

Women in Business Leadership - Networking Their Way to Success

Transcript of a discussion on how digital business transformation and networks are propelling women into more leadership roles.

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Dana Gardner: Hello, and welcome to a special BriefingsDirect podcast, coming to you from the 2017 SAP Ariba LIVE conference in Las Vegas.

I'm [Dana Gardner](#), Principal Analyst at [Interarbor Solutions](#), your host the week of March 20 as we explore the latest in collaborative commerce, and learn how innovative companies are tapping into the networked economy.

Our next digital business insights panel discussion focuses on the evolving role of women in business leadership. We'll focus on relationships and changes in business leadership requirements as a result of pervasive business networks.



[Tillman](#)

To learn more about the transformation of talent management strategies as a result of digital business and innovation, please join me in welcoming our guests, [Alicia Tillman](#), Chief Marketing Officer at [SAP Ariba](#).

Alicia Tillman: Hi, Dana! How are you?

Gardner: I'm great. Good to have you with us.

Gardner: We're also here with [Lisa Skeete Tatum](#), Co-founder and CEO of [Landit](#) in New York. Hello, Lisa.

Lisa Skeete Tatum: Hi, Dana. Hi, Alicia. Great to be here.

Gardner: Alicia, let's start with you. Looking at a confluence of trends, we have the rise of business networks and we have an advancing number of women in business leadership roles. Do they have anything to do with one another? What's the relationship?

Tillman: It is certainly safe to say that there is a relationship between the two. Networks historically connected businesses mostly from a transactional



Tatum

standpoint. But networks today are so much more about connecting people. And not only connecting them in a business context, but also from a relationship-standpoint as well.

There is as much networking and influence that happens in a digital network as does from meeting somebody at an event, conference or forum. It has really taken off in the recent years as being a way to connect quickly and broadly -- across geographies and industries. There is nothing that brings you speed like a network, and that's why I think there is such a strong correlation to how

digital networking has taken off -- and what a true technical network platform can allow.

Gardner: When people first hear “business networks,” they might think about transactions and applications talking to applications. But, as you say, this has become much broader in the last few years; business networks are really about social interactions, collaboration, and even joining companies culturally.

How has that been going? Has this been something that's been powerful and beneficial to companies?

Tillman: It's incredibly powerful and beneficial. If you think about how buying habits are these days, buyers are very particular about the goods that they are interested in, and, frankly, the people that they source from.

If I look at my buying population in particular at SAP Ariba, there is a tremendous movement toward sustainable goal or fair-trade types of responsibilities, of wanting to source goods from minority-owned businesses, wanting to source only organic or fair-trade products, wanting to only partner with organizations where they know within their supply chain the distribution of their product is coming from locations in the world where the working conditions are safe and their employees are being paid fairly.

A network allows for that; the SAP Ariba Network certainly allows for that, as we can match suppliers directly with what those incredibly diverse buyer needs are in today's environment.

Gardner: Lisa, we just heard from Alicia about how it's more important that companies have a relationship with one another and that they actually look for culture and character in new ways. Tell us about Landit, and how you're viewing this idea of business networks changing the way people relate to their companies and even each other?

Skeete Tatum: Our goal at Landit is to democratize career success for women around the globe. We have created a technology platform that not only increases the success and engagement of women in the workplace, but it also enables companies in this new environment to attract, develop, and retain high-potential diverse talent.

We do that by providing each woman with the personalized playbook in the spirit of one-size-fits-one. That empowers them with the access to the tools, the resources, the know-how, and, yes, the human connections that they need to more successfully navigate their paths.

It's really in response to the millions of women who will find themselves at an inflection point; whether they are in a company that they love but are just trying to figure out how to more successfully navigate there, or they may be feeling a little stuck and are not sure how to get out. The challenge is: "I am motivated, I have the skills, I just don't know where to start."

