

# The Quill Fire

Issue -18/ 2025

GLOBAL EDITION



## JACQUELINE DESTEFANO-TANGORRA, CPA

Founder, Omni BI Solutions

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TECHNOLOGY, GENERATIVE  
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# Editor's Desk

## Providing Solutions Beyond the Conventional

What innovation is and how is it directly related to the business? We come across these types of questions every now and then. The definition of innovation differs from business to business and company to company. But these innovations help the company to grow further. Innovation is born when there is a problem. The problem gives birth to innovation.

Steve Jobs is known as one of the most popular innovators. His thoughts and ability to think differently made Apple a Global brand. Apple is popularly known as one of the most innovative companies. It comes under the top 15 companies for holding patents. In the initial days, it faced a lot of criticism for the unique design of the first-ever mac. But today it is considered one of the best machines in the market. Similarly, we have 12 different stories of influential leaders who dare to think differently.

In Business Leaders Review's latest magazine issue of "Most Powerful Women in Business 2023", we have captured the problems and innovative solutions that many other companies and organizations are providing with their absolutely fantastic services. In this issue, we have tried combining the business profiles of such companies to give our readers a treat and help them understand the availability of such companies and services offered by individuals.

Read through such inspirational stories of the most influential leaders and get the most motivation for your next entrepreneurial or business expedition.

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**Business Leaders Review**  
Issue - 18/ 2023

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**JACQUELINE DESTEFANO-TANGORRA, CPA**  
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# Jacqueline DeStefano-Tangorra, CPA

JACQUELINE DESTEFANO-TANGORRA, CPA

Founder

Omni BI Solutions

A Trailblazer in Technology, Generative AI, and Business

# Intelligence Solutions

Page No. 12



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# Jacqueline DeStefano-Tangorra, CPA

## A Trailblazer in Technology, Generative AI, and Business Intelligence Solutions

In a world growing ever more dependent on technology, women are increasingly making significant contributions in the tech sphere. They are breaking barriers, setting new standards of excellence, and rewriting the narratives of a traditionally male-dominated field. In this edition of "Most Powerful Women in Business 2023," we highlight one such trailblazing woman. Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra is leaving an indelible mark on the technology industry, driven by her passion for data science, data visualization, and data storytelling. She's not just crunching numbers; she's creating narratives and uncovering unique insights that aid problem-solving.

When asked about what sparked her interest in the technology industry, DeStefano-Tangorra recounts a profound passion for artificial intelligence, machine learning, deep learning, data science, data visualization, and data storytelling. She has a unique knack for extracting insights and solving complex problems, a skill she harnesses to positively impact people's lives. She recognizes the transformative potential that technology has on the way businesses operate. But it doesn't stop there. Her enthusiasm for exploring and employing generative AI tools, and understanding their applications for businesses of varying sizes, truly sets her apart. Furthermore, she has taken up the task of designing and deploying custom AI applications and ML pipelines for her clientele.

"It was a defining moment," DeStefano-Tangorra shares, "when I realized that I genuinely enjoyed every minute of my work in this space. That's when I knew I had to change my career path and dive headfirst into technology." With a relentless pursuit of growth and learning within this dynamic field, Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra continues to be a powerful force in the realm of technology.

### **TRAILING THROUGH CHALLENGES: JACQUELINE ANN DESTEFANO-TANGORRA'S EMPOWERING JOURNEY**

Every journey is riddled with trials and tribulations that ultimately shape and define us. For Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra, overcoming professional adversity became the catalyst for her empowering transformation.

Before stepping into the world of entrepreneurship, DeStefano-Tangorra committed seven years of her career to a big four accounting firm. She worked as a financial statement auditor CPA for five years and then as a business intelligence technology consultant for two. However, early in her journey, she confronted a setback when she was overlooked for a promotion. Rather than let this hold her back, she found motivation to enhance her skills.





**JACQUELINE DESTEFANO-TANGORRA, CPA**  
Founder  
**Omni BI Solutions**

"I decided to turn my disappointment into an opportunity for growth," DeStefano-Tangorra recalls. "I focused on enhancing my technical skills and expanding my professional knowledge. I grew keenly focused on sustaining a long-term strategy for myself rather than simply riding the ups and downs of the short-term." But after half a decade at the firm, and amidst a global pandemic, she took a moment to introspect. "In those moments of reflection," DeStefano-Tangorra shares, "I realized that to truly unlock my potential, I needed to make some hard decisions for myself that many wouldn't dream of doing."

Taking these insights to heart, DeStefano-Tangorra made the bold but empowering decision to resign from her corporate role and pursue her newfound passion in business intelligence consulting. This transition, although fraught with challenges, paved the way for an expansive landscape of opportunities. It unlocked doors to creativity and provided platforms for skill enhancement, reaffirming her conviction that she had indeed made the right decision. Moreover, it surrounded her with a dynamic network of clients, contractors, and collaborative partnerships that nourished her entrepreneurial spirit, enriched her professional growth, and strengthened her resolve to push the boundaries of business intelligence solutions.

"Leaving a secure, high-paying job was daunting, but the possibility of making a difference and working on my own terms was an opportunity I couldn't pass up," she reveals.

In her new venture, DeStefano-Tangorra fostered connections with over 130 unique clients and businesses, spanning across 30+ industries worldwide. The decision she had made not only justified itself but proved to be a transformative experience.

Today, she relishes the joy of doing what she loves—solving complex business problems for her clients and consistently upgrading her skills to meet new challenges. "Every day is a new opportunity to learn and grow. I wouldn't trade this experience for anything. I truly love working with my clients and finding creative ways to solve their business problems," says DeStefano-Tangorra. In

shaping her career on her own terms, Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra stands as an inspiration for many, embodying resilience, dedication, and the power of pursuing one's passion.

