

# OWN YOUR FUTURE

21ST  
GREAT LAKES  
*Women's*  
BUSINESS CONFERENCE



*Sponsored by*

**DTE**





Michelle Richards

Executive Director  
Great Lakes Women's Business Council

## Welcome to the 2021 Great Lakes Women's Business Conference

So much has changed. And we and our businesses are changing to. Own Your Future is the theme of this year's conference because it is important for us to discover, discussed and set directions for tomorrow. The program lineup is very impressive this year, including two keynotes who will give you a look into the future economy, culture and workplace.

The Great Lakes Women's Business Council is committed to helping you propel your business forward whether that means to support your recovery, repositioning, pivoting or continued growth. Our programs are designed intentionally to provide the tools, resources and connections needed to meet your goals.

We believe that the 21st Great Lakes Women's Business Conference is a platform from where your future will grow

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michelle Richards'.

*Executive Director, Great Lakes Women's Business Council*

Great Lakes  
Women's  
Business  
COUNCIL  
*Accelerating business growth*



## Virtual Business Conference

### Tuesday, September 28, 2021

7:30 AM - 8:00 AM	Lighthouse Yoga
8:00 AM - 8:50 AM	Early Bird Workshop
8:50 AM - 9:00 AM	Conference Readiness
9:00 AM - 9:05 AM	Business Conference Kickoff
9:05 AM - 10:00 AM	The Great Pitch Competition   15 Semi-Finalists
10:00 AM - 10:05 AM	Opening Session   Day One Keynote
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Meet N Greet Networking   Photo Booth
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Educational Workshops I
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Corporate Only Workshops
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Educational Workshops II
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM	Corporate Only Workshop
1:00 PM - 1:15 PM	Meet and Greet Networking   Photo Booth
1:00 PM - 2:15 PM	Real Talk Panel
2:15 PM - 4:15 PM	WE Succeed   Module Three

### Wednesday, September 29, 2021

7:30 AM - 8:00 AM	Zumba Workout
8:50 AM - 9:00 AM	Conference Readiness
9:00 AM - 9:05 AM	Day Two Kickoff
9:05 AM - 9:30 AM	2021 Awards
9:30 AM - 10:15 AM	Keynote   Nancy Giordano
10:15 AM - 10:45 AM	Excellence in Supplier Diversity Awards
10:45 AM - 11:00 AM	Meet and Greet Networking   Photobooth
11:00 AM - 11:30 AM	The Great Pitch Competition   4 Finalists
11:30 am - 11:55 AM	Business Resource Clinic I
11:30 am - 12:55 AM	Coaching Labs
12:00 PM - 12:25 PM	Business Resource Clinic II
12:30 PM - 12:55 PM	Business Resource Clinic III
12:55 PM - 1:00 PM	Conference Spin to Win Wheel and Wrap-Up
1:00 PM - 4:15 PM	WE MATCH 1:1 Sessions   15 Minute Sessions

[greatlakeswbc.org/conference](https://greatlakeswbc.org/conference)





A woman with long dark hair is wearing extensive personal protective equipment (PPE) for a construction or utility job. She is wearing a white hard hat with a clear face shield, safety glasses, a black balaclava covering her nose and mouth, and a high-visibility yellow safety vest over a dark long-sleeved shirt. She is holding a yellow handheld electronic device with wires attached. The background shows a corrugated metal roof and a hazy, sunset-like sky.

# DTE

# DIVERSITY IS POWER

Our commitment to supplier diversity is about developing meaningful partnerships to drive economic growth and build stronger communities. Tapping into the diverse range of talents in our business community allows both DTE and its suppliers to achieve great things. DTE is proud to partner with a wide range of diverse organizations to support this commitment.





# Tony Tomczak

Executive Director & Chief Procurement  
Officer Corporate Services

# DTE

## Welcome to the 21st Great Lakes Women's Business Conference

DTE is pleased to be a title sponsor of the 21st Great Lakes Women's Business Conference Virtual Event. At a time when many businesses are experiencing unexpected challenges, I commend you for providing a forum to help women-owned businesses exchange ideas and network to drive their success.

At DTE, supplier diversity is an important part of our commitment to be a force for growth in the communities where we live and serve. We know that our company is at its best when our supply chain reflects the broad diversity of our customer base. This is why we use outreach, business council involvement, board participation and mentoring to seek out and connect with small, minority and women-owned businesses and help them grow.

We are putting our dollars to work, spending \$744 million with diverse vendors last year, an increase of 288 percent over our 2010 spending levels. To magnify the value of this spending, we encourage our largest suppliers to embrace a commitment to supplier diversity and we measure their results.

Our focus is supporting economic growth and expansion. We value our partnership with the GLWBC because it helps us create jobs, grow the local economy and build vibrant communities.

Thank you for attending this year's event. My best wishes for a successful and productive conference.

Tony Tomczak

*Vice President, Corporate Services  
Chief Procurement Officer, DTE*

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RETURNABLE PACKAGING FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE  
INDUSTRY SINCE 1978.**



Serafina Schorer

CEO / President  
RIM Custom Racks



## Welcome to the 21st Great Lakes Women's Business Conference

Your continued support for GLWBC and your fellow WBEs is appreciated now, more than ever.

Events like this are invaluable opportunities for WBEs to connect, grow, and succeed. RIM Custom Racks is proud to be this year's WBE title sponsor. It is our sincere hope that you will take advantage of everything this conference has to offer. Thank you for attending!

*Serafina Schorer*

Serafina Schorer  
*CEO / President, RIM Custom Racks*





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health of Michigan,  
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Learn more at *HereForItAll*.com



Jim Line

Senior Director, Corporate Procurement,  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan



## Hello and welcome to the 21st Annual Great Lakes WBC Conference

This year's conference is packed with great information, workshops, and opportunities to connect. We added a women-owned business to women-owned business procurement matchmaking opportunities. In an ever-changing business environment, having a solid foundation of contacts and being able to share information is as important as ever. We are excited to deliver content that will serve as an excellent tool to help business owners and procurement professionals successfully pivot in changing times.

We're honored to have several guests to help provide us with great information.

- Paula Tutman, Emmy award-winning broadcast journalist, is our mistress of ceremonies. Paula can be seen daily on WDIV, Local 4, and is an accomplished author and founder of the Master Your Message Communication Course workshop.
- Our keynote speaker, Nancy Giordano, will provide clarity and urgency around what twenty-first-century stewardship demands as exponential technologies and changing societal expectations converge to shape a better tomorrow!
- Nitin Gupta, our opening session speaker, will look at the economic forecast in light of everything that has happened in recent years.

We hope you will find this year's conference helpful as you try to continue to navigate our changing environment. Please take advantage of all the great sessions we have and be as interactive as possible since we're not able to be with each other in person.

Our thanks go out to everyone who helped put this year's conference together. The work of our guests, staff, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners continues to be critical for helping us build relationships and partnerships with businesses throughout Michigan.

Sincerely,

James Line, President  
*Great Lakes Women's Business Council*

# Diversity Powers Us Up

At Ford we recognize our social responsibility to provide opportunities to diverse businesses. For over a century we've been pioneers in providing opportunities to people regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation and background. And even though we've already contributed billions to the US economy in diversity spending, we're just getting started.

We're proud to support the 21st Great Lakes Women's Business Council Conference. Ford has a continued commitment to creating business opportunities for diverse suppliers including certified GLWBC Suppliers.

No one gets to the future alone. To learn more about our Ford Supplier Diversity & Inclusion Program, visit [www.fordsupplierdiversity.com](http://www.fordsupplierdiversity.com).







## You're an inspiration to us all

**Great Lakes Women's Business Council is making a difference in our neighborhood.**

Helping the local economy thrive is just one of the many positive attributes you bring to our area. Extending your abilities and resources to the community through service and other initiatives makes you a true leader.

We're proud to work with Great Lakes Women's Business Council.

Visit us at [bankofamerica.com/local](https://bankofamerica.com/local).

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# WE'RE MADE OF MANY CULTURES AND ONE SHARED COMMUNITY

Citizens Bank is pleased to support the Great Lakes Women's Business Council's 21st Business Conference.

Congratulations to all of this year's winners!

Member FDIC. Citizens Bank is a brand name of Citizens Bank, N.A. 1252539

# Keynote Speakers



## NANCY GIORDANO

Strategic Futurist, Author, Gatherer, Founder of playbiginc


*Nancy Giordano is one of the world's top female futurists. Passionate about helping leaders transform to meet the escalating expectations ahead, she delves deep into the intersections of tech, business, and society. Executives love her unique abilities to sense and synthesize the shifts ahead and to guide those ready to build more relevant and sustainable solutions. She has spent her career building, shaping and guiding a portfolio of \$50 billion worth of global brands.*



## NITIN GUPTA

Foreign Exchange | Citizens Bank Global Markets

*Nitin Gupta has advised corporate clients for 20 years on the use of derivatives to manage financial risk. He began his career at Citibank and has also worked at Goldman Sachs and the Royal Bank of Scotland. Nitin holds a MBA from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, graduate degrees in electrical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a Bachelor of Science in electrical engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.*

A diverse group of people, seen from behind, have their arms raised in the air, reaching towards a vibrant sunset sky with streaks of orange, pink, and blue. The scene is filled with a sense of joy and community.

TO HELP MAKE THE ROADS  
BETTER FOR ALL, WE ARE  
COMMITTED TO OPENING  
OUR DOORS TO ALL.

We're on a mission to support diversity, equity and inclusion within our workforce.  
Today, tomorrow and for every generation to come. And we won't stop until we get there.





# Mistress of Ceremony



## PAULA TUTMAN

Broadcast journalist, WDIV-TV Local 4  
News in Detroit, Michigan

*Paula Tutman has spent more than 35 years as a broadcast journalist. She can be seen daily on WDIV, Local 4 with her award-winning brand of human-interest stories. Outside of her broadcast work, Paula is, what she calls, a serial Creator-Preneur. A prolific writer, Paula is an award-winning novelist and aspiring screenplay writer. She is founder of the Master Your Message Communication Course workshop which teaches communication tools to companies and organizations to maximize productivity and minimize misunderstandings.*

*Multi-Emmy winning broadcast journalist, Paula Tutman has spent more than 35 years as a broadcast journalist. She can be seen daily on WDIV, Local 4 with her award-winning brand of human-interest stories. Outside of her broadcast work, Paula is, what she calls, a serial Creator- Preneur. A prolific writer, Paula is an award-winning novelist and aspiring screenplay writer. She is founder of the Master Your Message Communication Course workshop which teaches communication tools to companies and organizations to maximize productivity and minimize misunderstandings. Paula also founded Zuke-iT – a 100% women-run company which takes her first product invention to market in 2020. “As a journalist,” Paula says, “I can’t publicly endorse products, not even those I invent. I’m thrilled, however, that women will be the beneficiaries of my invention that literally supports them.”An avid collector of adventure points, Paula believes her biggest adventure has been taking on step-motherhood in 2009.*



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# TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

**7:30 AM -  
8:00 AM**

## **Morning Wellness Workout Lighthouse Yoga**

Sponsor: Henry Ford Health System

Claudette will lead a yoga session for all ages from prenatal to 100+. Most students are able to breathe better, increasing energy levels with strengthened muscles for an overall better lifestyle.

**Claudette Bond** | Instructor | Lighthouse Yoga | Yoga With Claudette

**8:00 AM -  
8:50 AM**

## **Early Bird Workshop Tax Talk...Planning is Now More Important Than Ever!**

No one cares more about your money than you do...except for Uncle Sam! Join CPAs Ursula Scroggs and Jean Stenger of DKSS CPAs + Advisors for a lively and in-depth review of the upcoming tax law changes. Learn how you can plan to mitigate their adverse effects and take advantage of credits and deductions that can save you tax dollars now and in the future.

**Ursula Scroggs** | Managing Director | Derderian, Kann, Seyferth & Salucci, P.C. (DKSS)  
**Jean Stenger** | Accounting Manager | Derderian, Kann, Seyferth & Salucci, P.C. (DKSS)

**8:50 AM -  
9:00 AM**

## **Conference Readiness Great Conference Experience**

The Virtual Great Lakes Women's Council Platform has been created and customized to provide you with the best experience possible. With any new online event, we recommend you to attend this session..

**Shelly Hyland** | Marketing and Engagement Manager | Great Lakes Women's Business Council  
**Nick Moore** | Marketing & Engagement Coordinator | Great Lakes Women's Business Council

**9:00 AM -  
9:05 AM**

## **Business Conference Kickoff Welcome Remarks**

Sponsor: DTE  
Welcome Remarks

**Paula Tutman** | Multi-Emmy Winning Broadcast Journalist | Mistress of Ceremonies | WDIV  
**Jim Line** | President | Great Lakes WBC Board of Directors |  
Senior Director, Corporate Procurement | Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan

**Jaspreet Singh** | Director Supply Chain Manager | DTE Energy  
**Serafina Schorer** | President & CEO | RIM Custom Rack



# TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

**9:05 AM -  
10:00 AM**

## Great Pitch Competition Round One 15 Semi-Finalist Presentations

Sponsor: DOW

The Great Pitch! Competition, a fast-paced business pitch tournament, brought to you in partnership with Dow. Fifteen WBEs will pitch their businesses to a panel of business experts at the virtual Great Lakes Women's Business Conference.

Facilitator | **Dr. Shawne Duperon** | ShawneTV  
Judges | **Sherry Cummins** | Great Lakes WBC | **Tiffany Frazier** | DOW | **Rona Lum** | Law Office of Rona M. Lum |  
Sherry Diccione | Adient | **Janie Goldberg** | Omnisource Marketing

**10:00 AM -  
10:05 AM**

## Opening Session

Sponsors: Argent Tape and Label | Ford Motor Company

Opening Session Sponsors: Travis Spencer of Ford Motor Company and Lynn Perenic with Argent Tape & Label industry experts will talk about issues that could directly affect your company, career, and overall success at the Business Conference.

**Paula Tutman** | WDIV | Multi-Emmy Winning Broadcast Journalist | Mistress of Ceremonies

**Travis Spencer** | Sr. Manager – Supplier Diversity & Inclusion | Ford Motor Company  
**Lynn Perenic** | President & CEO | Argent Tape & Label

**10:05 AM -  
10:45 AM**

## Day One Keynote Economic Outlook

Sponsors: Argent Tape and Label | Ford Motor Company

The pandemic struck a US economy which was already decelerating back to its potential growth rate. This discussion will examine key aspects of the US economy, monetary and fiscal policy, and the “K-shaped” recovery currently underway.

**Nitin Gupta** | Foreign Exchange | Citizens Bank Global Markets

**10:45 AM  
- 11:00 AM**

## Meet & Greet | Photo Booth

Networking Sponsors: GM | Federated Services Solution  
Photo Booth Sponsors: Blue Cross Blue Shield Network of Michigan |  
Rose Moving & Storage

Networking with people at the conference, you might even find a Business Conference Friend Forever (BCFF) or try Snap Bar the conference photo booth with great filters.

