improve efficiencies while maintaining competent legal representation. New groups, projects, and associations, continue to emerge as a result of women leaders creating new concepts and trends. It is truly exciting to watch this growth, and I am proud to be a part of it."



## **SECRETARY: ALICIA WOOD**

DEFAULT OPERATIONS MANAGER AT HOMEBRIDGE FINANCIAL

"I think one of the advantages of being a woman in our industry is being able to tap into the built-in support group that we've created amongst and for ourselves. When given the opportunity, we will go above and beyond for our peers to provide support – from being sounding boards when a colleague has an issue to supporting someone that's in transition in their own career or within the industry. I'm honored and humbled to be part of a group of women that is always willing to work towards a greater and better common good."



## **EDITORIAL BOARD CO-CHAIR: ANNA SPACONE**

PARTNER AT SCHILLER, KNAPP, LEFKOWITZ & HERTZEL, LLP (NEW YORK AND VERMONT)

"I love the quote 'Behind every successful woman is a tribe of successful women who have her back'. I think women in our Industry have strength in numbers as there are now many women working hard on all sides- Servicers, Law Firms, and the Courts – and I see every day how collaboration can help build confidence to advance careers, and in turn, inspire more women."

## **EDITORIAL BOARD CO-CHAIR: LAUREN THURMOND**

PARTNER AT HUTCHENS LAW FIRM LLP (NORTH CAROLINA AND SOUTH CAROLINA)

"The majority of the employees on my team are women. I have found that our ability to relate to each other as women brings a collegiality and manner of communication to my team that is different than ways I communicate with male colleagues. My role at the Firm is evidence to our employees that opportunities at all levels of our Firm are open to any person that is a high performer seeking continued growth and responsibility."





## **EDITORIAL BOARD CO-CHAIR: JILLIAN WILSON**

ASSOCIATE PARTNER AT WILSON & ASSOCIATES, PLLC (ARKANSAS, TENNESSEE, MISSISSIPPI)

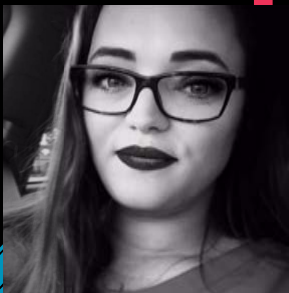
"I think some of the biggest advantages of being a woman in our industry are our abilities to successfully multitask, adapt, and be flexible. Our industry is constantly evolving, and it requires a type of person who can handle change and come up with creative solutions. Being able to see multiple moving parts or challenges, and manage them in an efficient manner is something that should be admired."



## **MEMBERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE: MINDA TURNBULL**

SENIOR DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SPECIAL SERVICING AT REVERSE MORTGAGE SOLUTIONS, INC.

"We have great resources available to us, such as WILL! I fell in love with WILL after attending my first WILL conference in DC, in 2017 and I want every woman in the industry to be able to experience all that this amazing group has to offer. With nearly 10 years in the industry, the last 8 of which working with reverse mortgages with a focus in default, foreclosure, and bankruptcy, I love leading and developing people and learning new ways to keep my folks motivated, and I encourage staff at all levels to be engaged and involved in every aspect of the business, and to further their education by reading books on leadership and management as well."



## **MEMBERSHIP AND MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE: RESHAUNDRUG SUGGS**

MANAGING ATTORNEY OF BANKRUPTCY AT CHOICE LEGAL GROUP, P.A. (FLORIDA AND TEXAS)

"There are so many wonderful, powerful and inspiring women to learn and grow from in this industry. I feel blessed to have had the opportunity to meet and interact with so many of them as it has definitely helped me in my individual growth as a person and my career growth as an attorney."





**EVENT, CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE:  
CANDICE ARCHIBALD**

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT SCHILLER, KNAPP, LEFKOWITZ & HERTZEL, LLP (FIRM PRACTICES IN NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY, AND VERMONT)

“Not just in our industry, but in any, I feel that women bring their own set of unique skills and experiences to the table, this gives us a competitive advantage. We should embrace these skills and experiences in ourselves as well as in each other. I feel that we as women could do a better job in supporting each other not just in our professional careers, but in our personal lives as well. If we could unite in this way, we as women would be a force to be reckoned with.”



**EVENT, CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA  
COMMITTEE: MARGARET (PEGGY) CASCINO**

MANAGING ATTORNEY FOR NEW YORK AT STERN & EISENBERG, PC (NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY)

“In an era where the news is replete with negative headlines, WILL provides a refreshing forum for strong and intelligent women to collaborate, discuss challenges, and celebrate our diversity. With the support of organizations such as WILL, women have advanced to key leadership positions allowing women to influence and shape the future of the mortgage servicing industry.”

