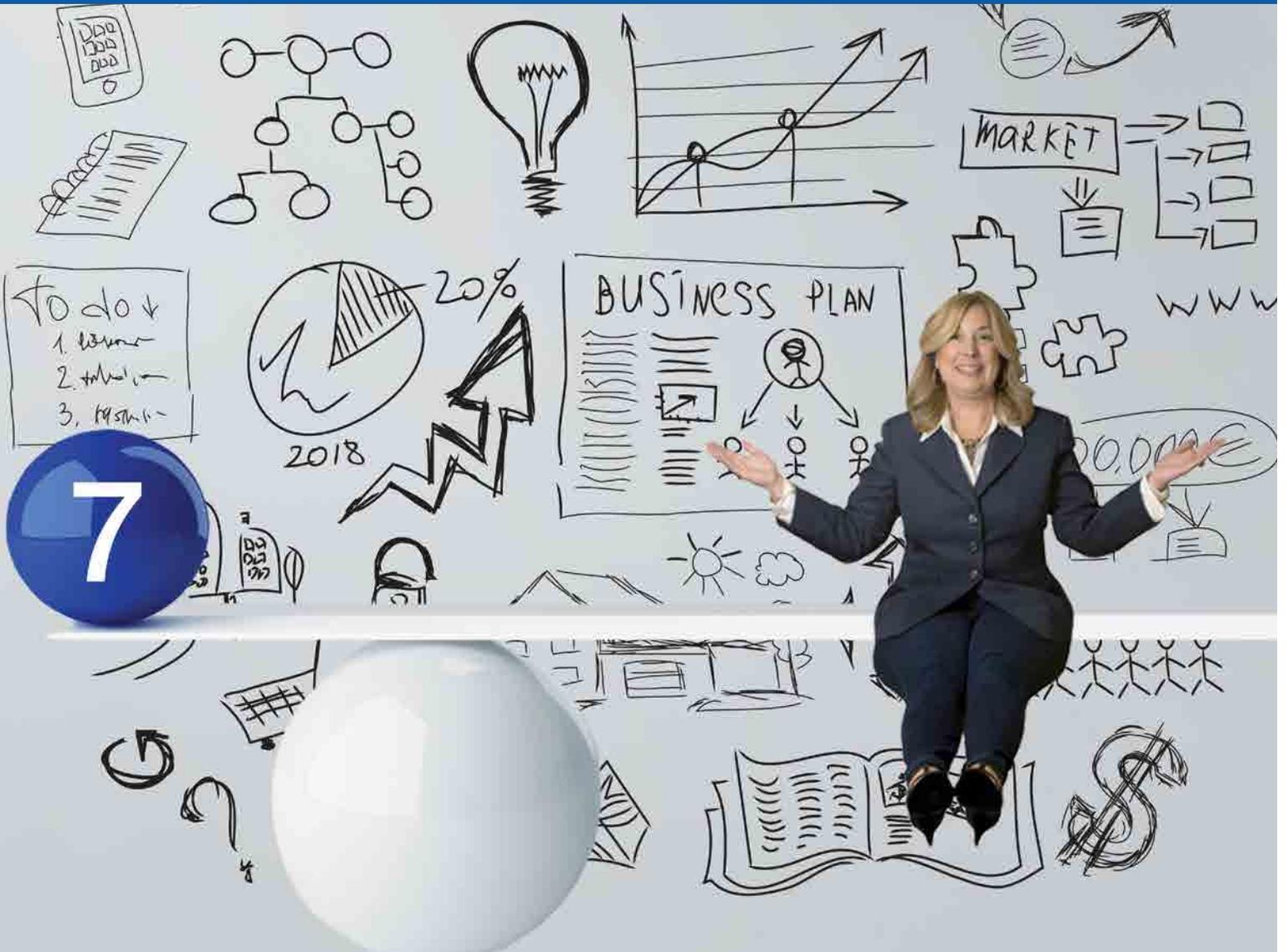


# Priceless Leadership™ Lessons

Breaking Barriers, Creating Change



Women's Business Enterprise Council

**Microsoft**  
Redmond, WA  
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## PRICELESS LESSONS™ I LEARNED ALONG MY JOURNEY TO BECOMING MY OWN BOSS

### MY STORY

It's still not easy for women to move up the ladder into executive positions - even though women have proven to be effective leaders. So why are many highly qualified women having such a difficult time reaching executive levels? Part of the answer lies within the senior management of the companies for whom they work. To have their talent recognized, it requires the awareness, commitment and leadership confidence of those making the hiring and promotion decisions.

At the age of 35, I was recruited by the CEO of a publicly-held medical device company. The company's stock price fell below the SEC minimum, became delisted and was obviously in big trouble. The position was VP/General Manager of its main revenue generating business unit - a divisional turnaround was quickly needed. I accepted the challenge not only because the CEO did a good sales job on me, but more importantly, he convinced me that gender was not an important consideration in running a business. The significant factors were skills, abilities and leadership qualities.



### Here's 7 of the priceless lessons I learned along the way and what it took to stay on top of my game:

1

**FLEXIBILITY** is second only to **INTEGRITY**. Create a mindset that change is an inevitable part of business operations. The ability to change course quickly when needed could result in your company's survival.

2

Always get the **FACTS** - it is easy to make a bad decision based on "false" assumptions. It's challenging to make the right decision, even with the best data.

3

This isn't a popularity contest - learn to make those tough decisions regardless of whether you are liked at the end of the day. It's more important to be **RESPECTED** in the workplace.