**11:00 AM -  
12:00 PM**

## Educational Workshop I

Sponsors: | Citizen Bank  
Excellerate Associates  
Strategic Staffing Solutions

Choose One:

### Cyber- Don't get Caught by the Hackers

It is real and it is painful. Learn the different ways to protect your company from hackers, thieves and ransomware. Not all insurance policies are created equally. And did you know, sometimes, it can be an inside job?

**Patricia Shall** | Creative Benefits & Insurance Solutions, LLC | President

**11:00 AM -  
12:00 PM**

## **Educational Workshop I (continued)**

Sponsors: | Citizen Bank  
Excellerate Associates  
Strategic Staffing Solutions

### **Fix This Next - Hammering out and fixing your biggest business challenger NOW**

Learn how to quickly clarify and pinpoint your business' biggest bottleneck and fix it next! Based on Mike Micahlowicz's book and taught by Certified Advisor Kathleen Johnson, discover what business area holds your weakest link and how to solve it using the Fix This Next methodology.

**Kathleen Johnson** | Kathleen Johnson Unlimited | Business Advisor | Coach | TRE Trainee | Kathleen Johnson Unltd

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### **Key Contract Terms to Know Before You Sign**

Entering into any business agreement is a serious undertaking and requires preparation before signing. There are key contract terms that every business should know when negotiating and drafting agreements. This workshop will address those key terms that appear in most contracts and what they can mean for your business deals..

**Pamela-Denise Mack** | Principal Attorney | The Mack Law Group PLC

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### **Powerfully Pivoting: People Performance, and Profitability**

In the post-pandemic economy, focusing solely on offering flexible work arrangements without considering how people navigate change, cuts short any strategic plan's success.

**Lisa Mininni** | President | Excellerate Associates

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### **Reassessing your brand strategy as a top priority in 2021**

As consumer behavior continues to change, the relevance of brand purpose, value, and differentiation factors remain core growth drivers. From product or service offering to price and more, it is recommended to reassess all brand elements to best meet the needs of the post-pandemic consumer mindset. In this session, you will learn how (and why) to reassess your brand purpose, values, and ensure you stand out in the market to win new and retain current customers.

**Lydia Michael** | President | Blended Collective

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### **The Women Business Owner's Guide To Commercial Real Estate Leasing Strategies**

Is your business expanding and in need of commercial space? Together we will review what to expect and how to go about finding your ideal business location. Tools will be shared to make sure you are not taken advantage of, in your quest to expand!

**Lynn Drake** | Commercial Realtor and Author | Compass Commercial

**1:00 PM -  
1:15 PM**

## **Meet and Greet Networking | Photo Booth**

Networking Sponsors: GM | Federated Services Solution  
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Networking with people at the conference, you might even find a Business Conference Friend Forever (BCFF) or try Snap Bar the conference photo booth with great filters.

# TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

**12:00 PM -  
1:00 PM**

## **Corporate Member Only | Workshop Two Candid Conversations: I'm listening**

Sponsor: DOW

Things have been crazy! Do you feel like you need a professional counseling session? We are here for you and we are listening! This session will be moderated by Empowerment

Coach Angela Moore. Ms. Moore holds several degrees including a Master of Counseling and an MBA – just the right combination for this time in our lives. She will guide us through discussions of our toughest challenges and explore our professional worries for the future. Don't miss this opportunity for this very special supplier diversity professional group therapy.

**Angela Moore** | Counselor & Empowerment Coach | The Body Principle

**12:00 PM -  
1:00 PM**

## **Educational Workshop II**

Sponsors: | Citizen Bank  
Excellerate Associates  
Strategic Staffing Solutions

Choose One:

### **A Business Owner's Journey Towards Wealth Empowerment**

70% of a business owner's wealth is tied up in their business yet 98% have no idea what it is worth. The journey towards Wealth Empowerment begins by knowing the value of your business, understanding how to maximize that value, and converting that value into personal wealth.

**Linda Ruffenach** | Founder / Chief Strategist | Execuity Value Advisors

### **Fix This Next - Hammering out and fixing your biggest business challenger NOW**

Trust is a shortcut for customer decision making. When someone trusts you, they buy from you, are loyal to you, and refer you to others. You can grow customer trust through consistent positive experiences and relevant communications. Join us to learn the dimensions of trust, how it can be built, measured, and recovered if lost.

**Janet Muhleman** | President, REGROUP

**Kristopher Gauthier** | Senior Project Director, Emicity

### **DEI: The Language of Data**

Do you have the right skills for your organizations' DEI initiatives? After publishing the nicely worded diversity statement and making everyone go through implicit bias (soft skills) training, it's time to start thinking about what's next. Hard skills, like collecting and analyzing data, are what's next. I'll share the language of data and a DEI data roadmap that will significantly enhance the effectiveness of your existing DEI work.

**Joy Mason** | Strategist/Author/Speaker/Entrepreneur, Optimist Business Solutions, LLC

### **Overcoming cross-cultural barriers**

This workshop includes the major cultural differences between a few selected countries to enable you to do business successfully in another country. These include Brazil, Germany, Japan, Mexico, and USA.

**Elke Kramer** | President, Forefront International Corporation



**12:00 PM -  
1:00 PM**

## **Educational Workshop II continued**

Sponsors: | Citizen Bank  
Excellerate Associates  
Strategic Staffing Solutions

Choose One:

### **Succession Planning**

What happens when you own a business and want to retire? How do you make sure the business will continue to provide income? How do you find the right successor? We will discuss how to ensure a successful transition and create the best experience for you, your clients, and your employees.

**Jill Gleba** | President and Owner | Gleba & Associates

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### **Toxicity Tamers: Challenging Corrosive Connections**

Many people interact with negative people or work in toxic environments filled with disrespect, distrust, and downright incivility. Lacking the necessary tools, these interactions negatively affect our physical and emotional health. In this interactive session, participants will learn how to use toxicity tamers -- defusing tension, staying on course, remembering the golden rule. These counter-actions can help change a work environment by providing tools to reduce the impact of corrosive workplace relationships on our health and work performance

**Mary Ceccanese** | Principal Consultant | Dynamic Connections | Speaker

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**1:00 PM -  
2:15 PM**

## **Meet and Greet Networking | Photo Booth**

Networking Sponsors: GM | Federated Services Solution  
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Networking with people at the conference, you might even find a Business Conference Friend Forever (BCFF) or try Snap Bar the conference photo booth with great filters.

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## **Real - Talk Panel**

### **Prevailing through a time of Change Lessons in 2020/1 & Strategies for 2022**

Sponsor: DOW

No one could have predicted the magnitude of changes that would take place in our world over the past 18 months. At this Real Talk session, you will hear from Women Business Owners sharing their challenges and how they persevered to prevail. See the impact it made to their businesses and the world.

Facilitator | **Jim G Bos** | Board | Great Lakes Women's Business Conference  
Vice President, Global Procurement Yanfeng Global Automotive Interiors | Yanfeng Global Automotive

Moderator | **Jacinto Blanco** | Senior Manager of Supplier Diversity | Yanfeng

Panelist | **Dr. Rae Pearson** | CEO | Alpha Rae Personnel

Panelist | **Madi Dixon** | CEO | Manager, Strategic Partner Development & Corporate Social Responsibility  
The Heico Companies

Panelist | **Charlene E. Shaya** | Executive | J&B Medical

Panelist | **Linda Slagel** | Chief Executive Officer | Stanco Metal Products

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

2:15 PM -  
3:15 PM

## WE Succeed Module Three Succeed with Marketing in a New Era

Sponsors: | Comerica | Matrix Integration

Your customers' radio station, no matter what, is WIIFM "What's In It For Me". Knowing what your customers' need before they know is an essential marketing strategy. At this module, you learn how to secure a strategic position in your market using various tools that build brand awareness and tune in to customer needs.

Session Sponsor | **Shirley Tang-Audritsh** | Supplier Diversity Program Manager | Eli Lilly & Company  
Presenter | **Shelly Pisors** | SVP, National Director Events and Contributions President | Comerica Foundation  
Moderator | **Teresa LeFevre** | Vice President, Supplier Diversity Manager | Comerica

3:15 PM -  
4:15 PM

## WE Succeed Module Three Marketing Workshop

Sponsors: | Comerica | Matrix Integration

Deeper dive into marketing in a new era continued as an interactive workshop.

Session Sponsor | **Sara Gerber** | Marketing Manager | Matrix Integration  
Presenter | **Shelly Pisors** | SVP, National Director Events and Contributions President | Comerica Foundation  
Moderator | **Teresa LeFevre** | Vice President, Supplier Diversity Manager | Comerica  
Speaker | **Shelly Hyland** | Marketing and Engagement Manager | Great Lakes Women's Business Council

GREAT LAKES WOMEN'S BUSINESS COUNCIL  
AWARDS CELEBRATION AT SUBURBAN COLLECTION  
SHOWPLACE IN NOVI, MICHIGAN

APRIL 26, 2022 TUESDAY NIGHT

### GREAT LAKES WBC AWARDS AMBASSADOR AWARD AND DISTINGUISHED BUSINESS LEADER AWARD

The Great Lakes Women's Business Council's Awards presentation is a trademark event for our organization. It is a time when we reflect on what we, as well as our members, have accomplished in the past year.

#### AMBASSADOR AWARD

It is for members or community leaders who have given their time and talent tirelessly to support the members of our organization and the mission of the Great Lakes Women's Business Council. They give generously to provide support, leadership, and offer sustainable resources to our members. With these qualities, they empower our members to succeed.

#### DISTINGUISHED BUSINESS LEADER AWARD

It is for business owners who exemplify a successful business model. They are distinguished, show a healthy management style, have grown, agile, innovative, grasped organizational change, and support their fellow business owners. They generously share their successes and failures to help others achieve their own business goals and help the greater community.



22ND WOMEN'S BUSINESS CONFERENCE  
AT SUBURBAN COLLECTION SHOWPLACE  
IN NOVI, MICHIGAN

SEPTEMBER 27-28, 2022

The 2022 Great Lakes Women's Business Conference brings together 1,000+ certified women-owned businesses from around the country, corporate and government supplier diversity, and procurement professionals. The conference addresses the needs of emerging and established business owners.

Great Lakes  
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- Metal Solutions



### Industrial Technologies Group (ITG)

- Heavy Equipment
- Water Infrastructure
- Capital Equipment
- Specialty Solutions & Components



### Construction Solutions Group (CSG)

- Commercial Construction Solutions
- Industrial Construction Solutions
- Construction Equipment



### Metal Processing Group (MPG)

- Steel Wire Products
- Steel Fasteners & Rods
- Wire Rod Products


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Online Capabilities Portfolio: [www.heicocompanies.com/portfolio](http://www.heicocompanies.com/portfolio)



For further information contact Madilynn Dixon | [mdixon@heicocompanies.com](mailto:mdixon@heicocompanies.com) | (630) 353-5050



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We fuel dreams.

The joy of creating is grounded in Honda's commitment to imagination, curiosity and innovative ideas. When visionaries are freed from what's always been done to think about what's never been done before, the sky's the limit.

**Honda is a proud supporter of the Great Lakes Women's Business Council.**

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The Power of Dreams

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To navigate through 2020 and beyond, Michigan businesses had to adapt. And the Michigan Economic Development Corporation is right there alongside them, helping to connect businesses to new resources, meet new partners and access the additional capital they needed from the start. If your business needs support to reach its new potential, the MEDC is available to help in any way we can.

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MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
**PURE PARTNERSHIP**



# WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

**7:30 AM -  
8:00 AM**

## **Zumba Workout**

Sponsor: Henry Ford Health System

Meechelle Parker assist clients to find joy in the journey to achieve their fitness and financial goals. You may ask, why both fitness and finances? The heart is a vital muscle in the body. According to the CDC, heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, killing 1 in 5 women. It is well known how important

fitness is to assisting heart health. As well, we know the devastation of financial struggles on health as well as other areas of life. I love to see clients win in both their health and wealth. I have a proven approach to fitness and financial coaching that will bring results through individual, couple and group sessions. My holistic approach to fitness and finances will have you feeling great and seeing results in no time.

**Meechelle Parker** | Owner | My HEART Enterprise

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**8:50 AM -  
9:00 AM**

## **Conference Readiness Great Conference Experience**

The Virtual Great Lakes Women's Council Platform has been created and customized to provide you with the best experience possible. With any new online event, we recommend you to attend this session..

**Shelly Hyland** | Marketing and Engagement Manager | Great Lakes Women's Business Council  
**Nick Moore** | Marketing & Engagement Coordinator | Great Lakes Women's Business Council

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**9:00 AM -  
9:05 AM**

## **Welcoming Remarks**

Sponsors: DTE | RIM Custom Rack

Welcome to day Two Featuring greetings from the speakers listed below.

**Paula Tutman** | Multi-Emmy Winning Broadcast Journalist | Mistress of Ceremonies | WDIV  
**Michelle Richards** | Founder & Executive Director | Great Lakes Women's Business Council  
**Serafina Schorer** | President & CEO | RIM Custom Rack

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**9:05 AM -  
9:30 AM**

## **2021 Awards Presentation**

Sponsors: Lasalle | Stellantis

Award Sponsors: Bay Corrugated Containers | Kelloggs

Business Conference Awards - The Great Lakes Women's Business Council's Awards presentation is a trademark event for our organization. The awards exhibit our history of commitment and dedication to leadership and excellence. These awards are for outstanding members that go above and beyond to support the Great Lakes WBC and its members with time and effort will be honored. Their leadership and support are an inspiration to all members, partners, and friends. See page 89 for Awards for more info.

**LeCathy Burston** | Senior Director of Membership & Corporate Development | Great Lakes Women's Business Council  
**Bashar Cholagh** | Head of Supplier Diversity Development and Purchasing Communications | Stellantis  
**Michelle Richards** | Founder & Executive Director | Great Lakes Women's Business Council  
**Vinnie Palermo** | Corporate Director | LaSalle

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**9:30 AM -  
10:15 AM**

## **Day Two Keynote Speaker Navigating The New Economy**

Keynote Speaker Sponsors: Flex N Gate | Nissan | Walker Miller Energy Services

Nancy Giordano is one of the world's top female futurists. Passionate about helping leaders transform to meet the escalating expectations ahead, she delves deep into the intersections of tech, business, and society. Executives love her unique abilities to sense and synthesize the shifts ahead and to guide those ready to build more relevant and sustainable solutions. She has spent her career building, shaping and guiding a portfolio of \$50 billion worth of global brands.

