

Achieve

ISSUE 6 • AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION • 2025

Celebrating ABWA's Women in Business®



The mission of the **American Business Women's Association (ABWA)** is to bring together business women of diverse occupations and to provide opportunities for them to help themselves and others grow personally and professionally through leadership, education, networking support, and national recognition.



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We are thrilled to share a bold new chapter in ABWA's history—one inspired by your voices, your stories, and your ambitions. This year, ABWA unveiled a refreshed brand identity that reflects who we are together: a vibrant, diverse community of women supporting one another as we grow personally and professionally. Our purpose remains strong and clear: to empower women in business to turn ambition into action. Now, our brand reflects that energy more powerfully than ever.

At the heart of the new brand is our updated tagline, *Activate Your Ambition*, a call to action that honors the drive already within every ABWA woman. It's not about giving you something new, it's about helping you step into your confidence, courage, and leadership. You'll also see our new logo, inspired by stained glass, symbolizing the mosaic of women who make ABWA extraordinary. Each piece is unique, yet together we form something powerful, unified, and full of possibility.

The new tagline and logo were created by D.C. marketing firm, NickelBronx. Utilizing months of

research, including surveying and interviewing members and staff, researching competitive national women-centered associations and applying years of marketing and branding experience—NickelBronx provided recommendations while also taking feedback from ABWA national to help provide the final product we have today.

As a member, you can find new logo files on the membership platform, shop updated ABWA merchandise, and watch for refreshed materials across ABWA channels. This is just the start, more updates will continue throughout 2026 as we roll out a revitalized digital experience and new communication tools. Thank you for being part of ABWA's evolution. We can't wait to grow, lead, and activate our ambitions... together.



ABWA
AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

From the ABWA National Office

.....
ELIZABETH H. JOHNSON, CAE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear ABWA Members,

As we reflect on the close of a remarkable year, I am reminded of the strength, power, and purpose of our ABWA community.

This season naturally invites us to pause and to appreciate how far we've come, the connections we've made, and the momentum we continue to build together. Returning from an energizing week in Portland, Maine, I am filled with gratitude for the hundreds of women who joined us, shared their stories, lifted one another up, and once again demonstrated why ABWA remains such a transformative space for women in business.

At the National Women's Leadership Conference, I experienced firsthand one of the greatest benefits of ABWA membership: the deep sense of connection and belonging. The week was rich with exceptional content from MBA professors at the University of Kansas School of Business and presenters from Franklin Covey, as well as heartfelt moments recognizing our members' accomplishments. We celebrated those who earned their MBA certificates, applauded record-breaking engagement in Apex Campus, honored members through the Inner Circle program, and recognized tenure and chapter excellence through the Best Practices Awards. Hosting the Top Ten Women's Breakfast was a personal highlight, hearing inspiring

speeches from our Top Ten honorees and announcing this year's American Business Woman of the Year, J Franco of the Cy-Fair Express Network. And of course, unveiling ABWA's new logo and tagline marked a defining moment, ushering our Association into its next generation.

As I approach ten months in the role of Executive Director, I have gained a deep understanding of what makes ABWA extraordinary. While I still have many chapters, DVP celebrations, and special events left to visit, I now have a strong baseline of our national programs, giving us the foundation we need to modernize and streamline many of the ways we operate. In the year ahead, you can expect enhancements to Best Practices, NWLC, member communications, chapter support, and more. Above all, our focus remains on increasing the value of your membership so that renewing with ABWA is an easy and rewarding decision.

Looking ahead to 2026, I am excited to continue rolling out our refreshed brand and investing in new resources to help us reach and recruit the next generation of ABWA members—professional working women who are driven, eager to grow personally and professionally, seeking meaningful connection, and ready to **Activate Their Ambition**.

Sending you warmth and gratitude this season,

Elizabeth H. Johnson, CAE
Executive Director
American Business Women's Association



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Date**

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SPRING CONFERENCE**
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DATES TO REMEMBER

.....

Important Deadlines and Events Your League Won't Want to Miss!

DECEMBER 10

Coffee Connections

DECEMBER 15

Tax Filing Deadline for Leagues Filing Their 990-N

JANUARY 05, 2026

Council Fee and Officers Due

JANUARY 22, 2026

Just In Time Webinar

JANUARY 31, 2026

SBMEF Reminder: Funds for Impact Scholarship and Outright Grants Are Due (including admin fee and student membership payment)

FEBRUARY 15, 2026

Last Day to Submit Business Skills Tuition Reimbursement for 2025 NWLC

MARCH 27-28, 2026

Virtual Spring Conference

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

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The *Achieve* newsletter is created with our members in mind, and your feedback helps us make it even better. Please take a few minutes to complete our short survey and share what content, features, and stories you'd like to see in future issues. Your voice shapes *Achieve*!



Survey Link: <https://forms.gle/K4Lv41CgX2QpAXxt9>

START A NEW ABWA CHAPTER IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

.....

