By Wayne Hoover, CFI

Executive Director of IAI

The International Association of Interviewers (IAI) and CONTROLTEK are proud to announce their second annual recognition of remarkable women in the industry, with this special edition called, “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women.”

Not only are we recognizing outstanding practitioners, but we are recognizing leading women in an industry that is not necessarily known for high ranking females. “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women” display resilience and determination in the face of adversity.

“The Power of 10” leading women were selected based on the key principles of IAI and these top-notch attributes:

Industry Commitment – Making time to get involved is a deep commitment. Our honorees are significantly involved in developing people and this industry through committing their time at industry events, associations and work groups.

Dedication to Learning – It takes a confident person to admit they don’t know everything. Our honorees understand that life is a journey of learning and have an external commitment to learning demonstrated by certifications, memberships and involvement.

Leadership Qualities – IAI embraces the ancient concept of “servant leadership” and our honorees embody those qualities. One of the most important descriptions of a servant leader is gratitude. In this issue, each honoree describes the individual(s) whom they are grateful for in their career.

Career Journey – A career path can be as diverse as the individuals you meet along the way. Our honorees have taken different paths which provides valuable and unique lessons readers can learn from. There is not one “right” career path as our honorees demonstrate, but they share wisdom that has guided them along the way. Which quote will you find most inspiring?

IAI will continue to recognize and honor remarkable women in the industry each year by devoting a special edition of the CFInsider to them, maintaining columns in our regular publication, and by dedicating space on our website: certifiedinterviewer.com.

Congratulations to Kathleen, Kati, Deborah, Melissa, Missy, Jennifer, Kim, Debbie, Stefanie, and Victoria. You are remarkable women who are change agents in our industry. Thank you for your commitment and paving the way for our next generation of remarkable, leading women.

Wayne Hoover, CFI
Executive Director
International Association of Interviewers
Kathleen Smith, CFI, is vice president of loss prevention for Safeway, Inc. and one of IAI’s “Power of 10 – Remarkable Women” for 2016. Prior to joining Safeway, Kathleen was a senior deputy for the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. She first started at Safeway as an investigator handling assessment and internal investigations. Kathleen then moved to chief investigator. Soon she was promoted to division director and in 2001 she took over the vice president position. Today she oversees security for 1800 stores across the U.S. and Canada. Kathleen has over thirty years of security management and law enforcement experience and believes it is important to tap into the resources of your company to create effective programs and to be a “change agent” who can achieve successful solutions through sound decision-making.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

Kathleen: I believe I have been successful because I love what I do. I welcome every day and every new challenge. I want to learn something new every day. I’ve never believed that there was anything I couldn’t do if I truly wanted to do it. Reflecting on my career, I feel I have been successful because I’ve been fortunate enough to hire and work with outstanding individuals who have helped me build a strong respected department.

What has been one of your greatest career achievements over the last two or three years?

Kathleen: I think a great recent success of mine has been bringing together a diverse group of individuals with varying sets of accomplishments to work together as a team for the betterment of all. To accomplish this, I had to avoid a “my way or the highway” mindset and develop a “give and take” attitude. I had to include everyone in the process of developing new ways to work together to achieve positive results.

What are the most important characteristics you believe every leader should possess?

Kathleen: I believe leaders need to show respect to everyone. They should also be open to differing opinions. Another most important leadership quality would be the ability to listen—without bias. Of course, leaders must also be courageous—that means having the courage to listen and to ask questions. Also, leaders should not expect others to do something they are not willing to do themselves. I believe this is an invaluable asset for a strong leader, and something I learned first-hand from my father. I will not ask someone that I work with to do something that I have not done myself or am not willing to do and would be willing to do again, if needed.

What types of leaders do you think make mistakes more frequently than others?

Kathleen: I think some leaders try to take credit for the accomplishments of others. This is a mistake and can prevent leaders from building a loyal following.

What are you doing to continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Kathleen: I don’t believe leaders should ever stop developing, learning, or growing. I continue to listen to those who work for me. I try to take the necessary time to notice if something is “off.” I try not to be afraid to ask, I seek to encourage others, and I strive for open channels of communication.

When faced with two equally-qualified candidates, how do you determine whom to hire?

Kathleen: I have several criteria for new hires. First, I look for individuals who have a “can-do” attitude. Next, I want team members who don’t have the word “can’t” in their vocabulary. Also, I would be impressed by individuals who, rather than become discouraged when they encounter a wall, look at obstacles as opportunities to build a shiny new ladder, dig a fancy tunnel or perhaps, fashion a creative set of wings. When hiring, I look for “diversity” in the candidates’ qualifications (not all LP experience, for example) and varied outside interests.
What will be the biggest challenge for the next generation of women?

Kathleen: The next generation of women will have to live up to whatever expectations have been previously set. If an individual has achieved success based on their personal achievements, then there should be no issues and they will be able to continue to grow and succeed. But if success was achieved solely through a perceived diversity mandate, then some women may need to work harder to rebuild and re-establish their credibility and reputation based on their own individual merits. I hope the next generation will not feel there is a difference in the workplace based on gender. I believe any differences in leadership should be based on an individual's style and skill sets alone, not whether they are a man or a woman.