**EVENT, CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMITTEE:  
MARCY FORD**

MANAGING PARTNER AT TROTT LAW, P.C. (MICHIGAN)

“Gosh, that seems like a loaded question. I think that women contribute to and enhance any industry that we become involved in. We are smart, loyal, empathetic, and strategic multi taskers. I do not think women have an advantage over men in our industry, but hopefully, we are received and treated equally based on our talents and skills.”







# WOMEN RISK AND INVESTING

BY ANNA Z. SPACONE  
PARTNER AT SCHILLER, KNAPP,  
LEFKOWITZ, & HERTZEL, LLP

Risk, I find, is often talked about in positive masculine terms, with the common message being: more risk equals more reward. And if you don't take a risk, you are, by default, a failure. To take a risk is to be brave, bold, adventurous and ambitious. "Go big or go home", "YOLO", "Man-up". On the other side of the same coin, I think we are all too familiar with the myriad of derogatory feminine terms used to belittle people who do not like to take risks.

And in general, women are more risk-averse, which is often seen as a disadvantage. It is logically true that if you never take an action that carries a risk of failure, it is impossible to reap the rewards of the possible successful execution of the endeavor. Or as more commonly stated, (over and over again as the Mega Millions jackpot crept up above \$1 billion recently), "you have to be in it to win it". Risk doesn't have to be a zero-sum game, however. Taking calculated risks seems far smarter than rash risks. And that is where women excel. After all, 88.7% of Darwin Award "winners" (definitely rash risk-takers) are male<sup>1</sup>.

Over the last few years, studies found that fewer women than men participate in the stock market, which is not very surprising as investing comes with a risk of loss. However, when women do invest, they are often actually more successful investors<sup>2</sup>. Women who invest tend to save more money than men and earn higher returns<sup>3</sup>. There are a few theories about

Financial stability and security increase worker productivity and health, and many companies are realizing that employees who are **MORE FINANCIALLY FIT** are more engaged and productive employees.

why this is, such as: women are more likely to research carefully prior to investing, and they are less likely to day trade. They also tend to buy and hold their investments through downturns and upswings.

Investing involves risk, but it is also a way to actually hedge risk and reduce stress in other areas of our lives. Emergency savings with more liquidity and less risk offers security for unexpected events, long term higher-risk investing helps us prepare for the future and retirement. Financial safety nets do more than just help us sleep at night; they help make us better employees, as well. Financial stability and security increase worker productivity and health, and many companies are realizing that employees who are more financially fit are more engaged and productive employees. A Mercer study in 2016 found that on average, employees spend 13 hours a month worrying about money-matters at work. Those who were more financially fit spent less time doing so than the financially unwell<sup>4</sup>. In 2015, the CFPB described financial wellness as having control over day-to-day and month-to-month finances, having the capacity to absorb a financial shock, is on track to meet financial goals, and having the financial freedom to make choices that allow him or her to enjoy life<sup>5</sup>.

With some time, research, and the courage to jump in, women are smart investors in control of their financial wellness and future. **W**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.livescience.com/49101-darwin-awards-are-men-idiot.html>