**Nancy Giordano** | Strategic Futurist, Author, Gatherer, Founder | playbiginc

**10:45 AM  
- 11:00 AM**

## **2021 Excellence in Supplier Diversity Award Presentation**

Excellence in Supplier Diversity Sponsors:  
Compass Commercial | G-Tech | MacArthur

This purpose of the Excellence in Supplier Diversity award program is to recognize Great Lakes Women Business Council's corporate members that have effective supplier diversity programs. Applicants may be recognized in one of three categories. They include: "Emerging", "Advanced" and "Best In Class". See page 91 for Awards for more info.

**Paula Tutman** | Multi-Emmy Winning Broadcast Journalist | Mistress of Ceremonies | WDIV  
Session Sponsor | **Lynn Drake** | Commercial Realtor and Author | Compass Commercial  
Session Sponsor | **Nicole Ghafarie** | Marketing Principal | G-Tech  
Session Sponsor | **Christie Wong Barrett** | CEO, Strategist, Manufacturing Innovation Policy Advisor | MacArthur Corporation

**10:45 AM  
- 11:00 AM**

## **Meet and Greet Networking | Photo Booth**

Networking Sponsors: GM | Federated Services Solution  
Photo Booth Sponsors: Blue Cross Blue Shield Network of Michigan | Rose Moving & Storage

Networking with people at the conference, you might even find a Business Conference Friend Forever (BCFF) or try Snap Bar the conference photo booth with great filters.

**11:00 AM -  
11:30 AM**

## **Great Pitch Competition Round Two Finalist Presentations**

Sponsor: DOW

The Great Pitch! Competition, a fast-paced business pitch tournament, brought to you in partnership with Dow. Watch four finalist companies compete for the final position and vote on who wins.

**Paula Tutman** | Multi-Emmy Winning Broadcast Journalist | Mistress of Ceremonies | WDIV  
Presenter | **Sherry Cummins** | MWM and WBE Services Coordinator | Great Lakes Women's Business Council (WBC)  
Judges | **Tiffany Frazier** | DOW | **Rona Lum** | Law Office of Rona M. Lum | **Sherry Diccione** | Adient | **Janie Goldberg** | Omnisource Marketing

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

11:30 AM -  
11:55 AM

## Business Resource Clinic I

Sponsors: | MichBusiness  
Nippon Seiki International (NSI)

Choose One:

### Marketing & SCORE (Mentoring and How They Can Help)

We will work together and share the value of having someone who cares and has experience running/managing a business. That person is called a MENTOR.

**David Broner** | Certified Mentor | SCORE  
**Dee Lockett** | Mentor | SCORE

### Detroit Means Business - Small Business Support Services That Work!

Detroit Means Business, is an online platform where small business owners have access to valuable information like vetted funding resources, expert guidance, and resources to address Covid-19 concerns. The District Business Liaison assists business owners in real-time, assisting with everything from relevant programs and resources, to help with navigating city services.

**Tenecia Johnson** | Business Liaison | Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)

**Lashawna Manigault** | Director of Small Business Attraction & Retention | Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)

### Preparing for Financing

Preparing for financing is a critical process for an entrepreneur or existing business owner, it can make the difference in the time it takes submit your application to obtaining a loan. In this training, we will review the steps to prepare for financing, how to set your expectations regarding the what the lender is looking and the expected time it take to process your application depending on which financial institution to choose.

**Abron Andrews** | Director | VetBiz



**ROCKET**  
Companies





**11:30 AM -  
12:55 PM**

## Coaching Labs

Sponsors: Bank of America  
Magna  
Rocket Companies

Choose One:

### Rock Your LinkedIn Profile

Learn helpful tricks, obtain useful features, and receive quick answers to the most common questions.

**Amy Dawson** | Global Contingent Workforce Operations Excellence Lead | LinkedIn

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### Beyond Survival and Recovery: Business Considerations for Resiliency in the New Normal

COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the way you do business, now and in the future. It can be overwhelming for business owners to keep up, let alone work out an action plan for your business. In this workshop, you will be guided through three phases that will address critical areas of your business

**Shawntay Dixon** | Program Manager | Great Lakes Women's Business Council (WBC)

**Lawrence Jackson** | President & CEO | Emerging Enterprise Group

**Laura Sigmon** | President & CEO | Best Practices Consulting Services

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### Turning BS (Blind Sides) into Leadership Success

Learn helpful tricks, obtain useful features, and receive quick answers to the most common questions Your blind sides (BS) may be holding you back from achieving your full potential to lead. In this motivational and interactive workshop, I share a process to identify your BS and steps to push past it. As a result, you will have the confidence to lead with your authentic self and the skills to be the kind of leader that makes a difference.

**Carla Romo** | Life Coach, Author | Carla Romo

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### Making Recruiting as easy as ABC (Attraction onBoarding Cultural) -- Hiring during COVID

Recruiting talent seems daunting, but we can break it down into its most basic elements, or the ABC's. These are the most integral basic building blocks to have a successful recruiting process. Let's go back to basics and discuss how to make recruiting work for you and your business.

Moderator: **Dawn Drozd** | CEO | ClearVision Associates

Panelist: **Emily Hopper** | Strategic Recruiting Services | **Lesley Delgado** | Strategic Recruiting Services |

**Sandy Harvey** | Exodus Consulting Group

**12:00 PM -  
12:25 PM**

## Business Resource Clinic II

Sponsors: | MichBusiness  
Nippon Seiki International (NSI)

Choose One:

### Getting to Know Accounting Aid Society

Become familiarized with the small business financial education and technical assistance services provided by the Accounting Aid Academy. You'll discover even new services that have launched to assist small businesses.

Moderator: **Jeremy Lewis** | Director | Accounting Aid Society

Panelist: **Maria Mendez** | Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society

Presenter: **Rachel Campbell** | E.A. Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society

**Lisa Day** | Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society

# WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

**12:00 PM -  
12:25 PM**

## Business Resource Clinic II Continued

Sponsors: | MichBusiness  
Nippon Seiki International (NSI)

Choose One:

### Go Global with International Sales Support

Learn about Michigan's International Trade program offerings, including grant funding, foreign offices, and a wide range of small business services to help your company identify and compete successfully in new global markets.

**Alyssa Tracey** | Director of International Trade | Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) International Trade Program

### MichBusiness Supplier Diversity Program

Session description: At MichBusiness, we strive to uplift the community and make Michigan a better place to live and work. Our focus is to help businesses grow and succeed, and we ensure that we are inclusive in representing diverse interests in all of our programs across the state. Join us to learn about our WBE Insurance Offerings, Women Thrive Initiative and our year-long DEI educational series to gain and increase engagement. Whether it's 5 words or a paragraph, learn to tell your story and make it count!

**Jennifer Werner** | Senior Vice President of Insurance Operations | MichBusiness

### USDOL Wage and Hour Division: Employer Resources

Will provide an overview of the USDOL Wage and Hour Division (WHD). The presentation will also cover the WHD resources and tools employers need to operate in compliance with the variety of labor laws enforced by the Division. (If we have any new updates at the time of the presentation, I will include them)

**Mildred S. Kress** | Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist (CORPS) | US Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division

### US Small Business Administration Resources Overview

An overview of the many resources available to Michigan startup and established businesses with a focus on SBA-funded resources.

**Sean Gray** | Economic Development Specialist | US Small Business Administration

## Business Resource Clinic III

Sponsors: | Citizen Bank

**12:00 PM -  
12:25 PM**

Excellerate Associates  
Strategic Staffing Solutions

Choose One:

### Go Global with International Sales Support

Learn about Michigan's International Trade program offerings, including grant funding, foreign offices, and a wide range of small business services to help your company identify and compete successfully in new global markets.

**Jeremy Lewis** | Director | Accounting Aid Society

Panelist: **Maria Mendez** | Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society

Presenter: **Rachel Campbell** | E.A. Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society

**Lisa Day** | Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society

## Business Resource Clinic III Continued

**12:00 PM -  
12:25 PM**

Sponsors: | Citizen Bank  
Excellerate Associates  
Strategic Staffing Solutions

Choose One:

**Tell Your Brand Story and Make it Count!**

Do you charm the reader of your brand collateral and digital presence? Sherry Cummins provides tips on the basic elements of storytelling and shares attention grabbers you need to gain and increase engagement. Whether it's 5 words or a paragraph, learn to tell your story and make it count!

**Sherry Cummins** | MWM and WBE Services Coordinator | Great Lakes Women's Business Council (WBC)

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**Market Research and Data Reports Drive Your Business**

Overview: This session will cover the various types of market research available through the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Attendees will learn the difference between primary and secondary research and how the SBDC can help with business planning through secondary information sources. There will also be a discussion of free research tools available through state and federal databases.

**Jamaal Ewing** | Economic Inclusion Business Consultant | Michigan Small Business Development Center

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**Conference Spin to Win Wheel and Wrap-Up**

**12:55 PM -  
1:00 PM**

All conference attendees, sponsors, vendors, and speakers are invited to the conference wrap up with networking and giveaways! Give thanks to these companies that donated.

**Company Name** | Gift  
**Company Name** | Gift  
**Company Name** | Gift  
**Company Name** | Gift  
**Company Name** | Gift  
**Company Name** | Gift

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**WE Match Sessions**

**1:00 PM -  
4:15 PM**

Pre scheduled for every 15 minutes) Match Times will be sent to qualified suppliers.



# Fairness. Respect. Inclusion.

With multicultural roots, Nissan is committed to providing an inclusive space that encourages innovative ideas from our diverse workforce and supply base. We not only respect, but eagerly welcome, the varied perspectives of these talented men and women. Nissan believes our commitment to our core principles of diversity - fairness, respect and inclusion - is essential to creating quality and innovative products.



## EMBRACING DIVERSITY





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# Presenters



## ABRON ANDREWS

*Executive Director* | **VetBiz Central**

Navy Veteran of 12 years and Entrepreneur. During Abron's Navy career he started an Auto Detailing business in San Diego California that for several years which included two locations.

After separating from the Navy, Abron started a 12 career in Banking and Investments that spanned 12 years in the Retail Banking, Investment, Insurance Industry. Abron also served 3 years as a Business Loan Associate and Technical Assistant.



## JACINTO BLANCO

*Senior Manager of Supplier Diversity* | **Yanfeng**

Jacinto Blanco, Senior Manager of Supplier Diversity for North America at Yanfeng Automotive Interiors. His Supplier Diversity leadership experience is validated with a proven record of directing and building robust supplier diversity programs. He proactively seeks out, identifies and utilizes external resources to develop diverse businesses/enterprises. He is accountable for leveraging existing supplier diversity programs by building support from internal constituencies such as sales, marketing, as well as other key indicators that identify opportunities for improved relations with the business community. In addition, his overall responsibility are to internal clients relative to corporate and government reporting ensure a measured success for a world class supplier diversity program.



## JIM BOS

*Vice President, Global Procurement* | **Yanfeng Global Automotive Interiors**

James Bos serves as Vice President of Global Procurement, for Yanfeng Automotive Interiors. In this role, he is responsible for leading all purchasing activities on a global basis with a total spend of \$7.5B.

Prior to this position, Bos most recently was Vice President, Purchasing – Interiors for Johnson Controls. (In July 2015, Johnson Controls and Yanfeng Automotive Trim Systems formed a joint venture for the interiors business of both companies called Yanfeng Automotive Interiors). At Johnson Controls, he held a variety of leadership roles in Manufacturing, Quality, Program Management, and Procurement. Bos joined Johnson Controls in 1985.



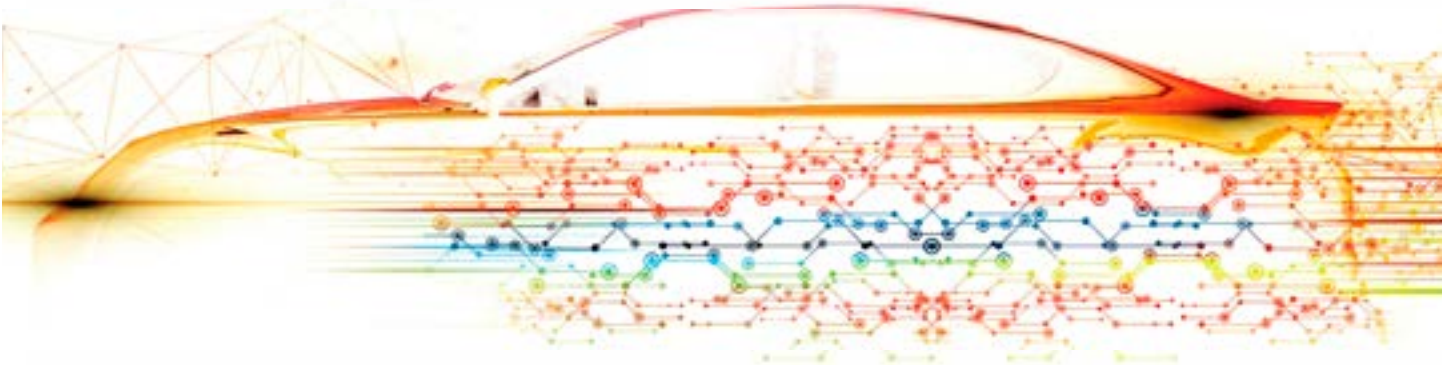
## DAVID BRONER

*Certified Mentor* | **SCORE**

David Broner. Certified Mentor at SCORE. Mentoring Existing and New Businesses in SE Michigan as part of the SBA. Managed a distribution company for over 35 years. Sales management and marketing was my primary focus. I have "walked in the shoes" of many entrepreneurs and will encourage, educate while helping them manage and know their numbers. It's lonely being an entrepreneur and as a mentor, I offer friendly listening.



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# Experience in motion

FOR A BETTER LIFE ON BOARD





## Presenters



### LECATHY BURSTON

*Senior Director of Membership & Corporate Development* | **Great Lakes WBC**

LeCathy has been a development professional for 27-years, she is passionate about establishing mutually beneficial relationships with corporations that share the same vision as Great Lakes Women's Business Council. She is responsible for building relationships with emerging and established corporations, developing corporate memberships and potential procurement opportunities for Women Business Enterprises (WBE's). LeCathy works with the Executive Director, Michelle Richards, to identify and assess strategic programming, procurement events and the support of Signature Events.



### RACHEL CAMPBELL

*E.A. Small Business Accountant* | **Accounting Aid Society**

Rachel began her career at Accounting Aid Society in 2010 as a Tax Site Supervisor in Accounting Aid Society's individual tax program. Driven by her commitment to strengthening Detroit's entrepreneurial ecosystem, Rachel has helped the Academy grow a broad client portfolio by building relationships with business owners and meeting them where they are in their business cycle. As a small business accountant, Rachel applies her knowledge, experience and uses a hands-on approach to help clients gain a deep understanding of their financial operations and maintain tax compliance. She earned her B.B.A from the University of Michigan - Dearborn, where she majored in accounting and holds credentials as an enrolled agent.



