



## **WIL HIGHLIGHTS for January 25, 2019**

### **Seminar #188**

**“Leading Across Multiple Sectors: From Corporate Boards to the C-Suite and the Community” featuring Duriya Farooqui – President, Georgia-Pacific Point A Center for Supply Chain Innovation**

**Summary:** Kicking off the 2019 WIL series in an interview with Susan Hitchcock, Duriya openly shared her extensive business acumen and broad-ranging leadership insights. The audience was particularly inspired by her experience and skill in successfully

bringing business CEOs, government officials and community leaders together to solve complex problems and resolve difficult issues. Attendees were also in 100% agreement that Atlanta is indeed fortunate to have Duriya in the many roles she has held – and everyone looks forward to following her continued success.

### **Background – Personal & Professional:**

- Duriya was born in Pakistan, before people in US could find it on a map. Father said: “You can be an engineer, a bus driver, a doctor, whatever you want, but you must be the best at what you do. There's no room in the world for mediocrity.”
- Undergrad at Hampshire College - married at 19 and he was attending Brown; she wanted a college in close proximity; received a full scholarship at Hampshire
- Masters in Public Administration and International Relations from Harvard; Knew public service would be a big thing, and she wanted to pursue education and career as a woman; new program at Harvard in International Relations & Public Administration; applied and accepted. After that worked at World Bank
- Named **President of Georgia-Pacific’s Point A Center for Supply Chain and Logistics innovation** in January 2019. Point A was launched in June 2018 as a forward-thinking hub where member companies collaborate to develop solutions that drive global supply chain efficiency. They come together to innovate - digitizing the supply chain and scaling for execution. Works well for ATL because most companies headquartered here are not competitors and can share best practices, new ideas, etc. ATL - 4<sup>th</sup> highest concentration of corporate HQ in the country.
- **COO of the City of Atlanta** 2007 – 2013.
- **Principal at Bain & Company** 2014-2016
- **Executive Director of Atlanta Committee for Progress (ACP)** – 2016 til the end of 2018. ACP was founded in 2002 under then mayor, Shirley Franklin, who realized there was not a conduit to engage with business leaders and she needed a “CEO Board of Directors.” ACP includes large company CEOs, college presidents, etc. All have single focus – the health of city. Under Mayor Franklin, the ACP helped purchase the King papers which led to the Museum of Civil and Human Right; ACP also supported Shirley Franklin’s goal to fix ATL’s sewer infrastructure. Later under Mayor Reed, the ACP helped solve the pension liability issue; launched the Westside Futures Fund; and launched Engage Ventures (Duriya serves on their Advisory BD today).
- **Corporate board member, Intercontinental Exchange and their subsidiary, New York Stock Exchange.** (NOTE: Women fill 10.6% of all Fortune 500 board seats.)

## **Key Lessons:**

- Seize the unexpected opportunity, even when not in the plan. Don't be obsessed with following your plan.
- Be the person that everyone wants to work for, even when you are an individual contributor
- As a leader, she knew who the 5 to 10 emerging leaders were in the organization of 5000, and gave them the hardest things to do - to develop them.
- Be the person in the room who can do anything - people say, "What's my role?" - don't ask that.
- Believe in yourself - when someone offers you something difficult - take it. Have the confidence to know you can and will figure it out (whether that's a career path or a challenging new role.)
- Build confidence by tapping into competence - do your best at everything, grow your skill set, demonstrate excellence

## **Other Advice (especially for Women):**

- Be careful about being slotted in HR, external affairs, chief of staff – as these roles are not as helpful to advancement as P&L, line, operations type roles
- Things that help you be a COO also help you be on a board
- Because so many organizations have mostly male senior leaders, your most effective sponsor will likely be a male. You need a sponsor - sponsor looks out for your career, usually in a higher role. Sponsors are different from mentors who mainly give advice and counsel
- Anchor yourself in something besides being a woman or a woman of color; make it about something other than your gender or appearance.
- Get comfortable being the only person like you in a room. Being different from others won't matter if you're grounded and competent
- Don't shrink in the shadows. Engage.
- Boards are looking for diversity, especially individuals with specific experience / competencies / skills sets, e.g., operations, technology, finance, etc. Board candidates today are not all CEOs. More and more, boards are realizing that if you don't have diversity, the company's performance won't be as strong. Lots of supportive data on this.