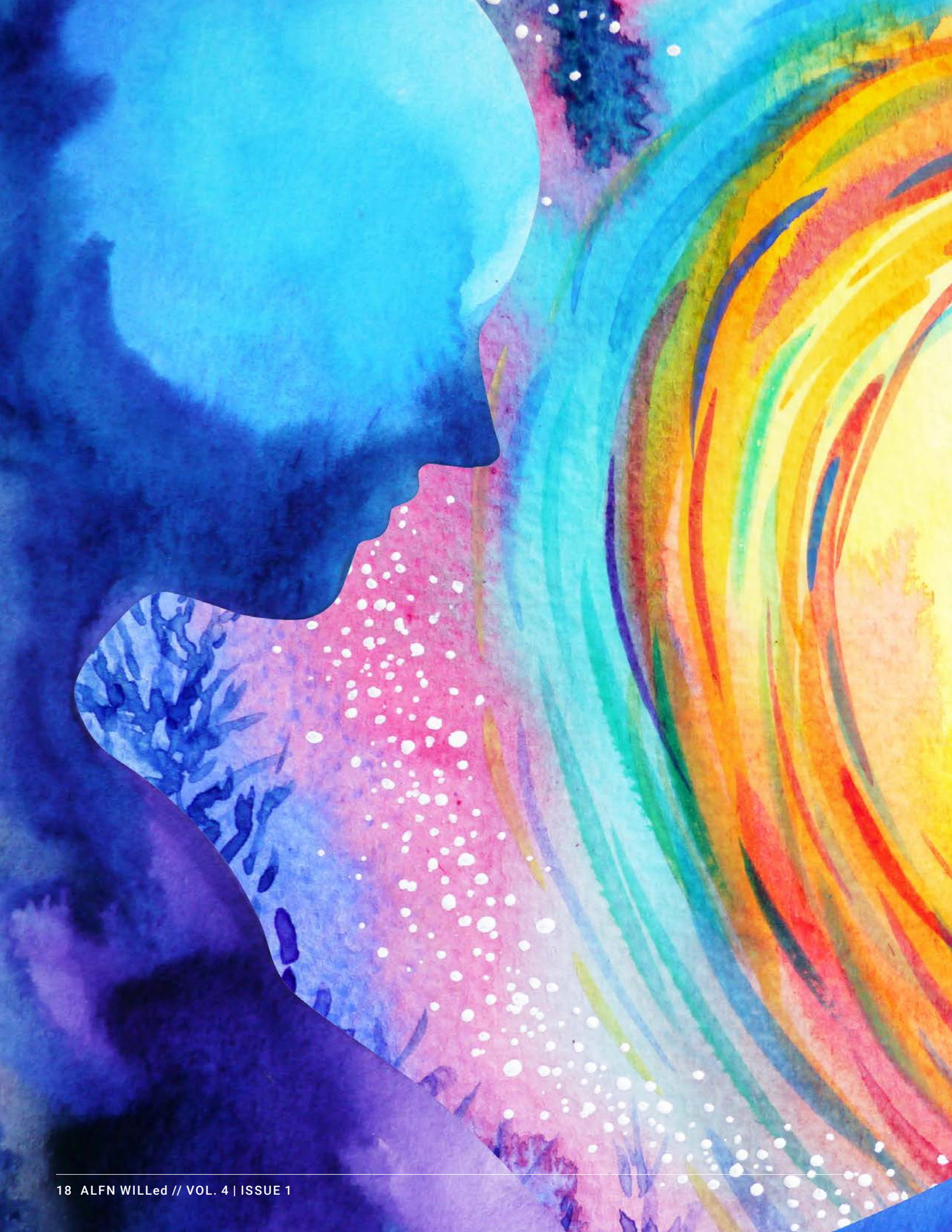
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.investors.com/news/women-investing-stocks-outperform-men-studies/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fidelity.com/about-fidelity/individual-investing/better-investor-men-or-women>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mercer.com/content/dam/mercera/attachments/global/inside-employees-minds/gj-2017-inside-employees-minds-financial-wellness.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Financial Well-being: The Goal of Financial Education, 2015, [https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501\\_cfpb\\_report\\_financial-well-being.pdf](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201501_cfpb_report_financial-well-being.pdf)





