

Telling the stories of remarkable women in the Okanagan

I AM WOMAN

MAR
2025

EMPOWERING
SUCCESS
THROUGH
GIVING AND
GROWING.

21
WOMEN

DRIVING IMPACT IN
LOCAL BUSINESS,
NONPROFITS, AND
EVERYDAY LIFE.

ANITA
PARKER

WISDOM, WEALTH & WELL-BEING



Editor’s Letter

Welcome to the 2025 edition of the I Am Woman magazine, where we continue to celebrate the remarkable women who are shaping our communities.

As we turn the page into another exciting year, we are reminded of the incredible progress women have made in every sector, from entrepreneurship, healthcare to tech, and beyond. The stories in this issue reflect the undeniable power of resilience, determination, and collaboration—qualities that have always been at the heart of every woman’s journey.

This year, we’ve been privileged to share the stories of women who are not only breaking barriers but also redefining what it means to lead. From CEOs and founders to artists and advocates, the women featured in this issue are proof that leadership comes in many forms.

We are particularly inspired by the women who are leading with compassion and innovation, creating pathways for others to follow, and pushing boundaries in ways that have an undeniable impact on the people in our community. Their journeys remind us that success is not just about achieving personal milestones, but about lifting up others along the way.

Through the stories that follow, we hope to foster not just inspiration, but action. We hope you find a sense of connection and empowerment as you move through this year.

Here’s to women who dream big, work hard, and inspire us all to be more, do more, and give more.

Megan Trudeau



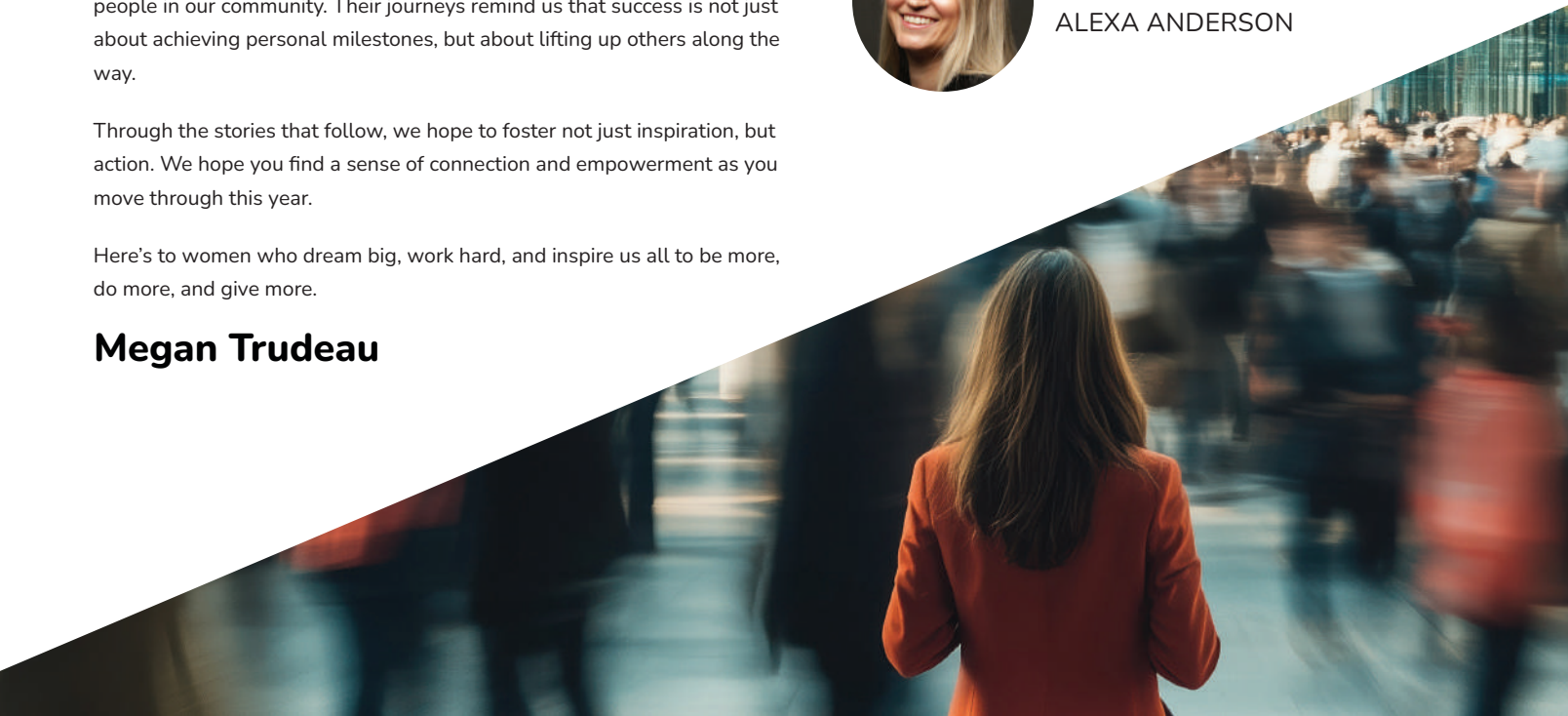
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Brittney Weatherill Tina Stanley

ATB Wealth

For Brittney Weatherill and Tina Stanley, wealth advisors at ATB Wealth in Kelowna, helping people achieve financial empowerment isn't just their job—it's their passion.

Brittney's journey into finance began while she was working towards her Bachelor of Business Administration degree with a specialization in finance. Growing up in an entrepreneurial family, she was introduced to the world of business early on, sparking a curiosity that quickly evolved into a passion for financial planning.

"I opened my first investment account as soon as I could," Brittney recalls. "I learned everything I could about investing, and as I continued my education, I realized how much I loved helping people build wealth and improve their lives."

In March 2024, Brittney joined ATB Wealth, where she found an environment that perfectly aligned with her values.

"I was immediately drawn to the people and the services ATB Wealth offered. It was the perfect fit. The ability to offer my clients elevated advice and a wider range of options has been fulfilling," Brittney explains.

Tina's path to finance was equally rooted in a desire to help others. Having spent years working in the fitness industry, she made a bold transition into the financial world in 2007.

"It was a big shift, but I realized quickly how deeply finances can affect our overall sense of well-being," she says, adding that she became passionate about teaching financial literacy through non-profits, then as an advisor in the financial services industry. She joined ATB Wealth when they expanded to Kelowna in 2023.

"I had always heard such positive things about ATB's culture and commitment to putting clients first," Tina explains. "When the opportunity came up to work with them, it was an easy decision."

For both women, the best part of their work at ATB Wealth is the ability to help clients build their dream lives.

"What I love the most is seeing clients get excited about their future," Brittney says. "Helping them understand how to manage their money and watching them take control of their financial lives is incredibly rewarding."

Tina adds that the top financial priorities for people in 2025 should be paying down debt, saving for emergencies, and investing for the long-term.

"Financial literacy is more important than ever. People need to understand the basics—how to budget, save, and make their money work for them. And having an advisor by your side can make all the difference. We help people stay accountable, guide them through the process, and ultimately help them reach their goals faster."

"It's all about taking those small steps to build a strong foundation. With an ATB Wealth advisor, you get that built-in accountability," Brittney adds. "We're here to guide you through each step and help you make adjustments as you go along."

Their expertise, passion for service, and dedication to client success are just a few reasons why ATB Wealth has become a trusted partner for people looking to reach their financial goals.