### **LEVERAGING DATA, DRIVING INNOVATION: THE MULTIFACETED SERVICES AT OBIS**

Navigating the complex landscape of digital technology, Omni Business Intelligence Solutions (OBIS), offers an impressive suite of expert services designed to enable businesses to flourish in the modern age.

OBIS takes pride in its comprehensive approach to data warehousing and integration, meticulously organizing data from myriad sources. Its team of experts construct custom dashboards, reports, and visualizations that help businesses distill real-time, actionable insights from their data.

Working together with their clients, OBIS develops bespoke business intelligence strategies. These tailored roadmaps for growth embody the unique goals of each business, underlining Jacqueline's commitment to providing personalized services.

Their expertise also extends to the realm of data mining and predictive analysis. The team at OBIS employs advanced techniques to extract hidden patterns and trends from data, furnishing clients with a proactive edge in decision-making.

Performance metrics and KPIs are another focus area at OBIS. Aligned with business objectives, these metrics are a

crucial tool for progress tracking in the fast-paced world of business. Additionally, OBIS prioritizes data governance and compliance, ensuring that businesses' data remains secure, accurate, and adheres to industry standards.

Harnessing the transformative power of Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), OBIS provides solutions that streamline processes and unlock deep insights. Jacqueline and her team are also breaking new ground with their work in generative AI and prompt engineering, identifying key areas where AI implementation can augment efficiency and productivity.

Through its wide array of services, OBIS encapsulates Jacqueline DeStefano-Tangorra's dedication to empowering businesses, leveraging technology, and fostering growth in the dynamic digital world.

### **THE CORNERSTONES OF LEADERSHIP IN TECH: INSIGHTS FROM JACQUELINE ANN DESTEFANO-TANGORRA**

Success in the tech industry requires more than technical prowess; it demands visionary leadership, emotional intelligence, and an unwavering commitment to ethics and integrity. Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra shares her insights into the key qualities that define a successful leader in this dynamic sector.

"A successful tech leader must be equipped with both a clear vision and an adaptable mindset. The technology industry is in constant flux, and leaders need to anticipate trends, innovate, and pivot when necessary to stay ahead of the competition," she states.

She mentions that while leaders don't need to be experts in all technological domains, an understanding of the latest advancements is vital for making informed decisions and identifying opportunities. Leadership, however, goes beyond technical expertise. DeStefano-Tangorra emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence, which encompasses self-awareness, empathy, and emotion management. "These qualities build trust with clients, foster cross collaboration, and help navigate the complexities of workplace relationships," she explains.

*"A successful tech leader must be equipped with both a clear vision and an adaptable mindset. The technology industry is in constant flux, and leaders need to anticipate trends, innovate, and pivot when necessary to stay ahead of the competition."*

In a rapidly changing industry, decisiveness and problem-solving skills are key. DeStefano-Tangorra asserts that “Leaders must make swift, informed decisions that align with the organization’s goals and values.” She also underscores the importance of communication and active listening in driving results and fostering collaboration. “A successful leader must effectively convey ideas and actively listen to feedback,” she advises.

Resilience and perseverance are also essential in a competitive industry where setbacks are inevitable. “A successful leader must have the fortitude to bounce back from failures and remain focused on long-term goals,” she affirms. Effective leadership also hinges on empowering team members. “Leaders should provide their teams with the necessary tools and autonomy, fostering a culture of ownership and accountability,” DeStefano-Tangorra says.

Lastly, she points to ethics and integrity as crucial elements in building trust and credibility. “Leaders in the technology industry must set an example by adhering to high moral standards, promoting transparency, and taking responsibility for their actions,” she concludes, “especially as it relates to compliance with new regulations and laws for generative AI applications and prioritizing the protection of our client’s data and information.”

#### **NAVIGATING THE DYNAMIC TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE: OBIS STRATEGY ON INNOVATION**

In the vibrant, fast-paced world of technology, Omni Business Intelligence Solutions stands out through its strategic commitment to innovation and competitive edge. “We continuously strive to augment our skills and broaden our knowledge horizon,” says Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra, “this commitment to constant learning ensures that the team is always in tune with emerging trends and advancements, and in turn, this positively impacts our clients and supports their growth.”

Moreover, at Omni Business Intelligence Solutions, the power of collaboration is never underestimated. “We foster a culture of knowledge sharing within our team and believe that our collective intelligence significantly contributes to our success,” DeStefano-Tangorra



shares, “we embrace active engagement with a broader tech ecosystem. Through participation in tech forums, industry events, and collaborative initiatives, our team stays abreast of the latest developments and maintains its place at the cutting edge of the industry.”

#### **STRIKING THE PERFECT BALANCE: JACQUELINE ANN DESTEFANO-TANGORRA ON NAVIGATING PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL LIFE**

Achieving a harmonious balance between professional and personal life may seem like a daunting task, but Jacqueline Ann DeStefano-Tangorra assures us it’s not only possible, but also essential for long-term well-being and success. She advocates setting clear boundaries, nurturing self-care routines, cultivating a supportive network, delegating tasks, maintaining organization, demonstrating flexibility, and managing expectations realistically.

“I firmly believe in the importance of ‘me’ time. Activities such as daily exercise and committed prayer time with God serve as vital anchors in my routine,” DeStefano-Tangorra shares. “And it’s

crucial to understand when to say ‘no’ when something doesn’t align with your priorities, and equally, when to say ‘yes’ to opportunities that promote growth.”

To women aiming to excel professionally, DeStefano-Tangorra offers sage advice. “Leverage your strengths and cultivate self-confidence by saying yes to opportunities that may be challenging. Truly believe in your potential to succeed and seek support when you need guidance or feedback. Be receptive to feedback and cherish your unique perspective — it has tremendous value,” she advises.