4

Hiring the right **TALENT** will make your job easier - don't be insecure about hiring people smarter than you. If your group can't achieve, neither will you. You will not be successful unless your team is successful!

5

Attunement to the CEO's agenda - knowing what his/her expectations are (not what you think they are, or should be) is key to your retention. Make sure you have **ALIGNMENT** with your boss.

6

Despite the complexity and clutter of day-to-day activities, you must **FOCUS** on your company's strategic thrust and making money for all stockholders – employees, customers and the investors. You must stay focused on this critical objective to assure company goals are achieved.

7

**LUCK!**

## MY POV & PERSONAL TIPS TO GREATER BUSINESS SUCCESS ... AND A HAPPIER LIFE!

- Avoid office gossip and politics - you should be too busy for this drama!
- Support and collaborate with your women colleagues instead of competing with them. Women can be harsh to one another - don't fall into this category. Remember: kindness is power.
- One of my favorite sayings: "Your reputation is like money - hard to get and easy to lose!"
- If you don't like yourself, why should anyone else?
- Be positive, engaging, motivating and inspiring. Otherwise, you'll attract the opposite - negative people with a lot of baggage.
- Avoid a life of regrets. Ask for what you want and say NO to what you don't want. So often we get into situations that we know we should have said no to, and we only end up regretting it afterwards.
- Use the word "we" instead of "I" and experience the power of defusing a negative situation.
- You can't change people, so quit trying. It's exhausting.
- There is no substitute for humility. Add these powerful statements to your daily vocabulary: "Thank you. Can I help you? What's your opinion on this? I'm sorry."

## What's your personal brand? Here's mine...

*Cathy Light's  
Secret Sauce to Success*

*1. Attitude: I'm a positive person both personally and professionally.*

*2. Confidence: I have the skills, abilities and talent to excel.*

*3. Drive: I'm ambitious. It's up to me to create my own success.*

*4. Visualization: I close my eyes, visualize my challenges, and see a positive outcome.*

*5. Negotiate: I've learned to ask for what I want and negotiate to equitable and fair agreements.*

*6. Energy: I'm action-oriented and can manage multi-tasking as a mother, busy executive and philanthropist.*

*7. Innovative: I like risk I'm not afraid to push the envelope. I'm forward-thinking, and I can create new ideas all the time.*

*8. Network: I have surrounded myself with a network of incredible people for whom I am extremely grateful.*

# Let's Get Started

Simple steps to create your roadmap to success...

**1 VISUALIZE** your success

**2 WHERE** are you now?

**3** What **STEPS** do you need to take to further you down your success path?

**4** Reality Check - **ASSESS** your Skills and Talents

**5** **WHO** are your mentors?

**6** **CELEBRATE** small wins

A red banner on a map pin that says "YOU'VE ARRIVED!". The banner is attached to a silver pin that is stuck into a map. The map shows various roads and geographical features in a light, muted color palette.

**1. VISUALIZE** – Everyone defines success differently. This is as individual as YOU!  
What do you see?

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**2. CURRENT STATE** – It's difficult to know your path unless you understand where you are now.  
Where are you on your roadmap? Starting your journey? Climbing? Arrived?

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**3. Identify THREE ACTIONS** that you can begin tomorrow to move you forward on your road map to success.

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1. Acknowledge your skills, abilities, talents and areas of learning.

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Development Areas</i>

2. Identify mentors that can provide honest feedback and coaching.

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3. Celebrate small wins on your journey to success. Journal your progress.

4. Describe when you know you have reached success.

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## Create Your Own *Secret Sauce* to **SUCCESS**



### *Your Secret Sauce Recipe to Success*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_





## WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

According to McKinsey & Company's monthly highlight in September 2016, titled "**Women in the Workplace 2016**," women fall behind early in corporate America and keep losing ground with every step. A joint study from LeanIn.Org and McKinsey elaborates on these patterns, providing some explanations in their research, and shares insights to priorities for leaders seeking to speed the rate of progress.

### Women in these positions include:

- C Suite positions **19%**
- Senior VP positions **24%**
- VP positions **29%**
- Director positions **33%**
- Managerial positions **37%**
- Entry level positions **46%**

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTINUED MOVEMENT

CEOs and executives from major companies offered insights and suggestions on the study's findings throughout the report. Some of these include:

1. Don't assume that the playing field has been leveled
2. Redesign systems to correct early inequities
3. Collect and review salary growth metrics
4. Build in "checks and balances" against unconscious bias
5. Make assignments based on qualifications, not presumptions



**CATHY LIGHT**, an Organizational Architect & Senior Advisor to Boards and CEOs, left corporate America in 1998 and has since founded five Bay Area companies: Business Builders; Assessment Leaders; Leadership Balance; Be Well, Perform Well; and Liderança Group, Inc. Cathy is passionate about Priceless Leadership™ and specializes in creating the right strategies, executive teams, culture, and processes from start-up to emerging growth companies to achieve business and workforce success. She is recognized as a successful, progressive entrepreneur and marketing executive with global experience in a cross-section of markets and industries. She is a global speaker, engaging and motivating her audiences on a variety of leadership topics: Driving Innovation, Building High-Performance Teams for 21st Century Leadership, Using Assessments to Improve Hiring and Organizational Performance, and How to Create Stakeholder Value. Ms. Light is equally passionate about working [with] women issues and is a frequent speaker on Women in Leadership: Challenges and Opportunities.

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