ATB Wealth consists of a range of financial services provided by ATB Financial and certain of its subsidiaries. ATB Investment Management Inc. and ATB Securities Inc. are individually licensed users of the registered trade name ATB Wealth. ATB Securities Inc. is a member of the Canadian Investor Protection Fund and Canadian Investment Regulatory Organization.

Brianna Wells

Opera Kelowna



In a world that often feels disconnected, Brianna Wells and Opera Kelowna are proving that music, theatre, and community can come together in powerful ways.

Brianna is the Managing Director of Opera Kelowna. She has always been drawn to the world of music and theatre, a passion that was nurtured from an early age. Growing up in Edmonton, she was fortunate to have a family who regularly took her to performances, sparking a lifelong love for the arts.

"Opera is the medium of choice for me," Brianna says. "It makes me laugh, cry, grieve, and celebrate all that life has to offer."

Before joining the Opera Kelowna team, Brianna worked as Edmonton Opera's communications manager for three years, a role that gave her a deeper understanding of the performing arts and its nonprofit challenges. But it was after quitting that role and diving into a PhD that her passion for opera took a more academic turn.

"I was fascinated by how opera is part of public discourse in North America," she says. "When we talk about opera we're not just talking about art, but about how community, class, money, beauty and aesthetics are all intertwined."

In 2018, Brianna relocated to Kelowna and began exploring opportunities to keep her hand in the world of opera. In addition to her work in Research

Development at UBC, she soon saw a need for stronger administrative leadership at Opera Kelowna. Despite the challenging timing—just as the pandemic was disrupting the arts—she took on the role of managing director, alongside new artistic director Rosemary Thomson, in 2020. Since that difficult year, the organization has not only survived, but experienced significant growth.

Opera Kelowna, a vibrant arts hub in a city many might consider too small for an opera company, is proving the power of live performance to unite and inspire.

"We present all kinds of opera, from our main stage show in August to pop-up performances in long-term care homes," Brianna explains. "Opera can come in all shapes and sizes, and I think it's amazing that a city like Kelowna can support such a range of performances." The company now reaches more than 2500 people annually across more than 20 performances and programs.

For Brianna, the significance of local access to the arts is undeniable.

"I believe life is richer when you have access to artistic expression," she says. "It's not just about music or theatre. It's about creating an experience that connects with you on a visceral level. Great singing and music coming at you live is something you feel right in your body."

Opera Kelowna continues to grow, serving as a beacon of arts and culture in the community. The organization's commitment to accessibility is also reflected in their pricing model, offering 10% of tickets at "pay what you wish" rates.

"For us, ticket prices shouldn't be a reason why someone can't experience opera," Brianna emphasizes.

Brianna encourages everyone to stay tuned for Opera Kelowna's upcoming events by signing up for their newsletter. With an exciting first Verdi production slated for August and a variety of performances throughout the year.



Shandi Schwartz

STRUT FOOTWEAR

Shandi never set out to own a shoe store, at least not in any conventional sense. But sometimes, life has a way of weaving together our passions in unexpected ways.

For Shandi, the transformation from teacher and counselor to entrepreneur came after 23 years of shaping young minds in Kelowna's school district. While she loved helping kids, the demands of her career—coupled with a particularly tense teachers' strike in 2014—pushed her to a breaking point.

It was at that professional low point she faced a pivotal choice: accept her fate or take control of her own destiny. After a good cry, she did what many might consider the unthinkable—she decided to open a shoe store.

"I have always loved people AND I've always been a bit crazy for shoes, so it is no coincidence that I found a way to weave these two passions together into my own business that I am extremely proud of," Shandi says.

Despite her extensive background in education, Shandi was new to the world of retail. And, when she shared her plans with others, the

response wasn't exactly encouraging. "Kelowna doesn't need another shoe store," they'd say. "What do you know about retail?" And worst of all, "Why would you leave a job with a pension?"

"It made me realize, very early on, that I had to believe in myself. Further to that, I had to ensure that everything I did from that moment on was done meticulously well," she recalls.

Instead of getting discouraged, these questions fueled her resolve. She attended trade shows, connected with industry experts, and pushed herself into uncomfortable situations where confidence was vital. At one such event, an industry veteran remarked, "You're the hardest-working shoe store owner who doesn't even have a store!"

It was at that moment she realized that perseverance pays off.

Strut Footwear opened its doors in 2017 at Kelowna's Mission Park Shopping Centre, and just this past January, the store completed a major renovation, doubling its space.

"Here we are, eight years later, in 2025, and it feels like déjà vu as I walk into this newly renovated beautiful space. It's incredible, I never

dreamed Strut would evolve into this. I love our fresh new look.....it's kind of like Strut's all grown up now!" Shandi says.

Going into the spring, the store has the largest collection of footwear to date, along with an expanded collection of handbags and accessories.

"The reaction and encouragement from our customers and our community has been nothing short of extraordinary and heartwarming. I am so grateful," she adds.

"Give a girl the right pair of shoes and she can change the world," Shandi says, echoing a sentiment that has become Strut's guiding philosophy.

It's not all about the shoes, though. As Strut has grown, so has Shandi's perspective on success. Early on, simply making enough money to keep the doors open felt like a major win. But over time, as Strut began to carve out a space in Kelowna's retail scene, the meaning of success evolved.

Rather than striving for more stores or bigger profits, Shandi focused on creating a place where people feel valued, heard and connected. Success, for her, isn't measured by how much Strut grows—it's about how much it makes a difference in the lives of the women who walk through its doors.

"I ALWAYS WANTED STRUT TO BE A PLACE WHERE WOMEN FEEL CELEBRATED."

"I wanted it to be a space for real conversations, real connections. The fact that Strut has become that place is what fills my cup every single day," she says.

This sense of purpose is also reflected in Strut's commitment to giving back to the community. Inspired by her mother, who worked at a women's shelter in Edmonton, Shandi made it a core value of her business to support local causes, particularly those that focus on education and helping women.

Through Strut's partnership with the Central Okanagan Bursary and Scholarship Society (COBSS), the store has given out nearly \$40,000 in scholarships to local high school graduates. And the giving doesn't stop there—Strut has also supported organizations like the Kelowna Women's Shelter, Project Literacy, Mamas for Mamas, the YMCA of Southern Interior BC, and many others.

"I still pinch myself sometimes when I walk into my store, because for so long it was just a crazy dream in my head," Shandi reflects.

"Now it is a reality, and I could have never dreamt it to be this fulfilling and rewarding. The little shoe store I dreamt of, pulled all-nighters to prepare for, worked tirelessly to create, has become so much more than just a little shoe store."





Katie Carter

Health & Fitness

Katie never planned on becoming a business owner. Growing up in Prince George, BC, she studied psychology, expecting to become a counselor. But life had other plans.

"I struggled with my own physical and mental health," she says. "When I started sharing my wellness journey online, people began reaching out, asking for advice. That's when I thought—maybe I can help others achieve what I did."

She originally set out to be a personal trainer, working in a gym. She got certified, landed a job, and was ready to go. Then COVID hit.

"I had just gotten certified, and then all the gyms shut down," she recalls. "I had to figure out how to train people online, which was completely new to me."

With no business background, she learned through trial and error, testing different coaching platforms and refining her approach. "At first, I did everything manually, figuring things out as I went," she says. "But honestly, moving online was the best thing that could have happened. It gave me flexibility, and my clients loved training from anywhere."

As her business grew, she realized fitness

wasn't just about workouts and meal plans—it was about mindset.

"The biggest barrier isn't gym access or food choices," she explains. "It's the way people talk to themselves. Negative self-talk, lack of motivation, unhealthy habits—that's what holds them back."