Contact ABWA National at webmail@abwa.org



Implementing Guiding Principles in Your Organization

BY SUSAN QUINN



Businesses without a solid framework of guiding principles are like ships adrift at sea—directionless and vulnerable to the whims of external forces.

In contrast, companies with a clear purpose, vision, mission, and set of core values are anchored by a resilient internal structure. This structure not only provides stability in turbulent times but also fosters innovation and agility. When the inevitable changes occur, these organizations can pivot without losing sight of their core identity.

For senior leaders, the challenge lies not only in articulating these principles but also in ensuring they permeate every aspect of the organization. Here are some practical steps to integrate guiding principles into the fabric of your company:

1

Conduct a Thorough Review

Begin by examining your existing purpose, vision, mission, and values. Are they still relevant? Do they resonate with the current market environment and the goals of your team? As the business landscape evolves, so too should these guiding elements. It may be time to refresh the language and the concepts to ensure they reflect the contemporary challenges and opportunities you face.

2

Engage Your Leadership Team

The process of defining or refining guiding principles should be a collaborative effort. Engage your senior leadership team in open, honest discussions about what your organization stands for and where it is headed. This collaborative approach not only garners diverse insights but also ensures that the resulting principles are embraced by the entire leadership team.

3

Communicate Consistently and Clearly

Once your guiding principles are defined, communication is key. They should be more than just words on a page or a slide

in a boardroom presentation—they must be woven into the everyday language and actions of your organization. Ensure that every team member understands the “why,” “what,” and “how” of your guiding principles. Use internal communications, training sessions, and leadership examples to reinforce these concepts regularly.

4

Align Policies and Practices

It is not enough to simply state your guiding principles; they must be reflected in your policies, procedures, and practices. Whether it's in hiring, performance reviews, decision-making processes, or customer interactions, every aspect of your organization should embody your core values. This alignment ensures consistency and reinforces the behaviors you want to see across the board.

5

Measure and Adapt

While guiding principles provide a stable foundation, the way they are implemented must evolve with your organization. Establish metrics and feedback mechanisms to assess how well these principles are being lived out. Regular reviews and adjustments can help you stay aligned with your goals and ensure that your guiding principles continue to drive the desired outcomes.

guiding principles cannot be understated. In a world where only a fraction of businesses manage to thrive over the long term, the difference often lies in the clarity and consistency of our internal foundations. You can challenge yourself to look beyond short-term wins and focus on building an organization that is robust enough to weather the storms of economic cycles, market disruptions, and technological changes. By grounding your strategies in a well-defined purpose, a compelling vision, a practical mission, and steadfast core values, you set the stage for enduring success.

The statistics speak for themselves. When only 25% of businesses survive beyond 15 years and a mere 1% reach significant revenue milestones*, the path to longevity becomes one of disciplined strategy and unwavering commitment. These numbers are not just data points—they are a call to action for senior leaders to invest in the foundation of their organizations.

CONCLUSION: A CALL TO ENDURING EXCELLENCE

Now is the time to evaluate your foundation. Is your purpose clear? Are your values visible in action, not just on paper? Do they inspire your team and build trust with your clients?

In a world of constant change, enduring organizations are anchored by principles that don't shift with trends. By intentionally embedding purpose, vision, mission, and values into every layer of the business, you can go beyond weathering disruption—you'll lead through it.