Can you name a person who has had tremendous impact on you as a leader?

Kathleen: My father has impacted my life as a leader the most, both in the way he demonstrated leadership to me by his example and by what he told me. He instilled in me the attitude that there is nothing in this life that I can't do if I really want to do it, provided I am willing to put in the effort, whether those challenges lie in sports, school, or the workplace. There was never the added, “as a woman.” So in the workplace, for example, I’ve never considered that I am doing something, “as a woman.” I’ve only known that I am successful because I work hard, because I am good at the task, or because I know who or where to go for assistance to accomplish a task. I’ve never thought in terms of gender.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Kathleen: Here’s a quote that I think sums up all the hard work I’ve put into my career: “There is no elevator to success. You have to take the stairs.” – Zig Ziglar

Kati Wisniewski, CFI

Kati Wisniewski, CFI, has been the Regional Loss Preventions Leader at Ratner Company for over 15 years. As one of IAI’s “Power of 10 – Remarkable Women,” Kati encourages potential leaders to work on their leadership skills through training and mentorship. Above all, she advises leaders who are making important decisions to look at the whole picture and not “rush” to make quick decisions.

What are the most important decisions you make as a leader?

Kati: Leaders have to make decisions concerning the futures of others. As a leader, I am able to mentor and coach people, and perhaps help make another person successful. Leadership decisions are important because someone’s success can be a direct reflection on their actual leader.

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Why and how did this person impact your life?

Kati: My first District Leader, Lyn Brown, had a huge impact on my life. She believed in me when I sometimes didn’t believe in myself. She helped me develop patience and understanding. She showed me how to look at a situation and really understand it before reacting. I always share the great example of Dereck Bentley, who was hung in 1953 for the murder of a police officer. Dereck Bentley and Christopher Craig were chased by a police officer after attempting to break into a warehouse in England. Christopher had a gun, and while running from the Police, Derek shouted to Chris, “Let him have it!” So, Chris shot and killed the officer. Dereck’s defense was that he said “Let him have it,” he meant for Chris to give the gun to the officer. Obviously, this statement can be interpreted in two different ways: Give the officer the gun or shoot the officer. This example points to the important lesson learned from my District Leader, and that is to listen without judgment, process the information carefully, and think before you respond.

What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?

Kati: Honesty and integrity are important leadership characteristics. As a leader you have to be honest with the people you are leading. Great leadership shines through those you lead and results in their achievements. Leaders have to do the right thing even when they don’t think people are watching them.

What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Kati: Leaders sometimes rush to making decisions and don’t take time to practice active listening or don’t ask enough questions to gather adequate information to make informed decisions.
What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Kati: If you want to be a good leader, you must observe, listen, and build relationships. You want your people to respect you and trust you. This doesn’t happen overnight! I often tell leaders not to make any significant changes for at least three months. No one wants someone to come into a role and make changes right off the bat! It’s important to get to know the people who will be affected by the changes first.

What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Kati: This year my goal is to complete and pass my LPC. This achievement will develop my strengths as a leader and highlight my ability to integrate my operations and asset protection skills to help advance my career.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

Kati: The support that I receive from my coworkers, as well as my support system at home, have helped contribute to my success. These support systems allow me to continue my education and develop my career. I also attend as many webinars and local meetings as time allows.

What woman inspires you the most and why?

Kati: The Princess of Wales, Diana Spencer, inspires me. She stood for what she believed and was loved by many. She really was a role model for my generation, and watching her grow to live a meaningful life was empowering. From the way she looked – fashion forward – to leading a Nobel Peace Prize campaign to ban landmines, she was a leader. She was able to capture a nation and touched many. She inspired people to better themselves and believe in themselves.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Kati: One of my favorite quotes is by Winston Churchill: “To each there comes in their lifetime a special moment when they are figuratively tapped on the shoulder and offered the chance to do a very special thing, unique to them and fitted to their talents. What a tragedy if that moment finds them unprepared or unqualified for that which could have been their finest hour.”

What is one of the great books you have read?

Kati: Today, my “greatest book” is Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell. He really makes us think about the decisions that we make in the first few seconds of any given situation. He makes us look at how we perceive others and how we are perceived by them. He talks about taking time to build relationships. If you haven’t read the book, you should do yourself a favor and read it today!

Deborah Lanford, CFI

Deborah Lanford, CFI has been selected as one of IAI’s “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women.” She is currently Profit Assurance Team Manager at 7-Eleven and has held district and regional managerial positions and ORC positions with big box, specialty, pharmacy, and convenience store retailers. She has been described as result-oriented motivator with a strong team approach, high standards, and an influential style. Deborah’s successful career in retail loss prevention has given her a unique perspective of the industry and she says, “I am honored and humbled to be recognized for the work which I love.”

How did you get started in the loss prevention field?

Deborah: I fell into the loss prevention area quite by accident. I was studying criminal justice at San Jose State and had aspirations to go to law school. I was working a retail job to fund my school expenses. A store detective position opened up and I asked the store manager about the qualifications needed to apply. His reply was, “Debbie, I don’t think women should be doing that work.” My 18-year-old self responded, “If you won’t give me an opportunity to pursue this type of work, I will find someone who will.” A month later I was in the midst of my first (and only) day of store detective training (the times were quite different back then). My supervisor’s advice to me: “Don’t try to stop anybody by yourself. I can be mean and tough, but you - no one is going to believe you can stop them.” By the time I was 19, I was supervising the department.