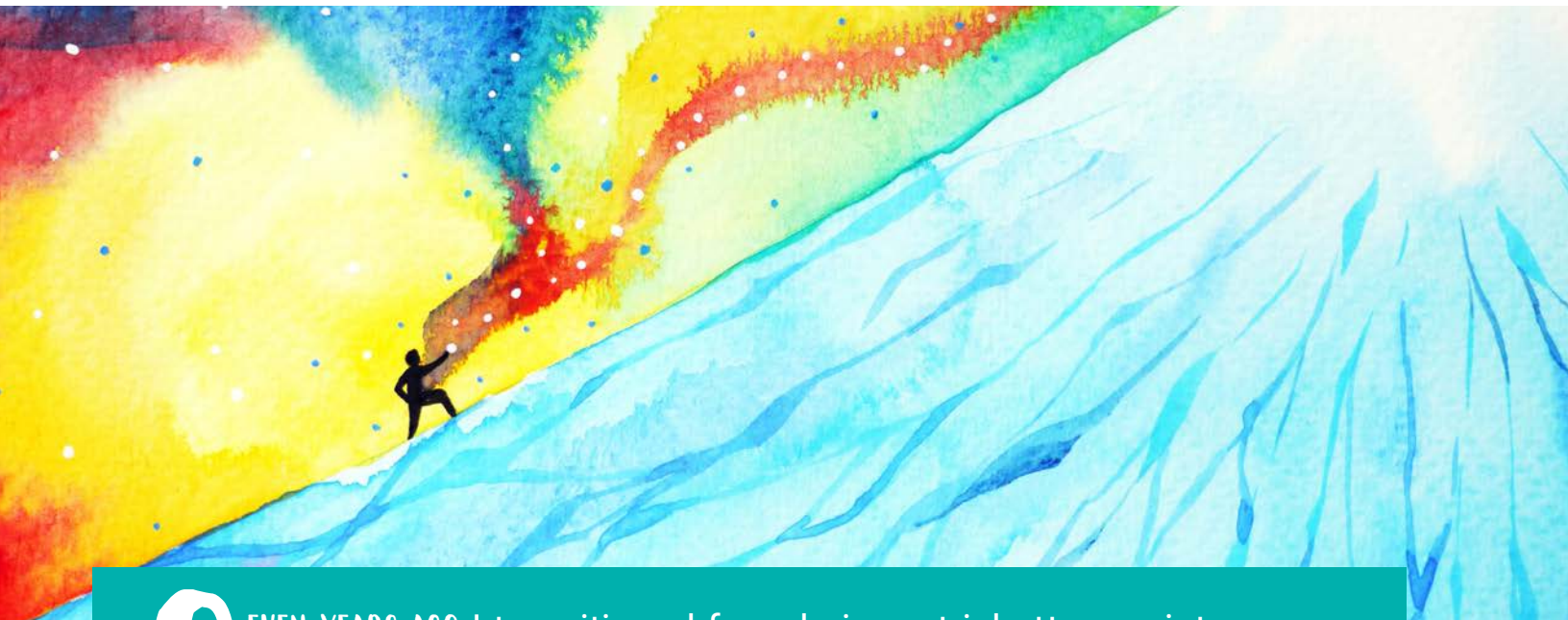




# AN INTRO TO EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

BY NATALIE GRIGG  
PARTNER AT WOODS OVIATT GILMAN LLP





**S** EVEN YEARS AGO I transitioned from being a trial attorney into a more supervisory capacity. I went from selecting juries and presenting arguments, to managing staff and attorneys. During my first year, I admit that I struggled in my new role. Then, one afternoon, a conversation with a friend changed everything. She pointed out to me that I already had the skills to manage. That in many ways, the skills I used when on trial, including how I read my jury, inflected tone, and controlled my reactions, were exactly the same skills I now needed to develop and use as a supervisor. I just needed to grow my emotional intelligence.

That was the first time I had ever heard the words “emotional intelligence.” It was a game changer for me and is a tool that should be in every woman’s arsenal.

By definition, emotional intelligence is managing and controlling one’s own emotions as well as understanding and influencing another’s emotions. Emotional intelligence is a concept that was initially proposed by two scientists Dr. Peter Salovey and Dr. John D. Mayer, and made popular by Daniel Goleman. It is a unique quality we all possess, and unlike cognitive intelligence (IQ), is a skill that can not only be learned, but also developed.

Emotional intelligence stems from the fact that as we face an experience, before we can rationalize what is happening, the information about the experience must first travel through our limbic system, which is where emotions are processed. Therefore, physi-

ologically, we feel an emotion about every aspect of our lives. Emotional intelligence requires us to think about that feeling as well as how to do something about it.

Emotional Intelligence is made up of two primary competencies: personal and social. Personal competence is a person’s ability to stay aware of his/her own emotions and manage his/her behavior. In other words, it is the ability to exercise self-awareness (how am I feeling right now) and self-management (how do I control my reaction). In contrast, social competence requires us to understand other people’s emotions and behavior and manage those relationships. It is a result of social awareness (how is that person feeling about what I am saying or doing) and relationship management (how do I best use the relationships I have with others).

The struggle for many however, is how to develop your emotional intelligence. Here are a few tips to improve your leadership journey:

## EXPAND ON YOUR EMOTIONAL VOCABULARY

To fully develop your emotional intelligence, you must learn that experiences make you more than just happy or sad. It is the ability to be highly specific about an emotion (i.e. sad) but also be able to define the degree of severity within that emotion (i.e. unhappy versus overwhelmed). To do this, one good tool to look at is the Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion, which takes the eight basic emotions (anger, anticipation, joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, and disgust), and expands upon each to a greater degree of severity.



## NAME YOUR EMOTION

Emotions can be powerful triggers. By understanding what emotion you are feeling at the time you are feeling it will help you identify what triggers you have, and thus how to prepare for the situation in the future.

## DISTANCE YOURSELF FROM THE EMOTION

Think of the number of times you have heard someone tell you to not take something personally or that “you’re being too emotional.” Here is the opportunity to work on that goal. When experiencing an emotion, pause and think about the emotion. Rather than think “I am frustrated because of X’s actions,” instead rephrase (i.e., I am experiencing frustration), recognize, and then let the emotion pass. This helps as a calming technique but also gives you the ability to then control the reaction – self-awareness and self-management.