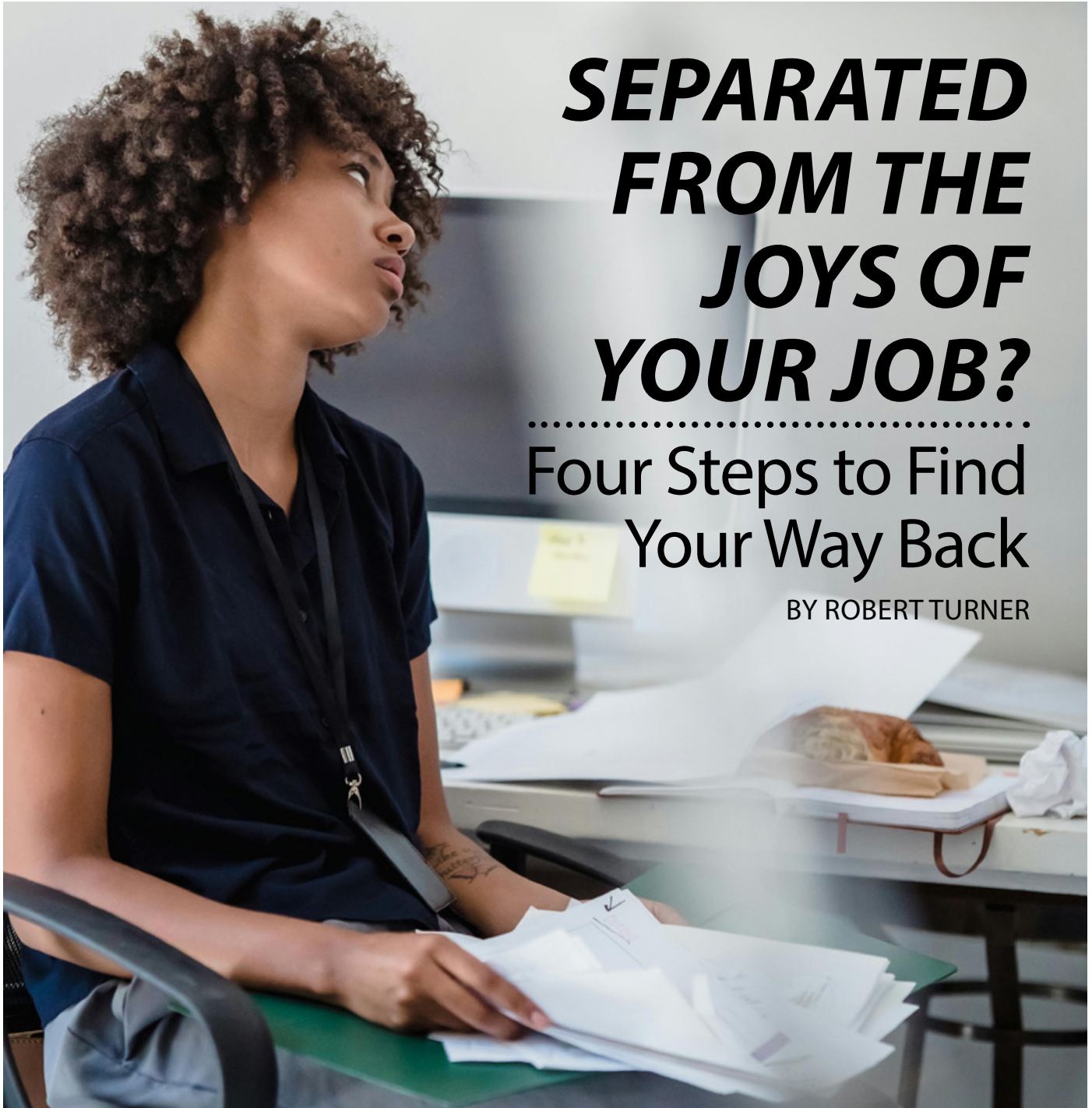
* “Frequently Asked Questions About Small Business, 2023,” U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, March 7, 2023, <https://advocacy.sba.gov/2023/03/07/frequently-asked-questions-about-small-business-2023/>.

THE IMPERATIVE FOR SENIOR LEADERS

For those of you in senior leadership roles, the responsibility of defining and upholding strong



SUSAN QUINN has worked for 30+ years with Fortune 500 to middle market firms across the country developing strategies that spur growth. As CEO of circle S studio, she supports companies in their quest to ‘better their best’ and brings a keen understanding of how to create a winning strategy. Quinn is the author of *Does Your Business Show Up or Stand Out?*, a leader’s playbook for implementing the nine traits. For more information, please visit www.circlesstudio.com/business-playbook.



SEPARATED FROM THE JOYS OF YOUR JOB?

..... Four Steps to Find Your Way Back

BY ROBERT TURNER

In the midst of a busy workday, with attention divided among so many responsibilities, it's easy to lose sight of what in our jobs truly brings us joy. Bridging the separation from joy can yield a high Return on Investment (ROI), not just in levels of satisfaction and fulfillment, but in creativity, productivity, and performance. By prioritizing joy in your job, individuals can create a unique value proposition that sets them apart in their professional lives.

When considering how you are separated from joy, it's important to recognize that the interpretation of joy as a state of well-being is an internal process. Therefore, the real barrier to joy lies within yourself. Behind that wall lies the negative emotions that you experience in the form of anxiety, overthinking, anger, trauma, and unforgiveness. Some will say: "But stuff happens!" Yes, that's true, but ultimately, you have control over how outside circumstances impact your joy. You determine the extent to which joy is surrendered to adversity.

Consider the story of Cyrus, a talented and experienced software engineer whose fingers navigate the keyboard with practiced ease, although his creative spark and energy has long since dwindled. For Cyrus, years of repetition and routine extinguished the joy he once felt for his job. When monotony sets in, it can create a disconnect between what you expect from work and the reality that's delivered. To break the cycle, Cyrus follows four steps to find his way back to the joy in a job he loves:

CONTRAST THEORY

Often, joy and happiness are used interchangeably since they both carry a similar positive emotional connotation, but joy is a much more profound experience than simple happiness. Joy often arises from a sense of purpose or connection, while happiness can result solely on the strength of external factors. Therefore, joy is firmly rooted in self; it's a whole-mind perspective. While happiness ebbs and flows with external events that are not under our control, joy is sourced from our core state of being.

As Cyrus stares blankly at the screen, the lines of code blurring together, he remembers why he became a software engineer. He remembers his passion for technology and complex problem-solving, and his mission to drive innovation and progress through software applications. Cyrus recognizes that rediscovering his true purpose, beyond mere happiness, is key to finding his way back to joy.