We have really focused on knitting what we believe are those key elements together -- leveraged by technology that actually guides them. But we find that companies in this new environment are often overwhelmed and trying to figure out a way to manage this new diverse workforce in this era of connectedness. So we give them a turnkey, one-size-fits-one solution, too.

As Alicia mentioned, in this next stage of collaborative businesses, there are really two things. One, we are more networked and more visible than ever before, which is great, because it's created more opportunities and flexibility than we have seen -- not to mention more access. However, those opportunities are highly dependent on how someone showcases their value, their contribution, and their credibility, which makes it even more important to cultivate not only your brand and your network. It goes beyond just individual capabilities of getting at what is the sponsorship in the support of a strong network.

The second thing I would say, that Alicia also mentioned, is that today's business environment -- which is more global, more diverse in its tapestry -- requires businesses to create an environment where everyone feels valued. People need to feel like they can bring the full measure of their talent and passion to the workplace. Companies want amazing talent to find a place at their company.

Gardner: If I'm at a company looking to be more diverse, how would I use Landit to accomplish that? Also, if I were an individual looking to get into the type of company that I want to be involved with, how would I use Landit?

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Connecting supply and demand for talent

Skeete Tatum: As an individual, when you come on to Landit, we actually give you one of the key ingredients for success. Because we often don't know what we don't know, we knit together the first step, of "Where do I fit?" If you are not in a place that fits with your values, it's not sustainable.

So we help you figure out what is it that fits with "all of me," and we then connect you to those opportunities. Many times with diversity programs, they are focused just on the intake, which is just one component. But you want people to thrive when they get there.

And so, whether it is building your personal brand or building your board of advisors or continuing with your skill development in a personalized, relevant way -- or access to coaching because often many of us don't have that unless we are in the C-suite on the way -- we are able to knit that together in a way that is relevant, that's right-sized for the individual.

For the company, we give them a turnkey solution to invest in a scalable way, to touch more lives across their company, particularly in a more global environment. Rather than having to place multiple bets, they place one bet with Landit. We leverage that one-size-fits-one capability with things that we all know are keys to success. We are then able to have them deliver that again, whether it is to the newly minted managers or people they have just acquired or maybe they are leaders that they want to continue to invest in. We enable them to do that in a measurable way, so that they can see the engagement and the success and the productivity.

Gardner: Alicia, I know that SAP Ariba is already working to provide services to those organizations that are trying to create diversity and inclusion within their supply chains. How do you see Landit fitting into the business network that SAP Ariba is building around diversity?

Tillman: First, the [SAP Ariba Network](#) is the largest business to business (B2B) network on the planet. We connect more than 2.5 million companies that transact over \$1 trillion in commerce annually. As you can imagine, there is incredible diversity in the buying requirements that exist amongst those companies that are located in all parts of the world and work in virtually every industry.

Many times with diversity programs, they are focused just on the intake, which is just one component. But you want people to thrive when they get there.

One of things that we offer as an organization is a [Discovery](#) tool. When you have a network that is so large, it can be difficult and a bit daunting for a buyer to find the supplier that meets their business requirements, and for a supplier to find their ideal buyer. So our SAP Ariba Discovery application is a matching service, if you will, that enables a buyer to list their requirements. You then let the tool work for you to allow matching you to suppliers that most meet your requirements, whatever they may be.

For women, it helps provide a digital environment that allows them to harness precisely what it is that's important to them when it comes to career development.

I'm very proud to have Lisa present at our Women in Leadership Forum at SAP Ariba LIVE 2017. I am showcasing Lisa not only because of her entrepreneurial spirit and the success that she's had in her career -- that I think will be very inspirational and motivational to women who are looking to continue to develop their careers -- but she has also created a powerful platform with Landit. For women, it helps provide a digital environment that allows them to harness precisely what it is that's important to them when it comes to career development, and then offers the coaching in the Landit environment to enable that.