### MARY CECCANESE

*Principal Consultant* | **Dynamic Connections**

Mary Ceccanese is the owner and principal consultant of Dynamic Connections LLC. Celebrating almost twenty years of professional experience working with all levels of staff in both for-profit and non-profit organizations, Mary engages attendees with research-based practices applied to work-life scenarios.

She has a BA in Human Resource Administration and has worked at the University of Michigan for more than thirty years. In 2010 she received the U of M's Candace J. Johnson Award for Excellence and in 2019 was presented with a Staff Impact Award. In addition, she was one of the 2019 "Top Ten Business Women" in the country of the American Business Women's Association. Mary is currently collaborating on a book for staff on how to create a positive workplace from the ground up.



### LAURA CHAPMAN- SIGMON

*President and CEO* | **Best Practices Consulting Services**

is the President and CEO of Best Practices Consulting Services, LLC. Her firm provides capacity-building assistance to small businesses through strategic planning, business development, government contracting, and marketing support. Since 2008 we've served retail, construction, healthcare, transportation, janitorial, and the IT industry.





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# Presenters



## BASHAR CHOLAGH

*Head of Supplier Diversity Development and Purchasing Communications | Stellantis*

Bashar Cholagh is the Head of Supplier Diversity Development and Purchasing Communications at Stellantis. In this role Bashar partners with minority and women businesses to create opportunities to support FCA Supplier Diversity initiatives. After spending the last 4 years supporting dealer network diversity, Bashar has driven an increase of 37 new minority owned dealerships across the FCA dealer network. This represented a 26% growth in FCA dealer diversity, and is the highest growth among all OEM's during that time.

Bashar has worked in the automotive industry for the last 20 years, and has worked for analytics consulting firms (Urban Science, and I.H.S. Automotive) as well OEM's (VW/Audi, and FCA). Through his career he's held strategic planning roles focused on Sales, Marketing, and Customer Experience.



## SHERRY CUMMINS

*MWM and WBE Services Coordinator | Great Lakes WBC*

Sherry Cummins is the MWM and WBE Services Coordinator at Great Lakes WBC. Sherry uses her expertise in relationships, human resources and event management to educate women business owners, help them to present themselves in the best possible light and help them to connect to grow relationships and their businesses through the Michigan Women's Marketplace.



## AMY DAWSON

*Global Contingent Workforce Operations Excellence Lead | LinkedIn*

Creating excellence in Contingent Staffing | Collaborating with industry leaders | Building a stronger future 20+ years experience in the IT staffing arena with 15 years in executive level management and MSP experience. Direct experience managing multiple Fortune 500 MSP staffing programs, developing, and implementing action plans to improve troubled programs and implementing new customer service guidelines and policies and procedures to increase client satisfaction. Have been responsible for managing, developing, and implementing program compliance and SOX processes and audits. Have also created collaborative working environments between the suppliers, clients and on-sites resulting in increased productivity and client satisfaction.



## LISA DAY

*Small Business Accountant | Accounting Aid Society*

Lisa Day joined Accounting Aid Society in 2021. She brings 20 years of progressive background in the retail banking industry. She has developed a solid history of producing positive revenue results and improved staff performance. Combining these skills and experiences she supports our small business customers in achieving their goals via tax and financial operations education and service.



# STELLANTIS



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Strengthen Our Products**

**Diverse Employees  
Strengthen Our Mindset**



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# Presenters



## LESLEY DELGADO

*President* | **Strategic Recruiting Services**

Lesley Delgado is the President of Strategic Recruiting Services, LLC, a premier outsourced recruiting, and HR consulting firm. It is not often that one finds creative talent of progressive human resource caliber balanced by an executive sense of strategy, organizational intelligence, and innate leadership ability. Delgado has proven, however, that these qualities can co-exist and, when fueled by a fiery passion for excellence and mission-centric dedication, create results that are far greater than the sum of their parts.

She has gained the strategic knowledge, focus, vision, and mature judgment after thirty years of hiring to provide companies with an alternative to the overall recruitment process and best practices HR solutions. Delgado currently serves on the Advisory board for MichBusiness, is a Trusted Advisor at Vistage of Michigan and a previous board member for Detroit Executive Association. Strategic Recruiting Services was the recipient of the “Best of Michigan” HR Wizards Award.



## SHERRY DICCION

*Supplier Diversity Manager* | **Adient**

Sherry is Adient’s manager of supplier diversity. She is responsible for the company’s \$1 billion diverse supplier portfolio.

Since joining Johnson Controls (from which Adient spun off in 2016) in 1991, Sherry has held a variety of leadership positions within the company, including several within Johnson Controls Building Efficiency.

Sherry is involved with the Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council and the Great Lakes Women’s Business Council and serves on several of their committees. Also, she co-leads a business module with Toyota that facilitates conversations and networking events between business owners and corporate leaders, enhancing the opportunity for business development and future partnerships.

Sherry earned a bachelor’s degree in management from Walsh College and completed executive education coursework at Dartmouth College.



## MADI DIXON

*Manager, Strategic Partner Development & Corporate Social Responsibility* | **The Heico Companies**

Madi Dixon is part of The Heico Companies’ Strategy team as Manager of Strategic Partner Development & Corporate Social Responsibility. In this role, she is on the ground floor for designing and integrating a company-wide corporate responsibility and inclusion strategy that aligns with the core vision, mission, and values of the company.

She acts as the initial focal point for Corporate Social Responsibility or ESG initiatives across the enterprise, builds relationships with community partners and key external and internal stakeholders, and has a focus in ESG supplier development and responsible sourcing.

Madi has been with The Heico Companies since May of 2018, where she has held various positions that led her to her current role. Madi holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Pure Mathematics from Wheaton College and is currently working on her Certified Supply Chain Professional Certification through the Association for Supply Chain Management.



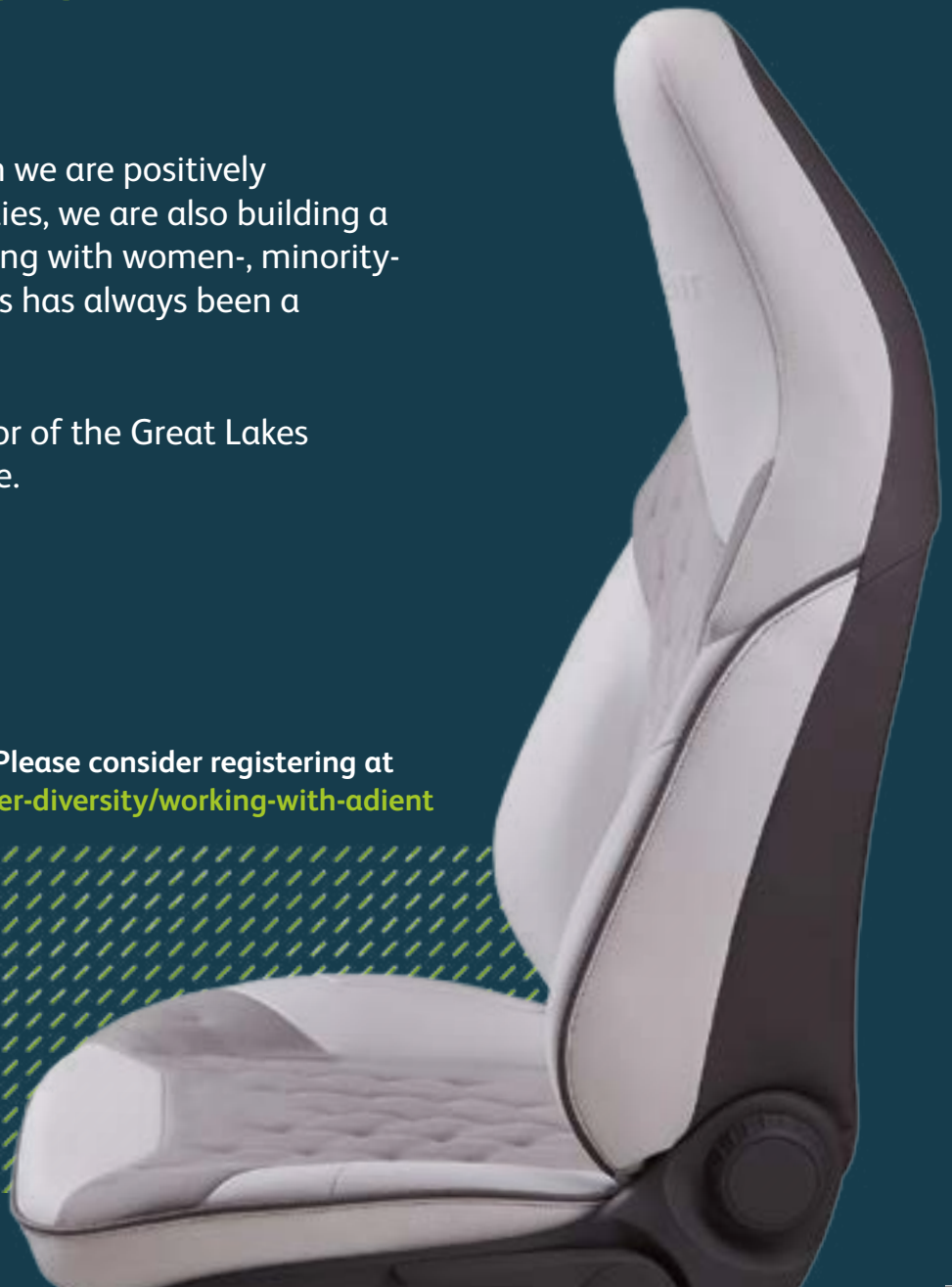


# > Moving forward with **focus**

At Adient, we know that when we are positively contributing to our communities, we are also building a stronger organization. Engaging with women-, minority- and veteran-owned businesses has always been a cornerstone of our business.

Adient is proud to be a sponsor of the Great Lakes Women's Business Conference.

Is your business woman-owned? Please consider registering at [www.adient.com/suppliers/supplier-diversity/working-with-adient](http://www.adient.com/suppliers/supplier-diversity/working-with-adient)



# Presenters



## SHAWNTAY DIXON

*Program Manager | Great Lakes Women's Business Council (WBC)*

Shawntay Dixon, Program Manager of Great Lakes Women's Business Council (GLWBC)'s Women's Business Center & Michigan Women's Marketplace, Shawntay Dixon is an experienced business development professional with more than 20 years of experience as a director and manager of entrepreneurship programs, business consultant, trainer, and coach of entrepreneurs. Under her leadership, the Women's Business Center was awarded the 2020 Michigan Women's Business Center of Excellence by the U.S. Small Business Administration Michigan District. As Program Manager, Shawntay is responsible for business development initiatives for our women business owners, including counseling, training, and mentoring. Shawntay is recognized for the creation of execWE, the implementation of MentorWE, and leading in the revamping of the Michigan Women's Marketplace, our online women's community and training portal. Shawntay also brings business ownership and ten years as a faculty of the School of Business of University of Phoenix. Shawntay has a M.B.A in Management and certifications as a Certified Workforce Development Professional and Certified Human Behavior Consultant (certified DISC Consultant).



## LISA DOLAN

*Vice President, Supply Chain Strategy | ALOM*

Lisa Dolan is a highly-seasoned supply chain executive with experience in global supply chain and reverse logistics management. With over 20 years serving ALOM customers, Ms. Dolan has implemented strategic supply chain plans that appreciably reduced costs and improved service and quality levels for some of the world's most respected Fortune 100 customers in technology, automotive, medical device and pharmaceutical sectors, and government agencies. Ms. Dolan combines extensive manufacturing and supply chain expertise with a deep understanding of technology application — both current and emerging — along with the ability to connect and build trusted relationships with prospective and established customers.

Ms. Dolan is active in the supply chain professional community. Currently, she serves as the vice president of Marketing with Women in Automotive Technology – Silicon Valley and held past board positions with and chaired the CSCMP San Francisco Roundtable. She represents ALOM as a member of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.



## LYNN DRAKE

*Commercial Realtor and Author | Compass Commercial*

Lynn Drake's status is well known in the industry: She's the commercial realtor focused on maintaining "true north" for her corporate clients. It's a reputation built on twenty years of commercial real estate experience and expertise in corporate and institutional workplace design, planning, and project implementation.

Lynn became a commercial realtor in 2001 after 15 years in corporate real estate, during which she initially managed and leased industrial real estate across North America for Central Transport, then directed real estate and facilities for 1,000 Kelly Services branches in the United States and Canada. Lynn has successfully completed over 2,500 real estate transactions, ranging from small business tenant leases to the sale and purchase of industrial complexes.

[greatlakeswbc.org/conference](https://greatlakeswbc.org/conference)





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The scale of our operations spans the globe and touches the lives of millions of people each day. We strive for that touch to be positive and uplifting. Every decision at ALOM is made with consideration for the future impact on people, on the community, on the environment, and on how we can most positively represent our customers.

#### Social Responsibility

As a woman-owned company, we advocate diversity and inclusion in our workplaces and across our global supply base as both a competitive advantage and simply the right way to do things.

#### Become an ALOM Diverse Supplier

<https://vms.alom.com/questionnaire>

**35.4%**

2020 ALOM  
Diverse Supplier  
Spend



#### Environmental Responsibility

This year we launched our NetZero Supply Chain Sustainability Initiative committing to a net zero carbon footprint across all operations by 2030.

#### Corporate Governance

Our commitment to running a financially sound company that is in a financial position to plan responsibly for growth, and treat its employees and suppliers fairly defines our mission and our culture.



ISO 9001 | ISO 14001 | ISO 13485 | TL 9000 | SOC2 | FDA Registered | [alom.com](https://alom.com)

Americas | EMEA | APAC



# Presenters



## DAWN DROZD

*CEO | ClearVision Associates*

Dawn Drozd is the CEO of ClearVision Associates. Since 2005, she's worked with hundreds of top executives and business owners as a thinking partner to help them overcome obstacles, reach more goals, and achieve greater satisfaction.

Dawn authored a book, *The Success Code*, based on over 50 interviews with owners who shared how they were able to thrive during the Great Recession, when so many others failed. The book's principles uncover a roadmap for leaders who want to create more success for themselves and their organization in any economy.



## DR. SHAWNE DUPERON

*American Scholar | ShawneTV*

With a PhD in communication and an expertise in good gossip, Dr. Shawne Duperon is considered be one of the most innovative speakers and consultants on engagement today. Her social reach tops 100 million a month.

From London to Athens, Munich, across North America, Dr. Shawne educates corporations, universities, governments and entrepreneurs, on how to effectively communicate resulting in increased engagement, retention, agility and creativity in the workplace. Her progressive teachings on Forgiveness as a Leadership Skill, shift corporate cultures and amplify respect.