Her psychology degree became the foundation of her coaching. "So much of my work is about helping clients reframe their thinking," she says. "I almost feel like a counselor sometimes. We focus on mental health, confidence, and breaking unhealthy patterns just as much as physical training."

Building a business from scratch wasn't easy. "I had no business degree, no experience," she admits. "I made mistakes, tried different systems, and eventually took courses to refine my approach."

Even now, she reminds herself that failure is part of the process. "Not everything works out. I've launched programs that didn't take off. But that doesn't mean I'm failing—it just means I need to adjust and try again."

Now, five years in, her definition of success has changed.

"At first, success was just making enough to pay rent and prove I could do this," she says. "Now, it's about impact. Seeing my clients build confidence, improve their mindset, and feel better in their own skin—that's what keeps me going."

To celebrate her business's fifth anniversary, she's hosting a community workout event—an energizing session followed by donuts and champagne. But she's also thinking ahead.

"I want to expand my educational resources, create more accessible programs, and maybe even mentor other fitness coaches," she says.

Her advice for new entrepreneurs? Just start.

And for Katie, that's exactly what this journey has been about.

Melina Moonesawmy

Mel in Kelo

Melina's journey into entrepreneurship showed her that to best serve others, you first have to invest in yourself.

What began as an unanticipated detour from accounting blossomed into the founding of her own marketing agency, Mel in Kelo, where she now combines creativity, digital expertise, and a deep sense of purpose to help businesses thrive.

Her first entrepreneurial inspiration came from her father, who left his job to start his own business when Melina was 12-years-old. As he was working with a tight budget, she helped him out by doing some graphic design, including an ad for an airline magazine, which is still in use today.

"Looking back now, I realize that even at a young age I had the creativity and insight to create something that would stand the test of time," she reflects.

Later in life, Melina was training to be an accountant, but after five years she realized that it was not her calling. Around that same time, the pandemic hit and she found herself drawn into something new — the world of marketing.

"I SEE IT AS HAVING A CAREER THAT ALIGNS WITH MY AUTHENTIC SELF AND REAL STRENGTHS."

"It was a strange time, and everyone was figuring things out. But that's when I realized this is where I could make a real difference," she says.

At the age of 28, she enrolled in a Digital Marketing program, a move that pushed her out of her comfort zone.

"Going back to college wasn't easy, but it was the best decision I made. Sometimes, the best way to serve others is by first investing in yourself," she reflects. Starting a business, however, came with its own set of challenges.

"I was overwhelmed. I thought I could handle everything—marketing, client management, admin—but soon realized I couldn't do it all." Recognizing the need for help, she began to delegate tasks and streamline her workflow, a shift that transformed the way she approached her business.

Now, she is one of the sponsors for the Canadian Digital Marketing Summit in Kelowna for 2025, and is excited about a new service she has launched for her clients. She now offers a membership subscription, aimed at providing affordable marketing expertise to small business owners.

"I know many businesses can't afford a full-time digital marketer, so this subscription gives them access to regular expert support," she explains. What excites her most is that members don't just benefit from her knowledge, but from the collective expertise of a network of other specialists she's brought together.



As a successful entrepreneur and marketing expert, Melina has also had a shift in how she views success. A younger version of herself equated success with traditional professions, like a doctor or lawyer.

"Now, I see it as having a career that aligns with my authentic self and real strengths," she explains. "Interestingly, many professionals I've always admired are now seeking my advice on marketing themselves because at the end of the day, they also have to sell their services."

Melina's approach is rooted in a deep understanding that every business has its own unique story. And, as she's learned firsthand, those stories are worth sharing.



Danielle Ursulan

Oak and Ivory Building Co.

For many people, switching careers can be daunting, especially when it means stepping away from a secure job in a familiar field.

For Danielle Ursulan, the founder of Oak and Ivory Building Co., the transition into interior design and project management has led to a fulfilling and successful second career.

Danielle's path to entrepreneurship wasn't a traditional one, but her passion for design and her innate organizational skills set her on a trajectory toward transforming homes—and the lives of those who live in them.

Before making the change, Danielle spent over a decade in healthcare at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH). It may have been a stable and rewarding career, but something was missing.

"I've always been super creative," she explains. "But I never saw interior design as a career path until later in life."

Her design journey began informally when friends and family started approaching her to help with their weddings.

"People would say, 'You're so creative, can you help with this? Can you do my wedding decor?'" she recalls. That led to more weddings than home projects.



"IF SOMETHING IGNITES YOU INSIDE, SOMETHING YOU CAN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT, PURSUE IT, LIFE IS TOO SHORT NOT TO ENGAGE IN WHAT YOU LOVE."

"I was doing it for free at first, just because I loved it," Danielle says. "And then, people started asking me to design their homes, and that's when I realized I could turn this into something more."

At that point, she decided to return to school and obtain her diploma in interior design. Soon after, she landed a job at a furniture store, where she successfully staged numerous homes and assisted clients with their design selections.

After spending several years in the furniture industry, she wanted to challenge herself further and use the drafting skills she had developed during her studies.

This led her to a position as a lead designer, where she combined project management with estimation. After gaining invaluable experience, she felt ready to embark on her journey, which resulted in the establishment of Oak and Ivory Building Co.

With her background in project management and a deep passion for interior design,

Danielle discovered the ideal niche: a blend of design and project management that distinguishes Oak and Ivory from others. Her unique ability to coordinate every project element is a rarity among designers.

At Oak and Ivory Building Co., Danielle goes beyond creating floor plans and choosing the right materials. She oversees projects from the ground up, from the build-out to the final touches, making sure everything is meticulously organized.

"I hold a diploma in interior design, but I also possess hands-on experience in project management," Danielle explains. "That combination truly differentiates me from other designers. I grasp both the creative aspects and the logistical necessities of completing projects on budget and schedule."

"I can manage everything from obtaining quotes, pulling permits, coordinating trades, overseeing budgets and involving engineers if necessary," she adds. "That's where my

experience and skill set greatly benefit my clients. They receive not just a beautiful design, but one that is feasible, cost-effective, and constructed."

Transitioning careers may have been a significant leap, but it has undoubtedly paid off for Danielle.

"It was indeed a slow climb," she acknowledges. "However, once I began working for myself, confidence started to build, clients started to pour in, and I felt I was finally doing something that inspired me."

Danielle encourages anyone contemplating a similar career change, "Go for it. Take small steps each day to move towards your goals."

"It can be intimidating, without a doubt. But if something ignites you inside, something you can't stop thinking about, pursue it," she advises. "Life is too short not to engage in what you love."

Jeni Wolsey's journey into the world of architecture and interior design was sparked early by her great-grandfather, a man whose artistic influence still echoes through family stories. According to family journals, he was a renowned associate of Canada's renowned Group of Seven painters, and it was from him that Jeni inherited her passion for creative expression.

While her early years were steeped in artistic expression through drawing and painting, it was in the environment-shaping world of interior design where she would truly leave her mark. More than 25 years ago, Jeni began her career as an interior designer and founded her own company. That experience as an entrepreneur—though deeply fulfilling—came with its own set of challenges.

"Entrepreneurship isn't for the faint of heart," she reflects. "You have to be resilient and willing to adapt. Challenges come in all shapes and sizes, and the best thing you can do is approach them with patience, perspective, and a willingness to learn."

"ENTREPRENEURSHIP ISN'T FOR THE FAINT OF HEART."

