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women in sustainability leadership awards

We honor 20 women who are shaping the sustainability landscape of tomorrow

✦ For more, head back to p. 10 where our associate publisher Laura Heidenreich dives deeper on our annual Women in Sustainability Leadership Awards. And for the scoop on this year's judges, flip to p. 81.

They hail from small towns or big cities and learned their craft at great universities or on construction sites. Just as many cite their mothers and grandmothers as key influencers as do others mention authors and scientists.

A universal characteristic among the 2015 gb&d Women in Sustainability Leadership Awards honorees is a deep authenticity. They believe in protecting the earth and that their work makes it cleaner and greener. They also recognize the interrelatedness of people, the planet, and the practical matters of finance, business, public policy, and human behavior.

There is also a shared belief in the power of women in sustainability. Several referenced men who have shown them a path to effective advocacy, but names such as Rachel Carson and Janine Benyus surfaced in several interviews.

Sustainability in its many forms is inspired by fathers and mothers alike. But the daughters are getting it done. And they are more than willing to share what they've learned, and what they do, with the generations to come.

Text by Russ Klettke



Lori Duvall

Director of Global Impact, eBay

Duvall oversees eBay's Greener Commerce strategy, which encompasses the company's own environmental impacts and finds ways to drive green directions in

general commerce. She works with company leaders and engages rank and file employees in the company's environmental strategies. It's clear by what she says here that she leads this charge broadly and holistically.

"Never think that a particular job is 'not a sustainability' job. We're trying to re-engineer the global economic paradigm. I'd say that makes just about every job a sustainability job."

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Lori Duvall, eBay

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"Voluntary action is important. But the kinds of change we need to build a sustainable world will require political courage and public investment. That's not just at the global/national level—some of the most important policy progress is happening at the state and local level. Look for opportunities and allies everywhere."

"'Sustainability' has come to mean 'environmental sustainability.' In truth it's still a question that covers people, the planet, and economic viability. If you forget that, you risk partial solutions and unintended (negative) consequences."

"Sometimes people think that becoming a leader of people is primarily about gaining power and influence over them. The very best of leaders know that the more power you have, the more selfless you need to be. It becomes less about you and more about everyone else and how you can help them be successful."

Given the nature of eBay's business, Duvall fairly places the reuse of goods as part of the circular economy, where "molecules/materials/products are kept at their highest value at all times," she says.

Reading Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* affected her as a teenager. "I was so mad," she says. "Her book... definitely pushed me to choose the path I'm still on today."



Arlene D. Blum, PhD

Founder & Executive Director, Green Science Policy Institute

Based upon extensive research and policy work focused on flame retardants and other harmful chemicals, Blum endeavors to protect human

"What I'm doing now feels like my most important expedition, making a healthier world for all of us."
Arlene D. Blum, Green Science Policy Institute

health and that of global ecosystems. **The Green Science Policy Institute (GSPI)**, which she assembled in 2008, educates and builds partnerships among scientists, regulators, businesses, and public interest groups to develop innovative solutions for reducing harmful chemicals in products, including those in the buildings and furnishings industries.

Fast results from speaking up. "We looked at fire retardants in children's sleepwear

called 'tris,' and found they caused cancer and changed DNA," she recounts. "I wrote a lead article in *Science*, and three months later, tris was removed from children's sleepwear."

She later discovered tris was being used in furniture and fabrics, which makes its way into breast milk and causes thyroid problems in pets. This led her to form the GSPI, which counts among its victories keeping two billion pounds of toxic chemicals

out of electronic equipment manufactured worldwide. That effort was a wide-ranging collaboration of scientists, firefighters, and non-government organizations experts.

Blum also organizes mountain climbing for women. "I love going on expeditions, using every bit of your mental ability and physical strength to do something," she says. "What I'm doing now feels like my most important expedition, making a healthier world for all of us."

Erla Dögg Ingjaldsdóttir

CEO/Inventor,
mnmMOD Building
Solutions

Erla's Santa Monica, California-based design studio **Minarc** developed an award-winning, high-performance, factory-manufactured paneling system (in partnership with her husband, Tryggvi Thorsteinsson) that employs passive sustainable components (recycled steel framing, a waterproof membrane, thermal break, and mechanical chases that replace traditional home insulation). The no-VOC system is manufactured off-site, ships flat, and is adaptable to design and construction variation. When asked for five key learnings about leadership and sustainability, this native Icelander gave us eleven.

"You don't do anything alone, so say thank you," Erla says. "Never give up. Never doubt that you can make a difference tomorrow. Don't worry—things have the tendency to work out. Try your best. If you don't make mistakes you are most likely not doing anything. Don't give up; sometimes it feels like running a marathon, but when you feel like you are hitting the finish line, you

have to do it all again. Don't give up! Don't be afraid of competition, it can help you spread the word. Be a good sport ... show them how to do it. It takes a lot of education changing the world. Waste is a major problem—I am sure your mom told you to tidy up your room—it goes the same with Mother Earth. You will never please everybody so educate those who listen. Let your actions speak louder than your words."