JOY-CENTRIC ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES

Joy is an essential human experience; it fosters the resilience needed for goal achievement and shaping meaningful stakeholder connections that drive financial growth. Prioritizing joy, positivity, and well-being in leadership, and reflecting this in

an organization's mission and values, yields positive results. Joy-centric cultures gain a competitive edge by recognizing that people and relationships are their core business, regardless of products or services. Therefore, joy must be intentionally integrated into every area—from customer and employee experience to marketing and product development—to build brand loyalty and ensure sustainable success.

Cyrus's day changed unexpectedly when a senior manager asked him to mentor a new team member. As he shared his knowledge, Cyrus experienced a new awareness that led him to discover a potentially lucrative application. With renewed joy, Cyrus then re-aligned with his organization's mission to make a positive technological impact.

THE POWER OF COACHING

Coaching empowers us by metaphorically inviting us to slide behind the steering wheel of our lives. This allows us to make a conscious and deliberate decision to turn toward a more joyful and fulfilling direction. When we actively take responsibility for our own joy, rather than passively waiting for it, we position ourselves to experience it. This enables joy to permeate everything we undertake, from our professional initiatives to our personal interactions, nurturing a deeper sense of contentment and purpose in all aspects of life.

Working with a professional coach empowered Cyrus to create a solid, personalized professional development plan. Reflecting on his own learning, he realized the critical need for continuous curiosity and acquiring new knowledge. Armed with clear, intentional goals, he was soon exploring new opportunities and reclaiming the joy in his job that monotonous routines had suppressed.

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When considering how you are separated from joy, it's important to recognize that the interpretation of joy as a state of well-being is an internal process. Therefore, the real barrier to joy lies within yourself.

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Like a slender shaft of sunlight, joy is there...
 waiting for our conscious recognition. The disconnection with self is the greatest enemy to cultivating joy.

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CONSCIOUS RECOGNITION

Joy cannot exist without a hunger to embrace life, which means that we must have the capacity to be curious, interested, enthused, and excited... about nearly everything. So ask yourself: What do you look forward to? Is it that next team meeting? Or is it a company retreat in the mountains or at the lake? Whatever it is, dive in with sheer abandonment! And beyond business hours, explore new hobbies or interests, even those that you doubted in some way, because we never know when depthless joy is ready to spring upon us.

Cyrus's breakthrough came with a profound realization: his attitude and approach to work were entirely within his control. By proactively seeking development and learning opportunities, he deliberately cultivated his joy, reigniting his career passion. This also involved consciously appreciating small daily moments, staying

present in interactions, and continually aligning with his core values and passions.

Like a slender shaft of sunlight, joy is there... waiting for our conscious recognition. The disconnection with self is the greatest enemy to cultivating joy. It is within self, that we find a connection and purpose. Those who have not found their purpose, are subject to chance experiences of joy. Mindfulness coaching supports the journey of self-discovery, helping us to align our personal and professional lives with core values grounded in universal truth. Through coaching, we can cultivate a deeper appreciation for the everyday blessings that make life special, and in doing so, we can tap into the divine presence within ourselves, lowering the barriers to the joyful life that awaits us.

This article is a companion piece to Empowering Joy; 4 Steps to Driving Success and Growth, also by Rev. Dr. Robert Turner.



REV. DR. ROBERT TURNER, PCC, BCC is a speaker and executive coach who helps senior leaders facing transition stress, isolation, or questioning whether their leadership still feels meaningful. With more than 30 years of experience speaking in business and community settings, he brings executive clarity and trusted support to leaders who are ready for what's next—even if they're not sure what that is yet. Learn more at ExecutiveCoachTurner.com.



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When you take courses and earn certificates at NU, you can also be earning credits toward a degree program at the same time. Everyone's educational journey is unique, so NU supports students in working at their own pace with convenient access to certificate and degree programs.

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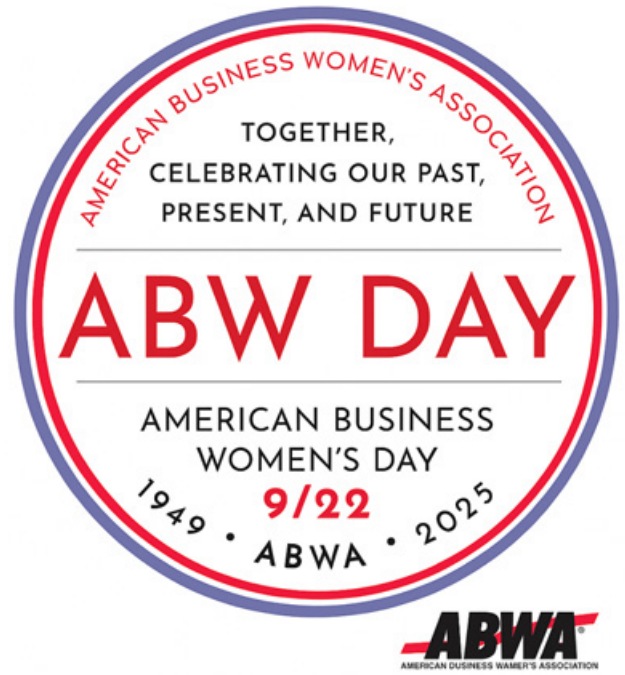
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ABW DAY ACROSS THE COUNTRY