She also urges aspiring women leaders to rethink the glorification of the burnout culture. “People who subscribe to a relentless work ethic at the expense of their health and well-being are unlikely to sustain their success. Prioritize what truly matters to you. If your values align with your actions, your joy will permeate into your work, allowing you to excel,” she concludes.

Her strategies serve as a powerful reminder that success in professional life should never come at the cost of personal well-being and fulfillment.

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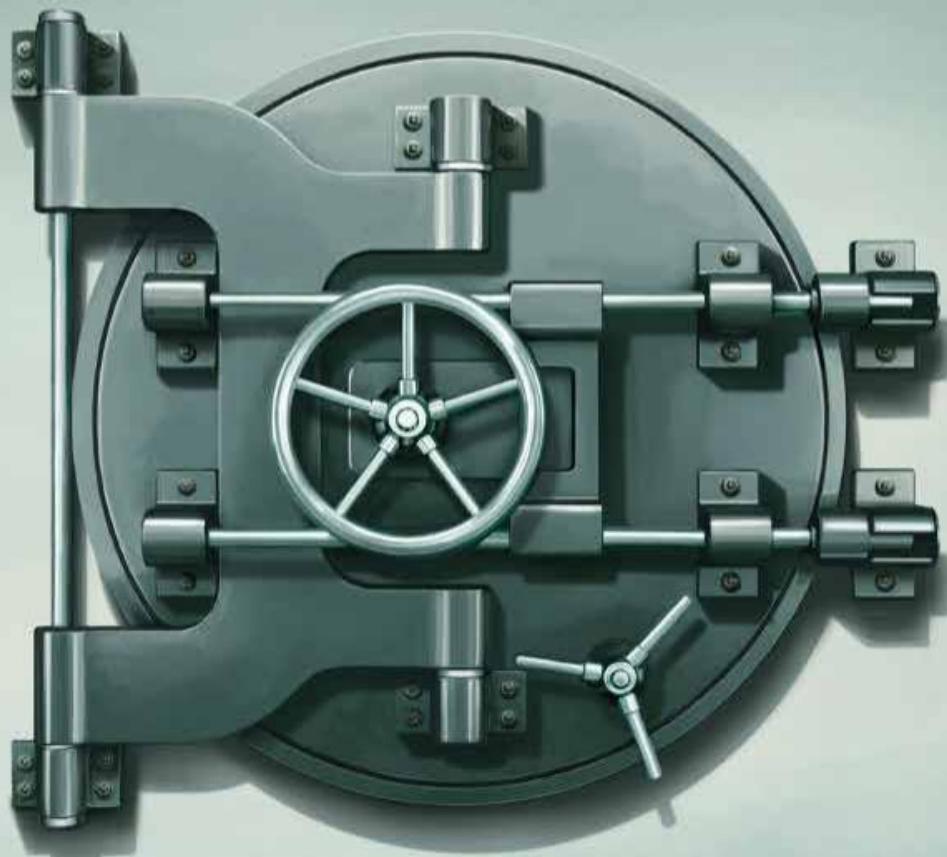


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# EMPOWERING AANHPI COMMUNITIES

## The Asian Real Estate Association of America's Journey

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In the dynamic world of real estate, where homeownership represents a fundamental aspiration, the Asian Real Estate Association of America (AREAA) has emerged as a guiding force for the Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community. With a rich history spanning two decades, AREAA has strived to overcome unique barriers faced by AANHPis and has championed policy changes that empower these communities. As we delve into the story of AREAA's transformative journey, we witness their unwavering dedication to fostering homeownership opportunities and shaping a brighter future for the AANHPI population.

### **PAVING THE WAY FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP SUCCESS**

Founded in 2003, AREAA stands tall as a trade organization with an impressive membership base of approximately 18,000 and 44 chapters across the United States. Their singular mission from the outset has been to increase homeownership opportunities for the AANHPI community. Over the years, their diligent efforts have borne fruit, with the homeownership rate rising from 53% to an impressive 61%. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the collective work of AREAA's members and partners, who have navigated through a range of barriers that the AANHPis face, including language access and credit history. Recognizing the diverse subgroups within the AANHPI label, such as Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indians, and Chamorro, AREAA emphasizes the importance of understanding



**HOPE ATUEL**  
CEO/Executive Director, AREAA

each community's unique cultural needs, rejecting a "one size fits all" approach.

## ADVOCACY AND POLICY

### VICTORIES

Throughout its 20-year history, AREAA has been at the forefront of enacting policy changes that positively impact the AANHPI community. One notable victory is the adoption of alternative credit scoring methods by the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). This change is particularly crucial for AANHPI immigrants, who may be averse to debt and have limited exposure to building credit history. By considering rental history, utility payments, and other forms of credit, the mortgage underwriting process becomes more inclusive, opening doors to homeownership for the AANHPI community. Another milestone achieved by AREAA is the establishment of a standalone category for AANHPIs in the quarterly reports published by the US Census. Previously lumped into the generic "other" category, AANHPIs now have their homeownership data recognized, affirming their distinct identity.

## EDUCATING AND EMPOWERING A GROWING COMMUNITY

With a population projected to double by 2040, the AANHPI community stands as the fastest-growing group in the United States, numbering 21 million strong. Recognizing the importance of catering to this dynamic market, AREAA takes on the responsibility of providing education and support to the real estate community. By debunking stereotypes and dispelling the model minority myth, AREAA strives to bridge the gap between perception and reality. Acknowledging that not all Asians are affluent cash buyers, AREAA's focus lies in understanding the unique needs and challenges of the AANHPI community to deliver appropriate services and support.

## CHAMPIONING HOMEOWNERSHIP RIGHTS

While AREAA celebrates its accomplishments, it acknowledges the persistent challenges faced by the AANHPI community, particularly the rise in anti-Asian hate crimes.

