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fresh

Game Changers

Meet **12** Women Leaders Who Are Transforming The Industry



Nitza Kardish, CEO
Trendlines AgTech-Mofet

➤ often expected too much from our government rather than finding its own solutions.

fresh: What challenges have you faced as a business leader?

EA: It's a challenge to strike the balance of how to be at the cutting edge of the market, not necessarily leading the market, but making sure that we are not too far behind. The global markets are in continual change and if we fall too far behind we lose relevance and ultimately, value and competitiveness.

fresh: What were some of the pitfalls you faced along your career path? Is there something you look back on now that you wish you could change?

EA: I often regret not taking enough time to recharge because I thought I needed to always be visible!

fresh: How has your leadership style evolved?

EA: I have learned to remember that my team is made up of people, and to first recognize each as an individual with their own style and personality. My leadership has become more inclusive, recognizing that even the smallest contribution can be the saving grace in a program or initiative. I have also learned to "let go" more, in favor of growth in the team and the organization.

fresh: Is there a difference between male and female leaders?

EA: Yes, definitely. Men and women are different and those differences come out, good or bad! Men decide first with reason, and women, by intuition first, and then reason. Difficulties arise when women try to ignore their intuition because they believe that the environment won't value it.

fresh: What is the one behavior that you have seen derail women in their careers?

EA: No disrespect to men, but women who try to act similarly to men, thinking that is what they need to succeed, can certainly derail women!

fresh: What are the most important skills for leaders to possess in today's global produce industry?

EA: Today, leaders must be able to separate the relevant messages of the markets from the noise. Leaders must also possess vision and must be innovative thinkers. In the future, leaders will live in a mode of continuous change and innovation!

fresh: What advice do you have for future generations, and in particular, for young women in this industry?

EA: Don't be afraid to use the skills and gifts you have been given and the ideas you have. The industry environment is so dynamic that past learning and experiences may no longer be relevant to the times, and innovation (new ideas and new types of leadership) need to be welcomed and embraced. The future will require its own solutions!

INÉS MASALLACH ARMIJO

Marketing Director, Imalinx, MEXICO

fresh: Tell us a little about yourself.

IMA: I am the Marketing Director and co-founder of Imalinx. My role involves working with our team to define the marketing strategy that will connect best with our market, bringing out the best attributes from each product that we offer. When I'm not at work, I enjoy cooking and experimenting with new flavors that will surprise my family and friends. I also love reading, spending time with my family and lately, I have to confess, "Pinning" (on Pinterest) has become a hobby. There are so many ideas there!

fresh: What are some early jobs that had an impact on you?

IMA: My first job was at McDonald's in Mexico when they had just entered the market. I was sixteen years old and took this first opportunity very seriously. I don't think I have ever studied harder for an interview! The opportunity to have working sessions with the franchisees, the suppliers, the toy and movie partners, all working together to make the customers' experience memorable was what made me choose marketing as a career. There was a competitive consistency among the restaurants and a feeling of being part of a worldwide team. I still have my signed 1991 issue of *Harvard Business Review*, from Michael Quinlan, then the CEO of McDonald's Corporation.

fresh: What are some lessons you learned early on about how to lead?

IMA: I learned that wanting too much control can be exhausting on the one hand and stifling on the other. It is important to understand individuality and what drives each team member, in order to be able to bring out the best in them.

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*Never forget
your dreams
and where
they fit in the
big picture.”*



fresh: How has your leadership style evolved?

IMA: I think my leadership style has evolved into a style that encourages open feedback and accountability from all team members.

fresh: Is there an experience that you can recall, that particularly influenced your leadership style?

IMA: There was a time at our company where we had two executives in charge, with two very different leadership styles. One was empirical and passionate, while the other, was more structured and objective. Our current CEO has worked to blend the best of these two styles; finding ways to make people feel passionate about the industry, but with an objective perspective. He has a way of being able to bring out the best in people, without conflict or confrontation, and he can give and receive feedback for improvement. His leadership style has been an example for me and a reference for how I want to lead.

fresh: Is there a business book that has had an impact on your career or leadership style?

IMA: I'm an avid business book reader but if I have to choose, I would say Malcom Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*. I have always

been detail oriented, but this book helped me understand when and what details are relevant, as well as to appreciate the different skills that each team member has. The best success stories can come from the correct combination of socialization, information, context and creativity.

fresh: What are the most important skills for leaders to possess in today's global produce industry?

IMA: Three things: One, listening skills. Being a good listener can help you identify industry opportunities and changes that are sometimes discussed informally in the field or on a trade call. I would say the second is cohesiveness, which is the ability to bring different departments and different nationalities together, despite them sometimes being in separate locations. And lastly, focus.

fresh: What advice do you have for future generations, and in particular, for young women in this industry?

IMA: My advice is, to never stop learning; to be direct, especially during initial negotiations; be sure to set limits; share your successes; and never forget your dreams and where they fit in the big picture.