Erla grew up in a country that values women, where the country's president from 1980 through 1996 (Vigdís Finnbogadóttir) was the first female head of state in all of Europe. Erla tells the story (incidentally, told to her by actress Gena Davis) of a letter received by Finnbogadóttir from a young boy. It read: "I am a boy. Do you think I could ever be a president?"

She is fascinated by products that make her ask, "Why did I not think of that?" citing coffee machines, Mac computers, white boards, the electric car, and salted caramels as examples. But among the many strong women of Iceland who she is inspired by, she names her daughters and her mother, a surgical nurse who managed the biggest surgical department in Iceland while her father spent weeks at a time in the North Atlantic as a fishing boat engineer.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ERLA DOGG INGJALDSDOTTIR (BOTTOM LEFT); ANTONIO CARRASCO (TOP RIGHT)



Hilary Beber Firestone

Senior Project
Manager/Advisor,
Energy Efficiency
Los Angeles
Mayor's Office of
Sustainability

Firestone has spent most of her career working for city governments. "I'm a firm believer that policymaking is a necessary driver to get things done," she says, noting that policy drives how people view and act on sustainability initiatives.

"As someone who has a tendency to desire immediate action, I have learned the importance of delayed gratification," she says. "Critical—and multifaceted—goals cannot be achieved at once. Regarding policymaking, it can take time to conceptualize and develop a regulation, have it adopted into law and roll out implementation, all before you start to see its impact."

"A true leader cannot get a project completed by herself, and the importance of teamwork becomes paramount." She says leaders should build teams of partners: "Not just an internal team, but a multidimensional one. For instance, ensuring the private sector is working with non-profits, and both are working in coordination with government, allows for

meaningful collaboration, and thus real change."

Firestone is inspired by a variety of leaders. "One of my mentors, **Laurie Kerr** [Director of Policy, **Urban Green Council**], taught me that if you can back bold ideas with data, sound reasoning, and technical justification, it becomes difficult for skeptics to look the other way. The sustainability movement has seen a surge of leadership in recent months; **Pope Francis**, **President Obama**, and Chinese President **Xi Jinping** are taking serious actions in the fight against climate change."

Firestone moved from New York to Los Angeles and had to start networking anew. She went on "blind dates, the professional type," and discovered leaders who were very welcoming. They include **Marcie Edwards**, the first female GM of LA Water and Power. "She is smart and strategic, and simply excels at getting the job done in a department that is notoriously complex. I find that continually motivating."

"A true leader cannot get a project completed by herself, and the importance of teamwork becomes paramount." Hilary Beber Firestone, Los Angeles Mayor's Office of Sustainability



Deborah Marton

Executive Director, New York Restoration Project

Since 2011, when she assumed the role of the head of this conservancy for under-resourced communities in the five boroughs of New York, Marton works with some big names: Founder **Bette Midler**, board members **Michael Kors** (celebrity designer), **Jann Wenner** (Rolling Stone founder/publisher), and **Maria Rodale** (multimedia publisher), among many others. They entrust and empower Marton, her staff, and volunteers to build green spaces that make life better for New Yorkers of all stripes.

“Leadership and sustainability are the same thing,” Marton says. “It’s about systems persisting over time. You want to manage resources as well as staff to continue after you are gone. Just as you would want resources flowing in a systemic way, you want your staff and your board to function to the best of their ability.”

But you can’t operate on gut feelings alone; accountability matters. “We know that seeing and experiencing nature and exercise, that air and water quality, can affect lifespans, birth weights, local economies, and civic engagement,” she says. “We are partnered with hospital and research institutions to determine if we can conclusively link green spaces to how people are able to live their lives.”

“It’s important to mentor anyone you can, male and female,” Marton shares. “I tell people there are two important things: to know yourself and to be honest about your skills, including where you can make improvements. Also to take chances. That builds leadership skills.” She adds that compassion, empathy, tough persistence, and not being defensive when wrong help get things done.

Her grandmother, born in Hungary and a refugee from communism, ranks up there with The Divine Miss M (Midler) as her inspiration.



Alicia Silva

General Director & Founder,
Revitaliza Consultores

A Mexico City-based architect (LEED AP BD+C), Silva is widely regarded by colleagues as an empowering influencer and is responsible for scores of LEED certified structures in Latin America and the US, among other services for builders and designers. She also holds leadership roles with **Sustainability for Mexico (SUME)** and the Mexican Institute of the Intelligent Building (IMEI). What brought her to working in sustainability?

“I have learned that sustainability is something that you live,” she says, explaining this formed while working in Seattle from 2002 to 2009 when she met community leaders that transformed her way of thinking. “This impacted my family, my lifestyle, and my approach to developing an organizational culture where life-work balance is cared for and achieved in order to have a sustainable life.”

“I have seen how inspiration only comes with passion,” she notes. “I need to really love people and society to understand how to make a difference but passion is the engine that keeps me going.”

