

Women in Leadership Seminar Highlights



December 21, 2012



Topic: *“Delivering Top Results While Managing Change”* featuring Trish Jones – Insight Advisors, Founder (formerly Chief Emerging Technology Officer –TBS and Carrie Wheeler - SVP/CIO, Cbeyond.

Trish Jones and **Carrie Wheeler** joined us for the final Women in Leadership Seminar of 2012. This dynamic duo delivered a powerful message concerning the fundamentals of leadership in a constantly changing environment.

Trish kicked off the morning by sharing the aspects of leadership that she sees as priority, which form the acronym, **EARN IT**.

E– ear to the ground: you have to figure out the informal power structure and how to influence the outcome of things through relationships. You also have to “embrace the mantle” (the full range or title of your role)

A – adapt: adaptability is the new currency; you have to be up-to-date with today's technologies and apply changes in real time. You also must see the bigger picture of what is driving the business.

R – recognize and respect differences by leveraging perspectives you don't have; this broadens what you bring to the table.

N – take note of what's “not said”, as this (the subtext) may be the most important part of any conversation; reflect upon what was not said.

I– Imposter syndrome: all women (universally) have moments of self-doubt; women need to have confidence in their capabilities

T – teamwork: men “close rank”, meaning once a decision is made, they get on board and do it. Women are not as likely to do this. As women and as leaders, we should advocate for our ideas, but at some point, we need to salute and march.

Carrie spoke next about her career challenges and leadership. She shared that the thing that has changed most throughout her career is the amount of support and community available to businesswomen and professionals. In Atlanta, women have now collectively figured this out!

Carrie got into the field of IT through her first job as a consultant when she had to learn programming (and not by choice). Since then, she has learned how to manage others,

lead others and, finally, lead through others. She joined CBeyond several years ago because the company's core values aligned with her own, and she is able to see her day-to-day impact at CBeyond.

Carrie shared several key pieces of advice for leaders:

- 1.) Don't spend too much time on being a great manager – be a great leader!
- 2.) Strive for excellence in communications; people will then call on you for things you are not directly responsible for.
- 3.) Pick great bosses so that you have a mentor every day and you learn how to emulate someone successful.
- 4.) Have courageous authenticity and act when the time and windows of opportunity are open. Be yourself and let your personality shine through; nothing builds respect more than this. Also, be okay saying, "I don't know".

Q&A:

▪ **When did you disagree with someone and still be your authentic self?**

Trish: It depends on who you need to challenge. Pick your battles and discern 'why'. The best method is to have one-on-one conversations.

Carrie: You have to know the difference between public and private challenges. You have to be prepared for courageous conversations.

▪ **How do you balance being a great leader and manager and get your work done?**

Carrie: It's hard! I spend time during the day being a manager and leader and find time in a different place to do work. I have to be brutally honest with my direct reports and acknowledge that it is not a time-box thing – it is evolving and cannot be forced.

Trish: There is a way to turn it around by delegating. Communication is critical. You have to be honest with your team. You can create opportunities to stretch your direct reports by delegating.

▪ **How do you combat imposter characteristics without being arrogant?**

Trish: Thread the needle by honoring what feels authentic to you. Keep your perspective and convey it with confidence.

Carrie: Maintain a laser-like focus on results and determine how to get things done.

▪ **What is your best piece of advice for leaders?**

Trish: If the opportunity presents itself to interface with a client, take it and run with it! Own and fully leverage your talents.

▪ **What did you learn through the telecom merger transition (MCI/Worldcom)?**

Carrie: This was a really tough time, and it was embarrassing at times. I was ashamed to be representing such a company, but had to remember that the fraud did not represent who I was. You really have to look at yourself in the mirror. I had to execute with the highest integrity and honesty.

- **How do you have courageous conversations, deliver the bad news and keep your team motivated?**

Trish: Applaud people for showing up and doing their best. Determine what you can take from the circumstance that is positive.

Carrie: Use straight-talk and state what happened, how you feel, what you learned and the task at hand. Focus on going forward.

- **What enhances my possibility of moving up?**

Trish: It takes great intentionality and commitment. It takes great pride and intention and exposure to many different disciplines. The top must be committed in order to create change. There must also be a discontentment with the status quo.

Carrie: I like to think of it like **3 P's**: Purposeful focus from the top, pressure from below, and the performance of all the women in senior executive roles who prove whether or not we can do it.

- **How can women support each other to open more opportunities?**

Carrie: Stop being so critical of each other and respect each other's decisions as their own.

Trish: I have the highest respect for mothers, as I am not one myself.