Discrimination and safety concerns have prompted a shift in priorities for Asian American homebuyers, as reflected in a recent survey conducted by AREAA. Proximity to quality schools, larger/newer homes, and safety have traditionally been the top considerations, but now they are joined by a desire to move away from discrimination and seek neighborhoods with a higher density of Asian Americans. This emerging trend of migration towards non-traditional metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in the middle of the country and the south highlights the impact of anti-Asian rhetoric on housing choices. AREAA remains vigilant, monitoring these trends closely and collaborating with the real estate industry to address the evolving needs of the AANHPI community.

## A JOURNEY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND BELONGING

AREAA finds itself in uncharted territory, engaged in social justice work that amplifies the voices of the AANHPI community and ensures their right to homeownership. The organization's leaders have embraced this new role, supported by dedicated members and partners, as they navigate the challenging landscape of shelter insecurity caused by hate crimes. As AREAA continues to stand up for homeownership rights, they recognize that advocacy is an invaluable member benefit. By effecting policy changes, AREAA transforms lives through real estate, fulfilling its tagline for the year: "Changing Lives Through Real Estate." Beyond achieving the American Dream, homeownership fosters a sense of belonging and builds generational wealth, anchoring families to the country they proudly call home.

## OUTRO:

AREAA's unwavering commitment to empowering the AANHPI community and its accomplishments in fostering homeownership opportunities are a testament to the organization's enduring impact. As they celebrate 20 years of shaping real estate landscapes, AREAA remains dedicated to creating a brighter future for the AANHPI population, breaking barriers, advocating for change, and nurturing a sense of belonging in the land of opportunity.



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CUCUMBER

**NANCY ZEFFMAN**  
Co-Founder, Cucumber Clothing

# NANCY ZEFFMAN

## DELIVERING COMFORT AND STYLE CREATIVELY

**N**ecessity is what brings updates to old technologies and systems. Whenever a certain system, method or product no longer serves its purpose; changes are required. These changes are often recognized by business minds who understand the requirement of change, seek for it and transform it into an opportunity. One such business mind is Nancy Zeffman, Co- Founder at Cucumber Clothing. Nancy understood the problems with women's nightwear and clothing and took a step forward to modify it.

### **Below are the highlights of the interview with Business Leaders Review:**

#### **Kindly take us through your journey on becoming a leader.**

It has been both crazy and amazing – an incredibly uplifting and challenging journey. The idea for Cucumber Clothing was born on a hot holiday. We (my co-founder Eileen Willett and myself) were with a group of female friends and there was a lot of talk around sleeplessness, heat and hormones. When we returned, we did some research and were astonished to find that the only garments on offer either looked 'medical' or were deemed seriously dowdy. We decided there and then to create a brand that took the latest cutting edge fabric tech and married it to gorgeous design that helped solve a problem.

It took about two years from having the idea to reaching the market. The two years were spent researching the market, materials, making up samples (and testing them), fine tuning our designs, photography and setting up our website, plus so much more, in time for our first capsule collection that launched in September 2017.

#### **How is your company impacting your customers?**

In so many ways! We have a very high repeat customer rate, so we know that our products work and we love the fact that we get so much positive feedback. Some women are telling us that they just can't go to bed in anything other than our nightwear if they want to get any sleep. It travels the world with them.

When we first launched, we were just about sleeping for the 40+ market. It is from customer feedback and requests, that we then widened our range to include breastfeeding friendly tops and dresses (new and breastfeeding mums suffer from raging hormones, just like the menopause) and multifunctional holiday wear and leisurewear. Every woman will get uncomfortably hot at some point in her life for a multitude of reasons.

#### **What are the anchors of your management philosophy?**

Be kind! One of the best things about starting a business has been all the amazing people we have met along the way. We've found from day one of our Cucumber journey that almost everyone, male or female, have been encouraging and full of ideas to help us. We've tried to do the same for others. Kindness is the best.

#### **How do you cultivate a diverse workplace at your company?**

There are only two of us in this business – the two founding members. We do everything ourselves, save for some freelance work around design and obviously we employ outside



manufacturers, pattern cutters and so on. We are both women. I am London born and Eileen is a Japanese Canadian who moved to London over 30 years ago. That's a pretty high diverse percentage, but who knows how expansion will change this...

#### **What do you feel the role of leadership is in developing careers?**

I think it's important for people to have role models, which is why diversity in all its forms is so important. Leaders should be both inspirational and offer guidance and mentoring.

#### **How do you strategize your game plans to tackle the competition in the market?**

We are a fabric led, solutions based brand. Our customers find and buy us for a reason. Our clothes look and feel great and they perform. Although our brand was first inspired by the menopause, these are not menopausal clothes. They are stylish clothes for any woman, no matter her age, because it isn't only menopause that causes women to have temperature problems: pregnancy and breastfeeding, medications, being curvier, travel – they can all turn the thermostat up, as can cancer treatments or thyroid issues for example.

We see part of our job as educating consumers about the benefits of technical fabrics. So many women, particularly older women, have been brought up to believe that natural fibers are the best for everything.

We are heavily focused on sustainability. We know that creating anything has an environmental cost and we want ours to be as light as possible, and we can do this because of the flexibility a small company gives us. We source everything bar our fabric from inside the UK, meaning we know all our suppliers.

We have just launched a new range using an even more revolutionary fabric that incorporates an innovative material made from naturally derived volcanic mineral called 37.5 technology. We are always researching new fabrics and looking at interesting ways of using them. We want to be at the forefront of fashion fabric technology.