Silva works with international

teams in Peru, Spain, Mexico and Colombia, observing “the potential and love for this earth is everywhere and that all we need is tools to transform our work into something that will benefit everybody’s quality of life.”

“As a woman working in a male dominated industry I have learned that gender does not matter when you know how to work together,” she notes. “Women make fabulous teammates when working toward a sustainable goal because they put their heart into the task at hand.”

“Selecting your team right is the most important thing to be able to delegate,” observes Silva. “I am so proud of my team, their intelligence and capabilities. We have evolved together. We can do much bigger things when we work as a team.”

Tesla Motors excites Silva, in part because of her experience working on solar power installations. She believes that next-generation batteries will transform homes, business and communities that may not yet even have electricity.

She draws her own inspiration from authors **Carol Sanford** (*The Responsible Business and The Responsible Entrepreneur*), **David Heinemeier Hansson** (*Rework: Change the Way You Work Forever*), **Adam M. Grant** (*Give and Take*), **Chip Heath** (*Made to Stick*) and **Sheryl Sandberg** (*Lean In*).



Dawn Rittenhouse

Director of Sustainable
Development,
DuPont Company

With the global, Delaware-based company since 1997—where she initially had neither budget nor staff—Rittenhouse has developed one of the most integrated and revered sustainability programs in the world. She is passionate about environmental conservation and has a deep understanding of the unique role women play in the effort. Here, she offers advice.

“Have a vision. You need one both for where you want to lead and for yourself personally. Over time it will almost certainly need to be tweaked, or even reset, but having your north star is important.”

“Walk the talk. You can’t be credible leading others if you don’t challenge yourself to do what you talk about—whether that is taking time for yourself to re-energize, or turning off the lights when you leave the office, or not printing documents unless it is necessary.”

“Sustainability is a long-term journey. I have been privileged to work under three CEOs who have led DuPont to where we are now. Especially in the business world where the planning horizon is at most a year, you have to be able to focus on changes over a much longer time period. Year to year it is often impossible to see progress, but over the 17 years I have been working on sustainability, we have achieved a lot. Two steps forward, one backward, does eventually get you someplace.”

“Love what you do. If you love your work and are committed to it, working on the challenges is interesting and rewarding.”

Who inspires her? “My mother. She started her career at a time when she was required to quit her job when she got married. Amazingly that didn’t deter her. Over my lifetime I have watched her take on and learn new things to give her access to new job opportunities—from accounting to computers.”

“I have seen how inspiration only comes with passion,” she notes. “I need to really love people and society to understand how to make a difference but passion is the engine that keeps me going.”
Alicia Silva,
Revitaliza
Consultores

Heather White

Executive Director,
Environmental Working
Group (EWG)

White empowers consumers to live in healthier homes and communities. Hailing from the Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee—an upbringing which she says “sparked my love for nature”—the wife and mother of two says her motivation today is to create a greener, healthier world for future generations.

“Sustainability brings my passion for science, math, law, and policy together.”

Studies in New Zealand, Kenya, at the universities of Virginia and Tennessee (environmental studies and law, respectively), and in women’s outreach for former Vice President Al Gore’s presidential bid in 2000, inform her work overseeing EWG’s advocacy and consumer education programs.

She helps people know what’s in their tap water.

EWG informs the public about chemicals in products that include shampoo and household cleaners, about pesticides in foods, and knowing how nearby farms, factories, and fracking operations might affect human health. The organization employs digital technologies to empower consumers to individually live sustainable lives.

“The ‘hero’ model of leadership is outdated,” she says.

When White is not testifying before the US Congress or meeting with White House officials on such matters as farm bill reform, energy policy, and toxic chemical pollution, she works with staff and others in the cause. “Leaders must empower everyone to be creative and come up with solutions. The monumental challenge of climate change and environmentally related disease will require everyone’s best thinking.”

Green chemistry, affordable solar batteries, and non-toxic buildings make White hopeful about the future. “A cul-

ture of creativity will bring about the innovations necessary for sustainability, and this next generation will expect it,” she says.

“Create space at work for your teams to connect with each other and play. Since empowerment is one of our core brand values, I created a monthly ‘empower hour.’ Staff share skills they have that may or may not be related to the environment but it’s fun, engaging, and personal.”

She cites author **Tara Mohr** (*Playing Big*) for detailing the pitfalls of perfectionism for women in leadership positions. Mohr “provides fascinating strategies to tap into your inner confidence to relax and just go for it,” White says.

Her grandmothers are just as inspiring to her.

One was a calculus teacher and the other earned her high school equivalency diploma later in life. “They knew that education and hard work would open new worlds. My grandmothers taught me that if the door of opportunity opens up you honor those before you by walking through it.”