Beyond the hurdles of business ownership, Jeni also faced the challenge of carving out credibility in a traditionally Architect-led industry. Transitioning from the interior design world into architecture was no small task, but it was this very challenge that laid the foundation for Wolsey Wall Architecture and Interior Design. Today, the firm is redefining how architecture and interior design interact.

Co-led by principals Jeni and Architect Brian Wall, Wolsey Wall is built on a unique premise: the belief that architecture and interior design should not be separate, sequential phases of a project but rather an integrated, harmonious process from inception.

"Traditionally, architecture comes first, and interior design follows. We are changing that process," Wolsey explains. "By bringing

Jeni Wolsey

Wolsey Wall Architecture & Interior Design

interior design to the table early, we ensure that every part of a project is aligned from the beginning. It creates a more thoughtful, integrated outcome."

As a leader, Jeni brings not just design expertise but also a sharp business acumen, ensuring that creativity and financial sustainability go hand in hand. Alongside Brian, she has cultivated a firm culture that values people, collaboration, innovation, and a deep respect for the craft of both architecture and interior design.

But her definition of success has shifted over time. In the early days, she measured it in milestones—delivering projects on time and ensuring profitability. Now, her perspective is broader and more holistic.

"Success has evolved," she explains. "It's no longer just about efficiency or the bottom line." It's about creating environments that function seamlessly, feel intuitive, and truly support & fulfill the needs of those who inhabit & experience them. When that happens, joy becomes a shared experience—and that is the real success."

Through Wolsey Wall, Jeni is leading projects across Canada, working in diverse sectors including multi-family housing, corporate, and retail. A key focus for the firm is its work with First Nations partners, a responsibility Jeni and her team approach with both sensitivity and commitment. With offices in Kelowna, Winnipeg, and Ontario, as well as remote staff in Calgary, Wolsey Wall's impact is nationwide.

As the firm continues to push boundaries, Jeni remains dedicated to blending design with business strategy and fostering collaborations that lead to innovation. For her, it's not just about designing spaces—it's about shaping experiences and creating lasting impact through thoughtful, intentional design.



MBA Chartered Professional Accountants Inc.

At MBA Chartered Professional Accountants, a boutique accounting firm in Kelowna, B.C., Kelly Ann Tardif, Stephanie Madahar and Alexis Semeschuk represent the diverse paths – shaped by personal experience and a desire to make a meaningful impact – that can lead to a successful career as a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA).

For Kelly Ann, Associate Partner and lead of MBA's corporate tax and assurance department, the path to becoming a CPA could be considered unconventional. While raising a family, she decided to pursue an accounting career by taking night courses, eventually earning her Master of Professional Accounting (MPAcc) from the University of Saskatchewan, followed by her CPA. She has been in the accounting industry since 2009 and joined the MBA team during the pandemic.

"It wasn't easy, but my perseverance paid off. I emerged with a rewarding career, the flexibility to spend time with my family and an opportunity to have a positive impact on my valued clients and community," reflects Kelly Ann. In her life she strives not only to set an example for her children, but for anyone considering taking on a similar challenge. "I made the decision to join MBA because of their commitment to their clients' needs and understanding that the big picture looks at not just compliance, but

at business development, wealth and estate planning".

Originally from Kelowna, Stephanie worked at Deloitte in Vancouver after earning her Bachelor of Business Administration. While she gained valuable experience, Stephanie realized she wanted to focus on smaller, owner-managed businesses, where she could make a deeper impact. Now a Senior Accountant with MBA, Stephanie says working at MBA has given her the opportunity to interact with clients on multiple levels and provide them with personalized services.

"MBA's approach to working with clients on both their personal and business goals really resonated with me," Stephanie says. Since returning to Kelowna and joining MBA, she's found a stronger sense of purpose in helping clients achieve long-term success.

Growing up with two CPAs as parents, Alexis naturally gravitated toward accounting. After working at a large firm while earning her CPA, she found the work-life balance lacking and the client impact minimal.

"At MBA, we take the time to really get to know our clients and focus on building long-term relationships. We make a point of truly understanding our clients' needs, goals, and dreams to help them get to

where they want to be," she says. Alexis, a Manager with MBA, joined the firm in 2020 and has found MBA's holistic approach to accounting rewarding, especially as the firm concentrates on the entire financial picture of its clients.

Each of these women faced unique challenges in their careers. For Alexis and Stephanie, balancing work with the demanding CPA program was tough, while Kelly Ann experienced the added challenge of managing family responsibilities. Despite the hurdles, all three emphasize the value of resilience and the importance of finding balance in both personal and professional life.

What sets MBA apart is its commitment to work-life balance. Unlike larger firms where billable hours dominate and often serve to oppress both accountants and clients, MBA offers a flexible environment with shorter work weeks that prioritizes client success and employee well-being.

"At MBA, we don't track hours. When a client feels comfortable enough to reach out without the worry of being billed extra, it's much easier to set up a plan of action to help them navigate every stage of their business. This approach allows us to focus fully on our clients' needs," says Kelly Ann.

Additionally, MBA offers its employees the opportunity to work on career growth. With the wealth of knowledge that owner Peter McFadden brings to his practice and has imparted to his staff, MBA is able to provide a client-focused approach that includes a variety of services, like assistance with mergers, acquisitions, estate planning, succession planning and more.

For those considering a career in accounting, Alexis advises: "Find something you're passionate about and stick with it." Stephanie recommends persistence, saying: "Don't give up, even when obstacles arise." Kelly Ann encourages others by saying: "It is never too late. Life and work don't often move in a straight line. Be patient with yourself, and you will find that the journey is just as important as the destination."



Your Network is Your Net Worth

Join **Kelowna Women in Business** and be part of a supportive network that uplifts, educates, and connects women across industries.

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IT'S NOT ONE-TO-ONE. IT'S ONE TO MANY.

After 12 years in the banking industry, I felt called to step out of my comfort zone and launch BarterPay™ Kelowna. I had seen too many small business owners struggle with limited options to grow, and I knew there had to be a better way. That's when I turned to the oldest form of commerce—barter. BarterPay™ helps small businesses across Canada turn idle inventory, unsold time, and unused space into opportunities. With over 4,000 members, we offer an innovative network where businesses earn Barter Credits™ by sharing their spare capacity. These credits can be used to acquire the things they need—saving cash while reducing waste. Your personal Barter Coach™ works with you to uncover new opportunities and make the most of the BarterPay™ ecosystem. It's a smarter way to grow your business, save money, and build meaningful connections. Discover how BarterPay™ can transform your business today.

Dr. Emily Pratt BSc ND

Nourish Health Clinic

For Dr. Emily Pratt, the path to naturopathic medicine wasn't linear—but it was inevitable. With a background in biochemistry and molecular biology, she originally set her sights on conventional medicine, even writing the MCAT. But as life unfolded, she found herself drawn to a different approach—one that combined the best of modern science with a patient-centered, integrative perspective.

Now, with 15 years of practice, Dr. Pratt has made it her mission to shift the narrative around naturopathic care. "We have modern medicine for a reason," she says. "But there's also space for a proactive, integrative approach—one that gives people evidence based options."

Her work spans everything from integrative dermatology, hormone balancing, fertility, thyroid and adrenal health, autoimmune disease, digestion, chronic pain, and cancer care. "Women, in particular, are the drivers of health in their homes," she explains. "But we're also notorious for deprioritizing ourselves. We keep appointments for our kids and partners but hesitate to take up space for our own needs."