We are trying to do so much more than just sell clothes. We are trying to build a Cucumber community through our blogs and vlogs where we interact with (mainly) women of all different ages and backgrounds





that we feel have something interesting to say to our newsletter subscribers. As part of this community, it is also very important to us to support causes we believe in. We have donated 50p off every purchase of our cashmere mix range to The Eve Appeal and donated all our samples to an event held by Prevent Breast Cancer and have more collaborations planned with them in the near future.

**What are your future endeavors/objectives and where do you see yourself in the near future?**

We've been expanding into luxury spas and you can find us at the Four Seasons in Hampshire and Park Lane and at Beaverbrook Hotel and Spa. There are other possible venues coming soon too.

We hope that the near future will bring Cucumber more brand awareness. Although we have made sales all round the world, the majority of our sales have been in the UK. The US in particular is proving a strong second market for us and we would like to grow our market here.

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# MICHELLE BEYO

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**M**y goal is to help the future of payments come to life. This is the statement of Michelle Beyo, Founder of FinAvator, a consulting firm with expertise in Payments, Prepaid, Loyalty and Blockchain focused on Digital Marketing, Product Strategy and Sales Acceleration for Startups, FinTech's and Enterprises. She is a strategic advisor to Uulala, a California based FinTech company focused on financial inclusion; she is a strong supporter of entrepreneurs and women as a SheEO activator; a Women in Payments' mentor and a Money 20/20 US 2019 Rise Up Academy Member. Michelle is also a wife, mother of two and just competed in her first sprint triathlon.

Michelle's journey to leadership included experiencing struggles, success and failures with each phase teaching her something new and valuable. Her leadership skills come from many different experiences:

Her resilience and confidence come from watching her parents run their own businesses. Michelle's strong commitment to a project and teamwork come from playing ten years of rep soccer and her ability to plan ahead and believe in herself come from lessons learnt living in Australia on her own as a young adult (all invaluable lessons to the future entrepreneur!).

Michelle started her first career in Telecom while still in high school she worked to buy her first car, she spent her nights and weekends helping a Telus franchisee grow their team and locations. She soon fell in love with the excitement of learning new technologies and having the opportunity to be at the forefront of emerging digital mobile phones over her six years. She then moved to the Loyalty sector, where she had the pleasure of working for her first female leader and lifelong mentor Kelly Lee Smith. She learnt so much from her positive attitude and ability to drive results as the only female in the boardroom. Michelle adds "She inspired me in many ways, as I led my first team and managed multiple online shopping malls for major airlines such as United, Delta and Lufthansa" She then gained key leadership and marketing skills in her following Director role focused on credit card loyalty acceleration of Aeroplan for major Canadian banks CIBC and TD as she helped retailers, restaurants and spas increase consumer spend.

After eight years in Loyalty, she made the move into the payments industry and took on the challenging Senior Director role of managing three departments at the world's largest prepaid provider InComm. She was extremely fortunate to have an inspiring, balanced and diverse executive team led by an incredible

GM, Felipe Papaleo. Felipe shared "Michelle is a driven and committed leader, with innovation in her DNA. She is always eager to explore new ways to enhance sales while ensuring a consumer-centric approach. She was responsible for creating, designing and implementing some of InComm's main initiatives during her three year tenure and did so with determination and poise. Innovation and leadership are at her core, and so is her passion for it!"

Michelle's desire for continuously learning and improving led her to apply and attend Ivey Business School inaugural "Mastering FinTech Program" in late 2017. This allowed her to quickly grasp emerging digital currencies, blockchain technology and exciting FinTech's that were starting to change the world of payments while also connecting her to senior bank executives and industry innovators. It was soon after this insightful program that Michelle jumped into the blockchain sector in a new role on another balanced executive team for a passionate CEO, Bruce Silcoff. Her new role as a Chief Client Oficer at Shyft Network, a Blockchain startup focused on building the world's first modern, secure, multi-stakeholder trust network allowed her to take a deep dive into consent frameworks while working towards proof of concepts and engaging strategic partnerships.

After spending a year at a startup Michelle realized it was time to venture out on her own by launching FinAvator, a FinTech advisory firm to help enterprise and startup companies add an innovative twist to their business. She is able to share her unique multi-industry knowledge on digital payments, prepaid innovation, loyalty incentives, blockchain ecosystem and her ability to combine corporate expertise with startup agility. FinAvator works closely with each client to understand their challenges and create a plan to drive growth through customer centric products, digital marketing and strategic partnerships.

**On leadership Michelle asserts "A true leader focuses on long term vision and**



**finds the time to help colleagues strive towards their potential." Throughout her career Michelle has built strong rapport with a group of diverse mentors that have inspired her to take risks and continue to grow as a leader. She believes 'It is important in business and life to forge genuine relationships, help each other and challenge the status quo"**

**Michelle enjoyed working on diverse and balanced executive teams as she witnessed the unique innovative ideas and team work that it creates. She considers herself lucky to have been a part of many diverse management teams and has the goal of building FinAvator with the same vision.**

According to Michelle, the first step to understanding your competition is deep industry research and customer discovery followed by finding ways to differentiate. Then building clear goals for your team, marketing the benefits of your company, connecting with your community as well as partnering with some competitors to leverage each other.

GREG SCHWARTZ

Co-Founder and COO, StockX



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# DR CAROLINE BARELLE



## DEFINING PROFICIENCY WITH FERVENT LEADERSHIP

**CAROLINE BARELLE** | Chief Executive Officer and founder, Elasmogen Ltd.

The world has witnessed rapid technology progress in every sector and the pharmaceutical industry is no exception. The demands for safe and effective drugs, and technological solutions to increase clinical success rate are getting higher everyday, and thus, new discovery and development processes are needed. Understanding this need and sworn to its attainment, Dr Caroline Barelle, CEO of Elasmogen Ltd, a highly qualified and proficient in Pharma and biotech, is working to bring effective medical solutions for all.