Robin Chase

Founder,

ZipCar, Buzzcar, Veniam

Author, *Peers Inc: How People and Platforms are Inventing the Collaborative Economy and Reinventing Capitalism*

A serial entrepreneur (Zipcar, the largest carsharing company in the world; Buzzcar, a French peer-to-peer carsharing service; GoLoco, an inline ride-sharing company, and Veniam, building the networking fabric for the “Internet of Moving Things”), Chase keeps a busy schedule of writing, lecturing, serving



Mary Wenzel

Head of Environmental Affairs, Wells Fargo

In her position with the global banking company since 2004, Wenzel and her staff develop environmental strategies and drive organizational change to support the company’s sustainability efforts. Responsibilities include a focus on environmental philanthropy, operational sustainability, environmental and social risk

management, and clean technology financing and lending.

This means that she must lead the company to integrate environmental policies and processes into company operations and community development initiatives. Consider the results: \$11 million in grants to more than 385 environmental nonprofits in 2014 alone (\$40.2 million since 2012). Environmentally sustainable businesses received \$37 billion in investments and loans since 2012. The company also financed \$3.8 billion in environmental initiatives in low-to moderate-income communities since 2012.

on boards, and, by the way, running companies. A list of awards and honorary degrees from the likes of Harvard, the Illinois Institute of Technology, Business Week, and Fast Company populate her CV.

At the core of all this are leadership and sustainability.

“There is no distance between leadership and sustainability if you care about what’s best for your company and your employees,” she told us. “I’ve found that people want to work for companies that value the health of the environment, and certainly those companies that lead on green have a competitive advantage over the laggards.”

It only makes sense that Chase has made being a transportation entrepreneur her life’s work.

She’s a study in motion, and what interests her most affects us all. “I have been championing low cost wireless connectivity, especially mesh networking, for years because I see it as a key requirement for “smart” (rational) consumption of energy and transportation,” she says. “We can only respond to congested roads and peak electricity demand when we know about it and are charged a premium for it. One of the reasons Zipcar reduces CO2 emissions is because people see and pay the full cost of driving each and every time.”

Chase fully embraces the

“There is no distance between leadership and sustainability if you care about what’s best for your company and your employees,” Robin Chase, ZipCar, Buzzcar, Veniam

rapid technological changes to come.

She believes self-driving cars as potential game-changers, able to significantly reduce road fatalities while providing low-cost access to jobs, education, and healthcare. Air quality will improve (if the cars are electric), and congestion will be reduced, with less space overall needed for parking and roads.

Her top recommendation to women looking to develop leadership skills:

Be honest with one’s self, learn your strengths and weaknesses, surround yourself with people who complement you. “Really listen to how people respond to your ideas,” she says, “then take this feedback to improve how you explain your company or your idea the next time.”

Chase confesses being “in awe” of Christiana Figueres,

chair of the UN Climate Summit in Paris (December 2015). “She communicates urgency and upbeat energetic hope while pressing for very concrete action. She appears tireless.”

Sixty Wells Fargo Green teams, involving 4,000 members, volunteered 71,000 hours in their local communities last year alone.

Environmental and Social Risk Management policy, while the Wells Fargo Supplier Code of Conduct provides a holistic framework of environmental stewardship with 30,000 vendors in more than 36 countries.

Employee engagement in green initiatives is part of the company culture. Sixty Wells Fargo Green teams, involving 4,000 members, volunteered 71,000 hours in their local communities last year alone.

PHOTOS: ANDREW ELLIOTT (TOP LEFT); COURTESY OF WELLS FARGO (BOTTOM)

Jane Palmieri

Business President,
Dow Building &
Construction

In a prior position as general manager of Dow Solar, Palmieri (who trained as a mechanical engineer) drove strategy and commercialization of DOW Powerhouse Solar Shingles. Now she continues to lead in sustainable energy and efficiency while also championing the corporation's climate change policy proposals. Her beliefs on sustainability leadership:

“Goals are critical for making progress and energizing the organization. Bold goals that align to a sustainability vision not only can demonstrate to the market that you are a sustainability leader, but also motivate employees, who are more commonly choosing employers based on their commitment to the future.”

“Collaboration is absolutely essential. Our sustainability challenges are so multi-dimensional that anyone who thinks they can go it alone probably will not get very far. Collaborate with the markets, with industry peers, with NGOs and with governments. As co-chair of the Alliance to Save Energy, I'm seeing that collaborating across industries

can help drive energy efficient technologies into practice, as one step toward a sustainable future.”

“Communication of the value of sustainability is tough but critical. We need consumers to be aware of how they are impacted by energy efficiency, and to ask for technology that will save energy and save them money.

“Sustainability innovation takes time and patience. Like any new product, commercialization of a sustainable technology can proceed at its own pace, and understanding how that product fits into the long term sustainability needs of the market can be critical to maintaining focus on its success.”

“Business and public policy have to be in sync to enable sustainable technologies to succeed. To be a real sustainability leader, you have to be in sync with public policy, and encourage public policy that helps us get to where we all want to go.”

“I find that many young women are too reticent to embrace their inner leaders' early in their careers. Don't wait until someone gives you a formal leadership roll—leadership [can] shine through when you are able to influence a group, team, or decision without being officially or hierarchically in the position of leadership.”

