



INSTITUTE FOR  
WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, INC.

RAYONA  
SHARPBACK



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Rayona Sharpnack's commitment to advancing women in business and nonprofits is highly visible in the work she does on a daily basis. As founder and CEO of the Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL), she has been able to become part of a much wider network of women who feel the same way.

"The heart of my networking organization is the roughly 3,000 women and men alumni of the leadership training programs I have conducted over the past 25 years," Sharpnack said. "These people, along with their colleagues in the companies that have engaged the Institute for Women's Leadership, form a network that is invaluable to each other both internally and externally. We have graduates across Australia, Canada and the United States. Most recently, we are partnering with LeanIn.org to grow the women's empowerment movement globally."

enrollment format for its annual award-winning women's leadership training program in Northern California to women who not only work in corporations but also as entrepreneurs and nonprofit leaders.

"IWL has been a pioneer in the design and implementation of solutions for advancing women leaders for the past 20-plus years," she said.

"We offer world-class services in consulting, training and coaching for individuals and entire organizations to leverage the full contribution of women in driving business success. We are thought leaders in distinguishing the critical success factors that successfully move women into higher leadership positions while delivering significant return on investment to the company."

IWL has created its own proprietary methodology called Contextual Leadership as part of its package of solutions. "They [our solutions] are

**"TOGETHER WE ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY ONE OF US IN BRINGING ABOUT THE FULL CONTRIBUTION OF WOMEN TO SOCIETY. BELONGING TO THIS NETWORK ALLOWS ME TO MAKE A BIGGER DIFFERENCE THROUGH OTHERS." — RAYONA SHARPNACK**

Sharpnack founded IWL in 1991, drawing on her career experience in education, professional sports and business. In her role as founder and CEO, Sharpnack works as a leadership consultant to executives in multinational companies, government agencies, emerging businesses and nonprofit organizations.

IWL offers its clients groundbreaking solutions for optimizing the full partnership of women and men. They provide leadership consulting, coaching and training services to many Fortune 500 companies in the Bay Area. Renowned for its fresh approach to developing leadership excellence, IWL has enabled executive women in these corporations to create extraordinary, sustainable leadership success.

"IWL has also had success in teaching companies how to remove the institutional blind spots and barriers to women's empowerment as well as engaging men to advance women," she said. It offers an open-

designed to give women access to new, powerful and effective ways of thinking, taking action, creating breakthrough results, practicing work-life harmony to support their organizations and their personal lives," Sharpnack said.

Personally, networking has been an important factor of Sharpnack's success in business. "For my part, I love being in connection with and an inspiration to professional women leaders who are advancing their careers while having an impact on their organizations and communities," she said. "Together we are more powerful than any one of us in bringing about the full contribution of women to society."

She advises others interested in becoming part of a network to seize every opportunity to make connections with others. "They shouldn't hesitate to make connections at every opportunity available to them and



## WHAT I LOVE ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO

"THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA IS THE MOST DIVERSE AND INNOVATIVE PLACE IN THE WORLD FOR WOMEN LEADERS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH THEIR LIVES. I AM HONORED TO BE CALLED A PIONEER IN FORGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN LEADERS TO LEARN, GROW AND LEAD IN WAYS THEY ONLY DREAMED POSSIBLE. I'M ALSO SO PROUD OF MY DAUGHTER WHO HAS CHOSEN EDUCATION AS HER CAREER AND IS AN INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF WHAT THIS YOUNGER GENERATION IS DOING TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OTHERS WHILE DESIGNING LIFE ON THEIR OWN TERMS!"

then continue to nurture those relationships in every way they can," Sharpnack said. "What you can accomplish is directly proportional to the foundation of relationships that you build and maintain. Take time to nourish those relationships every week. This practice will prove to be invaluable to you as you navigate your way through professional challenges and opportunities. Put more time into being 'interested' versus 'interesting.'"

In addition to founding IWL, Sharpnack published a very successful book, *Trade Up! 5 Steps for Redesigning Your Leadership & Life from the Inside Out*, and she is also a contributing author to *Enlightened Power: How Women Are Transforming the Practice of Leadership* and *Goddess Shift: Women Leading for Change*. Previously, she was chairwoman of leadership development for the Harvard Kennedy School's Women's Leadership Board. Sharpnack recently co-founded GenderAllies, an organization whose focus is engaging men to advance women. •