At her clinic, Nourish Health Clinic, Dr. Pratt and her team are dedicated to providing a collaborative space where patients feel heard. "I'm not here to replace anyone's family physician," she emphasizes. "I always strive to work in collaboration with them. It's about filling the gaps, giving people informed choices, and making healthcare feel like a conversation—not a transaction."

A large part of her practice involves educating women about their bodies. "Just because something is common doesn't mean it's normal," she says. "I want women to understand their health, not just accept discomfort as part of life." Whether it's supporting perimenopausal women through hormone shifts, offering evidence-based naturopathic solutions for anxiety and ADHD, or helping patients navigate long-term wellness, her approach is rooted in science and practicality.

But the journey hasn't been without its challenges. "There are still stereotypes around naturopathic medicine," she admits. "It's why I always lead with education. I want people to understand that this isn't about alternative medicine—it's about integrative care." She acknowledges that many of her patients come to her after exhausting traditional options, unsure of what to expect. "I



always start by listening. My job isn't to sell supplements or make promises—it's to offer options tailored to each person."

Beyond patient care, Dr. Pratt is constantly looking at ways to expand access. She recently completed training in IUD insertions to help address barriers to reproductive health and is growing programs focused on weight management—not for vanity, but for longevity and muscle health, especially for perimenopausal women. "It's not about a one-size-fits-all approach," she explains. "It's about helping people understand their bodies and giving them the tools to feel their best."



So, what does success look like for her now? "It's not about money or numbers," she says. "It's about having the time to show up—for my family, for my patients, and for myself. It's about knowing I'm doing my best to try to make a difference—one conversation, one choice, one empowered woman at a time."

Dr. Emily Pratt isn't just practicing medicine. She's redefining it.

Barb Jackson, Melani Mcbratney, and Gabriela Rubio Bocangel

KGH Foundation's Business Enterprises

At the helm of the KGH Foundation's social enterprises are three exceptional women: Barb Jackson, Melani Mcbratney, and Gabriela Rubio Bocangel. These enterprises have generated millions of dollars in support of health care at Kelowna General Hospital (KGH). Together with their team, these women are redefining what it means to blend business with philanthropy.

Barb and Melani oversee the Perking Lot Café, Royal Bistro, and Centennial Mercantile Gift Shop—the volunteer-run businesses that generate funding for the charity, while Gabriela coordinates their volunteer team. In the last fiscal year alone, these three businesses made over \$2.76 million in revenue, allowing the Foundation to contribute over \$796,00 towards urgent health care priorities.

This social enterprise model requires financial expertise, strong leadership, and a commitment to purpose-driven business. Barb Jackson, Chief Operating Officer, ensures these enterprises operate efficiently for maximum impact.

"The real challenge in our field is balancing

financial sustainability and social impact," says Jackson. "Unlike traditional businesses, our success isn't measured by profit alone—every decision we make considers our customers, the experience of our dedicated volunteers, and the funds we raise for health care. What makes our model unique is that every dollar earned is reinvested back into our community and hospital. We will all rely on KGH at some point. Knowing that our work will benefit our families, friends, and neighbors is incredibly rewarding."

Melani Mcbratney, Director of Business Enterprises, leads the staff team of five, oversees operations, and ensures the enterprises remain efficient and profitable.

"We have an incredible staff and volunteer team that constantly shows up with passion and purpose," Mcbratney shares. "Because of them, we just recently

surpassed \$1 million in sales at the Royal Bistro and \$1.3 million at the Perking Lot within ten months. These are just some of the tremendous accomplishments our team is making possible at our little businesses. The impact of these enterprises, and the people within them, is undeniable."

Having started as a volunteer herself at just 14 years old, Volunteer Coordinator Gabriela Rubio Bocangel now plays a key role in recruiting, training, and supporting a large and dedicated team of 189 volunteers for the Business Enterprises.

"The gift of time is something you can never get back," says Gabriela. "Our volunteers have given over 30,000 hours in the last year alone, helping these enterprises thrive. Every volunteer shift directly translates into better resources, advanced equipment, and improved care in our community."

Thanks to these women and their team, profits from the enterprises have helped fund projects like the new 3T MRI machine at KGH that will serve thousands of patients annually.

Through visionary leadership, an innovative hybrid business model, and a strong team dedicated to their charitable mission, these women are not just strengthening the bottom line—they're transforming lives and bringing world-class health care closer to home.



Anita Parker

Wisdom, Wealth, & Well-Being

REDEFINING SUCCESS THROUGH PHILANTHROPY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Anita Parker, CEO of Wisdom Wealth & Wellbeing, has always been passionate about creating a positive impact.

From her humble beginnings growing up in a single-parent household to running a successful business, Parker is using her entrepreneurial spirit to give back to the community and lift others up with her.

In 2024, Parker took a major step forward in her career by acquiring and rebranding Wine Women & Wellbeing, a company she had previously worked with as a director for two cities. The rebrand marked a new chapter, not just in the company's identity, but also in its mission to foster inclusivity and financial literacy.

The company's expanded vision now includes both personal and professional well-being. While they remain focused on women, they are open to everyone.

"We want to focus on financial literacy, wealth, and well-being—not just for women, but for men and non-binary individuals as well," says Parker. "It's about creating a community of inclusivity where we learn from each other, grow together, and ultimately create change in the communities we serve."

Parker is passionate about supporting local entrepreneurs and nonprofits, creating opportunities for people to access the resources they need to thrive. Wisdom Wealth & Wellbeing has partnered with fantastic organizations like Mamas for Mamas, Dress for Success, and the BC SPCA.

For Parker, giving back is about much more than writing a cheque—it's about time, attention, and creating spaces where people feel seen and heard.

"Giving back is about access," she says. "It's about creating spaces for people to come, learn, and get the resources they need. Real change happens when we come together as a community."

Raised by a single mother who worked tirelessly to support her family, Parker learned early on the importance of hard work and community.

"My mom worked three jobs so that we could have a

roof over our heads and food on the table," Parker shares. "I understood from a young age the importance of working together as a family to create safety and stability. That's what drives me today—helping others achieve that sense of security and wellbeing."

Combining entrepreneurship with philanthropy isn't just a career choice for Parker—it's a way of life. And she believes that other entrepreneurs can do the same.

"AT THE END OF THE DAY,
IT'S NOT ABOUT WHAT I'VE
ACHIEVED—IT'S ABOUT THE
IMPACT WE'VE MADE TOGETHER."

"There's always an opportunity every day to give, whether it's through a smile, a kind word, or a donation of time," she adds. "You don't need to make a grand gesture to make a difference. Giving can be as simple as acknowledging someone, listening to them, or being a source of support."

One of Parker's focuses is creating a platform where people can access resources that will help them grow both financially and personally. Through expert panels, workshops, and community events, Wisdom Wealth & Wellbeing is building a network of learning, support, and empowerment.

Parker also has exciting projects on the horizon, including a collaboration with another female entrepreneur on the Pink Spirit Project, an all-day summit that will focus on helping female entrepreneurs scale their businesses. The event, set for June 12th, 2025, will provide valuable resources and tools to help women grow their businesses to six, seven, and even eight figures.

In addition, Parker is set to be featured in a new TV docuseries called Legacy Makers, which will air on TV streaming platforms. The show will highlight entrepreneurs from different sectors, and Parker is thrilled to share her story with a global audience.

"At the end of the day, it's not about what I've achieved—it's about the impact we've made together," she says. "I'm proud of the work we've done, but I'm even more excited for what's to come."





Robyn Muccillo's approach to real estate is simple yet powerful: put clients first.