## JAMAAL EWING

*Economic Inclusion Business Consultant | Michigan Small Business Development Center*

Jamaal Ewing is the Economic Inclusion Business Consultant with the Michigan Small Business Development Center. A Lansing native, Jamaal attended Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo where he received his BBA in Sales and Business Marketing in 2006. After graduation he took a job with J.P Morgan Chase to pursue a career in financial services. In 2011, while working as a banker with Huntington, Jamaal decided to pursue his MBA which he received in 2013. Jamaal switched career paths in 2014 when he left banking to take a position as the microloan program manager for Grand Rapids Opportunities for Women, a program designed to help underserved businesses access capital, prior to joining



## TIFFANY FRAZIER

*Senior Sourcing Manager | DOW*

Tiffany Frazier, senior sourcing information technology manager at Dow Chemical Company based in Midland, Michigan. Her skills include negotiation, procurement, marketing, supply chain, leadership, purchasing, supply chain management, strategic sourcing, cross functional team leadership, six sigma, process improvement, manufacturing, supply management, chemical engineering, petrochemical, process optimization, global sourcing, and capital projects. Tiffany holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Tuskegee University.



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# Presenters



## KRISTOPHER GAUTHIER

*Senior Project Director | Emicity*

Kristopher Gauthier is the Senior Project Director at Emicity Research, a full service research consultancy in Troy, MI. Kristopher has applied his education in experimental psychology to help clients across a broad range of industries better understand the needs of customers and their own position in the competitive landscape. Well-versed in both quantitative and qualitative techniques, Kristopher's research efforts have focused on brand/product positioning, customer and market segmentation, customer relationships, and motivators of brand engagement.



## SARA GERBER

*Marketing Manager | Matrix Integration*

Sara Gerber has been in the Marketing field for the last 14 years with Matrix Integration, a certified WBE and IT solution and managed service provider. She is currently the Marketing Manager, responsible for developing the marketing strategy and promotional plans to activate sales through effective branding, multi-touch communication campaigns and demand generation activities. She is also responsible for overseeing strategic partners and distributors by monitoring revenue goals, managing day to day programs including analysis, reporting and certification requirements, and helping our sales and service teams leverage programs for growth and profitability.



## NICOLE GHAFARI

*Marketing Principal | G-Tech*

As Principal, Nicole strives to advance G-TECH's mission, values, and vision through a variety of strategic initiatives focused on employee engagement, internal and external communications, and key partnerships. With nearly a decade of marketing experience, she believes that clear communication is at the crux of operational effectiveness and successful collaboration.

Nicole holds a Master of Business Administration with honors from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and graduated magna cum laude from Boston College with a Bachelor of Science in management. An active Chicago Booth alumna, she serves on the admissions committee as a candidate interviewer and application reviewer. She is also involved with the school's



## JILL GLEBA

*President and Owner | Gleba & Associates*

Jill Gleba founded Gleba & Associates, an independent financial management firm, more than 30 years ago. Her introduction to investing happened at 12 years old when she took the money she earned from her paper route and invested in the market. Jill has two degrees from Wayne State University and Oakland University, and she recently qualified for Premier Club 2019 with our broker-dealer, Cambridge. Being an Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF), Jill specializes in business retirement plans and helping others become retirement-ready. Her goal is to help people create the life they want for themselves, their families, and their employees. Gleba has consistently earned the Five Star Award\* through



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# Presenters



## JANIE GOLDBERG

*Owner | Omnisource Marketing*

Omnisource Marketing is a privately-held Certified Women-Owned, Brand Engagement Agency, founded in 1989 by Janie Goldberg, President and CEO.

Janie studied accounting at the University of Miami and was a business visionary from the start. Her inquisitive mind and entrepreneurial spirit saw potential in an unused screen-printing press which was the start of OmniSource Marketing.

Today, Omnisource is a 20-million-dollar a year business representing brands like PepsiCo., Simon Malls, and Cummins across the globe, just to name a few.



## SEAN GRAY

*Economic Development Specialist | US Small Business Administration*

Sean Gray, Economic Development Specialist was previously the Associate Director of the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program at Wayne State University in Detroit. A native of Detroit, Sean Gray comes from a family of small business owners. Working at his grandfather's plumbing business and visiting his mother's ceramics studio kindled a lifelong passion for entrepreneurship. While Sean's first exposure to entrepreneurship began at home, he went on to earn a bachelor's in business administration and a master's in educational leadership from Eastern Michigan University and has worked in economic development for over fifteen years.



## SANDY HARVEY

*President & Chief Strategist | Exodus Consulting Group*

Sandy Harvey is the founder and President of Exodus Consulting Group, where she utilizes her 25+ years' experience as a Human Resources, Operations, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategist. She has worked in many industries, including financial services, defense, retail, energy, nonprofit, and more. Sandy supports individuals and organizations by aligning business processes, platforms, and people to achieve goals by identifying diverse and innovative measures. As a student of life and embracer of differences, Sandy seeks opportunities to demonstrate that individuals and organizations are better collaborators by highlighting our differences. She is committed to creating engaged and profitable companies that enhance the lives of individuals through professional development and



## EMILY HOPPER

*Human Resources Consultant | Strategic Recruiting Services*

Emily Hopper is a human resources professional with over thirteen years of experience in the field. Emily specializes in recruitment, onboarding, employee engagement, and benefits administration.

Emily currently works as the Human Resources Director for the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit and leads their Culture Committee. In addition to her work at the YMCA, Emily also works as a Human Resources Consultant for Strategic Recruiting Services. She has experience in for-profit and nonprofit human resources management. She spent several years as the Human Resources Manager at the Detroit Zoological Society prior to joining the YMCA Team.





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## Presenters



### SHELLY HYLAND

*Marketing and Engagement Manager | Great Lakes WBC*

Shelly Hyland, Marketing Manager for Great Lakes Women's Business Council is a creative marketer, results-driven professional with extensive experience engaging audiences, maximizing revenues, and supporting brand growth goals. Accomplished Event planner steering the full process from ideation through execution for events ranging in size and degree of complexity. Highly organized project management specialist committed to delivering results on time, in the budget, and in a way that maximizes customer satisfaction. People-focused collaborator leveraging exemplary organization and communication skills to drive business success.



### LAWRENCE F. JACKSON

*President & CEO | Professional Consulting*

Financial professional who provides business owners with strategies on how to use financial data to grow and manage their enterprise.

Lawrence F. Jackson has been an adviser and business advocate to profit and non profit businesses. His strength is the development and implementation of solid action plans by analyzing the financial profiles of the enterprise. His customer service orientation is the basis for his knowledge and expertise in: Commercial and Retail Banking Products; Analysis and Problem Solving; and the Presentation of seminars and workshops. Lawrence's approach to enhance Customer Support is to develop collaborative relationships, to meet varied business needs. Implicit in his success is the ability to listen, address each need and communicate.



### KATHLEEN JOHNSON

*Business Advisor | Coach | TRE Traineer | Kathleen Johnson Unltd*

Kathleen Johnson is a veteran entrepreneur with 21-+ years owning and operating businesses. Along the way, Kathleen has mentored fellow business owners, was an SBDC Small Business Consultant and is currently a Fix This Next Certified Advisor. In 2017, Kathleen launched her own advising company, Kathleen Johnson Unlimited, specifically to help business owners at a breakthrough level gain clarity, direction and implement systems to leverage to the next level of success. An alumna of Central Michigan University, Kathleen spent her 'employed' career in service to non-profits through fundraising and event planning. Her breadth of experience includes sales and marketing while working with companies from a variety of industries. Kathleen resides in Northern Michigan with her two teens, two dogs, and two cats.

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### TENECIA JOHNSON

*District 1 Business Liaison* | **Detroit Economic Growth Corporation (DEGC)**

**Detroit Economic Growth Corp (DEGC)**

Tenecia is a Communication professional with over a decade of customer service, outreach and engagement, and relationship management experience delivering clear, concise, and strategic messaging to desired stakeholders. Specializing in corporate and community relations, she has earned a reputation for developing creative processes to improve both internal and external communication. Armed with a BA in Communication from Eastern Michigan University, Tenecia has enthusiastically capitalized on opportunities to gain professional experience and expand her network by emerging into the business, non-profit, and government communities in Detroit. Born in Detroit, she has a passion for ensuring fair and equal opportunities are available to everyone. As an entrepreneur, she's worked to build bridges between organizations and connect people with resources to help improve their quality of life. She volunteers with philanthropic organizations and is committed to service through her sorority.



### ELKE KRAMER

*President* | **Forefront International Corporation**

Elke Kramer founded Forefront Corporation in 1997 and has acted as president since then. She started its cross-cultural training program in 2001. Elke has lived and worked in various European countries and brought valuable insights to some of the cultural training workshops. Besides her work at Forefront, she enjoys her German Shepherd dog and traveling the world.



### MILDRED S. KRESS

*Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist (CORPS)* |  
**US Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division**

Mildred S. Kress is Community Outreach and Resource Planning Specialist (CORPS) at the USDOL Wage and Hour Division, Detroit District Office. She has been with the Division for almost 10 years. As the CORPS, She responsible for assisting in planning and developing a wide range of activities including organizing, facilitating and conducting compliance assistance and outreach.

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# Presenters



## TERESA LEFEVRE

*Vice President, Supplier Diversity Manager | Comerica*

Teresa Whalen LeFevre is the vice president and manager of supplier diversity for Comerica Bank in Auburn Hills, Michigan. As vice president, Teresa identifies and facilitates the utilization of diverse suppliers to provide goods and services for the operation of the Bank in the communities that it serves and acts as Comerica's liaison and representative to the minority and women's business enterprise advocacy organizations on both a local and national level. Teresa also leads the procurement team's sustainability efforts and assists in managing customer/vendor relationships. Prior to joining Comerica, Teresa worked as a purchasing and supplier diversity manager for Federal Mogul Corporation.



## JEREMY LEWIS

*Director | Accounting Aid Society*

Jeremy Lewis joined Accounting Aid Society in 2021. A native Detroit, Jeremy has unique corporate business development and community development background. After graduating from Hampton University in Virginia, he developed and managed client relationships in advertising sales roles in Atlanta, New York, and Chicago, respectively. He returned to Detroit in 2015 and combined his passion and connection to the city to support the work of neighborhood-focused small business community development in traditional and



## JIM LINE

*Board President | Great Lakes WBC*

*Senior Director, Corporate Procurement | Blue Cross Blue Shield Michigan*

Jim Line serves as the Director of Corporate Procurement for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the Great Lakes Women's Business Council Board of Directors, President. He has 25 years of leadership experience. James is a Certified Purchasing Manager with a lifetime certificate. He is responsible for oversight for \$900 million annual purchases of goods and services. James is a member of the National Association Sourcing and Purchasing



## DEE LOCKETT

*Mentor | SCORE*

Dee Lockett is the Founder and C.E.O. of The Marketing Dept. Unlimited, where she combines the power and principles of money and marketing to make a difference for women-led businesses to stabilize local economies, communities, and families. She also helms H.E.R. Web Design Agency, where she combines her expertise in technology with her passion for women in business. Dee has over 15 years of experience marketing authors, Non-Profit organizations, and small businesses. Dee is known for her passionate and engaging presentation style.



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# Presenters



## LILLIAN LOWERY

*Supplier Diversity Coordinator* | **Henry Ford Health System**

Lillian Lowery is the Supplier Diversity Coordinator for Henry Ford Health System (HFHS). Her contribution has helped HFHS to win several industry awards including the 2020 Diversity Inc. ranking number 4th in the Top Companies for Supplier Diversity. Prior to coming HFHS she worked at the Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council (MMSDC) for 10 years, her leadership helped minority-owned businesses receive over \$25 billion in contracts from Michigan's top corporations.

She holds over 13 years of experience in advertising in media planning, buying and research, having also worked for Don Coleman Advertising, (now GlobalHue), GM Plan Works and Ogilvy and Mather.



## RONA LUM

*President* | **Law Offices of Rona M. Lum**

Rona M. Lum, has been in practice since 1993, focused on corporate and Immigration law. She was a Featured Speaker on the subject of U.S. Immigration Law and Special Registration at the Center for International Legal Studies (CILS) in Valle Nevado, Chile (August 2002), a Featured Speaker on the subject of Intracompany Transferees and Multinational Executives/Managers at the June 2003 CILS conference in Salzburg, Austria, and was a Moderator for a panel of legal experts on the subject of "National Perspectives of Investment and Doing Business" at the April 2005 CILS conference in Whistler, British Columbia. She earned a B.B.A. from the University of Hawaii, and her J.D. from Michigan State University College of Law.



## PAMELA-DENISE MACK

*Principal Attorney* | **The Mack Law Group PLC**

Pamela Mack is a Principal Attorney with The Mack Law Group. She concentrates her practice in the areas of corporate/commercial transactions, data privacy, IP, and legacy planning. Before forming the Mack Law Group, Pamela was in-house corporate and real estate counsel for two multinational corporations. As corporate counsel to Kmart Corporation, she oversaw leasehold matters for over \$600 million in real estate assets. She went on to serve as in-house corporate counsel for the world's largest inventory services provider, where she was responsible for overseeing all corporate contracting, global data privacy, and FCPA compliance functions.

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## Presenters



### LASHAWNA MANIGAULT

*Director of Small Business Attraction & Retention* | **Detroit Economic Growth Corporation**

Lashawna is a serial entrepreneur, minority certified business owner and consultant in the start-up space. Daily she coaches small businesses on practices and strategies that lend itself to sustainability, growth and creates access to funding. Lashawna currently serves as Detroit's District 2 Business Liaison where she is a liaison between small businesses, city departments and offers a wealth of knowledge as it pertains to local resources. Lashawna has a background in HR with an emphasis on Recruiting.

She has owned as well as managed several staffing firms from transportation and manufacturing to unskilled healthcare workers. A native Detroit, Lashawna is a passionate community advocate and sits as a board member for her local neighborhood organization as well as early learning center Little Scholars CDC of Detroit.



### JOY E. MASON

*Strategist/Author/Speaker/Entrepreneur* | **Optimist Business Solutions**

Joy E. Mason is a motivational speaker, author, and business owner residing in Indianapolis. She has degrees in Microbiology and Pharmaceuticals. Joy is a Certified Six Sigma Black Belt Strategist who retired from her global project management role at Eli Lilly in 2017. During her 30 years at Lilly, Joy worked in Technical Services, Human Resources, Management, and Quality. After retiring, Joy established Optimist Business Solutions, a training and consulting firm that helps organizations optimize results. Joy's process mapping services and attention to detail have positioned her as a preferred consultant for some of the largest non-profit organizations in Indiana, such as Lilly Endowment, Inc. and Ivy Tech College. Joy is the author of *5 Steps to Sustainable Solutions for Women in Business* (2019). Joy also authored *Purpose A Shift from Driving It to Embracing It* (2018), which describes her deeply personal and inspiring journey of re-finding her life's purpose.