On September 22, ABWA chapters across the country celebrated ABW Day with energy, creativity, and connection. Thank you to all the chapters who shared their photos with us! We're excited to feature a selection of snapshots that highlight the wide variety of activities—socials, community outreach, special gatherings, and member recognition. Enjoy this glimpse into how our members came together to honor the spirit and purpose of ABWA!



SOUTH CAROLINA AREA COUNCIL OF ABWA



KANSAS CITY AREA COUNCIL AND DES MOINES AREA COUNCIL OF ABWA



ALABAMA LEADING LADIES CHAPTER & BIRMINGHAM CHARTER CHAPTER



PUNTA GORDA CHARTER CHAPTER



IMPERIAL RIVER CHAPTER



PALMS OF EDISONIA CHAPTER



TU'YA CHAPTER



SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COUNCIL



DOUGLAS COUNTY CHARTER CHAPTER



LAKELAND DOWNTOWN CHAPTER



CY-FAIR EXPRESS NETWORK



GEM CITY CHAPTER



TRI-COUNTY AREA COUNCIL



PYRAMID CHAPTER



SOUTH CAROLINA AREA COUNCIL OF ABWA



AIRPORT CHARTER CHAPTER



GOLDEN ROYALTIES CHAPTER



OCEANSIDE CHARTER CHAPTER

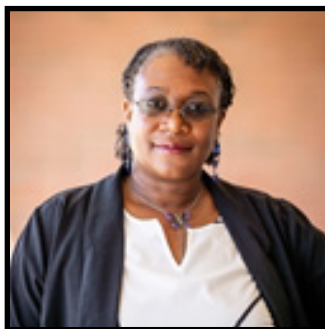
ABWA'S INNER CIRCLE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Meet the Members Who Recently Leveled Up

Inviting and then recruiting new members has always been an important aspect of maintaining the growth and vitality of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA). Introduced in the early 50s, ABWA's *Inner Circle Recognition* program spotlights members who are committed to sponsoring new members into ABWA. There are nine levels of the *Inner Circle Recognition* program. Each level represents a higher number of sponsored new members.



DR. GAIL HAMILTON
EmpowerHer Chapter,
Orangeburg, SC, **joined the Golden Sapphire level**
by sponsoring 33 new members.



CHARISSA MCCALL
Women Inspiring Women
Leaders Chapter, Fredericksburg,
VA, **joined the Inner Circle** by
sponsoring 11 new members.

Celebrating ABWA League Milestone Anniversaries

MARYLAND CAPITAL CHAPTER
Annapolis, MD, 55 years

OKLAHOMA CITY CHARTER CHAPTER
Oklahoma City, OK, 75 years

Celebrating ABWA Member Anniversaries

30 YEARS

JUNE DISHMAN
Dunlap Charter Chapter,
Dunlap, TN

PATTI ANN HOKAMA
Na Kilohana 'O Wahine Chapter,
Honolulu, HI

ELIZABETH TENNANT
Territorial Charter Chapter
Yuma, AZ

CADY HALVORSON
National Member,
Boulder, CO

CHRISTINA BRENNAN
Northeast Sunrise Charter
Chapter, Oscoda, MI

VERDIE HENDERSON
Charisma Charter Chapter
Cedar Hill, TX

40 YEARS

MARILYN RAGSDALE
National Member,
Salado, TX

45 YEARS

RITA TEAL RUPLE
National Member,
Huntsville, AL

60 YEARS

BEULAH MASON
National Member,
Bay City, MI





ABWA'S NEWEST PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

SIGN UP NOW FOR OUR DECEMBER & JANUARY COMPLIMENTARY COURSE FROM OUR APEX CAMPUS!

Day in the Life of a Lean Supervisor—December 1–31, 2025

This course goes further into the topic of lean daily accountability with these supplementary videos. See these processes in action, and hear from lean leaders on how their own implementations have been successfully handled.

Introduction to Agile Kanban—January 5–30, 2026

Kanban has become one of the most widely adopted Agile ways of working since it originated as a visual management method for project management and software development. These modules provide an overview of the principles, cadences, and metrics employed in Agile Kanban. Learners are guided step by step through the creation and adaptation of Kanban to suit their individual and organizational needs.