She's been able to build her career at Sotheby's International Realty in Kelowna on trust.

"More than 90% of our business comes from referrals," she says. "We don't need flashy ads. Our clients do the marketing for us."

This client-first philosophy sets her apart in a saturated market. It's not just about closing a deal—it's about fostering long-term relationships that go beyond the transaction.

"We don't send direct mailers or spend a lot on ads," she explains. "Instead, we align our values and personalities with our clients, making the process more enjoyable and meaningful."

Prior to entering the field, Robyn worked in corporate purchasing with companies like Costco. When she moved to Kelowna in 2008, the local job market didn't match her background.

After meeting a realtor who needed help with administrative and marketing tasks, Robyn became intrigued by the real estate industry and quickly immersed herself in the business.

"I received about 10 years' worth of coaching by working closely with a seasoned professional," Robyn says.

Robyn's passion for her job is clear, especially when it comes to the homes she works with.

"IT'S NOT JUST A TRANSACTION, IT'S ABOUT FINDING A SPACE WHERE CLIENTS FEEL SAFE AND HAPPY."

Robyn Muccillo

Sotheby's International Realty Canada

"Every time I walk into a new property, I think, 'Wow, I could live here!' I love understanding people's needs and helping them find the perfect place to call home."

"It's not just about the sale. It's about making sure clients are confident in their choices," Robyn says. "If it's not the right fit, we'll tell them."

Robyn's deep knowledge of the Kelowna area further strengthens her expertise. Having lived in Ontario and Vancouver, she understands what it's like to relocate to a new place.

"I can offer out-of-town buyers insight into neighbourhoods that might feel like home to them," she explains.

This is especially valuable as Kelowna attracts many buyers from Ontario and the Lower Mainland who are less familiar with the local market.

In addition to their client-focused approach, Robyn benefits from being part of the prestigious Sotheby's International Realty brand.

"Whether it's the US, Canada, or overseas, our listings reach a global audience." But despite the luxury properties Sotheby's is known for, the team treats every listing with the same level of care.

Robyn is particularly hands-on when it comes to marketing, working closely with clients and home stagers to ensure every property is presented in its best light, free of charge.

This service ensures that everything from how to take the best photos for the listing, to updates that will attract serious buyers, are all considered.

They will even show up with the photographer to make sure everything is just right.

"We make sure to declutter and stage homes strategically," she says.



"We even joke with our clients about checking their oven when they get home to make sure we haven't hidden anything in there!"

For Robyn, real estate is more than a job; it's about helping people find a place where they feel at home.

Looking to the future, Robyn is excited about new projects, including a luxury townhome development at West 61 on Shannon Lake in West Kelowna.

"This development offers lake views, upscale amenities, and high-end finishes," she says.

"It's a unique offering for West Kelowna, and I'm excited to see how it unfolds."

"Kelowna is a beautiful place to live, and the community continues to grow. I'm proud to be part of it."



Lindsey Sloan

Sena College of Massage Therapy

When Lindsey Sloan and her team of fellow educators decided to launch Sena College of Massage Therapy, their mission was clear—to create a school that not only focused on excellence in education, but also nurtures and supports students and engages with the community.

Located at the Landmark District in Kelowna, the school is a fresh addition to the field of massage therapy education, with a foundation that is built on years of experience, collaboration, and a shared vision of what education should look like.

Sena College, which will open its doors to its first cohort in January 2025, is the result of a long journey for Lindsey, who has spent much of her career in education.

Alongside her are Fiona Duncan, Kylagh Cornford, and Bobi McGrath—three talented women who not only share Lindsey's passion for teaching but have worked closely with her in the past, creating a tight-knit, like-minded team.

The decision to create Sena College came out of a shared desire to do things differently—to build a school with values rooted in fairness, respect, and quality education.

"We wanted to create a school that isn't just about teaching technical skills but also fostering a sense of community, supporting students through every step of their journey," says Lindsey.

The school's location is one of the key factors that sets it apart.

Positioned centrally with easy access to transit, parking, and cafes and eateries, students will have everything they need nearby.

"We wanted students to feel like they were walking into a place that wasn't just a school, but a community," explains Lindsey. "It's about providing a well-rounded experience that supports both their academic and personal growth."

The school's modern, purpose-built facilities are another standout feature.

"We've created a space that's not just beautiful but functional, a place where students can thrive," Lindsey says.

Another distinguishing factor is their commitment to high-quality education. Each of the founding team members has formal adult education training, something that sets the school apart in the field of massage therapy education.

"Our instructors are not just practitioners; they are trained educators," says Lindsey. "That means we can offer a richer, more effective learning experience for our students."

Sena College's curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed, while also emphasizing compassionate care and a holistic approach to therapy.

The program will cover diverse areas of massage therapy, preparing students to work with various populations, including pregnant women, athletes, the elderly and those with neurological conditions.

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The school is also committed to being a community-focused institution. Sena College plans to open a student clinic in January 2026, providing the public with affordable massage therapy services performed by students under the supervision of instructors.

This initiative is designed to make massage therapy more accessible to the wider community.

"We want to give people in our community an opportunity to receive care at a lower cost, whether they have insurance or not," says Lindsey. "It's another way we can give back and support the people who support us."

Starting a new venture is never without its challenges, but for Lindsey and her team, the rewards have far outweighed the obstacles.

"There were definitely moments when I thought, 'Can I really do this?'" she admits. "But the key is to believe in yourself and keep pushing forward, even when things get tough."

"We're really excited to get started and do what we love—to teach, to support, and to help create the next generation of massage therapists," she adds. "We're ready to make a difference."



CO2llaborative Care + Research:

Focus on a functional swallow

Dr. Hilary Pada and her all-women team are part of a global shift in how we think about health and health care – right here in Kelowna. They are professionals in dentistry, oromyofunctional therapy, craniosacral therapy, community health, and breastfeeding counseling.

To some, they are seen as controversial and renegade. To others, they are viewed as courageous, skilled, compassionate, and a valuable resource for preventive root cause care. Their goal is to build bridges between providers involved in the patient's circle of care. What are they all about? Tongue Ties, Tethered Oral Tissues, and ultimately a functional swallow.

Dr. Pada's journey began with her youngest daughter, whose severe oral ties had contributed to growth and function that showed up as croup, colic, troubled breastfeeding and sleep, a retruded jaw, seasonal bronchitis, dental deep bite, and baby teeth that would not fall out on their own. She needed inhalers for exercise by age 8. Through guided development and oromyofunctional therapy, breathwork training, and oral releases, she now has a normal healthy bite with no use of inhalers, even for her athletic pursuits. "I couldn't

ignore this... so I ended up starting a clinic to offer this care for others."

As women, all the moms at CO2llaborative Care + Research wish they knew what they know now when their own children were younger. "It is so much more complicated and harder to treat at older ages, and we can see similarities in our own experiences - it is humbling to learn what is connected."

As environmental stewards, they recognize the waste streams from medical interventions, devices, medications, and dental care treatments that stem from early swallowing struggles that ultimately snowball into more problems down the road. Research shows that abnormal oral habits have immediate and long-term effects on the skull, jaws, and teeth. "Once we began studying baby function, jaw development, and head form... we started to see early dental conditions in infants." After all, form follows function.