### AMANDA MEDLEN

*RID, LEED AP ID + C* | **IDO Incorporated**

Amanda began her IDO career in college, as an intern, in the summer of 2003. Additionally, she helped her colleagues at IDO during her school breaks. Amanda graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Interior Design and officially joined IDO Incorporated shortly after graduation. Since that time, Amanda has acquired NCIDQ and LEED AP ID+C professional design accreditations as a commitment to her profession and professional development. Perhaps more than her own personal development, she is passionate and dedicated to the professional development of colleagues and other professional designers.

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## Presenters



### MARIA MENDEZ, E.A.

*Small Business Accountant* | **Accounting Aid Society**

Maria is an Enrolled Agent and has more than 15 years of experience. She holds a B.A. in public accounting from the University of Chihuahua, Mexico, and is fluent in Spanish. Her experience as a tax analyst, accounting supervisor and small business support liaison makes her expertise and service precision of great value for small business owners. "My unique approach to details and knowledge, make my clients more confident about what they are doing, for me it is important that my clients know and understand their business numbers;



### LYDIA MICHAEL

*President* | **Blended Collective**

Lydia Michael is the President of Blended Collective, a multicultural marketing and brand consultancy. A thought leader in multicultural marketing, Lydia focuses on helping brands reach and engage diverse audiences through brand, content, and multicultural marketing strategy, which requires an authentically and culturally engaging approach. Her work includes Deloitte and L'Oréal while in Germany.

Lydia has worked with nonprofit organizations, corporations, and small businesses. Her most recent projects include COVID-19 Recovery programs with the Michigan SBDC and Great Lakes Women's Business Council, providing marketing consulting services.



### LISA MININNI

*President* | **Excellerate Associates**

Lisa Mininni is President of Excellerate Associates, a business mentoring and organizational/leadership development company that works with CEOs in companies generating \$500k to over \$200M. Lisa is Founder of the Business Innovation Lab, an 8,100 sf coworking and conference center in Livonia, Michigan. For 20+ years, Lisa and her Lab Leader Licensees have educated business leaders on their biological wiring. Wiring dictates the type of environment in which you are best equipped to thrive and succeed. Your human wiring drives you in business and is primarily unconscious.



### ANGELA MOORE

*ANGELA MOORE* | **The Body Principle**

Angela T. Moore is an integrative health expert, keynote speaker, radio personality, wellness blog contributor and business owner.

Angela provides integrative health assessments, mental, nutritional, and physical health programming, educational webinars, interactive workshops, and empowerment coaching to individuals, community, and corporate groups.

Angela is a NASM Master Trainer, Performance Enhancement Specialist (PES), Corrective Exercise Specialist (CES) and Fitness Nutrition Specialist (FNS) through the National Academy of Sports Medicine. She is also a nationally certified counselor (NCC) and a Limited Licensed





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## Presenters



### NICK MOORE

*Marketing & Engagement Coordinator* | **Great Lakes WBC**

Nick Moore is the Marketing and Engagement Coordinator at the Great Lakes Women's Business Council. He has been a part of the organization since 2020.

As the Marketing and Engagement Coordinator, Nick assists his team with the social media, email, event marketing as well as provide technology expertise for the council.

**Nick has worked with digital technology and marketing extensively for the last six**



### JANET MUHLEMAN

*President* | **REGROUP**

Jan Muhleman, President of Regroup has the curiosity of an industry tenderfoot, the go-getter attitude of a marketing maven and the tried-and-true wisdom that only a trailblazer like her could have. Our strategic president certainly has many laurels to rest on: growing multinational franchises from three to thousands, building an agency from the ground up, crafting countless award-winning energy campaigns. But she focuses on what's tomorrow instead—for our business and yours.



### VINNIE PALERMO

*Corporate Director* | **LaSalle**

Vinnie Palermo will be following in her father's footsteps by joining LaSalle Construction Services full-time as CEO starting in January. Vinnie will be joining LaSalle from The University of South Carolina, where she will be obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Finance and Marketing this December.

While in school, Vinnie has been a vital part of LaSalle's Leadership Team. She has been hands-on in all business functions throughout the firm, and a leading voice in all valuable decisions made for the company. LaSalle is very excited for this new chapter with Vinnie on board as CEO and looks forward to her dedication, passion, and leadership towards the future of LaSalle.



### DR. RAE PEARSON

*CEO* | **Alpha Rae Personnel**

Dr. Rae Pearson leads a very successful HR management firm with a history of assisting with diversity and inclusion as a part of its expertise in executive search, administrative sales, and human resources. They have received numerous certifications as a Certified Personnel Consultant and a Certified Small Business Consultant, to name a few. Alpha Rae Personnel has excellent success locating and placing star candidates in the United States and other countries for large and small companies.





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## Presenters



### LYNN PERENIC

*CEO | Argent Tape & Label*

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### SHELLY PISORS

*Senior Vice President, National Director Events and Contributions President | Comerica Foundation*

In 1983 Shelly joined Comerica Bank from a major investment firm the first time as part of the bank's industry-leading discount brokerage operation-the first of its kind offered at a commercial bank.

It was Comerica that redirected her career from sales and operations to Marketing. It was also Comerica that kicked off her valuable training as a future leader and manager.



### MICHELLE RAFALSKI

*Operations & Marketing Manager | Gleba & Associates*

Michelle is the Operations & Marketing Manager at Gleba & Associates, Inc., where she's been working on and off since approximately age 12. Yes, she does look familiar. Yes, she is Jill's daughter and answers to Jill Jr. on a regular basis. Michelle assists in keeping the office running smoothly, while also coordinating company events, seminars, and educational workshops. After graduating from the University of Tennessee with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration-Marketing, she went into the investment real estate field for eight years before joining our work family. When she's not working, you'll often find Michelle on Paint Creek Trail, on her patio with her husband, Nick, or cheering on her alma mater, the University of Tennessee Vols.



### MICHELLE RICHARDS

*Founder, Executive Director | Great Lakes WBC*

Michelle Richards is a leading authority on women-owned and small businesses. She has successfully advocated for economic opportunities, provide much-needed resources and build the credibility of community-based, women-owned and small businesses for nearly four decades. In 1984, Michelle began her professional career when she convinced the Ann Arbor City Council to create the Ann Arbor Community Development Corporation, establish a loan program and provide other necessary support to help small businesses thrive. Under Michelle's tenacious and visionary leadership, she expanded the organization's boundaries beyond Ann Arbor's city limit to advocate for women-owned businesses when significant barriers to federal government and corporate procurement opportunities occurred in the 1990s. Michelle played a critical role in national efforts to persuade much of the business world that doing business with women-owned businesses was both prudent and profitable. Today,



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## Presenters



### CARLA ROMO

*Speaking, Life Coach, Author* | **Carla Romo**

Carla Romo is a keynote speaker, author, certified life coach and podcast host. At age 24, she hit her rock bottom when she found herself in another toxic codependent relationship and in a cycle of burnout from her career in TV. But, this time, she got up and learned how to break free from codependency and get out of burnout. Inspired by her self-growth journey, she took lemons and made lemonade. Today she helps people push through their BS (blind sides) so they can thrive in all aspects of their life.



### LINDA RUFFENACH

*Founder | Chief Strategist* | **Execuity Value Advisors**

Linda Ruffenach, Founder and Chief Strategist at Execuity LLC is committed to helping business owners achieve their vision of Total World Domination. Her 20+ years of C-level experience enables her to relate to the challenges business owners face every day. As the former CEO of a \$100 million international enterprise, she has been through almost every stage a company can experience from fast growth, rapid decline, to complete transformation. She has learned that knowledge and experience breeds confidence. As a Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) she provides business owners with the knowledge to understand and accelerate business value and how they can convert that into personal wealth.



### SERAFINA SCHORER

*CEO* | **RIM Custom Rack**

Serafina J. Schorer is the Chief Executive Officer of RIM Custom Racks, a Detroit-based automotive material handling rack and container manufacturer founded in 1978 by Serafina and Howard Schorer.

Serafina is a past member of the Great Lakes Women's Business Council's Executive Committee and Board of Directors. Serafina was the 2013 WBE of the Year Award for the Great Lakes WBC and the 2016 WBENC Business Star. Serafina serves on the WBENC WBE Forum as a member of the Domestic Programs Committee and is WBE Host Committee Chair for the 2018 WBENC National Conference & Business Fair in Detroit. She is also an active member of the National Association of Women Business Owners, Automotive Women's Alliance Foundation, Women in Defense, and Michigan Women's Foundation/Power of 100 Women.

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## Presenters



### URSULA SCROGGS

*Managing Director | Derderian, Kann, Seyferth & Salucci, P.C. (DKSS)*

Ursula Scroggs, has been assisting businesses with financial and operational management, tax and business improvement advice for over 40 years. Currently the managing director of DKSS CPAs + Advisors, Michigan's largest women owned CPA firm. Ursula started her career as a high school co-op student at DKSS ... truly a "file room to board room" story. She was designated by NAWBO as one of Michigan's Top 10 Women in Business and is a recipient of the Michigan SBA Advocate of the Year Award for Women in Business from the U.S. Small Business Administration. She was received the MACPA's Experienced Leader "Women to Watch" award. Ursula was the Center for Empowerment and Economic Development's 2014 Outstanding Volunteer award co-recipient, and received last year's Most Valuable Professional award from Corp! Magazine. Her success has been built upon her personal mantra... "Have a positive impact on every life you touch."

DKSS CPAs + Advisors is a MichBusiness Champion.



### DEBBIE SELLIS

*COO | Argent Tape & Label*

Having started her career as a litigation attorney in a well-known Philadelphia law firm, Deborah (Debbie) Sellis currently serves as Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel for Argent Tape & Label and Argent International. Her previous litigation practice spanned multiple jurisdictions and courts and remains characterized by expertise in various subject matters, complex litigation, and alternative conflict resolution methods.

In 2017 Deborah joined ATL as Chief Operating Officer. By that time, ATL had grown over the span of seven short years from a near-defunct business to a profitable custom labeling enterprise servicing multiple industry verticals. Working alongside ATL CEO and Owner Lynn Perenic, Deborah drew upon her experience as a litigator and dove into learning the whole world of custom label and tag manufacturing. ATL has since experienced continued growth as it produces for automotive, health, food and beverage markets. ATL is an Open-Book Management company, so employees are engaged in all aspects of the company, including comprehensive yearly business planning.



### PATRICIA SHALL

*Senior Procurement Manager | Creative Benefits & Insurance*

Patricia started her insurance career 35 years ago in the International Department of a Big Broker. She was worked on the Insurance Company, Insurance Agency and TPA side of the business as well as being a business owner herself and understanding the impact of appropriate coverage and risk management.

Today, Patricia leads a team of 24 CBIS Team Members that service business insurance, group benefits and personal lines. She has a loyal following of both clients and employees and has grown the agency to \$50,000,000 in annual premiums.

Patricia was recently a speaker at the National NAWIC Conference on the hot topic Force Majeure. She currently sits on the Macomb Habitat for Humanity Board. She has been a certified WBE for over 10 years and has received many awards including:



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## Presenters



### CHARLENE E. SHAYA Esq.

Senior Healthcare Executive | **J&B Medical**

Shaya currently acts as the Chief Operating Officer for The J&B Medical Family of Companies; comprising of sixteen different business enterprises and customers in 48 states and 28 countries. J&B Medical services several million beneficiaries nationwide in Medicaid, Medicare and government programs, bringing new ideas and solutions to delivery of care and improving patient access and quality. Companies include: J&B Medical, J&B Pharmacy, Dynamic Synergy, Sylaps, J&B AtHome, J&B Pet Source and HNC Virtual Solutions.



### JASPREET SINGH

*Director, Supply Chain Management* | **DTE Energy**

Jaspreet Singh is the director of Supply Chain Management for DTE Energy. He is responsible for management of the company's non-fuel purchases, materials planning, supplier performance management, and warehouse operations. In addition, he leads DTE's supplier diversity initiative.

Singh has played a significant role in helping the company reduce outside expenditures through the successful negotiation of large contracts that included items like external audit services, tree trimming, construction, wire and cable, transformers, and temporary labor.

### Henry Ford Health System is proud to be a Silver Sponsor of the Great Lakes Women's Business Council (Great Lakes WBC)

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## Presenters



### LINDA SLAGEL

*Chief Executive Officer | Stanco Metal Products*

Linda Slagel works as a Chief Executive Officer at Stanco Metal Products, which is a Manufacturing company with an estimated 257 employees; and founded in 1917. They are part of the Executive team within the C-Suite Department and their management level is C-Level. Linda is currently based in Grand Haven, Michigan. Stanco has been producing stove top drip pans and bowls for over 50 years at competitive prices.



### TRAVIS SPENCER

*Sr. Manager – Supplier Diversity & Inclusion | Ford Motor Company*

Travis is responsible for driving diversity and inclusion among Ford's strategic partners and supply chain. He accomplishes this by connecting minority, women, veteran, disabled, LGBTQ and small business enterprises to Ford and its Tier 1 suppliers. Travis believes that economic empowerment for diverse suppliers and their corresponding communities is the epitome for what it means to drive human progress... Thus ultimately delivering Ford's vision of Creating a Better Tomorrow. Travis brings a strong professional business acumen in Corporate Purchasing & Strategy, Supply Chain Management, Program Management, and Negotiation along with an academic focus in Accounting, Finance, and Business Ethics.



### JEAN STENGER

*Senior Accounting Manager | Derderian, Kann, Seyferth & Salucci, P.C. (DKSS)*

Jean Stenger, CPA, joined DKSS in 2010 and is a member of the firm's senior management team. With over 37 years of experience in public accounting, banking, small business and non-profit accounting, Jean provides and guides business owners with their tax preparation and planning, financial reporting and business consulting needs. Throughout her career, Jean has delivered "CFO for Hire" consulting services to businesses. These services include cash flow analysis, budgeting and forecasting, bank negotiations, contract negotiations, internal control analysis, overseeing accounting systems and strategic planning. Building client relationships and servicing clients' needs is core to Jean's success.

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## Presenters



### SHIRLEY TANG-AUDRITSH

*Supplier Diversity Program Manager | Eli Lilly & Company*

Shirley Tang-Audritsh is the Supplier Diversity Program Manager at Eli Lilly and Company headquartered in Indianapolis, IN. She has been with Lilly for 24 years, with the past 16 years in Global Procurement. In her current role, she actively engages with local and national advocacy groups for supplier diversity, identifies qualified diverse and small businesses that meet business needs, and advocates the utilization of these diverse and small businesses throughout the Lilly supply chain. While in Procurement, she also has had extensive sourcing experience with Phase I-IV Clinical Development and Regulatory, ranging from CRO/ARO services for clinical trials, Clinical Diagnostics services for Biomarkers, ePRO services, to Patient Recruitment and Retention services. Prior to that, her responsibilities included Intercontinental Regulatory Affairs, Software/Medical Quality Assurance as well as ISO9000 Quality System Implementation. Externally, Shirley served on the Board of Directors for Diversity Alliance for Science from 2015 to 2018, and was the Coordinator for the NMSDC Healthcare Industry Group. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Hispanic Business Council, and co-chairs the industry group Helix Supplier Diversity Forum. She was named "2016 Top 30 Champions of Diversity" by DiversityPlus Magazine, "2017 Program Manager of Year" by Diversity Alliance for Science, and "2018 Supplier Diversity Advocate of the Year" by Central Indiana Supply Chain Awards. Under her leadership, Lilly Supplier Diversity Program won numerous awards the past several years.



