

Dec 21, 2009 - 2009 HBA Leadership Conference offers a transformational experience for over 600 attendees

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Nearly 640 women (and a few men) attended the annual 2009 HBA Leadership Conference in San Francisco, California, where we were enveloped with *limitless leadership* development opportunities.

Keynote speaker [Libby Gill](#) inspired attendees in the opening plenary session, **Creating a Culture of Leadership: Three Strategies for Igniting Bold Leaders at All Levels**. Her 3-step process of "clarify, simplify, execute" gave us an easy-to-implement take-home plan for leadership and career development.



The HBA Leadership Conference Executive Luncheon Panel, **Redefining Leadership in a Time of Change**, consisted of an extraordinary lineup of executives:

- **Deborah Dunsire, MD**, 2009 Woman of the Year (WOTY), CEO and President, Millennium, the Takeda Oncology Company
- **Alex Gorsky**, this year's HBA Mentor of the Year, Worldwide Chairman, Surgical Care, and member of the Executive Committee at Johnson & Johnson
- **Maria Sainz**, CEO, Concentric Medical
- **Diane Gage Lofgren**, SVP, Brand Strategy, Communications and Public Relations

Dr. Dunsire encouraged us to lean into change, and not be afraid of it while gaining a breadth of experiences as great resilience builders. Mr. Gorsky followed up with a similar message, saying, "*Carpe diem*—Learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable." Mr. Gorsky defined organizational change as an opportunity to go global, change sectors, and expand our careers. But he cautioned us to always be ourselves, as that is what has gotten each of us to where we are now.

Ms. Sainz defined leadership as earning trust. She warned us that the world is changing and we will have to produce better solutions for patients with fewer resources. We will have to cancel projects. We will have to be on top of our game. "Just do it and don't be a victim," she advised. "Be open. What have you got to lose?" Ms. Sainz also suggested that everyone take the opportunity to work in sales at some point in our careers because leadership is similar to gaining the confidence of a customer.

Finally, Ms. Lofgren explained the importance of developing a personal circle of "thought partners." They may be girlfriends or coaches, and may be paid or not, but no leader can succeed without them.

E-Level Science: Innovation at the Executive Level in the Science Vertical, hosted by National Public Radio's [Moira Gunn of Tech Nation](#), offered an expert panel of executive women scientists:

- **Susan M. Molineaux, PhD**, Chief Scientific Officer and Founder, Proteolix
- **Gisela M. Schwab, MD**, EVP, Exelixis
- **Kornelija Zgonc**, VP global R&D instrumentation and engineering, Life Technologies

The panel discussed issues from the value of a doctorate or an MBA to the difficulties of leading a company in times of transition. Ms. Molineaux shared how she stayed true to herself in the face of sexism in a job interview and ended up landing the job—beating out even her own husband for the position. All of these women made a move from science and engineering into business and feel that they could not have succeeded without their technical background.

The final keynote speaker was [Steve Farber](#), author of *The Radical Leap: A Personal Lesson in Extreme Leadership*. Mr. Farber gave us an incredible guide to extreme leadership. One great take home was his LEAP framework for leadership:

- **Love**: Cultivate love. Cultivate the meet-the-family, "I want to take you to dinner"-type of love from your colleagues and customers. Love what you do and show it.
- **Energy**: Ask yourself—do you create energy by entering the room or leaving it?
- **Audacity**: Audacity is defined as bold and blatant disregard of normal constraints in order to change the world for the better. The world can be a person, a company, or a process. Don't just "think outside the box," but instead ask "what box?"
- **Proof**: Do what you say you will do.

LEAP is applied in a framework greater than yourself, where Mr. Farber reminds us that the golden rule

still applies from 9 to 5. All in attendance were given Mr. Farber's new book *Greater Than Yourself: The Ultimate Lesson of True Leadership* to reinforce what we learned.

This year's HBA Leadership Conference also offered over 20 unique interactive workshops and 3 in-depth post-conference seminars in biotechnology, healthcare information, and team development. Mentoring circles and individual coaching sessions offered attendees tangible, 1-on-1 career development. Plus, we all enjoyed the fun and fabulous networking events. **A Taste of San Francisco**—music and animation—definitely brought attendees to a new networking extreme and **Wine, Women, and Shoes**—a sparkling event and silent auction featuring exquisite wines, designer fashions, and shoes—allowed us to get to know each other in a fun social environment.

Thank you to the committee for a fabulous event. Plan on joining us in Philadelphia from October 27 to 29, 2010 for the next HBA Leadership Conference. The committee is already working on creating another memorable learning and growing event that drives your leadership to its fullest potential ... *limitless leadership!*

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