It hasn't been easy being changemakers! Both Dr. Pada and Charlotte Collingwood, a Registered Dental Hygienist and Orofacial Myofunctional Therapist, had long careers in conventional dentistry before discovering and committing to this path. And after over 20 years in the dental field, they delved into the root causes of symptoms previously unnoticed by them. "Once you see it... you can't unsee it," Charlotte says. "Although we will always need dental care, dental hygiene, and caring for teeth and gums, it's been a steep learning curve, moving away from ingrained systems supported by familiar practices."

"At first, it seemed uncomfortable to think a patient's breastfeeding history was a part of their grown-up oral conditions. We know that the tongue swallows upwards of 2,000 times each day, so how it does this makes an impact. The tongue is critical to the body's overall functioning," Dr. Pada continues. "It's connected to so many of our body's systems. We have 12 cranial nerves,

and 5 of them connect to the tongue - a clue to its importance."

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At CO2llaborative Care + Research, they often say, "we are all grown-up babies." They continue to study, learn, and reinvent how to implement treatments that address what the mouth, tongue, palate, and airway need for proper function. "Our goal is to meet people where they're at and nudge them in their journey toward healing."

When we think about our work supporting women, it is empowering to offer care that helps moms experience innate aspects of motherhood they were struggling with. Research on post-partum depression shows that moms who can successfully breastfeed their babies have significantly less depression, and that pre-partum depression can actually decrease with

successful breastfeeding. We love helping moms who were struggling to breastfeed and seeing them return for follow-up care with improvements in feeding, greater calm, comfort, and ease, improved sleep for themselves and their baby. And we love hearing, "It is like we have a different baby." We also see bottle-fed infants with symptoms unrelated to weight gain and work with many Lactation Consultants around the province for the care of all babies.

The team's flagship goal is a "conversion to a functional swallow," a simple yet profound idea. A functional swallow, Dr. Pada explains, is a cornerstone of overall health. The consequences of a dysfunctional swallow, often related to tethered oral tissues such as tongue tie (ankyloglossia) and lip tie, can ripple throughout the body. Breathing problems, poor digestion, headaches, neck pain, as well as body alignment conditions, can be traced back to something as distant as a dysfunctional swallow. Their goal is to bring ethical, conservative, compassionate, and evidence-based knowledge to tethered oral tissue care. They are fueled by the dedication of their collaborators, their team, the hugs from patients, and the joy of seeing individuals thrive.



Crystal Taylor

Holden + Taylor Advisory Group

"IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN THE MONEY. IT'S ABOUT HELPING PEOPLE MAKE FINANCIAL DECISIONS THAT ARE ALIGNED WITH WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY WANT IN THEIR LIFE."



Crystal Taylor is on a mission to offer thoughtful, personalized financial guidance to individuals seeking confidence in their finances now and for their future.

As the 'Taylor' of Holden + Taylor Advisory Group, she brings not only her 19 years of expertise but also a commitment to helping others navigate the often-confusing world of finance. Her journey into financial advisory is rooted in an early experience that left her exhausted trying to navigate financial success on her own.

In her early twenties, Crystal faced a major setback when she was denied a mortgage insurance claim. It was a pivotal moment that illuminated just how easily individuals can be derailed by financial institutions, and the perception that we are protected by their services and offerings.

"I decided that no one I know will fall victim to this lack of protection," she recalls.

This realization set her on a path to pursue a career in insurance, where she hoped to shield others from the pitfalls she had encountered.

However, a new direction soon emerged. Crystal entered the finance industry in 2006, just before the 2008 financial crisis rocked the global economy. The crisis not only intensified her desire to help others but also prompted her to pivot towards wealth management, where she believed she could have a more direct impact on people's long-term financial security.

Over the past 19 years, Crystal has built a successful career, and today is a trusted financial advisor. She works tirelessly to help clients understand their current financial positions and create personalized plans that help them achieve their goals.

Her approach to financial advising is rooted in a belief that financial decisions should reflect more than just numbers—they should reflect the individual making them. Crystal views every financial decision as a reflection of a person's values and aspirations.

Crystal's path to success has not been easy, however. She has faced significant personal challenges, including a divorce early in her career, at a time when there was little support for women navigating such life changes.

"None of my friends had been through it, and none of my close family had been through it," she shares.

As a single mother, Crystal was suddenly thrust into the difficult balancing act of raising her child while building a career.

The emotional and financial pressure was immense, but she persisted. These personal challenges, while tough, helped shape her desire to help others—especially women who are navigating life transitions like a separation, divorce or widowhood—and find financial stability, confidence and hope.

"When clients get a plan in place and feel that relief, it's incredibly rewarding," Crystal reflects.

For her, the success of her work is not measured solely by her clients' financial progress, but by their sense of peace and confidence in their futures. Crystal is driven by the belief that true financial success is not about accumulating wealth for wealth's sake.

In an age where DIY financial tools and automated services are increasingly popular, Crystal remains firm in her belief that personalized, hands-on guidance is irreplaceable.

"In a corporate environment, I might be criticized for spending too much time with existing clients," she says. "But as an independent business owner, I can

prioritize what's best for my clients over short-term metrics and quarterly goals."

Her commitment to doing what's best for her clients, regardless of what the industry might deem as "efficient," is one of the core reasons her clients trust her—and why her business has grown steadily over the years.

Crystal's dedication to financial literacy extends beyond her one-on-one advisory work. Through regular events hosted by Holden + Taylor Advisory Group, as well as content shared on their YouTube channel



and website, she ensures that valuable financial advice is accessible to everyone. Whether in person or virtually, these resources are designed to reach those who may not otherwise have the opportunity to receive professional financial guidance.

For those considering a career in financial planning, Crystal has this piece of advice: "Be really confident in who you are and what you're trying to achieve."

Through her work, Crystal Taylor continues to transform lives by helping individuals and families navigate their financial journeys with confidence and clarity.

Whether it's building a retirement plan, navigating the complexities of insurance, or simply helping clients get a clear picture of their financial future, Crystal's dedication to personalized, values-driven financial planning is unwavering.



Allie Chmilar

Allie Chmilar has been an integral part of NowMedia Group for the past four years, a period during which she has played a crucial role in driving business growth and fostering meaningful connections. As an Account Executive with a sharp focus on building relationships, Allie's passion for helping businesses succeed has made her a standout figure within the company.

Since joining NowMedia in November 2020, Allie has thrived on the dynamic nature of her work. What excites her the most is the opportunity to connect with people, understand the unique challenges they face, and offer tailored solutions that truly make a difference.

"I really enjoy building new connections with people and learning about their businesses," she shares. "It's incredibly rewarding to understand their challenges and help them find solutions that make a real difference."

It's clear that for Allie, success isn't just measured by numbers—it's about the positive impact she can have on those around her. She is particularly excited about the evolving role of artificial intelligence and automation in the business world. With rapid

advancements in technology, she sees tremendous potential for businesses to leverage AI tools for growth and efficiency.

"I'm excited about the integration of AI and the new tools we'll be incorporating, especially around automation," she says. "The potential for innovation is huge, and I'm looking forward to how these advancements will create new opportunities for businesses to grow and evolve."

Embracing these tools isn't just an option—it's an essential step for businesses to stay ahead of the curve in an increasingly competitive landscape.

But as much as Allie is energized by the future of technology, she emphasizes that business success is not just about innovation—it's also about balance.

"Embrace AI and new technologies—don't be afraid to experiment and adapt," she advises. "But just as important is prioritizing your personal well-being and growth. When you take care of yourself, it reflects in your business and leadership."

As she continues to thrive in her role at NowMedia, Allie remains deeply committed to helping businesses not only navigate the challenges of today but also capitalize on the opportunities of tomorrow.