### ALYSSA TRACEY

*Director of International Trade | Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) International Trade Program*

Alyssa Tracey is the Director of International Trade at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), in which she oversees export growth support for small-medium sized businesses across the State of Michigan. In this role, Alyssa coordinates export programming and service delivery through international trade centers and regional export partners statewide. Through engagement with Michigan's small business community, the International Trade team has facilitated over \$4 billion in export sales since 2011. The MEDC is a public-private partnership serving as the state's economic development and marketing arm, and lead agency for business, community, talent, tourism, and overall economic growth.

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# Partnering with diverse suppliers

Through Supplier Diversity Development, Lilly aspires to broaden participation of small and diverse-owned businesses in the Lilly supplier base to levels more reflective of the diverse business community. Our Supplier Diversity Development program is focused on three key areas:

- » **Commitment to seeking out and working with small and diverse suppliers**
- » **Community engagement**
- » **Compliance to our annual government goals.**

To learn about Lilly's commitment to diverse suppliers and the services we purchase, visit [supplierportal.lilly.com/Pages/Supplier-Diversity.aspx](http://supplierportal.lilly.com/Pages/Supplier-Diversity.aspx).



## Presenters



### JENNIFER WERNER

*Senior Vice President of Insurance Operations | MichBusiness*

Jennifer Werner is the Senior Vice President of Insurance Operations for MichBusiness also known in the business community and insurance industry as the Michigan Business and Professional Association (MBPA) as well as the Michigan Food and Beverage Association (MFBA).

She works alongside independent insurance agents and their agency staff providing valuable information about the organization and the benefits & services the Associations offer to its vast membership. Prior to joining MBPA/MFBA in 2001, Jennifer worked as a Development Director for the Arthritis Foundation of Michigan helping to raise awareness about the disease, and raising funds to help the population of Michigan and its citizens afflicted by the 100+ forms of Arthritis.



### CHRISTIE WONG BARRETT

*CEO, Strategist, Manufacturing Innovation Policy Advisor | MacArthur Corporation*

Ms. Christie Wong Barrett is the CEO of MacArthur Corporation, a manufacturer with operations in the US, Mexico, China and Poland. For nearly 50 years, MacArthur has provided custom durable labels and flexible parts to some of the largest OEMs and Tier 1s in automotive and mobility. She has driven new product innovation with RFID and Anti-Theft applications for Automotive and continuous improvement across MacArthur's global business. Previously, she held roles at McKinsey & Company and Raytheon. She has a Bachelor's in Engineering from MIT and MBA from the Kellogg School of Management. Ms. Wong Barrett is also a national advisor on manufacturing competitiveness and innovation with appointments on the White House Advanced Manufacturing Partnership, Manufacturing Council, and M Foresight. She is passionate about diverse talent and business development, serving as an MMSDC Board member and active member of the Great Lakes Women's Business Council.

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- This exclusive opportunity allows businesses to count health insurance premiums towards spend with a woman owned business.
- Join **MichBusiness** as a **Thrive** member, and take part in our Supplier Diversity program, plus receive enhanced benefits including financial perks, networking, education and training opportunities, sponsorship and advertising exposure, discounts on HR compliance solutions, and the "Best Practices" resource guide that shares the secret sauce of winners and top employers across the U.S. and much more!
- Reach out to our team to learn more about MichBusiness and our Supplier Diversity program to see how your company can benefit.

**Contact us at 586-393-8800 or via email at [SupplierDiversity@michbusiness.org](mailto:SupplierDiversity@michbusiness.org)**

## Presenters



### JENNIFER WERNER

*Senior Vice President of Insurance Operations | MichBusiness*

Jennifer Werner is the Senior Vice President of Insurance Operations for MichBusiness also known in the business community and insurance industry as the Michigan Business and Professional Association (MBPA) as well as the Michigan Food and Beverage Association (MFBA).

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### LORI WESBY

*MentorWE Program Coordinator | Great Lakes WBC*

Lori Wesby serves as the MentorWE Program Coordinator on the COVID-19 Recovery Team at the GLWBC Women's Business Center. Prior to joining the team at Great Lakes, she was the Program Manager for a non-traditional micro-lender that supported women in business. She is a certified PeerSpectives® Facilitator who has guided small groups of CEOs through mentoring circles. She has an MBA, a background in Engineering, Purchasing and Program Management which she leveraged throughout her corporate career, as well as extensive community leadership experience. She is passionate about the opportunity to serve and give back to her community using all of her gifts!



### CHRISTIE WONG BARRETT

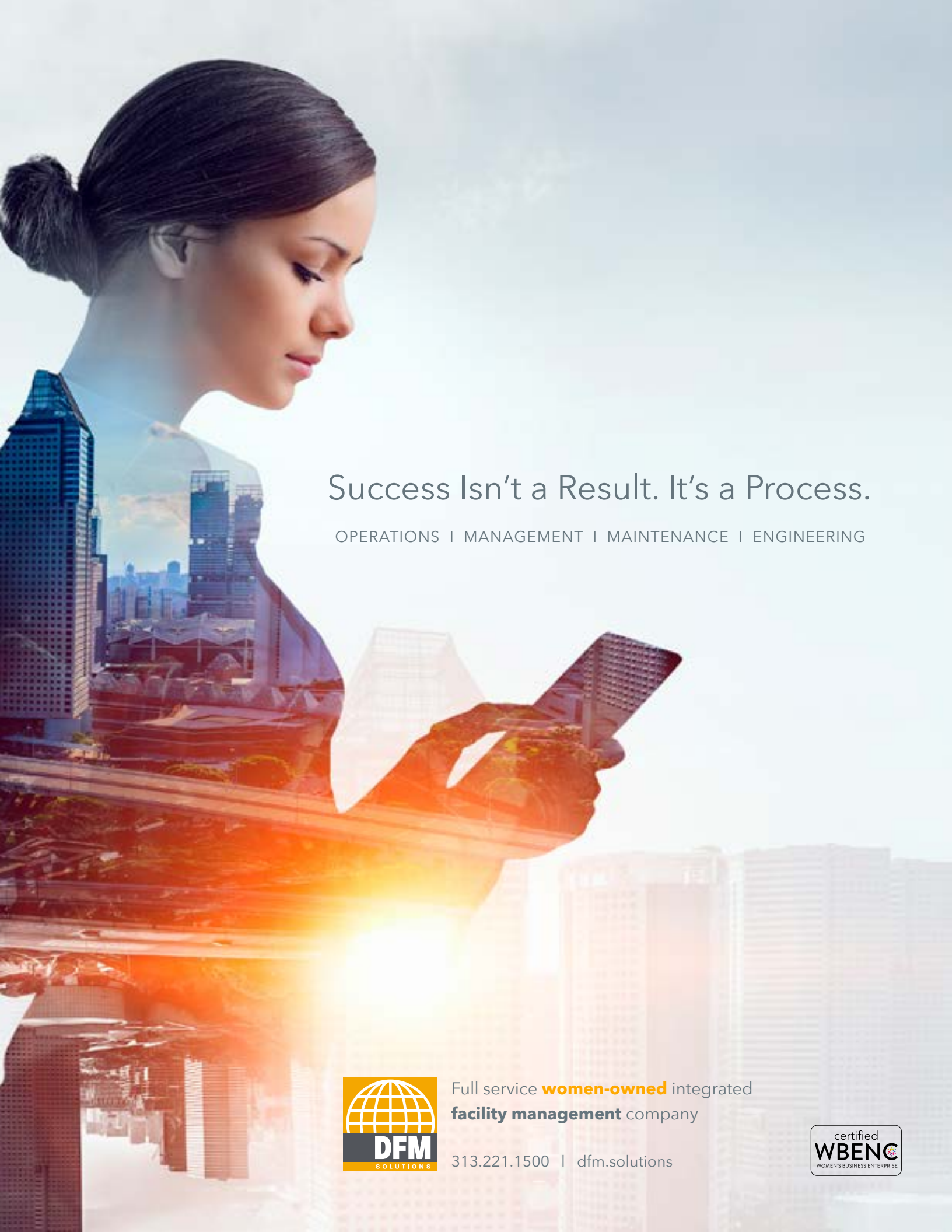
*CEO, Strategist, Manufacturing Innovation Policy Advisor | MacArthur Corporation*

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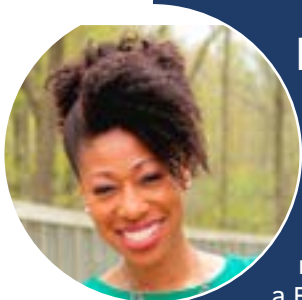
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### CLAUDETTE BOND

*Instructor* | Lighthouse Yoga | Yoga With Claudette

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### MEECHELLE PARKER

*Owner* | My HEART Enterprise

Meechelle Parker is owner of My HEART Enterprise, a fitness and financial coaching service. She helps clients transform and find the joy in the journey to achieving their personalized fitness and financial goals. Meechelle provides virtual and in-person fitness and financial plans, group Zumba classes, budget planning, Empowerment Trainings, and more. Meechelle is a licensed Zumba instructor through the Zumba Instructor Network and a Financial Coach Master Trainer through Ramsey Solutions.

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# 2021 Business Conference Awards



The Awards presentation is a trademark event for our organization. The awards exhibit our history of commitment and dedication to leadership and excellence. These awards are for outstanding members that go above and beyond to support the Great Lakes WBC and its members with time and effort will be honored. Their leadership and support are an inspiration to all members, partners, and friends.

## Corporate Advocate of the Year

- Advocates on behalf of individual women business owners or as a group
- Identifies procurement opportunities for women business owners
- Makes certain that women are represented in the procurement process

## Corporate Champion of the Year

- Encourages corporate involvement in Great Lakes WBC and support of women business owners
- Demonstrates extraordinary leadership in championing women business owners
- Champions the cause of women's business ownership

## Corporate Volunteer of the Year

- Involved in Great Lakes WBC Programs/Projects
- Volunteers on committees
- Encourages others to participate in WBENC - Great Lakes

## Breakout Influencer

- Active champion

## WBE Role Model/Mentor of the Year | IN & MI

Demonstrates extraordinary leadership

- Serves as a role model
- Encourages women business owners
- Shares knowledge and experience with other women business owners

## WBE Volunteer of the Year | IN & MI

- Involved in Great Lakes WBC Programs/Projects/Committees
- Volunteers on committees

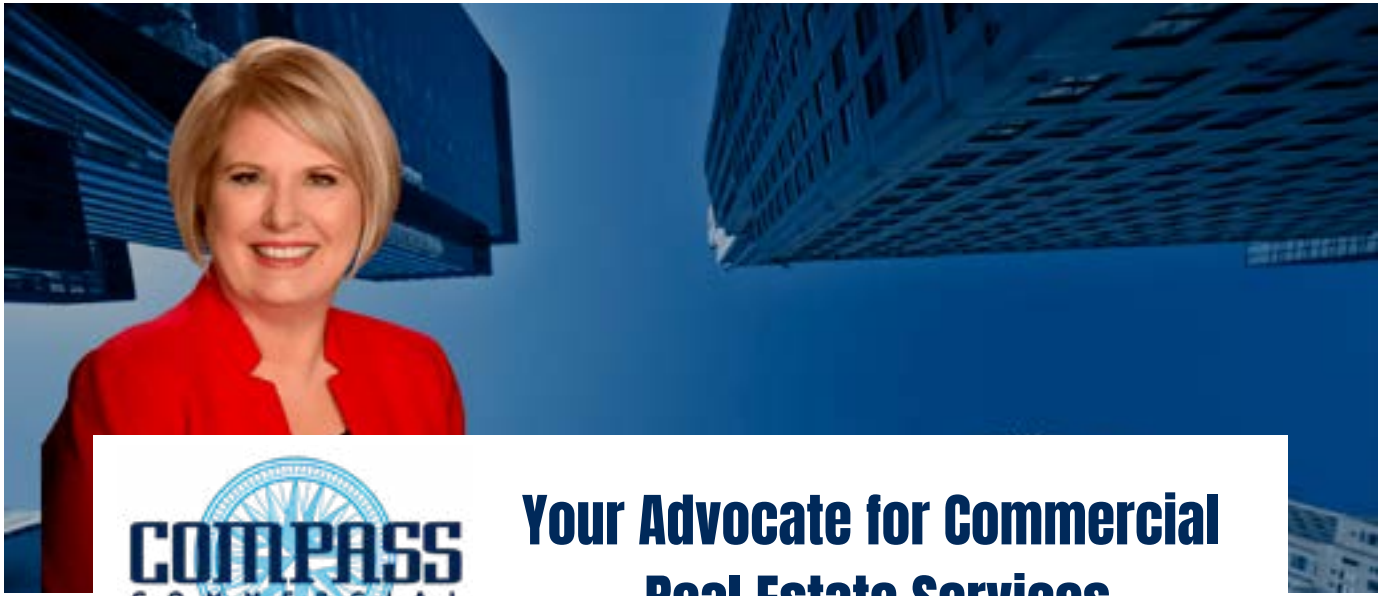
## WBE of the Year | IN & MI

- Proactive in addressing/servicing customer needs
- Conducts business with other women entrepreneurs
- Possesses good business skills (growth, financial stability, creativity, innovation, management)
- Is current on industry trends and incorporates best practices in business operations

## Significant Contribution Award

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# Excellence in Supplier Diversity Award



This purpose of the Excellence in Supplier Diversity award program is to recognize Great Lakes Women Business Council's corporate members that have effective supplier diversity programs. Applicants may be recognized in one of three categories. They include: "Emerging", "Advanced" and "Best In Class".

## Emerging

This recognition reflects that a corporation has demonstrated an increasing commitment to advancing capacity building and contracting opportunities for certified women business owners.

## Advanced

This recognition reflects that a corporation has documented a strong commitment to women's business enterprise advocacy, capacity building and contracting. Advanced category award winners are leaders among their peers.

## Best in Class

This recognition reflects that a corporation has excelled in all major categories surveyed including women business enterprise spend and capacity building, and advocacy for women – owned businesses.



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# The Great Pitch 15 Finalist



## GINA ADAMS

CEO | **Ware•ologie**

Gina Adams is the Founder and CEO of Ware•ologie, a social venture that creates innovative hardware to restore levels of independence and empower people with physical challenges. Adams worked in the apparel industry for over 15 years at The North Face and J. Crew, where she gained a deep appreciation for highly functional and yet stylish apparel. After witnessing the severe impacts of Parkinson's on her step-father, Adams was inspired to create adaptive-friendly accessories to restore confidence and dignity for people with physical challenges.