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Jane Palmieri,
Dow Building &
Construction



PHOTOS: LYNNE BRUBAKER, COURTESY WILLIAM MCDONOUGH + PARTNERS (RIGHT); DAN DENARDO (LEFT)



Kira Gould

Director of Communications,
William McDonough + Partners
Co-Author, *Women in Green: Voices of Sustainable Design* (with Lance Hosey)

Gould is a writer and a LEED AP whose current role is sharing the possibilities of the Cradle-to-Cradle and Upcycle philosophies birthed by **William McDonough**. Widely published in her own right and described as a “powerhouse” of organization and leadership, she shares what she's learned from many years of green building advocacy:

“Listening is powerful. The best way to continuously learn is to listen—to people and to place. In a fast, information-saturated world, there is ever-greater pressure to prove one's value with assertion and action before hearing and synthesizing inputs. (Synthesis is often devalued or even dismissed as a “female trait” and an impediment to decisive action.)”

“Voice is more important than vision. This dichotomy became very clear during the research for *Women in Green*, and was especially reinforced by the writings of leadership expert/author **Sally Helgesen**, and especially her book, *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership*. Vision tends to relate to a worldview in which truth is abstract and objective, whereas voice represents an interactive, inclusive process in which truth relates to context and circumstance.”

“Finding leverage points is critical to making change. **Donella Meadows** taught us this in her seminal “Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System,” a brilliant, approachable treatise based on serious system analysis.

“Monocultures fail. Monocultures are a dangerous invention of a species that appears to be proving that it values cleverness over wisdom, and homogeneity over diversity. Monocultures are dangerous (and often suicidal, ultimately) in the context of companies, teams, communities, and physical environments. Human organisms thrive on diversity.”

“The natural world is a powerful model. We are a part of the natural world, within which are many models—many of which evolve far faster than we do—to inspire us to adjust our thinking.”

Gould is clearly inspired by McDonough, but also cites **Janine Benyus** (*Biomimicry: Innovation Inspired by Nature*), **Rachel Carson** (*Silent Spring*), and **Stewart Brand** (*How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They're Built*)—as well as the biophilia hypothesis and the framing of buildings and communities as social contracts – as significantly impactful and beneficially disruptive. “Once you understand the implications of these concepts, it's difficult to think about a building or a community the same way ever again,” she says.



Angela Foster-Rice

Managing Director of Environmental Affairs,
United Airlines

United Airlines is now using advanced sustainable aviation biofuels (Fulcrum Bioenergy), reducing CO2 emissions by as much as 80% over traditional petroleum jet fuel. Foster-Rice, an attorney who has been with the carrier since 2002, spearheaded agreements with the biofuel suppliers to make this happen.

This is a game changer for a fuel-hungry industry. “There will continue to be incredible advancements in fuel efficiency for aviation through both aircraft innovation and operational measures,” she says. “To take aviation to the next level in reduction in carbon intensity, I believe sustainable aviation biofuels has tremendous promise. Waste materials as feedstocks—such as municipal solid waste—can also protect natural resources and turn waste into a beneficial product. Importantly, development of a sustainable aviation fuels industry can (longer term) help with fuel diversification to protect against price volatility and energy security while contributing to a clean energy economy.”

Foster-Rice’s passion for sustainability is on the ground as much as up in the air. She expresses excitement for micro-grids “that don’t require significant investments in infrastructure nor associated impacts on the environment,” for solar energy, for systems that utilize waste materials to generate heat and electricity, and for evaporative refrigeration that requires no power at all.

She warns against being

“Be confident and don’t wait until you are sure about your abilities, dive in!” Angela Foster-Rice, United Airlines

distracted by “shiny objects,” advising to “stay grounded in the strategy you have built with your team. There are many more ideas to chase in sustainability than are possible to effectively implement.” Part of the leadership skills necessary to do this, says Foster-Rice, is to empower stakeholders and team members to remain honest with her even if the ideas clash. A key element is to provide mutual respect.

How fast can a \$38 billion company (2014 revenues) in a tight margins, highly competitive industry embrace green ideas? “Environmental leaders in companies must keep close to the pulse of broader company objectives and cost pain points,” she says, noting the need to be flexible and to hold onto the sustainability vision through periods of market volatility. “Continue to build that strategy through small, medium, and large steps. This is a marathon not a sprint.”

Foster-Rice advises women to trust themselves and their capabilities. “Be confident and don’t wait until you are sure about your abilities,” she says. “Dive in!” She cites her sister, **Renee Foster**, as the source of her inspiration. “She is bold, successful, and a great leader, all while keeping perspective on what is truly most important in life.”



Stacy Glass

VP, Built Environment
Cradle to Cradle Products
Innovation Institute

“We don’t have a waste problem, or a toxins problem, or a population problem, we have a DESIGN problem.” Glass cites this quote from **William McDonough** (*Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*) as the light bulb moment that inspired her career.