Landit also offers companies an ability to support their goals around gender diversity. They can look at the Landit platform and source talent that is not only very focused on careers -- but also supports a company in their diversity goals. It's a tremendous capability that's necessary and needed in today's environment.

Gardner: Lisa, what has changed in the past several years that has prompted this changed workforce? We have talked about the business network as an enabler, and we have talked about social networks connecting people. But what's going to be different about the workforce going forward?

Collaborative visibility via networking

Skeete Tatum: There are three main things. First, there is a recognition that diversity is not a "nice to have," it's a "must-have" from a competitive standpoint; to acquire the best ideas and gain a better return on capital. So it's a business imperative to invest in and value diversity within one's workforce. Second, businesses are continuing to shift toward matching opportunities with the people who are best able to do that job, but in a less-biased way. Thirdly, business-as-usual isn't going to work in this new reality of career management.

It's no longer one- or bi-directional, where it's just the manager or the employee. It's much more collaborative and driven by the individual. And so all of these

things ... where there is much more opportunity, much more freedom. But how do you anchor that with a problem and a framework and a connectivity that enables someone to more successfully navigate the new environment and new opportunities? How do you leverage and build your network? Everyone knows they need to do it, but many people don't know how to do it. Or when your brand is even more important, visibility is more important, how do you develop and communicate your accomplishments and your value? It is the confluence of those things coming together that creates this new world order.

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Gardner: Alicia, one of the biggest challenges for most businesses is getting the skills that they need in a timely fashion. How do we get past the difficulty of best matching hiring? How do we use business networks to help solve that?

Tillman: This is the beauty of technology. Technology is an enabler in business to form relationships more quickly, and to transact more quickly. Similarly, technology also provides a network to help you grow from a development standpoint. Lisa's organization, Landit, is one example of that.

Within SAP Ariba we are very focused on closing the gap in gaining the skills that are necessary to be successful in today's business environment. I look at the offering of [SAP SuccessFactors](#) - which is focused on empowering the human capital management (HCM) organization to lead performance management and career development. And [SAP Fieldglass](#) helps companies find and source the right temporary labor that they need to service their most pressing projects. Combine all that with a business network, and there is no better place in today's environment to find something you need -- and find it quickly.

But it all comes down to the individual's desire to want to grow their skills, or find new skills, to get out of their comfort zone and try something new. I don't believe there is a shortage of tools or applications to help enable that growth and talent. It comes down to the individual's desire to want to grab it and go after it.

Maximize your potential with technology

Skeete Tatum: I couldn't agree more. The technology and the network are what create the opportunity. In the past, there may have been a skills gap, but you have to be able to label it, you have to be able to identify it in a way that is relevant to the individual. As Alicia said, there are many opportunities out there for development, but how do you parse that down and deliver it to the individual in a way that is relevant -- and that's actionable? That's where a network comes in and where the power of one can be leveraged in a scalable way.

Now is probably one of the best times to invest in and have an individual grow to reach their full potential. The desire to meet their goals can be leveraged by technology in a very personal way.

Gardner: As we have been hearing here at SAP Ariba LIVE 2017, more-and-more technologies along the lines of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) – are taking advantage of all the data and analyzing it and making it actionable -- can now be brought to bear on this set of issues of matching workforce requirements with skill sets.

Where should we expect to see these technologies reduce the complexity and help companies identify the right workforce, and the workforce identify the right companies?

Skeete Tatum: Having the data and being able to quantify and qualify it gives you the power to set a path forward. The beauty is that it actually enables everyone to have the opportunity to contribute, the opportunity to grow, and to create a path and a sense of belonging by having a way to get there. From our perspective, it is that empowerment and that ownership -- but with the support of the network from the overall organization -- that enables someone to move forward. And it enables the organization to be more successful and more embracing of this new workforce, this diverse talent.

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Tillman: Individuals should feel more empowered today than ever before to really take their career development to unprecedented levels. There are so many technologies, so many applications out there to help coach you on every level. It's up to the individual to truly harness what is standing in front of them and to really grab hold of it -- and use it to their advantage to reach their career goal.