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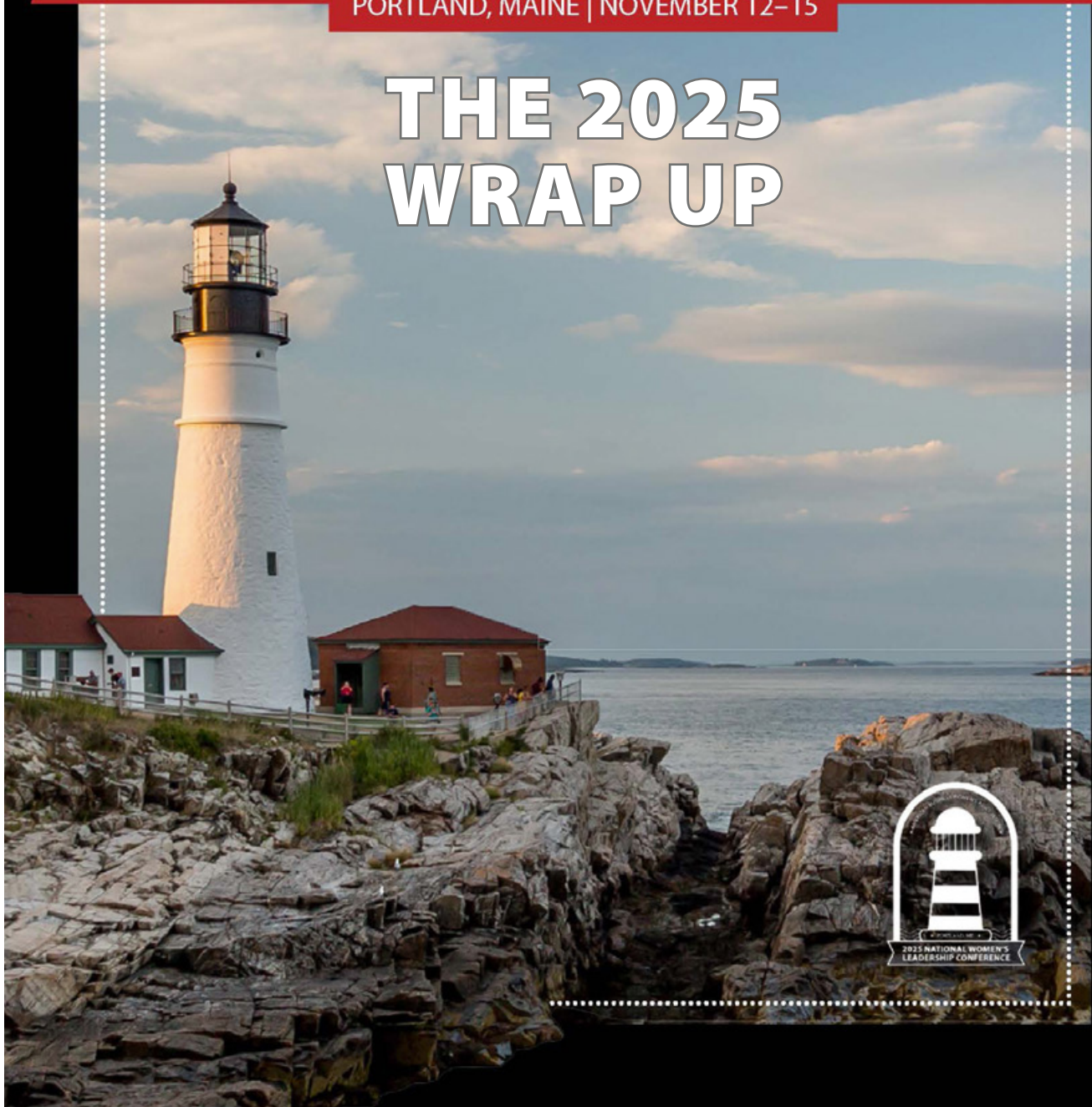


AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

2025 NATIONAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

PORTLAND, MAINE | NOVEMBER 12-15

THE 2025 WRAP UP



THANK YOU

Corporate Sponsors and Contributors

Decades ago, corporate America discovered ABWA and its leadership role in supporting working women and women business owners. Their recognition of our Association's mission and core values has been beneficial to individual members. This year's expanded agenda and concentrated programming is attributed to their sponsorship dollars. We ask that you please support ABWA's corporate sponsors by considering their products and services before making a purchasing decision.