Now fully engaged in the C2C cause, Glass offers a list of leadership skills that mean the most to her: work is about the message, not the self; every team member should have “energy pointed in the same direction;” scalability and organizational sustainability won’t happen if she’s the smartest person in the room (i.e., it’s OK if smarter staff challenge the status quo); forgiveness “is my favorite human trait;” and “do what you say you are going to do” with transparency and trust.

“When I am clear that my work is about the message and the change we are trying to make, everything else falls into place,” she says. “Insecurities disappear, competition turns into collaboration, judgment becomes empathy, and people become more collaborative and creative. When I remember it’s not about me, I have the best chance to achieve the change I seek.”

In earlier work, Glass successfully built a green building materials distribution and marketing

“When I am clear that my work is about the message and the change we are trying to make, everything else falls into place,” Stacy Glass, Cradle to Cradle Products Innovation

company (**CaraGreen, LLC**) from a regional to national player. She now spends much of her time educating the design community on selecting green-certified products.

A colleague points out that Glass has been a critical force in the harmonization of material chemistry programs to accelerate industry change.

She led the formation of the Material Health Harmonization Task Group at the US Green Building Council, which makes up the LEED v4 Material Ingredients credit.

She acknowledges that leadership has been on her mind since she worked an administrative position early in her career. “I read the classic, *On Becoming a Leader* by Warren Bennis,” she says. “The book resonated with my personal values. I felt like ‘I’ve got this!’ It helped me understand that if I am true to my values and execute them at my best, I will be a good leader.”

Several women inspired her. Her mother (a full-time professional), business coach **Mary Kralj**, and **Kimberly Jenkins**, who introduced Glass to the C2C concept and a career in sustainability.

Michelle Moore

CEO,
Groundswell

Groundswell organizes local residents and institutions into collective purchasing groups, guiding them through the process of securing clean energy. The organization is based in Washington DC and helps end-users in the mid-Atlantic region to request supplier bids and to negotiate optimal rate schedules. Additionally, it organizes consumer activists to advocate for cleaner energy and healthier local environments.

Moore took the helm of Groundswell in mid-2015, but is also a strategic advisor to the **International WELL Building Institute** and an advisory board member for **Tribal Planet**, which builds mobile platforms that motivate consumers to take action for social good. She is also a senior fellow with the **Council on Competitiveness**, a Washington-based NGO that joins labor leaders, corporate CEOs, university presidents, and national laboratory directors in such things as infrastructure rebuilding. **Moore believes in the free market.** "Information and consumer markets move a lot faster than government," she observes. "The things the sustainability movement is fighting for—from clean energy to healthier food—are analogous

"The green building movement is a beautiful demonstration that it doesn't cost a pound of flesh to do the right thing and that you can build economic prosperity without destroying the place we live." Michelle Moore, Groundswell

to a technology upgrade for our economic system," the **White House** and **Clinton Foundation** veteran says. "It's prosperity and profitability that doesn't come at someone else's expense."

She suggests a greener world requires people who can lead others.

"As **David Gottfried** [author, *Explosion Green*, and considered father of the global green building movement] has reminded us time and time again it's about the people," says Moore. "It wouldn't be a movement without all of the individuals who've dedicated their time and bet their businesses on a better way."

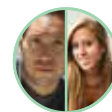
Those people should include women who are paid the same as men.

"Culture plus commerce equals change," she says. "The green building movement is a beautiful demonstration that it doesn't cost a pound of flesh to do the right thing and that you can build economic prosperity without destroying the place we live." Moore holds a pay stub from one of her two grandmothers who both worked in cotton mills more than 40 years ago. A week's work paid \$60 in 1966. "I will never forget how hard they worked alongside my grandfathers to raise and educate my parents, nor will I forget that their hard work is why I am here," she says.



PHOTO: COURTESY OF GROUNDSWELL

Meet the Judges



Chris Howe is the publisher and CEO of *Green Building & Design*, while **Laura Heidenreich** serves as the publication's associate publisher and president. Howe and Heidenreich are the co-founders of *gb&d's* parent company **Green Advocacy Partners, LLC** and the creators of the WSLA. Together they formed their company, which advocates for meaningful and lasting sustainable change with the mission of creating a more sustainable world.



Kimberly Lewis: Lewis is the senior VP of community advancement and conferences/events for the **US Green Building Council** where she works to integrate, diversify, and globalize USGBC's community of volunteers, chapters, and emerging professionals from around the world. She also serves on the advisory boards of Starwood Hotels, Marriott International Hotels, and convention visitors bureaus in New Orleans.



Rochelle Routman: In her role as the VP of sustainability at **Mohawk Industries**, Routman evolves the company's corporate strategic strategy, engages employees, supports Mohawk's customers in meeting their sustainability goals, and communicates the program to external audiences. She is a proven leader and expert sustainability strategist and the chair of our WSLA alumni group.