Gardner: Lisa, what should you be thinking about from a personal branding perspective when it comes to making the best use of tools like Landit and business networks?

Skeete Tatum: The first thing is that people actually have to think of themselves as a brand, as opposed to thinking that they are bragging or being boastful. The most important brand you have is the brand of you.

Second, people have to realize that this notion of building your brand is something that you nurture and it develops over time. What we believe is important is that we have to make it

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tangible, we have to make it actionable, and we have to make it bite-size, otherwise it seems overwhelming.

So we have defined what we believe are the 12 key elements for anyone to have a successful brand, such as have you been visible, do you have a strategic plan of you, are you seeking feedback, do you have a regular cadence of interaction with your network, et cetera. Knowing what to do and how to do it and at what cadence and at what level is what enables someone to move forward. And in today's environment, again, it's even more important.

Pique their curiosity by promoting your own

Tillman: Employers want to be sure that they are attracting candidates and employing candidates that are really invested in their own development. An employer operates in the best interest of the employee in terms of helping to enable tools and allow for that development to occur. At the same time, where candidates can really differentiate themselves in today's work environment is when they are sitting across the table and they are in that interview. It's really important for a candidate to talk about his or her own development and what are they doing to constantly learn and support their curiosity.

Employers want curious people. They want those that are taking advantage of development and tools and learning, and these are the things that I think set people apart from one another when they know that individually they are going to go after learning opportunities and push themselves out of their comfort zone to take themselves – and ultimately the companies that employ them - to the next level.

Gardner: Before we close out, let's take a peek into the crystal ball. What, Alicia, would be your top two predictions given that we are just on sort of an inflection point with this new network, with this new workforce and the networking effect for it?

Tillman: First, technology is only going to continue to improve. Networks have historically enabled buyers and sellers to come together and transact to build their organizations and support growth, but networks are taking on a different form.

Technology is going to continue to enable priorities professionally and priorities personally. Technology is going to become a leading enabler of a person's professional development.

Second, individuals are going to set themselves apart from others by their desire and their hunger to really grab hold of that technology. When you think about decision-making among companies in terms of candidates they hire and

candidates they don't, employers are going to report back and say, "One of the leading reasons why I selected one candidate over another is because of their desire to learn and their desire to grab hold of technologies and networks that were standing in front of them to bring their careers to an unprecedented level."

Gardner: Lisa, what are your top two predictions for the new workforce and particularly for diversity playing a bigger role?

Skeete Tatum: Technology is the ultimate leveler of the playing field. It enables companies as well as the individual to make decisions based on things that matter. That is what enables people to bring their full selves, the full measure of their talent, to the workplace.

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In terms of networks in particular, they have always been a key element to success but now they are even more important. It actually poses a special challenge for diverse talent. They are often not part of the network, and they may have competing personal responsibilities that make the investment of the time and the frequency in those relationships a challenge.

Sometimes there is a discomfort with how to do it. We believe that through technology people will have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. They need to learn not only how to codify their network, but also have the right access to the right person with the right cadence, and access to that know how, that guidance, can be delivered through technology.

Gardner: I'm afraid we will have to leave it there. We've been talking about the evolving role of women and diversity in hiring and in the use of business networks. And we have learned about how the new workforce is going to be leveraging various types of technology, but it's up to the individual to become very familiar with that technology -- and perhaps use it as a leveler.

So a big thanks to our guests, Alicia Tillman, the Chief Marketing Officer at SAP Ariba, and Lisa Skeete Tatum, the Co-founder and CEO of Landit. And, of course, a big thank you to our audience as well for joining this special podcast coming to you from the 2017 SAP Ariba LIVE conference in Las Vegas.

I'm Dana Gardner, Principal Analyst at Interarbor Solutions, your host throughout this series of SAP Ariba-sponsored BriefingsDirect digital business insights discussions.

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