Ware•ologie is based in Michigan. They develop and resale assorted assistive living aids to help people with physical challenges, carry out essential activities of daily living and age in place.



## DR. JACQUELINE DARNA

CEO | **NoMo Nausea**

Dr. Jacqueline Darna is the CEO and medical inventor of the NoMo Nausea, NoMo Migraine, & NoMo Sleepless Nights. The first and only natural way to stop nausea, vomiting, headaches and sleep problems instantly for adults, kids, and pets. Her stylish, waterproof, and comfortable patent-pending essential oil infused pressure point wristband combines fast-acting aromatherapy with long-lasting relief that helps with morning sickness, motion sickness, migraines, and much more in 30 seconds. Within a few short years, Jacqueline started the company and is now distributed in 12 countries of the world for her 5 product lines, and can be found in big-box retail stores like Walmart, CVS, Bed Bath & Beyond, BuyBuy Baby stores. The NoMo Nausea Band was awarded Surgical Product of the Year Nominee, the best kids anti-nausea product, and is the seasickness product of choice by NAUI scuba divers worldwide.



## LYNN DRAKE

Commercial Realtor | Author and Speaker | **Compass Commercial**

Lynn Drake's status is well known in the industry: She's the commercial realtor focused on maintaining "true north" for her corporate clients. It's a reputation built on twenty years of commercial real estate experience and expertise in corporate and institutional workplace design, planning, and project implementation.

Lynn became a commercial realtor in 2001 after 15 years in corporate real estate, during which she initially managed and leased industrial real estate across North America for Central Transport, then directed real estate and facilities for 1,000 Kelly Services branches in the United States and Canada. Lynn has successfully completed over 2,500 real estate transactions, ranging from small business tenant leases to the sale and purchase of industrial complexes.

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## — PROUD TO SUPPORT — THE WBE COMMUNITY



As the largest WBENC-certified contractor in the nation, Aristeo knows the importance of supporting the Great Lakes Women's Business Council & the 2021 Women to Women Match. We are a proud member of the GLWBC, an active participant and mentor in their MentorWE program, and were honored to be named the 2020 Corporate Volunteer of the Year.

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## KIRSTEN FIELD

*Owner | Kids Craft*

Kids Crafts™ was born while I was volunteering for the holiday shop at my children's school. It was shocking to see the poor quality and high price tags of the gifts for sale. I didn't need another #1 Mom coffee mug or jewelry that turned my skin green. Realizing the best gifts were always handmade, I decided to create craft kits for schools and organizations. This way our kids could embrace their creativity and feel a sense of accomplishment without spending a cent.

As my business grew, I saw the impact it had on my girls. My work inspired them to start their own small business.

When we show our girls examples of successful women — we teach them that anything is possible.

Kids Crafts™ was inspired by my family. Let's invest in the next generation of mighty women by sharing the stories of female trailblazers, helping children embrace their creativity, and giving back to organizations that are changing the world.



## SHELIA HARDEN

*CEO | GSHA Quality Services*

Shelia Harden has 25+ years working across the globe in some of the world's largest companies delivering Quality Management and Supplier Development programming and services, resulting in an averaging of \$2.1 million per company.

In 2009, Ms. Harden established GSHA Quality Services LLC to provide quality control consulting, training, and staffing solutions designed to reduce waste and to maximize success, resulting in complete customer satisfaction and increased profitability. Parts manufacturers are offered one stop support services for all quality needs.

Ms. Harden has successfully and consistently delivered Lean and Six Sigma process improvement formulas in diverse settings in the United States and international cultures such as Brazil, China, India, Japan, Mexico and South Africa. In each setting leaving her trainees, customer/clients and their organizations with sustainable quality control solutions and transferable skillsets.



## FELICIA HARRIS | CFP®, MHRM, SHRM-SCP

*Principal | EverythingHR*

An award-winning Human Resources Innovator and financial expert, Felicia G. Harris is Principal and CEO of EverythingHR and EverythingHR Financial Services in Rochester Hills, Michigan. She also is the founder of the EverythingHR Talent Development Institute. Ms. Harris has more than 30 years of HR experience and more than 20 years

of employee organizational and professional development training experience. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, Felicia Harris was enlisted by the City of Detroit and the Ferndale

Downtown Development Authority as a resource for small business owners, helping them navigate unemployment and WorkShare concerns, HR and policy matters, reopening strategy and Paycheck Protection Program planning.

Ms. Harris has worked with and counseled C-Level management her entire professional career. Ms. Harris has 30-plus years of executive leadership experience in the financial industry. She has overseen over \$1 billion in assets and served in the financial industry as a Vice President for more than 25 years. Felicia is a sought after certified trainer who has worked with organizations such as the U.S. Small Business Administration, Tech Town, the Macomb-Oakland University Incubator, Michigan Minority Supplier Development Council, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, the Great Lakes Women's Business Council, and Macomb Community College, helping hundreds of small businesses and startups.



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**[www.cbitelecom.com](http://www.cbitelecom.com)**



**[dpepin@cbitelecom.com](mailto:dpepin@cbitelecom.com)**



**CBI Telecommunications Consultants  
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Grand Rapids, MI 49548**



# The Great Pitch 15 Finalist



## KIEARA JOHNSON

*Founder* | **All Things Business Center**

Kieara Johnson is an award-winning entrepreneur and a woman on a mission. She always had a heart for entrepreneurship but after the death of her mother to cancer, she was further inspired to make a difference for her family and those connected to her. Kieara founded a global technology company called, All Things Business Center, which provides project/gig work opportunities to creative entrepreneurs.

She is known for her business savvy and has the nickname, All Things Business, hence the name of her business. Kieara has been featured in several publications such as Michigan Chronicle, K.I.S,H Magazine, Crain's Detroit, Hub Detroit, Native Detroit Sun and more. She has earned widespread recognition and awards, including NAWBO "Innovation" award in 2019 and MichBusiness "Sustainability" award in 2017.



## LYDIA MICHAEL

*President* | **Blended Collective**

Lydia Michael is the President of Blended Collective, a multicultural marketing and brand consultancy. A thought leader in multicultural marketing, Lydia focuses on helping brands reach and engage diverse audiences through brand, content, and multicultural marketing strategy, which requires an authentically and culturally engaging approach. Her work includes Deloitte and L'Oréal while in Germany.

Lydia has worked with nonprofit organizations, corporations, and small businesses. Her most recent projects include COVID-19 Recovery programs with the Michigan SBDC and Great Lakes Women's Business Council, providing marketing consulting services. In recent years, Lydia received several diversity and marketing-centered awards for her work. She also leads workshops and speaks to audiences about topics such as marketing, diversity and inclusion, entrepreneurship, and leadership.



## DR. WENDY RINGO

*Owner* | *Operator* | **Sugah Please Coffee House**

Dr. Ringo is committed to serving her community through acts of service and volunteerism. She volunteers and donates her talents and services when able, though she is most proud of her involvement with youth fitness and nutrition initiatives and her recent incorporation of her own companies, Sugah Please Coffee House and Ms. Sugah's Magical Treats Story Books and Animation.

Founded in October of 2019, Sugah Please Coffee House set out to forge its way as a premier Metro Detroit area coffee dessert house with a philanthropic pulse for local charitable causes. Sugah Please is a Michigan based company tasked with supporting and leveraging other Michigan based brands. Located inside of 12 Oaks Mall, in Novi, MI, we service the greater Metropolitan Detroit area and beyond.

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## DAWN ROSS

*Principal Consultant | Mayday Educational Services*

Kieara Johnson is an award-winning entrepreneur and a woman on a mission. She always had a heart for entrepreneurship but after the death of her mother to cancer, she was further inspired to make a difference for her family and those connected to her. Kieara founded a global technology company called, All Things Business Center, which provides project/gig work opportunities to creative entrepreneurs.

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## AMY ROSSI

*Owner, CEO, Career Coach, Engineering & Supply Chain Consultant | M&B Rossi Consulting, LLC*

Amy Rossi is celebrating 5 years in business as M&B Rossi Consulting LLC, a WBE & WOSB certified business. M&B Rossi Consulting bridges the gap between process improvement and people performance with tactical, personal, and results oriented consulting & career coaching in lean manufacturing, program/project management, supply chain, customer success, and leadership development. Amy brings 20+ years of industry experience to her practice as an industrial engineer and certified coach, speaker, & trainer. She has taken the last year as her opportunity to release her online course portal Its Only Sunshine with Amy Rossi featuring courses and workshops for Your Career Evolution and Team Evolution. She also has a new book 'Ask Up!' ... ask her about it!



## TARYN SULKES

*President & CEO | Operator | Eagle Specialties, LLC*

Taryn Sulkes is President/CEO of Eagle Specialties, LLC, a Detroit-based commercial construction supplier/subcontractor that furnishes and installs the likes of toilet room accessories, toilet partitions, fire extinguishers, cubicle tracks and curtains, lockers, shades and blinds, projection screens, and display stems throughout the continental United States. Taryn is a Native American woman business owner. Born into the construction industry, she fondly remembers going on trips to the 'big city' where her father used to pick up materials for his window and door business in Pinckney, Michigan. Taryn is proud to call that 'big city' of Detroit home to the company she has put her heart and soul into since 2014.

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# The Great Pitch 15 Finalist



## ANN TESCHENDORF

*CEO and Founder* | **Covalent Resource Group**

Ann Teschendorf is the CEO and founder of Covalent Resource Group, a software development, agile coaching, and professional services provider in the metro Detroit area. With over 28 years' experience in the software development industry, Ann has a rich background in sales and business leadership. In her previous role, Ann served as Vice President of Sales and Professional Services of a leading software development company where she grew revenue from \$900,000 to \$9M in a few short years. Ann also provided strategic leadership and vision for further growth of the organization.

An entrepreneur at heart, Ann started her own business, Covalent Resource Group, in 2017. Unique to other professional service providers, Ann bridged the gap between technology and business strategy by creating a company that focuses on providing a solution to customers, not just a service.



## MICHELLE A. WAINWRIGHT

*Owner* | **Cute As A Cupcake**

Michelle A. Wainwright is the owner of Cute as a Cupcake! Cupcakery & Bake Shop located in Merrillville, IN. After completion of graduate school, Michelle decided to enroll in Wilton Cake decorating classes. At the time, she wanted to do something different to leverage her creative spirit. Upon request, she would bake and decorate cakes and cupcakes for friends and family. It wasn't until her fast-tracked career in the pharmaceutical industry came to an end in 2014, she was faced with the decision of what to do next. At 40 years old, she decided to step out on faith and follow her dream. In 2015, Michelle established Cute as a Cupcake! Cupcakery & Bake Shop. Through hard-work, determination and PRAYER, Michelle built the brand through participating at farmer's markets, vendor and craft fairs. Later in 2015, she leased a kiosk at the local mall and later opened a storefront in September 2016. Since opening the brick and mortar, Cute as a Cupcake! Cupcakery & Bake Shop continues to grow and gain new customers daily. It's Michelle's belief that a Life without Cupcakes is a Life without Love!



## LESA WALKER

*Owner* | **Sweet Thoughts**

Lesa Walker is the owner and founder of Sweet Thoughts, a family owned business headquartered in Detroit Michigan. After working 25 years in the family construction business she decided to pursue her love of pastry and baking at Schoolcraft College. She had no idea she would discover her true, sweet love-candy making! Lesa quickly made her mark as a unique and accomplished chocolatier and today Sweet Thoughts produces award-winning hand-painted custom gourmet chocolates with a spirit of excellence. Lesa's attention to detail, flavor and expertise gained her numerous awards and recognitions. Awards include The Retail Confectionary International's Best New Piece and Best First Time Entry; winner of the WBC Pitch Tank competition; and she was awarded a live interview with Emmy-winning broad-cast journalist Paula Tutman on Detroit's WDIV 4 that showcased her talents. Seeing a need to provide a healthy alternative, Lesa created a nutritional Sweet Krispy Chip; so delicious, that tasters were surprised to find that they were gluten free, vegan and included ingredients such as flaxseed, chia seeds and other healthy ingredients. She is on track to have her D'lishus Sweet Krispy Chips in big box stores by 2022. Lesa is a wife, mother and grandmother. She spends most of her free time with her two beautiful granddaughters, baking, swimming and learning the latest Tic Tok dances. Lesa's advice to other entrepreneurs is heartfelt. "Business is so much more than making money. Giving back and working together to be successful is the ultimate goal."



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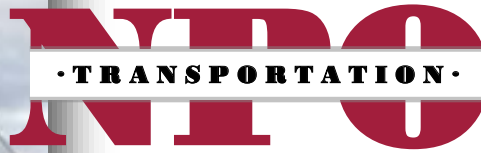
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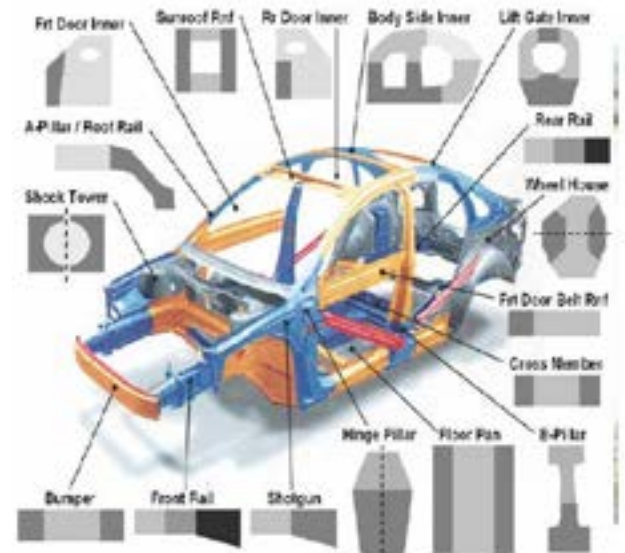


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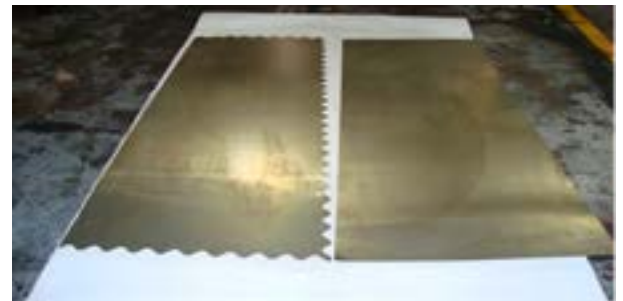
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Best Wishes for Continued Success*



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A background image of a smiling woman with blonde hair, wearing a dark sleeveless top, holding a glass. The image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent grey overlay containing text.

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### **Membership Initiative |**

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