What are some of today’s challenges for LP professionals?

Deborah: Today, our leaders must not only be experts in LP, but they must also have strong business acumen. LP professionals are the most relied upon resources to protect our people (customers and employees), our product, and our brand. Over the next few years, we will face unique challenges related to work place safety, cybersecurity threats, and data breaches. To face these challenges, it will be important for our leaders to forge cross-functional partnerships.
What do you think are the most important characteristics of a strong leader?

Deborah: I believe the most important leadership characteristics are integrity, accountability, credibility, vision, and the communication skills necessary to inspire others. Today’s leaders must surround themselves with talented people who are empowered to make decisions and take action. Equally important is the ability of our leaders to contribute to the unique network that makes up the LP community. I am fortunate to have been able to reach out to my peers over the years for opinions, advice, and support. I have always found a willingness among them to assist me in any way. I can only hope I have given back as much to others in return.

Who has had tremendous impact on you as a leader?

Deborah: Many people have influenced me on my journey. I was fortunate to have spent my early management years at Emporium-Capwell, then later at Circuit City. I have worked with some great people – many of whom are in leadership positions today in the LP world. As a young LP manager, I had a wonderful mentor in Leona Marini. Susan Manning inspired me in so many ways, and took a chance on me as a regional investigator. I was exposed to many great leaders: Elaine Schramm, Tom Miller, Bill Engen, Mark Stinde, John Voytilla, and Dave Urquidi. I had examples of the power of work ethics in people like Mike Currier and Debbie Maples. Each of these people have, in some way, inspired me to be a better leader, either by the examples they set, the lessons they taught, the opportunities they afforded me, or the encouragement they offered.

While at CVS, I was part of one of the best ORC teams in the business, under the leadership of Tony Sheppard. I met and worked with dedicated, talented investigators who are passionate about tackling ORC problems, and willing to share information and resources.

Two other people I have been greatly inspired by over the years are Joe Larocca for his passion, dedication, and commitment to the loss prevention industry, and Paul Jones, whose leadership has forged strong partnerships between Ebay and the retail community. Together we have accomplished so much in the fight against ORC.

What has been one of your greatest career achievements over the last two or three years?

Deborah: As I look back on my career, I see many things contributing to my success. Growing up, I was instilled with the principle that you can be anything you want to be if you work hard enough, act with integrity, and don’t give up when things get difficult. It was never about being male or female; it was about doing the right thing, working hard, and standing up for what you believe. These principles have been my guideposts throughout my career. In my first WZ class, Dave and Doug inspired me to be a great interviewer. I was fortunate to teach the course for the LP team at Emporium, and I look back on that as one of my favorite experiences. Once I ran into a young woman that I had interviewed and prosecuted, and she told me the experience had changed the course of her life. She thanked me for how I had treated her. This memory is a constant reminder of the impact we can have on the lives of others.

Melissa Mitchell, CFI

Melissa Mitchell, CFI has been selected as one of IAI’s “The Power of 10 - Remarkable Women.” Melissa has been in the loss prevention industry for thirty years and Director of Loss Prevention and Inventory Control for LifeWay Christian Stores for the past fourteen years. She was the District Loss Prevention Manager for Service Merchandise and previously worked as Loss Prevention Manager for the Cato Corporation, Inc., Roses Stores, Inc., Revco drug stores, and TJ Maxx. Melissa takes all her leadership decisions to heart and says this is because her decisions often have a direct impact on the lives of her associates.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

Melissa: I have had the great fortune of working with leaders who were willing to give me a shot at a task even though I was not always the most qualified candidate on paper. I looked at this as a great gift and I was determined to do more than was expected of me so that these mentors would never regret extending that opportunity to me.

What will be the biggest challenge for the generation of women behind you?

Melissa: I think women in my field need to remember they should not let others define what “having it all” means for them and their families.

What has been your greatest achievement over the last two to three years at work?

Melissa: After 30 years in Loss Prevention I had become comfortable with what I was doing. Then I accepted additional responsibilities to include retail supply chain, process improvement, and inventory control. This was a huge stretch for me. The new duties were very much outside of my comfort zone. I found myself learning a new job while trying to find answers to supply chain-related issues. Fortunately, the key to success is the same across the spectrum- a great team. And I am very fortunate to be a part of a great team!
What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?

Melissa: The truth is, you cannot make people follow you. You can only influence them to follow you. So I think it is important for all leaders to have integrity. I have never known anyone to follow, for any length of time or with total conviction, a leader who is lacking in integrity.

What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Melissa: I believe that some leaders think the title brings with it automatic respect and acceptance. But I think you have to earn respect, and you have to earn it every day. People watch everything leaders do, for example, how they treat people, what their priorities are, and if their words are consistent with their actions. I have seen people work really hard to get to a leadership position and then suddenly, because they had earned the title, they stopped trying to earn the respect. For me, one does not equal the other.

