

On Being a Woman-Owned Business

by Diane MacWilliams, President and CEO

I just returned from the Executives' Club of Chicago Women's Leadership Breakfast "I Wish I Would Have Known That: Lessons for New Leaders." The moderator was Judy Hsu, Morning Anchor for ABC 7 Chicago and the panel included Dolores Kunda, President and CEO, Lapiz and Leo Burnett Puerto Rico; Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman, Carlson; and Kara Walsh, CEO, Metromix LLC.

These four impressive ladies came from different generations and cultures and have experienced very different challenges. Yet all four of them have been incredibly successful and are open to sharing what they learned along the way. In all cases they have dared to dream and not let gender stand in the way.



Judy Hsu, Morning Anchor for ABC 7 Chicago, Panel Moderator

Over the last three decades, the number of women in executive positions has grown dramatically.

Just looking around the Fairmont Ballroom and seeing almost 1,000 women attending this breakfast sends a powerful message. When I joined the Executives' Club several years ago, the number of women attending any function was extremely limited.



Kara Walsh, CEO Metromix LLC, Panel Member

The Women's Leadership Breakfasts had not been initiated. Fortunately, the leadership at the Executives' Club is not asleep at the wheel and has responded to the powerful change that has taken place in business. At my table I met three young, vibrant women who will, no doubt, be sitting at the front of the room some day soon. Each of them was impressive in their enthusiasm, self-assurance, scholastic accomplishments, intelligence and eagerness to listen and learn more. Having started my career 35 years ago, I am energized by this picture and feel great optimism about the future of American and International businesses as these young women grow into leadership positions.

So what does this have to do with being a woman-owned business?

On Being a Woman-Owned Business (continued)

The opportunities for women have never been better.

Quicksilver Associates is a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) and has been for many years. Besides doing great work and building great relationships with our wonderful clients – more doors have opened to us through this certification. A couple of years ago, Microsoft included Quicksilver in their sourcing initiative for qualified video production partners. We were chosen as one of 17 companies within the United States to support their video initiatives. We were the only WBE. However, no one gets to do business



Dolores Kunda, President and CEO, Lapiz and Leo Burnett Puerto Rico, Panel Member

just based on gender. Quicksilver has a great team of men and women who have respect for each other, possess leadership qualities and bold talent that create success for our clients.

Corporations around the world are now seriously promoting programs for women within their companies and opening up more opportunities for women-owned businesses. [The Women's Business Development Center \(WBDC\)](#) in Chicago has encouraged women to start businesses and created numerous programs to train,

mentor and support those who dare to dream. At a national level, the [Women's Business Enterprise National Council \(WBENC\)](#) has encouraged growing partnerships between large corporations and women-owned businesses.

It is hard to believe these organizations have only been around for the last 25 years and have become so influential. But then it really isn't when you realize that women always had the ability, the intelligence and the determination to succeed, just like their male counterparts. And, to our great clients – we are proud to be part of your diversity initiatives and know you will never be sorry you chose Quicksilver.



Marilyn Carlson Nelson, Chairman Carlson, Panel Member

By the way I recommend reading Marilyn Carlson Nelson's book "[How We Lead Matters – Reflections on a Life of Leadership](#)". Marilyn is genuinely inspirational – someone whose life has made this earth a better place to be. I wish I actually knew her.

Diane MacWilliams is the president and founder of Quicksilver Associates, celebrating its 33rd anniversary on June 6, 2009. Diane has been active in WBDC, serving on the board that certifies businesses as woman owned.

Quicksilver has been in business as a private, woman-owned, full-service business communications firm for 33 years. We have great depth of experience working with a wide variety of corporate clients. We become part of the team, acquiring a deep understanding of each client's communication needs, business goals and the desired results. We then embark on a collaborative development process and successfully deliver on those results. [Click on this link](#) to learn about our full range of capabilities or [contact our sales team](#) for more information.