## REFRAME YOUR THOUGHTS

Try to look at the situation from a different point of view. Exercise sympathy (being aware that another person may have feelings about the situation), as well as empathy (understand how the person may be feeling about the situation).

## STRIVE TO UNDERSTAND, AND ANTICIPATE, OTHER’S VIEWPOINTS

Note: the difficulty here is to recognize a viewpoint, not anticipate a reaction, which is the emotional response.



This list is simply a starting point to help you to begin to assess and think about your emotional intelligence. Remember, emotional intelligence can be developed. Today is the day to commit to starting on that journey. **W**







# IT'S TIME TO HAVE THE CAREER PATH CONVERSATION

BY JACQUELINE COMEAU  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER AT A360 INC.





Overseeing a team that provides governance, risk, and compliance services, I have seen firsthand the importance of effective communication as a core value that is critical to our success. It was this pursuit that encouraged me to work through Kim Malone’s “Radical Candor” with my management team earlier this year. As we learned new ideas for effective communication, I was also struck by the author’s consideration of the flaws associated with the 9-box performance-potential matrix used by many organizations to predict employee potential.

Traditionally, companies have used this matrix to categorize employee performance and potential as high, medium, or low. The intersection of those scores then serves to inform succession plans, career path plans, and the provision of development opportunities, often without the employee’s input. This methodology often fails to recognize, or severely undervalues, the contributions of some employees, and this flaw can easily lead to decreased engagement, damaged morale, and unnecessary turnover. This is especially true for employees who are content and prefer to maintain their current role – importantly, their lack of desire to climb the corporate ladder does not equate to a lack of potential or value to the company.

Instead, Malone encourages management to focus on the growth trajectory of the employee. This process begins with determining the needs of the company and each employee’s talents, strengths, and levels of preparedness. Management works closely with the employee to obtain a realistic view of the employee’s current growth trajectory and uses that information with other relevant data to update succession and development plans that align with the company’s strategic objectives.

Growth trajectory is the momentum and pace with which employees progress professionally throughout their career. It may incline at varying rates of acceleration, remain level, or decline. A graph illustration of a growth trajectory line will be unique to each employee. For example, a chart line may look like a staircase representing multiple promotions followed by time spent perfecting skills or gaining expertise in a position until the next promotion occurs. A flat line may indicate a person who is content in what they do with no interest in promotion to another level. There are also various forces that may impact a growth trajectory chart. Starting a new career, seeking additional education, changing companies, starting or growing a family, and personal health chal-

**EMPLOYEE CAPABILITIES  
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NOT LIKELY THEIR FINAL  
DESTINATION.**

lenges are just some of the life events that can alter a person's chart.

The author provides examples of employee types, including the "rock star" and the "superstar." Rock stars are solid foundational performers who love their work and are high performers, but whose growth trajectory, for personal reasons, is level or at a very gradual incline. Superstars, on the other hand, have a steep growth trajectory. They are consistently motivated to learn new skills, take on additional responsibilities, and dedicate discretionary time and effort to faster-paced growth.

Both employee types are integral to a company's success, but they must be managed and coached differently on their career path. If managers force a rock star into a role they don't want, or aren't prepared for, there is a substantial risk of losing them. Superstars, on the other hand, need constant challenge and new opportunities to avoid boredom or frustration – both factors that increase the risk of these employee types leaving the company.

There are things that both employees and managers can do to change the pattern of performance management and career/succession planning for their

own career or company. Employees should consider scheduling some time with their manager to talk about their own professional growth trajectory. They should be prepared to discuss their current strengths, goals and desires, how they fit within the company's goals and objectives, and any opportunities to align their development with that of the company.

Managers involved in performance management and career path development should consider using growth trajectories for their employees. Start by:

- Using performance review meetings to gain insight into employee plans, desires, capabilities, and current preparedness for new opportunities;
- Determining if the employee has personal goals or plans that might affect their growth trajectory capabilities in the near future;
- Determining whether opportunities are in line with an employee's growth trajectory, and taking steps to revisit development plans if they're not; and
- Continuing these conversations throughout the year.

A company's success depends on the combined effort and growth of its employees. Setting goals and objectives is useless if a company has not incorporated HR strategies that ensure employees are career-pathed correctly and possess the right skills, capabilities, and level of commitment to succeed. Employee capabilities ebb and flow based on a set of unique circumstances, including personal goals, ambitions, and life events, both controllable and uncontrollable, and an employee's current situation is not likely their final destination. Including employees in the strategic HR planning process through crucial conversations on a regular basis and planning growth and development that aligns with both the company's needs and the employee's plans and abilities will result in better resource planning, less turnover, increased engagement, and a more cohesive team. ■

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