What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Melissa: I would say to those who are going into new leadership positions to accept the fact that you are going to falter and, in some cases, perhaps fail. Falling down is not the problem, but pretending that it didn't happen is failure, in and of itself. Learn to fall on your sword gracefully and move on. Seeing leaders admit to failure has empowered me to take calculated risks… which, I believe, is the way we all grow.

When faced with two equally-qualified candidates, how do you determine whom to hire?

Melissa: It depends on what the definition of “equally qualified” is, but I think a candidate’s personality and his/her people skills trump the number of years of experience a person has clocked at a particular job. I always hire the person I believe will be the best fit with our team and organizational culture, even if that person has less experience in terms of number of years.

What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Melissa: I love to learn new things by asking questions of my peers. I have a sheet of paper with questions about leadership on it that carry in my wallet. Anytime I can get ten interrupted minutes with someone in a leadership position, I pull out my piece of paper and get their insights into as many of those questions as possible.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Melissa: My favorite quote is: “Holding on to bitterness is like taking poison and hoping the other guy dies.” - Unknown Author

Missy Andeel, CFI

Missy Andeel, CFI, is the Senior Employee Relations Representative for Children’s Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri. She says HR is all about relationships and proactive consulting with leaders and staff. She feels women at all levels in the profession have helped position HR as a strategic business partner and she is excited to be a part of this change.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

Missy: Resilience. I don't think I was born with resilience, but I earned it! I was laid off three times in three years when I was in my late twenties. The first time was just after I had uprooted my household to move from Boston to Chicago. I was in a different field at that time, and whole teams and departments were being cut. Each time I was laid off was a shock to my system. I'd pound the pavement for a few months and eventually find a position, but it was so exhausting to start over. The third time it happened, about 30 of my teammates and I took our pink slips and our boxes of personal items and walked three blocks to the Sears Tower in downtown Chicago where we indulged in margaritas and self-pity. It was during the cab ride home that I realized I needed to develop new skills that would allow me to stay in the driver’s seat of my career. So I did, and I was never laid off again. I have made proactive moves – company choice and location, but I no longer feel I am vulnerable to a bad economy, an obsolete career path, or a random executive’s business decision.

What has been your greatest achievement over the last two to three years at work?

Missy: There’s no doubt that the best thing I’ve done is invest the time and effort to obtain my CFI designation, and here’s why: My job is to give advice to employees and managers. I have to provide information that will equip managers to make the best business decisions they can. I can recommend a course of action or offer an idea and I can help them think through the pros and cons of the alternatives, but I am
not the implementer or the ultimate decision-maker. My ideas and advice are valued, but in many situations, it's the quality and credibility of the information I provide that helps our leaders make good business decisions. Because of my CFI designation and the training behind it, the information I am able to obtain during an investigation is of a higher quality, which greatly impacts the input I provide. I feel confident going home every day knowing that the leaders I advise made the best decisions they could with the information that I was able to offer.

**What are your observations about the challenges women face that are specific to your industry?**

**Missy:** I love seeing our highest performing employees (many are women) come up through the internal ranks of various levels of leadership. Internal promotions can be a beautiful thing and a great development tool. However, when a person gets promoted over her peers, she must reset her own and others' expectations regarding the friendships she has developed and nurtured at work. Because many employees tend to work at healthcare organizations for a long time (some for their entire careers), this means tough conversations with new subordinates about boundaries, about time spent together outside of work, and about posting photos and comments on social media. It’s hard to tell friends that a valued relationship might need to change, but it’s so necessary for the greater good of an environment of fairness (and ensuring perceptions of fairness) at work. I am not certain if men struggle in the same way women do when faced with having to discuss changes in the parameters of relationships with their friends.

**What will be the biggest challenge for the generation of women behind you?**

**Missy:** I’ve heard it said that the best thing about being over 40 is that we made all of our bad decisions before the internet. I do appreciate that our present era of technology can generate more evidence to fight crime and fraud, and I love that I can communicate quickly and share photos with friends and relatives near and far, but I worry about Generation X, Y, or anyone else, who feel that all of their actions and opinions need to be expressed in an online forum with a permanent footprint. From an HR standpoint, the information that people post on Facebook or Twitter is not necessarily something we need to know to make a hiring decision, and (at least in my organization) we don’t seek out that kind of information. But wherever you work and whatever product or service you provide, even if your hiring department isn't Googling you, chances are good that your customers and coworkers are. You can’t decide at age 30 that you want to be deliberate about cultivating your personal brand. It’s already out there with a life of its own.

**What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?**

**Missy:** I think leaders need to want to be in leadership roles for the right reasons. Not everyone should supervise others, and that is okay. There are lots of ways to demonstrate leadership informally, for instance, by the example you set or by using your influence for good. But if you make the leap to a leadership position and to being responsible for other people, you must know that you will be responsible for their workload, their productivity, their relationship with you, their morale, their experience at your organization, and possibly their departure from it. So be sure that’s what you want to sign on to do. Some people go for promotions into a leadership role because that might be the only upward step in their career progression within their organization. Others accept leadership positions because they are interested in an increase in pay. It’s important for leaders to actually want to do the job of leading.