Her ability to blend innovation with genuine care for her clients is what makes her a true leader in her field.

Celebrating the Women Who Make a Difference.

Renee Tonks

Renee Tonks has always known that family is at the heart of everything she does. Whether she's hiking with her dog, skiing, or biking with her loved ones, it's clear that her life revolves around her family, and the beauty of Kelowna offers the perfect backdrop for this active lifestyle. "Living here is ideal for our family—lakes, hiking, skiing—it's all close by," she says, reflecting on what makes this city a true home for her.

But it's not just the outdoor adventures that keep Renee grounded in this vibrant community. As an Account Executive at NowMedia Group and Csek Creative, she thrives on the connections she builds and the relationships she fosters with local businesses. For Renee, the best part of her job is simple but meaningful: getting to know people and helping them grow. She's been in sales for most of her career, and the opportunity to make a real impact in her community through business growth keeps her engaged and inspired every day.

Renee's journey with NowMedia began four years ago, and in that time, she has been able to see the company's impact firsthand. As she continues to build her network, she looks forward to seeing Kelowna grow as well. "I'm excited to be part of such a close-knit community and to watch it continue to thrive," she says. But it's not just the local scene that catches her attention; she's also eager to see how advancements in technology, particularly AI, will continue to shape

business practices moving forward.

"I'm looking forward to learning more about AI and finding ways it can help businesses become more efficient," she shares.

Looking ahead to 2025, Renee offers advice for entrepreneurs and businesses striving for success in an ever-evolving market: embrace technology. "AI is a powerful tool that can save businesses time and help them focus on what they do best," she says. "Strategic thinking is key in marketing, and we're here to help guide that process." Whether it's building lasting relationships, assisting clients with smart, strategic marketing tactics, or staying curious about the future, Renee's passion for what she does is clear.

Through her role at NowMedia, her dedication to her family, and her love for her community, Renee embodies what it means to thrive—professionally and personally—in an ever-changing world.



Frida Fernandez

FRF Solutions Limited

Frida, owner of FRF Solutions LTD, is making a significant impact through her cleaning business.

With hard work and dedication to quality, she's not just transforming spaces but also offering opportunities in the community.

Frida's journey began when she moved from Mexico in 2017 after finishing University in business administration. She wanted a new fresh start in life and moved to Canada looking for a better future, and started from the bottom as a labourer in asbestos removal and commercial cleaner. This experience laid the foundation for her future business. She later met her now husband during the pandemic and together they decided to come to Kelowna in 2021 after he secured a job as a carpenter.

"I didn't know what to expect when I came here," she recalls. "But I worked hard, learned the industry, and built my knowledge of what the Kelowna market needed."

After transitioning into a management role at a company specializing in short-term rental cleaning, Frida saw a gap: businesses were struggling to recruit reliable employees. Inspired by this, she launched FRF Solutions LTD initially as a subcontracting business, and later expanding to offer residential, commercial, post-construction, and carpet cleaning, along with staffing services.

Today, FRF Solutions LTD employs many workers from Frida's community, providing them with stable, skilled jobs. Her commitment to empowering immigrants in Kelowna has created a strong, dependable workforce that delivers top-notch service to clients.

"I wanted to help my community," Frida explains. "When I arrived, I saw many Mexican and Latino women struggling to find stable jobs because of language barriers or lack of confidence. I wanted to change that by offering them opportunities and helping them grow."

What sets FRF Solutions apart in a competitive market is its focus on reliability.

"A lot of clients in Kelowna were frustrated because cleaning companies weren't showing up or delivering quality," Frida says. "We pride ourselves on always being there when we say we will and providing high-quality, consistent work. That's what builds trust and keeps clients coming back."

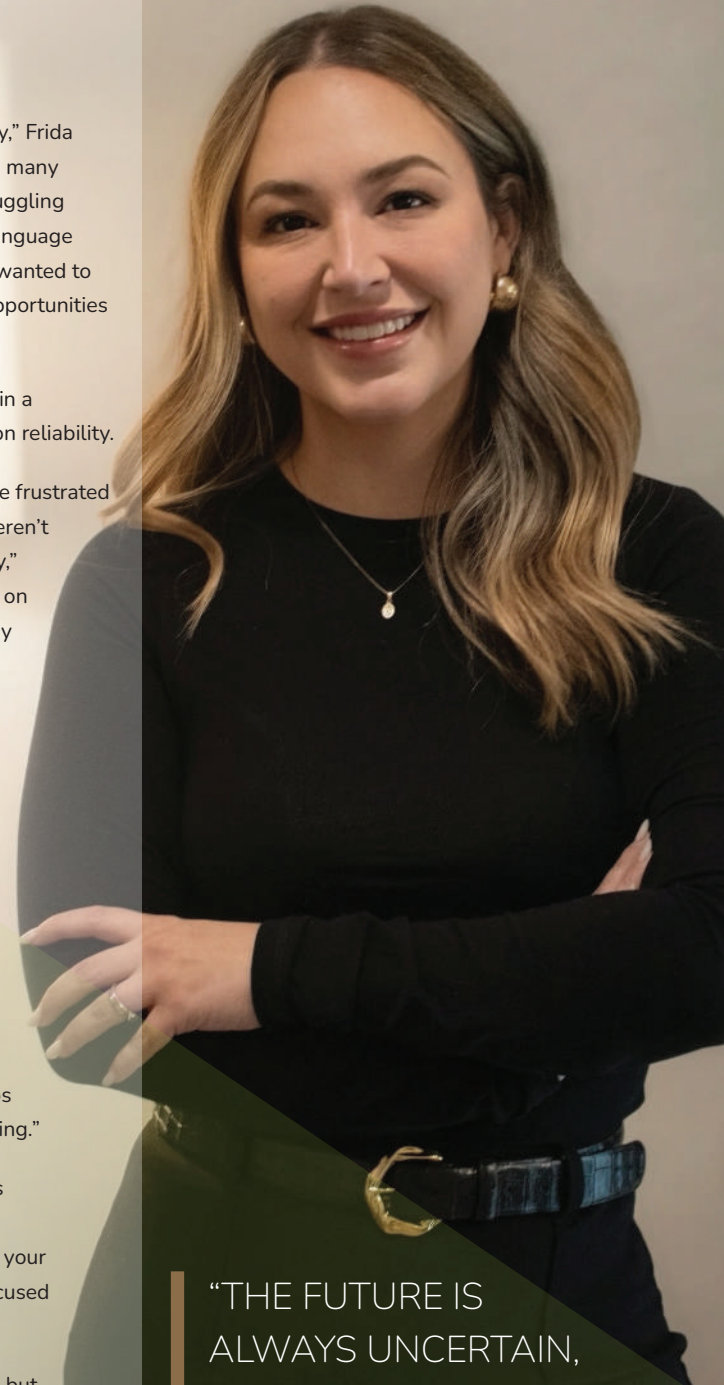
Frida's success isn't just about business—it's about building relationships.

"For me, it's not just about cleaning," she says. "It's about connecting with my clients, understanding their needs, and building trust. That's what keeps them happy and keeps us growing."

As FRF Solutions LTD continues to thrive, Frida's advice to other entrepreneurs is simple—Trust your instincts, take risks, and stay focused on your goals.

"The future is always uncertain, but if you're willing to put in the work, you can succeed," she says. "You just have to believe in yourself and stay committed."

"THE FUTURE IS ALWAYS UNCERTAIN, BUT IF YOU'RE WILLING TO PUT IN THE WORK, YOU CAN SUCCEED."



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