National Sponsor: National University

National Conference Sponsors: Holladay & Associates, Inc. (Iced Tea Sponsor)

Texas Motor Transportation Consultants (Conference Bag Sponsor)

Vanessa Willis (Top Ten Breakfast Sponsor)















BEST PRACTICES • Recognition



DISTRICT 1

Palms of Edisonia Chapter
Fort Meyers, FL

EmpowerHer Chapter
Orangeburg, SC

Imperial River Chapter
Bonita Springs, FL

Airport Charter Chapter
Atlanta, GA

Oceanside Charter Chapter
Melbourne, FL

Lakeland Downtown Chapter
Lakeland, FL

Douglas County Charter Chapter
Douglasville, GA

Leading Women Express Network
Bryan, TX

DISTRICT 2

Crescent City Connections Express Network
Metairie, LA

Cy-Fair Express Network
Cypress, TX

Victoria Professional Express Network
Victoria, TX

Quincy Charter Chapter
Quincy, IL

DISTRICT 4

Heart Of The Piedmont Chapter
Greensboro, NC

Oxon Hill Charter Chapter
Fort Washington, MD

DISTRICT 3

W. Des Moines Charter Chapter
Des Moines, IA



DISTRICT 1

Coral Springs Charter Chapter
Coral Springs, FL

DISTRICT 2

Charisma Charter Chapter
Carrollton, TX

Women Growing Together Express Network
Victoria, TX



DISTRICT 1

Birmingham Charter Chapter
Birmingham, AL

Punta Gorda Charter Chapter
Punta Gorda, FL

Orange Park Charter Chapter
Orange Park, FL

Alabama Leading Ladies Chapter
Madison, AL

Pyramid Chapter
Atlanta, GA

Golden Dome Chapter
Atlanta, GA

DISTRICT 2

La Capitale Chapter
Baton Rouge, LA



DISTRICT 1

Columbia Triad Chapter
Columbia, SC

InspireHer Chapter
Snellville, GA

Women Connecting Women Chapter
Newberry, SC

DISTRICT 2

Bryan/College Station Charter Chapter
College Station, TX

DISTRICT 3

Mo-Kan Chapter
Lenexa, KS

Kansas City Express Network
Overland, KS

Ad Astra Chapter
Topeka, KS

DISTRICT 4

D.C. Charter Chapter
Washington, DC

Limitless Ladies Chapter
Charlotte, NC

Blue Mountain Chapter
Harrisburg, PA

DISTRICT 5

Women of Magnitude Express Network
Fort Wayne, IN

Suburban Connection Charter Chapter
Clinton Township, MI

Nu-Lite Chapter
Flint, MI

Gem City Chapter
Dayton, OH

Indianapolis Charter Chapter
Indianapolis, IN

Raintree Chapter
New Castle, IN

DISTRICT 6

Pathfinder Chapter
Fremont, CA

Wind Song Charter Chapter
Huntington Beach, CA

CONGRATULATIONS J FRANCO

CY-FAIR EXPRESS NETWORK | KATY, TX



2025–2026 National Board of Directors

National Officers.....



BARBARA PEDERSEN
National President
Member since 2004, Heart of the
Piedmont Chapter



DIOR DAVIS
National Vice President
Member since 2021, Airport
Charter Chapter



**DR. TRACEY
G. JACKSON**
National Secretary-Treasurer
Member since 2007, Oxon Hill
Charter Chapter

District Vice Presidents



**DR. DEBORAH
JOHNSON-BLAKE**
District 1 Vice President
Member since 2016, Douglas
County Charter Chapter



KATHY ELLER
District 2 Vice President
Member since 2020, Tu'Ya
Chapter



LESLIE MCMILLIN
District 3 Vice President
Member since 2018, Kansas City
Express Network



LINDA B. JOHNSON
District 4 Vice President
Member since 2014, Limitless
Ladies Chapter



RENEE CLEMENT
District 5 Vice President
Member since 2018, Gem City
Chapter



KAREN FITTING
District 6 Vice President
Member since 2017, Pathfinder
Chapter

2025–2026 Ambassador Steering Committee

Dr. Cindy Schmitt
Chair

Trina Kingery
Chair Elect

Doris Brown
Advisor

DISTRICT 1

Linda Hough-Hicks
Rep

Sonya Lowe
Co-Rep

DISTRICT 2

Barbara Barach
Rep

Elizabeth Gonzalez
Co-Rep

DISTRICT 3

Janelle Burlin
Rep

Kathy Schooley
Co-Rep

DISTRICT 4

Yolanda Johnson
Rep

Joyce Wright
Co-Rep

DISTRICT 5

Shirley New
Rep

Cheryl Schmandt
Co-Rep

DISTRICT 6

JoAnn Osby
Rep

Velma Landers
Co-Rep

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 ABWA-KU MBA ESSENTIALS GRADUATES



Rhoynda Bender
Birmingham Charter Chapter
Birmingham, AL

Michelle English
Douglas County Charter Chapter
Douglasville, GA

Karen Kolc
Novi Oaks Charter Chapter
Farmington Hills, MI

Debra Nashed
Imperial River Chapter
Fort Myers, FL

Erin Niekamp
Quincy Charter Chapter
Quincy, IL

Emily Pate
Orange Park Charter Chapter
Orange Park, FL

Minutes for ABWA's Annual Meeting of the Membership

November 13, 2025 - American Business Women's Association

The 2025 Annual Meeting of the American Business Women's Association was called to order by National President Anne O'Neill, Thursday, November 13, at 6:26 p.m. EST.