*“To continue to build this company, to expand both the scientific and management team, to increase its portfolio of collaborations and bring our first product into the clinic.”*

Caroline has worked in the life sciences sector for many years initially in an academic setting and laterally in the biotech and pharma arena. She believes that one becomes a leader as soon as he/she impacts others by providing support and insight which in Caroline's case, in the early years, was as a post-doctoral fellow in a research lab. After ten years of academic research, she transitioned into the biotech sector which she absolutely loved and then into a team leader position in big pharma where she was leading a team of scientists in drug discovery and development. Opportunity struck when the pharma company restructured, closing her team's site and leaving a number of incredibly talented scientists looking elsewhere. This was the catalyst for founding a new biotech company based on the technology they had developed as



a team. That was over six years ago now and they are still going.

In such a complex and changing world as drug development, the team around is everything. Elasmogen's science team is

exceptional, innovative and committed and is the engine for the company. As a drug discovery company, ultimately Elasmogen's endpoint customers are patients and the company never loses sight of what it is trying to achieve which



is bringing new effective medicines into the clinic for unmet medical conditions. In reality, given the significant cost and substantial risk of new medicine development, the company's strategy is to develop novelty and improved efficacy over existing drugs as well as creating completely new drugs and to partner with large pharma to take these drugs into the clinic.

According to Caroline, their field of drug development is biologics – drugs that originate within the body such as antibodies which can be engineered to detect and destroy diseased tissue. It is a hot area with substantial competition. Elasmogen's technology lends itself to tackle many different diseases and as a small company, it simply does not have the bandwidth to do everything so its strategy is to collaborate with companies and academia who bring both expertise and other technologies. This way both can combine together to find solutions to treat complex diseases.

Caroline strives to be transparent (given the unstable nature of biotech companies), inclusive and mindful of individual needs to create an environment where open conversation and debate is encouraged and where everyone shares a common goal which is ultimately the continued success

of the company. Working in the life sciences industry, she has had the privilege of working with people from all cultures and backgrounds throughout her career. It is by nature a diverse sector and this adds incredible value to all aspects of scientific research whether it be in the public or private domain. The team is small but it has a rich diversity of nationalities which benefits the company and which the company will continue to foster.

Throughout Caroline's career, she has always tried to be as supportive as she can to others to provide them with the opportunity for self-development and to progress in whatever direction they wish to take. For anyone in a leadership role, there is a responsibility to ensure that one creates opportunity and training as required and go that extra mile to use connections and network to help others to reach their potential. She takes honesty, integrity, resilience and compassion as the most crucial traits which every leader must possess.

Caroline's future objective for her company is "To continue to build this company, to expand both the scientific and management team, to increase its portfolio of collaborations and bring our first product into the clinic."

## ABOUT THE LEADER

With postgraduate qualifications in both business and science, Caroline has a strong commercial, bio partnering and biologics drug discovery/development background. For over 4 years she has successfully led teams at Wyeth Inc and subsequently Pfizer Inc in Global Biotherapeutic Technologies progressing from early platform technologies to late stage clinical development. Prior to this she was Alliance and Programs Manager at Haptogen Ltd and a key part of the acquisition team that successfully exited the business to Wyeth Inc.

Caroline has been awarded a prestigious Royal Society of Edinburgh Enterprise Fellowship and is a doctoral graduate from the University of Aberdeen in Biochemistry and holds an MBA from Robert Gordon's University.

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**ERIN FARRELL TALBOT** | Founder, Farrell Talbot Consulting, Inc.

# FARRELL TALBOT CONSULTING INC.

## Excelling Beyond the Ordinary in PR and Communications

PR firms and consultancy agencies are vital in helping businesses succeed in today's fast-moving world. They're like the architects of effective communication, ensuring organizations can share their ideas and information with the right people. But these firms must keep up with the changing business world to stay on top.

Amidst the competitive landscape, Farrell Talbot Consulting Inc. stands apart from conventional PR firms and consultancy agencies. The firm fosters exceptional expertise across a wide range of communications and is highly sought by leading companies and organizations for its expertise. Moreover, its collaborative approach includes partnering closely with clients to craft meticulously planned and results-oriented communication strategies.

### INSPIRED BY A ROBUST ESTABLISHMENT

In 2008, Erin Farrell Talbot established Farrell Talbot from the comfort of her living room. In the same year, Erin was working at a prominent PR firm with a diverse client base, where her primary responsibility was managing smaller technology

companies with limited PR budgets. She identified an industry gap as she observed the challenge of stretching limited budgets, but, which were significant for many clients, to meet their needs and deliver outstanding service. Motivated by this, she founded Farrell Talbot to serve smaller tech companies on tight budgets, using her media expertise to achieve meaningful results.

Erin launched Farrell Talbot from her living room, and for 15 years since the company's inception, has gained valuable experience working with exceptional clients. She has achieved notable success by garnering media placements from reputed publications like Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, Reuters, CNBC, and more. She has also earned recognition from specialized industry verticals from health IT, manufacturing, supply chain, and retail, all while understanding the importance of following intuition and logic throughout this journey.

### COMPREHENSIVE SUITE OF TAILORED SERVICES

Farrell Talbot Consulting has specialized in serving technology and corporate clients, ranging from budding startups to large, publicly traded corporations. Erin's enthusiasm for media engagement, storytelling, and strategic collaboration drives the firm's mission and has resulted in notable success. She excels in media relations for a diverse client base that, while originally only focused on technology, has recently expanded to include a focus on consumer products and services. She is proficient in multiple media formats, including broadcast, podcasts, print, social media, and video and has excelled as a professional communicator by being able to create impactful messaging documents and executive communications.