Charmaine Atherton: As a senior VP **Bank of America Merrill Lynch**, Atherton works for the company's Community Development Banking Group in Southern California and strives to improve the economic development of underserved communities and serves as the organization's women's leadership chair. ULI Los Angeles, a district council of the Urban Land Institute, also recently named her its new chair.



Fulya Kocak

Director of Sustainability,
Clark Construction Group

“In order to create change, a leader must be strong in the technical aspects of sustainability, as well as a strong diplomat, effective communicator, sincere networker, inspiring speaker, creative author, savvy salesperson, and more.”

The Bethesda, Maryland-based national construction firm counts on Kocak to be the “boots on the ground” implementer of green buildings and LEED certification. Calling herself a change agent and evangelist, Kocak says, “A successful leader in sustainability is not just an expert in one facet of their work but a well-rounded professional. In order to create change, a leader must be strong in the technical aspects of sustainability, as well as a strong diplomat, effective communicator, sincere networker, inspiring speaker, creative author, savvy salesperson, and more. A successful sustainability leader reminds me of a modern day Renaissance man, someone whose exper-

tise spans technical, social, financial, and environmental subjects.

Kocak began her career in operations, “in my hard hat and steel toed boots,” she notes. From there, building relationships was her true strength. “My network is composed of people at various states in their careers, including students, new graduates, senior mentors, and decision makers. Networking must always be approached as a two-way street.”

She is a fan of rapid change. “I admire the US Green Building Council’s success in transforming the building market worldwide in a very short period of time. Leveraging the LEED Rating system, USGBC made a strong business case around green buildings. As building professionals, we all learned how to incorporate sustainable solutions in our work as a norm in less than a decade.”

Five steps that Kocak offers for women looking to develop leadership skills: Build your network by volunteering. Understand operations inside out. Discuss organizational priorities with peers and senior leadership—listen, do not assume. Learn what sustainability costs and when it will pay back. And don’t wait for a sustainability position to happen to you; instead, do things to build experience.

She met Native American families at the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation (Montana) building a straw-bale literacy center as part of her graduate studies. Their culture and spiritual beliefs inform her work.



Dagmar B. Epsten

President & CEO,
The Epsten Group, Inc.

“Being an environmentalist could be depressing, and we need to remind ourselves that we need to keep our eyes clearly focused on good goals and uplifting actions!”
Dagmar B. Epsten, The Epsten Group, Inc.

A LEED Fellow and founding member of the USGBC Atlanta chapter, the German-born Epsten has received multiple building design and achievement awards. Her firm is responsible for a broad variety of projects on several continents and speaks at conferences from Oslo to Tokyo, Melbourne, and Riyadh. She thoughtfully shares ideas on sustainability leadership:

“It takes courage to lead an organization. I have become less reactive and more strategic over the years, using a strategic plan and creating regular time for long-range planning. I try to avoid looking at daily issues in an isolated way, and rather see them as symptoms of what may be needed in the long run. I have become fairly fearless over time in leading my organization and related initiatives.”

“It helps being an optimist. When I hear a discouraging statement, sometimes I just say, ‘I am an optimist.’ And then I try to find something to say that gives the person something to work for and to look forward to. That seems to help people some. Being an environmentalist could be depressing, and we need to remind ourselves that we need to keep our eyes clearly focused on good goals and uplifting actions!”

“There is beauty all around us. I found that yoga helps me to stay focused and calm and carry me through a busy week. If I can’t stay calm, it is hard to be an effective leader. The other thing that helps is to just appreciate beauty whenever we can catch a glimpse of it—a flower in my front yard on the way to work, the sky when I turn around before I go back into the house, and the vegetables that we pick in our backyard garden for a meal.”

“Carry out an ant to the backyard. Making buildings tight to the outside, including using operable windows with screens, allows insects to stay outside where they belong and keeps them in the ecosystem. I also like to design buildings so that birds don’t hit them (there are many resources out there for bird-friendly design, and let’s please keep cats away from our songbirds).”

“Life on earth is amazing. I have traveled in more than 50 countries. We can learn much about addressing resources and climate by taking a more indigenous approach to buildings, and we should have an open eye toward adapting creative, simple ideas for current and future sustainable design and construction.”

Amy Francetic

Chief Executive Officer,
Clean Energy Trust (CET)

Chicago-based Francetic

oversees the non-profit's mission to accelerate the development of clean energy technologies and businesses in the Midwest. The organization has thus far awarded \$3.2 million in funding to startups—largely commercializing research from labs and universities—that subsequently raised \$70 million in follow-on funding and has created at least 300 jobs. The former Silicon Valley executive shares her thoughts on sustainability leadership:

“Solving real problems in clean energy and sustainability takes patience, political grit, and generally big investments. It’s not the place to look for instant gratification. Communicating the big “why” for any kind of scientific breakthrough is difficult but is critical to success. Communicating with charisma and passion, but also simplicity, is necessary.”