**What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?**

**Missy:** I think sometimes leaders say “yes” to the wrong thing, or to too many things, without taking into account how saying “yes” will impact those executing that decision. “Yes” is not the right answer all the time. I remember a leader who had our department sit in a circle around a whiteboard. She asked us to think of and share all of the “out-of-the-box” ideas we could for possible implementation in the coming year. The exercise started out as a fun brainstorming session. We filled up multiple pages with ideas. However, the time never came to take a second pass at the list with a red pen to prioritize the actions, or to say “yes” to some items and “no” to others. Instead, she gave us marching orders to just do most everything on the list, without considering other priorities, without additional resources, and without removing any current work from our plates. You can imagine that the next January when she began the exercise again, most of us kept our mouths shut. On one hand, she was a positive, “can do” person. On the other hand, her constant “yes” and what it meant for our respect for the “no” means that our workloads and morale were just exhausting. In contrast, I have experienced excellent leaders who put the right amount of thought and deliberation into how a new project impacts the big picture before saying “yes,” “no,” or “not right now.” Leaders with this mindset have my utmost respect.

**What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?**

**Missy:** I hear the same themes, over and over, from individuals expressing what they are looking for from their manager. They say they want managers to be “nice” or to admit “I don’t know that yet.” New leaders should not worry about trying out the leadership theories they’ve read about or seek to make changes quickly. In fact, I advise them to assure people that you won’t make changes right away. New leaders should develop credibility in the first few weeks by shadowing their employees as much as they can to learn about their jobs. I would tell new leaders to get to know your staff on an individual level. Have one-on-one meetings and be curious about what people like about their jobs, what stresses them out, what they would love to change if they could, and what they need from you. You don’t have to agree with what they say, but you can listen to and consider their opinions. Take as much advantage as you can of leadership development opportunities.
within your organization and beyond. Learn the mechanics of doing annual performance evaluations, but get really good at the ongoing, in-the-moment development and feedback conversations. Learn who your HR business partners are and what kind of support they can provide that you have a sounding board for any big decisions you may need to make. Correct any performance and behavior problems early before they impact productivity or others on the team. Be as kind as you can, but as direct as the situation requires. Don’t let anything push you past your boiling point. Read Dale Carnegie, Marcus Buckingham, or anyone else you find motivating and helpful.

**When faced with two equally-qualified candidates, how do you determine whom to hire?**

**Missy:** I learned from a good manager years ago that when presented with two equally qualified candidates, you should always pick the one who brings something to the team that you don’t already have. That recommendation has stuck with me, and I see good leaders today employing the same philosophy. That is why interviewing skills are so critical for today’s leaders – not just for recruiters, but for managers. They must develop expertise in getting to the core of what a person can offer while identifying how this applicant can add to the team’s thinking and understanding. If a manager can identify what makes a person unique, they can individualize their mentoring, coaching, and feedback.

**What is one of the greatest books you have ever read?**

**Missy:** Every ten years I re-read my favorite book, *Seventrees*, by Janice Young Brooks. My mother gave me a copy when I was 16 years old. The book follows three generations of strong women during the 1800s as they navigate life on the border of Kansas and Missouri. They explore the joys, furies, and struggles of family, community, medicine, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and so much more. In the end, though, it’s a story about leadership. Ironically, my home is almost within walking distance of the historical site that serves as the book’s setting.

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**Jennifer DiCarlo, CFI**

Jennifer DiCarlo, CFI is one of IAI’s selections for “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women.” She is currently District Loss Prevention Manager at Sobeys. Jennifer is proud that women are now part of LP leadership teams. “Women who can empower their peers, whether male or female, are readily accepted today,” she says. Jennifer shares with us some of her thoughts about women, leadership, and the loss prevention industry.

**What has been one of your greatest career achievements over the last two or three years?**

**Jennifer:** My greatest achievement would have to be obtaining my CFI. My CFI designation has opened doors and allowed me to expand my horizons within my career. I truly believe I am where I am today because I had an advantage over other qualified candidates, and that advantage was my CFI. I’ve been able to connect with other Canadians who want to work towards obtaining their CFI designations and I have been pleased to see them succeed. I’m very proud of those I have helped over the past few years.

**As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?**

**Jennifer:** I am fortunate to have worked alongside and learned from innovative leaders who were not afraid to think outside the box and break new ground. In the early 90’s, it was thought that Organized Retail Crime (ORC) was something that LP in the U.S. needed to think about, but not in Canada. The LP leader I was working for at the time put together the first LP/Police task force to combat ORC in Southern Ontario. I watched, listened, learned, and participated in this action plan. This was new territory. I saw that it was okay to take educated risks and to go after what you believe. To this day I try to lead with the same zest and excitement this LP leader brought to his department. I have since been led by and worked with courageous, ground-breaking leaders. I continue to learn from them and, in turn, they are open to learn from me. Leading by example, learning from my peers, not being afraid to say, “I don’t know” or “I don’t understand,” and making sure I seek out answers, continues to allow me to succeed in this industry.

**What patterns or trends about women in your profession have you noticed over the years?**

**Jennifer:** I’ve noticed a growing number of women emerging into the higher levels of the LP area. When I first started in this field, most of the senior leaders were male and the floor-walkers were female. Now I see many women moving up in the ranks and taking senior leadership roles… and they are leading their respective companies and peers with overwhelming success and acceptance. Women aren’t afraid to make hard decisions, then stand up and tell it how it is.
People have varying opinions as to whether or not there are differences between how men and women lead. What are your thoughts on that?

Jennifer: Regarding whether or not there are differences between how men and women lead, I would have to say I think everyone leads differently and this is not due to gender.

What are the most important decisions you have to make as a leader?

Jennifer: I believe the most important decisions leaders must make are choosing the people to work alongside you. If you don’t have an engaged, knowledgeable, confident, and reliable team, you won’t be a leader for long. I also think it’s important for leaders to train their replacements so they can step away knowing everything will be fine. Leaders must allow their team to make mistakes and help them learn from those mistakes. Our mistakes are often our greatest lessons. Leaders must believe that the sign of a true leader is when one of their team gets promoted. Lastly, I truly believe that leaders must make a conscious decision to lead by example and demonstrate the attributes they want to see in their employees.

What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Jennifer: The one mistake I have witnessed leaders make more frequently than others is not hiring people smarter than they are. They are afraid that someone smarter than them might replace them. That fear only blinds leaders to the knowledge that others possess. Often the individual you may be afraid to hire is the one who can teach you about new techniques and technologies. Instead of worrying about being replaced, think of this new hire as someone with the knowledge to help you and your team stay relevant.

What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Jennifer: The advice I would give to someone going into a leadership position for the first time is listen to your people, learn from them, and don’t be afraid to ask them for advice. I would also reaching out to other leaders. Remember, you are not alone; don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you? Why and how did this person impact your life?

Jennifer: Who would I say has been my greatest mentor? I’ve been lucky to have a few. But if I must pick one, I’d have to say Wayne Hoover, CFI. Wayne has always been a supporter of mine, as well as someone who I can go to for advice and guidance. Over the years I have bounced ideas off of him and learned from him. I have been successful thanks to his experience and guidance. Many times when I request his advice, we talk and in the end he tells me I really already had the answer, I just needed to talk the problem through.

Who has inspired you the most?

Jennifer: My sister, Susan, has inspired me the most. Susan was born with Cerebral Palsy, and she is one of the most courageous, friendly, and determined people I know. Growing up wasn’t easy for her, however she never thought of herself as disabled. She learned to pick herself up when she fell, ride a bike, and drive a motorcycle. If anyone tried to assist in these tasks, she would say, “Thank you, but I have to do this on my own.” But when she needed help, she was never afraid to ask. When she was in high school and needed help up the stairs, she would get members of the football team to carry her to class. Susan was on the Canadian National Swim Team for the physically disabled and held two World Records in the 1980s. Nothing came easy for Susan. She had to work three times harder than anyone else, but she never gave up and never said, “I can’t.” That word just wasn’t in her vocabulary. Susan has inspired me to not just give up and to keep going after what I want. She taught me that anything worth having is also worth the hard work, and once you achieve your goal, you should cherish it. It was earned by you, not simply given to you.

Who has been your greatest supporter?

Jennifer: Without the support and understanding of my spouse, I would have never been able to accomplish what I have over the years. His willingness to take over at home, even though he has an equally demanding career, allows me to do what needs to be done. We have always worked together to make sure our home life doesn’t suffer. I never have to worry or feel guilty for wanting to excel because I know that together, with teamwork, we can both succeed.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Jennifer: Being a shy person, I love this quote by Lady Bird Johnson: “The way you overcome shyness is to become so wrapped up in something that you forget to be afraid.”
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Kim Horstman, CFI has been selected as one of IAI’s “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women.” She has been Senior Field Investigator at American Family Insurance for the past eight years. Before that she was a corporate security investigator for Chase Manhattan bank for over a decade. She says that women in the loss prevention industry have to be “fearless” as they navigate the gender and cultural biases with which they are confronted.

What are your observations about the challenges women face that are specific to your industry?

Kim: Women in my industry face many challenges. They have to overcome gender and cultural biases with every interaction. Women have to be particularly strong and capable. That being said, I do feel as though the playing field has been leveling out over the last 20+ years I’ve been here.

What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?

Kim: I think every leader should have integrity because without it, you are just another voice in the crowd.

Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Why and how did this person impact your life?

Kim: My grandfather was one of the greatest men... and one of the greatest leaders I’ve ever known. He was a Lt. Col. in the Air Force for 26 years and led secret bombing missions during several different wars. He led with dignity, integrity, and charisma, yet he had a disarming humbleness about him. Very few ever questioned his authority or his leadership abilities because they had the utmost respect for him. In addition to all that, he was a friend to everyone he knew.

What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?

Kim: I think it is a mistake when leaders put quantity over quality. I have always believed that if you are going to do something, you should do it right. I have seen leaders get caught up in the finances, numbers, and metrics of a leadership position... and forget that there are people behind all of those numbers. This is a critical error and one that tends to create dissension in the organization.

What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Kim: To those entering a leadership position for the first time I would say to be confident and humble. Be confident in yourself and in your abilities, but be humble about your position and be willing to admit when you don't know something. Also, I think great leaders must be great listeners. People will tell you a lot about who they are and may even share their deepest secrets, if you are willing to listen.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

Kim: My success has been built on persistence and passion. I have always been passionate about my work. I also believe that persistence wins the race, not necessarily natural talent or ability.

What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Kim: I strive to grow and develop in several areas. I attend webinars, seminars, and conferences, and I am constantly reading articles and books about interviewing and interrogation techniques. I always stretch myself to think outside the box, particularly when approaching new challenges. In addition, I seek advice from my peers and I am always willing to try new ways of doing things.

Who has been your greatest supporter or mentor?

Kim: One of my greatest supporters was my former supervisor. He appreciated my passion for the job, and always had my back. He was supportive of my determination and ingenuity to get the job done, even when my way was different from what others had done before me. Most importantly, he believed in me and in my abilities, and he wasn't afraid to say so.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Kim: I really like Gandhi's words: “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”
Debbie Maples, CFI

Debbie Maples, CFI is Vice President Loss Prevention, International Stores, Global Supply Chain, Investigations & Corporate Security for Gap, Inc. She has been selected by the International Association of Interviewers as one of its remarkable women in the “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women” program. She thinks developing investigative strength is needed to ensure that the industry operates with ethics and integrity. With years of retail security experience behind her, Debbie shares some of her thoughts and concerns about leadership and women in the industry.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?
Debbie: I had great leaders who supported me. They recognized my potential and ensured that I had access to any and all opportunities that would develop my capabilities.

What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?
Debbie: Every leader must have integrity and humility. I don't think great leaders can have one without the other!

What types of leaders do you think make mistakes more frequently than others?
Debbie: People who are self-serving and arrogant are not good leaders. They often allow these characteristics to get in the way of good decision-making.

Can you name a person who has had tremendous impact on you as a leader?
Debbie: Keith White is a leader who sees the potential and hidden possibilities of his team members. Keith understood my career experience, but did not assume that I could not learn more, do more, and experience more. His biggest impact on my career was encouraging me to complete my education, which I did. He believed in my ability and demonstrated his belief in a tangible way. He always encourages the growth of his team as well as the success of the organization. Keith continues to give me opportunities to lead and I am so grateful.

What women leaders inspire you the most?
Debbie: I admire the strong women who are public figures, such as Hilary Clinton and Sonya Sotomayor. I also think Lisa LaBruno is an impressive and supportive industry leader. These women are strong, confident, wicked smart, and unbelievably passionate about their work!

Can you tell us a little about the challenges that women face in your industry?
Debbie: Understanding the landscape and being prepared for the next level is challenging for women who are juggling careers and family. Learning to invest in our personal development to achieve confidence and balance is an important area of opportunity for women.

People have varying opinions as to whether or not there are differences between how men and women lead. What are your thoughts on that?
Debbie: I think there are definitely differences between the way men and women lead, but the important thing is to understand those differences. Behavioral studies have noted that women tend to operate with a sense of intuition and keen attention to detail; men tend to be very confident. Both genders have positive leadership strengths and attributes.

What do you think will be the biggest challenge for the next generations of women?
Debbie: Women are still underrepresented in our industry, and it is up to us to ensure we are developing women so they are ready for the next level. Consequently, I think the next generation of women leaders will have to be patient with career progression, but getting women to higher leadership levels is definitely a priority for me and our organization.

What has been one of your greatest career achievements over the last two or three years?
Debbie: My achievements are realized through the work of my teams – from people development to organization development. If I have to pick one success to highlight, it would be developing a robust LP program and team in China. We developed a blueprint for our global organization to ensure consistency without forsaking local needs. All of my teams work hard to support our global initiatives which are aligned with our corporate growth strategy.
What are the most important decisions you have to make as a leader?

Debbie: The most important decisions I make are all people decisions. I am charged with ensuring that safety is our top priority and that we are all aligned with how we do our work. The end game is important, but how we get there is even more important. Preserving our culture, operating with integrity, and prioritizing what’s best for the organization are paramount in my decision making.

What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Debbie: I would tell potential leaders to be confident – do not short-sell yourselves! Ask for stretch assignments and welcome feedback. Constructive feedback can be your best friend as you pursue leadership roles.

What are you doing to continue to grow and develop as a leader?

Debbie: I regularly invest in self-development and formal development programs and seek out advice from others. Everyone needs a mentor or coach to help push them beyond situations that might limit their progress.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Debbie: “Luck is when hard work meets opportunity.” – David Foster

Who has been your greatest supporter?

Debbie: I have an amazing support system. My husband and family are there to help me when I cannot do it all!

Stefanie Hoover, CFI

Stefanie Hoover, CFI, is one of IAI’s “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women.” She currently holds the position of Business Development Manager, North America, Verisk Retail, a unit of Verisk Analytics. Her experience in the retail industry includes working for TJX, Toys R Us, and LP Innovations. Today she helps clients leverage the power of data through customized Exception Based Reporting and Case Management systems in order to maximize profits. She shares her thoughts about leadership and the LP industry with us.

What has been your greatest achievement over the last two to three years at work?

Stefanie: I think one of my greatest achievements recently has been learning an entirely new industry. I moved from Loss Prevention to Business Development for Verisk Retail and as a result of that transition, I had to learn a whole new language and way of doing things. After 23 years in the LP field, believe me, it was not easy, or always comfortable, being the newbie again.

Any observations about the challenges women face that are specific to your industry?

Stefanie: Women at the upper levels of management are rare in many industries, but even more so in LP. Over the years I’ve seen many diversity programs put in place, but things seem to be moving very slowly. The number of women in upper management positions still isn’t as high as one might hope to see.

People have varying opinions as to whether or not there are differences between how men and women lead. What are your thoughts on that?

Stefanie: I don’t believe that a chromosome, or lack of one, determine how a person leads. I feel that we all lead as individuals and everyone has their own style. I think blanket statements about women leaders vs. men leaders do more harm than good. Do I believe that someone’s leadership style can be affected by his or her experience? Absolutely. Could that experience be affected by something that happened to that leader because she was a woman or because he was a man? Yes.

What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?

Stefanie: I think one of the most important characteristics for any leader is the ability to truly listen. Leaders must make time for relevant conversations and listen to what their team is telling them.
What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

**Stefanie:** I would tell those who are going into leadership positions for the first time to develop partnerships. They may need help later and these partnerships will be a good resource. But there’s another reason to nurture partnerships and that is because the job is just more fun when you can share successes and screw-ups with a partner or two.

When faced with two equally-qualified candidates, how do you determine whom to hire?

**Stefanie:** When it comes to hiring the right person for the job, I need to see a certain energy level and a willingness for open and honest conversation. Candidates may look great on paper but if they can’t carry on a conversation in a normal manner and fail to convey interest and excitement about the job ahead, they’re not going to be a good fit for my team.

What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?

**Stefanie:** To continue my development as a leader, I attend many of the LP conferences where I can learn about cutting edge technology and listen to dynamic speakers. I’m always curious about what’s coming next or what the next big innovation or obstacle is going to be. I also read industry publications and talk with experts when I can get some time with them.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

**Stefanie:** I have been able to be successful in my career because of the support from my family who have stood behind me through every career decision I’ve made. My family is my safety net.

Greatest book you have read?

**Stefanie:** I was a voracious reader as a kid and read everything I could get my hands on. I read Sherlock Holmes, The Hobbit, Zane Grey, Little Women -- any story that had bold characters with a strong sense of right and wrong. I also love Malcolm Gladwell; I read his books as soon as they come out!

Do you have a favorite quote?

**Stefanie:** My favorite quote is from Ralph Waldo Emerson: “A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.”

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**Victoria To-Dowd, CFI**

**Victoria To-Dowd, CFI** is proud to be selected as one of IAI’s “The Power of 10 – Remarkable Women.” Victoria is currently the Loss Prevention Manager – North America for Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics where she provides investigative guidance and direction to regional directors and district managers across the US, Canada, and Mexico. She thinks women who can successfully balance their families and careers while managing to be happy in their lives provide great inspiration for all women.

As you reflect upon your career, to what do you attribute your high level of success?

**Victoria:** I attribute some of my career success to my work ethic. I’m an achiever. I am disciplined. I take on responsibility. But my passion to be the best that I can be in any role has lead me to where I am today. I believe if you work hard and can be successful in your current role, promotions will come.

What has been your greatest achievement over the last two to three years at work?

**Victoria:** I guess one of my greatest achievements recently has been taking everything I have learned from previous experiences and creating and implementing a first-ever LP program for a successful and ethical company.

Who has been your greatest supporter or mentor?

**Victoria:** Lionel Halstead, CFI, has been my greatest supporter and mentor. I met Lionel when I started my career in Loss Prevention in 2007 and he helped me successfully transition from being a store manager to a regional loss prevention manager (RLPM). He has always been honest and confident in my abilities. We wrote an article, “Success with Telephone Interviews at CPI Corp,” for the LP newsletter a couple of years ago. He is a master in his field, makes work fun, and impacts the business, as well.
Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Why and how did this person impact your life?

Victoria: All my managers over the years have impacted my life. I learned about great, and not so great, leadership from them all.

What is the most important characteristic you believe every leader should possess?

Victoria: I think every leader should express appreciation for what others are doing. This little action can ensure that your team feels valued for the work they do.

People have varying opinions as to whether or not there are differences between how men and women lead. What are your thoughts on that?

Victoria: (Laughing) Yes, I believe there are differences between how men and women lead. But I am more interested in how a leader moves their business forward and how they continue to encourage employee engagement and development.

What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

Victoria: If I were to give some advice to those who are embarking on a leadership position for the first time I would say to be confident and be yourself, and have fun doing it!

What woman inspires you the most and why?

Victoria: I am most inspired by women who have both families and careers. It is a struggle to balance work and home life and I’m in awe of women who make that all happen… and are happy and successful.

Do you have a favorite quote?

Victoria: My favorite quote is by Les Brown, author of Live Your Dreams, who said, “Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.”

What is one of the greatest books that you’ve read?

Victoria: I really liked one particular development book, Shine: How to Survive and Thrive at Work, by Chris Barez-Brown. The book encourages people to find ways to love the work they are doing. For my personal reading enjoyment, I think 11/22/63 by Stephen King is a great read.

Thank you CONTROLTEK for helping us honor all women in the loss prevention industry!