Clients working with Erin can anticipate a comprehensive suite of services crafted to meet their unique requirements and business objectives. Why? Because Erin personally engages with each client and program – closely collaborating with each client

and developing customized media strategies that align with their goals. Erin's journalism background enables the creation of engaging content, such as press releases, thought leadership pieces, and informative blogs, fostering audience engagement and credibility. She has the ability to know what a good story is and how to tell it.

The firm's services draw from three decades of industry experience underpinned by unwavering integrity and ethical practices. When liaising with the press, clients can trust Farrell Talbot's commitment to their best interest and adherence to the highest ethical standards.

#### **GOLDEN RULE: ETHICS OF RECIPROCITY**

Erin's professional philosophy is guided by the ethics of reciprocity, commonly known as the "Golden Rule." She applies this principle to her interactions with various stakeholders in her career, including the media, clients, contractors, and industry colleagues. This rule is not merely a moral guideline but forms the bedrock of her organization's values.

Erin seamlessly integrates the ethics of reciprocity into her work, consistently applying these principles in client engagements, media outreach, PR campaigns, and her professional endeavors. She fosters mutual respect and collaboration, benefiting all parties by treating others as they wish to be treated. Her dedication reflects her commitment to colleagues' well-being and success, driving her ability to create productive relationships. Trust and credibility are paramount in public relations and media outreach.

Various factors, including professionalism, reputation, relationships, and personal satisfaction, motivate Erin to serve her clients. At the core, professionalism is fundamental to Erin's work ethic. Regardless of a client's size or budget, she approaches every project with unwavering dedication, driven by her belief in delivering top-quality results.

*"Not every client is the right one for your business. It has taught me that business is not just about products and services that companies sell, but about the people, the relationships that are formed, and the trust that is developed."*

can be leveraged to benefit clients. While continuous learning and attending industry events, webinars, and subscribing to newsletters, publications, and substacks are critical for Farrell Talbot to stay on top of industry best practices, maintaining strong relationships with industry influencers and key players in the media industry allows the firm to access valuable insights.

Erin emphasizes the importance of embracing innovation, harnessing technology, and continuously researching and learning for success in media relations. This approach allows her to provide effective solutions and recommendations for communication needs, navigating the evolving media landscape using Generative language AI, social media, and podcasts. She is enthusiastic about exploring the potential use of technologies like ChatGPT, considering their integration into her PR toolkit to enhance client and stakeholder support.

Erin's motivation stems from maintaining a strong industry reputation closely tied to delivering significant client results. She prioritizes responsiveness, trustworthiness, and attentiveness to establish herself as a reliable professional. Building relationships is another key driver for Erin, evident in her extensive network of clients, industry peers, executives, and media professionals. She takes pride in being a valuable partner, helping companies achieve their goals, and serving as a trustworthy source for journalists. Erin's satisfaction also fuels her motivation, drawn from contributing to her client's success, collaborating with the press on engaging stories, and making a positive impact. This satisfaction propels her unwavering dedication to excellence.

#### **COMPREHENSIVELY NAVIGATING THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE**

Erin envisions a proliferative future for Farrell Talbot by incorporating the latest trends and leveraging the latest technological advancements. Today, it is imperative to stay ahead of the industry trends and technologies that are rapidly evolving to ensure they

Erin's attention is also dedicated to comprehending emerging technologies such as AI and machine learning. She plans to continue to explore how these cutting-edge tools can benefit diverse sectors like healthcare, manufacturing, supply chain financial services, retail, and marketing.

One of Erin's enduring passions is promoting gender diversity in leadership roles. While strides have been made in attracting young women to STEAM professions, she acknowledges that more work is needed to increase the presence of women in executive positions and among young entrepreneurs and innovators in the industry. She also aims to participate in more women-focused leadership organizations in the coming year. "I am raising two boys, and I am happy they see their mom in an executive, entrepreneurial, and leadership role. They think a girl boss in technology is not an anomaly, which is great. I am hoping to be able to join more women in leadership organizations this year," concludes Erin.



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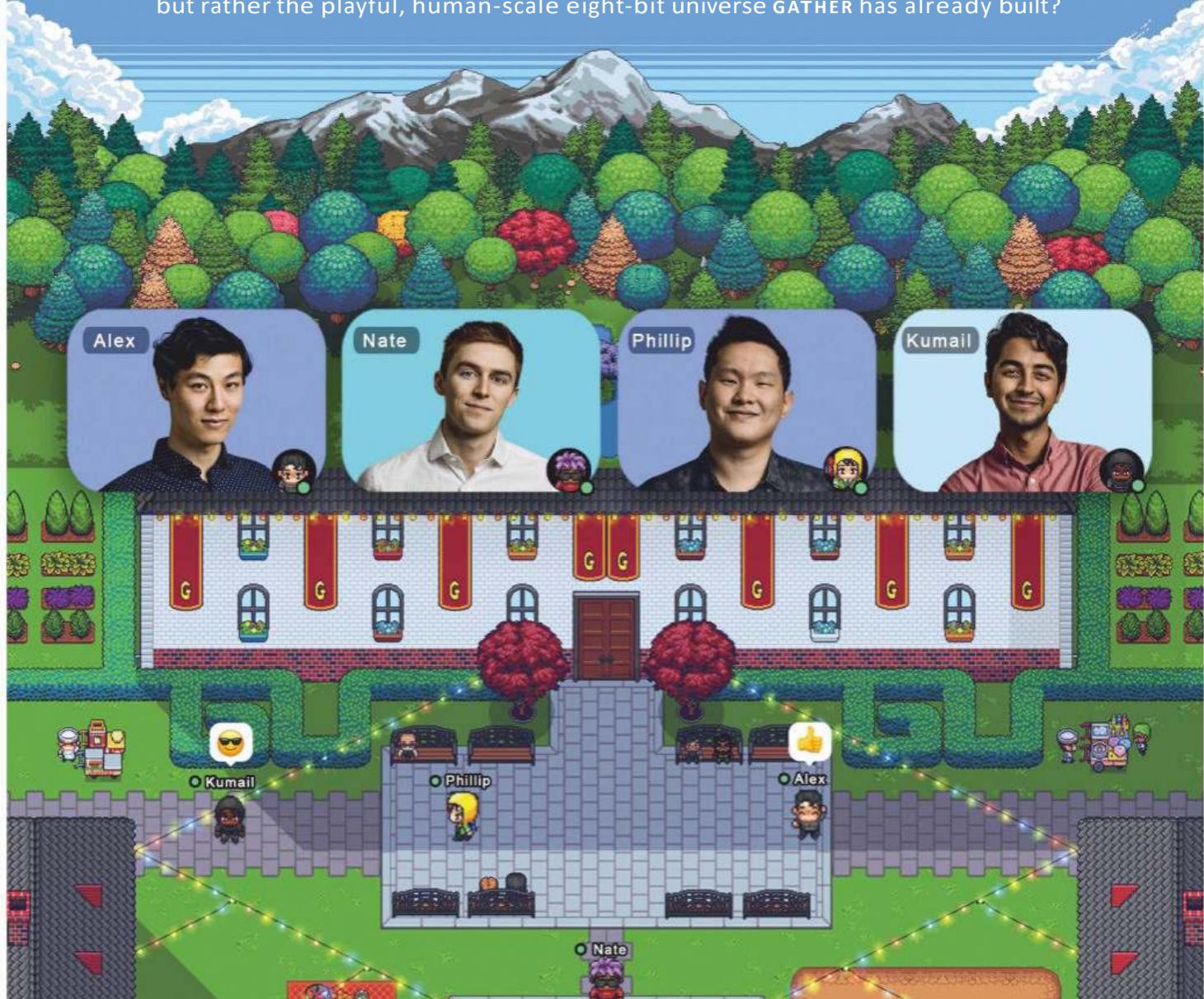
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By Kenrick Cai

Photograph by Ethan Pines for Forbes

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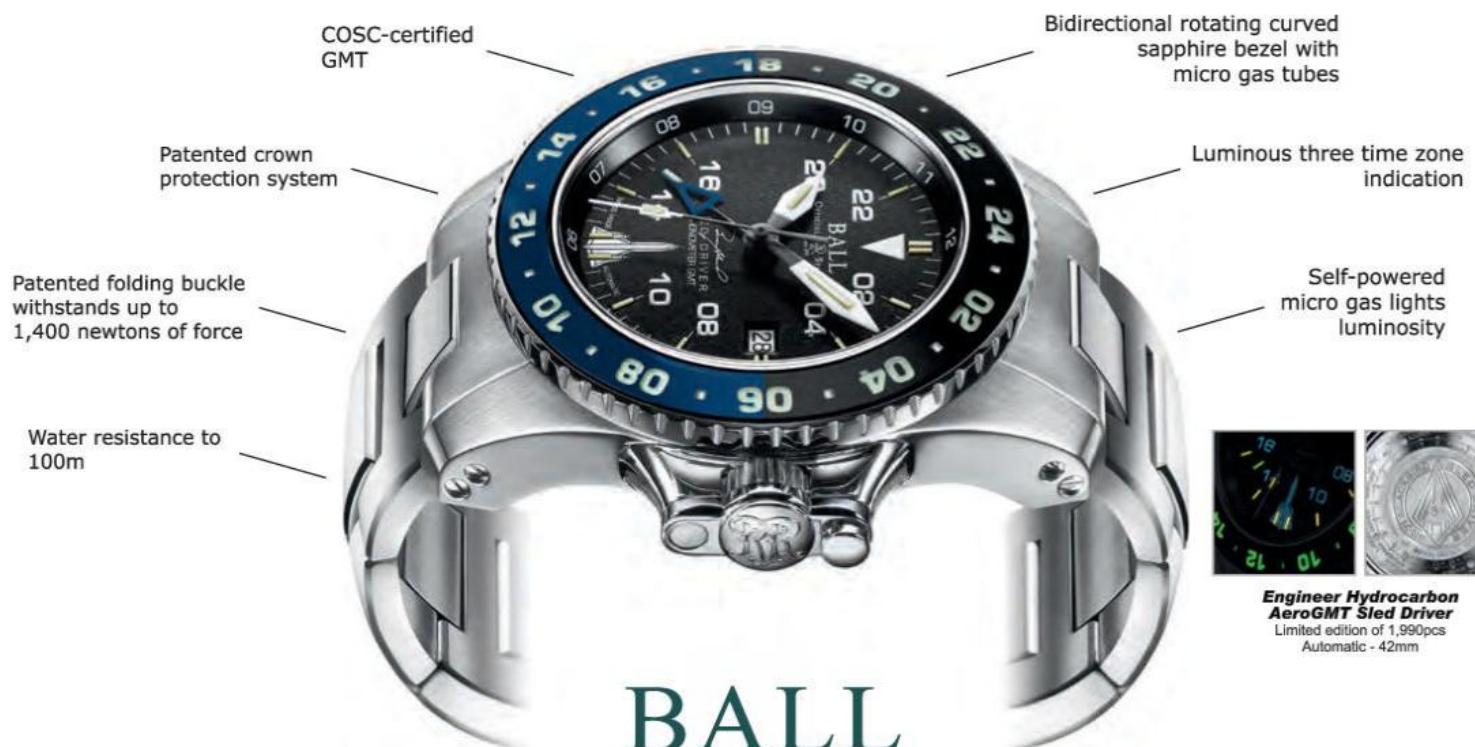
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