“Millennials are pissed that they are inheriting a climate crisis and they want to do something about it. They should not be underestimated in politics or in business. Our elected officials

are lagging behind the public when it comes to views about climate and sustainability. It may take a few election cycles to get them aligned. We cannot let our despair prevent us from voting. Climate denial is dying a slow death.”

“Next generation battery storage at the grid, building, and vehicle level has the potential to disrupt and remake our modern electrical infrastructure. It is the foundation of our post-modern life. It will take everything we’ve got to help it achieve its potential—scientists, investors, engineers, politicians, and marketers. **Michael Polsky**, CEO of **Invenergy**, is running the largest independently held renewable energy company in the world. He is a fearless, wicked smart CEO. He believes that we are only at the beginning of the clean energy revolution.”

“Find a posse of like-minded women and support each other. CET is one of the founding members of the Chicago chapter of Women’s Energy Network, a national professional organization that supports women in the energy industry. There is also the C3E initiative that promotes and recognizes mid-career women in the clean energy field. For women in their 30’s, stop looking for mentors and start being mentors.”

“If you don’t feel like what you are doing matters, work is pretty empty.”



Lisa Colicchio

Director of Corporate
Responsibility,
CBRE

From her global real estate firm’s corporate headquarters in Los Angeles—the first corporate office to achieve the WELL Building Standard Certification—Colicchio is a hands-on manager who spearheads green programs from conception to implementation. She says that sustainability leaders need to engage in a breadth of venues. Here’s her advice.

“Get involved with as many organizations, committees, and industry conferences to network with peers and learn from others. Exchanging ideas and best practices with others will help to continually improve your skills and expand your experience. Seek out all relevant industry certifications and training programs to gain experience and exposure and to learn new skills. The sustainability industry is dynamic and continues to evolve and grow; online news publications and social media outlets are some of the best sources to stay current on topics and trends.”

“Seek opportunities to improve and lead—and embrace change. I regularly read what other top leading firms are doing in sustainability to learn best practices and study where trends are going. Change is inevitable and can be uncomfortable, but change always has positive outcomes. I focus on how I can make change work in my favor to seize on opportunities it presents and expand in new directions I hadn’t considered.”

“Jump in and give back: seek out all opportunities to take on additional responsibilities both as work and in the community. The experience that’s gained ...by working with a wide variety of groups in these diverse environments is priceless and can greatly enhance leadership skill development.”
Lisa Colicchio, CBRE

“Jump in and give back: seek out all opportunities to take on additional responsibilities both as work and in the community. Serve on committees in local business organizations, volunteer for charities; get involved in local community events. The experience that’s gained by working with a wide variety of groups in these diverse environments is priceless and can greatly enhance leadership skill development.”

“Janine Benyus is the queen innovator in the sustainability world. An expert in biomimicry, she employs the principles of nature to influence and inspire innovation and has made significant contributions in studying how nature’s best ideas can solve our toughest 21st century problems. Additionally, **Vandana Shiva** is truly inspirational and a real environmental superhero. Trained as a physicist and one of the original “tree huggers” (literally) she has dedicated her life to being an advocate, activist and intellectual seeking peace, sustainability and social justice.”

PHOTOS: MICHAEL MULLENHOFF (LEFT); COURTESY OF CBRE (TOP RIGHT)



Katrin Klingenberg

Executive Director,
Passive House Institute US
(PHIUS)

Klingenberg, a registered architect in Germany, built her first Passive House in Urbana, Illinois in 2003 and followed it up with three more for first-time low-income homebuyers. She founded PHIUS in 2007, which provides certification programs for architects and construction professionals as well as annual conferences. What does she say about leadership?

“Keep the eye on the prize,” she says. “PHIUS’ mission—to reduce carbon emissions from buildings to globally agreed-upon limits—looked daunting 10 years ago, and to some it still does. But we are obligated to try. Staying in touch with one’s original vision and motivation, and nurturing that motivation, is important to be able to manifest the desired change. So is

learning from mistakes and being kind to oneself, taking responsibility and committing to doing it better next time.

“Stay flexible and open to creative and maybe unusual solutions. Sometimes they are the best ones. Remembering that the carbon reduction challenge—especially in the building sector—is not a sprint but a marathon. In 2012, we had a dozen certified projects. Today we have hundreds. Each was a critical steppingstone to a critical transition. Getting committed, self-motivated, resourceful, and talented people on the team is priceless. Teamwork is clutch.”

Klingenberg credits her mother Ingrid for inspiring her career path. And she cites **Amory Lovins** (of

“Staying in touch with one’s original vision and motivation, and nurturing that motivation, is important to be able to manifest the desired change.”
Katrin Klingenberg, PHIUS

the Rocky Mountain Institute) as someone of impact. “His vision has the potential to increase resource efficiency not only in technical terms but on a whole systems basis by uncovering existing synergies on all levels. He helped me to see another way, the alternative to constant growth, which in the beginning seemed totally counterintuitive. His writings create a significant shift in how we think about energy and how we can generate and provide for energy needs without continuing to deplete our resources.” **gb&d**