National President **Anne O'Neill**, *announced that:*

- Cheryl Blair served as the Rules Advisor.
- Pam Carvell served as the Alternate Rules Advisor.
- Genice Hall would serve as the Sergeant at Arms.

Sergeant of Arms, **Genice Hall Fowler** reviewed the decorum that is expected throughout the annual meeting.

National President, **Anne O'Neill**, announced the members serving on the credentials committee and briefly explained their role in the annual meeting:

- *Michelle Crone, Chair*
- *Jennifer Mann*
- *Toby Page*

National President, **Anne O'Neill** announced that the reading of the minutes for the 2024 Annual Meeting would be waived since they were approved by the 2024 Publishing Committee and were published in the 2024 *Achieve* Newsletter.

National President, **Anne O'Neill** also stated that this year's annual meeting minutes would also be published in the next *Achieve* Newsletter.

National President, **Anne O'Neill** announced the names of the members serving on the publishing committee:

Cindy Osmer (from District II) would serve as chair of the Publishing Committee for the annual meeting minutes.

Other publishing committee members are:

- From District II, Cindy Osmer - Chair
- From District III, Caitlin Foss
- From District VI, Adrienne Jackson Wright – not in attendance

The first item of business was to review the Statement of Condition for the Stephen Bufton Memorial Educational Fund by National Secretary-Treasurer, **Barbara Pedersen**.

The Stephen Bufton Memorial Educational Fund Statement of Condition for the year ending July 31, 2025.

Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$40,191.66
Investments at Fair Market Value	\$1,282,454.47
Total Assets	\$1,322,646.13
Liabilities	\$0.00
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,322,646.13
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$1,322,646.13

The second item of business was to introduce the National Nominating Committee, Chair, and the other members serving on the nominating committee including:

- From District I, Doris Harrison—Chair
- From District II, J Franco
- From District VI, Beverly Licata—not in attendance

Nominating Committee Chair, **Doris Harrison** introduced the members who were declared national board of directors candidates beginning with Candidates for Vice President, Districts I–VI, followed by National Secretary Treasurer, National Vice President, and National President.

Doris Harrison stated that, in accordance with the ABWA National Bylaws, if any one candidate did not receive a majority vote a run-off election would be held between the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes, citing Articles Article IX, Section 3 of the National Bylaws.

National President, **Anne O'Neill** invited officer candidates beginning with National Secretary-Treasurer, National Vice President, and National President to give their three minute remarks on the following question...

This transition to Big Red M is an exciting moment for ABWA. We all care deeply about ABWA's future, and we're looking to you for leadership. It will take vision and courage to lead us forward.

"How will you lead with vision to protect ABWA's legacy, empower future leaders, and chart a path of lasting growth and impact for our association?"

National President, **Anne O'Neill** invited DVP candidates beginning with District I VP, District II VP, District III VP, District IV VP, District V VP and ending with District VI VP to give their three minute remarks on the following question ...

Reflecting on the new ABWA theme "Believe, Belong, Become," how would you develop a holistic membership growth and retention strategy for your district that embodies all three elements? How will you ensure that members are inspired to join, actively engage, and remain committed to ABWA for the long term?

National President, **Anne O'Neill** cited the Bylaws Article 9, Section 3 regarding voting and reintroduced credentials committee members.

Credential Committee member, **Toby Page** explained the voting protocol for each Ballot and Round.

1st Round and Ballot Began at 8:40 p.m Eastern time
2nd Round and Ballot Began at 9:13 p.m. (runoff for Secretary/Treasurer).

At 10:03 p.m., National President, **Anne O'Neill** welcomed Michelle Crone to the podium to announce the results of the election and reminded members that the newly elected officers would be installed promptly and are elected to serve one term.

The Credential Committee Chair **Michelle Crone** announced the 2025–2026 National Board of Directors:

- District I Vice President, Deborah Blake Johnson
- District II Vice President, Kathy Eller
- District III Vice President, Leslie McMillan
- District IV Vice President, Linda B. Johnson
- District V Vice President, Renee Clement
- District VI Vice President, Karen Fitting
- National Secretary-Treasurer, Tracey Jackson
- National Vice President, Dior Davis
- National President, Barbara Pedersen

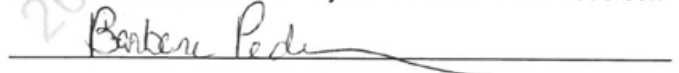
The 2025–2026 National Board of Directors were invited to the stage and were installed by the outgoing National President, Anne O'Neill.

The annual meeting was adjourned by the newly elected National President, Barbara Pedersen.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

The minutes from the Annual Meeting of the Membership were approved by the 2025 Publishing Committee on 11/13/2025 and signed by National Secretary-Treasurer, Barbara Pedersen and Publishing Committee Chair, Cindy Osmer.

2024-2025 National Secretary/Treasurer Barbara Pedersen



2025 Publishing Committee Chair Cindy Osmer





HAPPY

Holidays!



ABWA
AMERICAN BUSINESS WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION