

Rocking Talent

A CATALYST FOR
CHANGE AT VISA

MARIBEL DIZ

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
HUMAN RESOURCES

**ROCKSTAR
LEADERS**

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
MARC WEINSTEIN

NEWMONT CORPORATION
ISABEL MONTES

"LEADING WITH VULNERABILITY"
JACOB MORGAN

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(9th Edition)

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Rocking



PDA'S JOURNEY TO EMPOWERMENT AND SUCCESS IN THE US HR LANDSCAPE

By: Nataly López
CBO-Chief Business Officer

In the fast-paced realm of human resources, a new player has emerged on the scene – PDA. As we set foot on American soil, we faced our fair share of challenges, navigating the intricate landscape of the US market. While our journey began modestly in 2022, it was the decisive step we took in March 2023 that marked our official debut. Since then, our endeavors have borne fruit, with successful project implementations in medium-sized enterprises that share our fervent belief in the transformative power of self-awareness.

The year 2023 not only heralded PDA's definitive arrival in the United States but also marked a significant transition in my own professional voyage. Having initially steered the ship of our commercial team, I now find myself at the helm of PDA's US operations. This transition wasn't merely a change in title, but a transformation that encapsulates the essence of growth, challenge, and empowerment.

As a woman in a leadership position, I embraced both the triumphs and tribulations that come with the territory. The path to leadership is paved with unique challenges for women, and my journey was no exception. Yet, each challenge became a stepping stone, propelling me forward. The wisdom gained through overcoming obstacles now resonates in my new role, guiding our strategy to establish PDA's foothold in the dynamic American market.

The essence of our approach lies in harnessing the potential of individuals through self-awareness. We firmly believe that empowered individuals foster thriving organizations. Our projects with medium-sized enterprises have underscored this conviction, illuminating the positive impacts of self-discovery on team dynamics, communication, and overall performance. Through workshops, assessments, and targeted interventions, we've witnessed firsthand the metamorphosis that occurs when employees unlock their full potential.

Looking ahead, our commitment to promoting self-awareness remains unwavering. The American market, known for its diversity and dynamism, presents a unique tapestry of opportunities and challenges. We're excited to weave ourselves into this fabric, leveraging the experiences and insights gained from our successful projects to pioneer a culture of empowerment and growth.

In conclusion, as PDA charts its course in the United States, I reflect on my personal journey from a leader within the commercial team to spearheading the PDA market. The challenges and victories that shaped my path as a woman in leadership have equipped me to lead the charge in our American venture. Together, we stand on the threshold of transformation, poised to empower individuals, nurture teams, and elevate organizations to new heights of excellence.

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EDITION
ROCKSTAR
LEADERS



JACOB MORGAN

BE A LEADER

**NOT A
FOLLOWER!**

BY FERNANDA CALA



Jacob Morgan is an author, speaker and futurist living in Los Angeles, California. He has distinguished himself through his work and his main goal: to create better leaders. How has he accomplished this goal? By inspiring with his experiences through his voice and books. His next book "Leading With Vulnerability" will be released in October. It will help leaders to lead by combining two important pieces in the puzzle: leadership and vulnerability.

First, we would like to get to know you Jacob, tell us about your story.

My family came from the Republic of Georgia, they did not speak any English and do not have any money or possessions in the States, so they had to build a life for themselves and take care of my brother and me. I was always a bad student at school, I did not do well in middle school and high school... but I finally did well in college where I did a double major in Economics and Psychology; my first job was working for a technological company and I was promised that I will be doing all these wonderful and amazing things... but a couple of months after, I was stocked doing data entry and cold calling, PowerPoint presentations and bring cups of coffee to the executive, so that was one of the last full-time jobs that I had for working to somebody else. So, for the last fifteen years, I have been trying to create organizations where employees want to show up, and engage the employees, create great managers and the future of organizations has been my goal ever since, so having those bad jobs working for other people is really what prepared me on the current path that I am now.

What sparked your passion for exploring the future of work and inspiring organizations?

I enjoy meeting a lot of leaders and talking to them and employees, helping them to figure out how business and leadership is changing. I never had a place where employees wanted to show up and my wife had a similar experience, I know that lots of people had the same experience... So, I mentioned that I have two little kids and I would like to imagine a world whereby the time my kids grow up they will be able to have jobs or work for companies they genuinely want to be.

What disruptive technologies do you believe will have the most significant impact on the future of work?

I think AI, especially ChatGPT and all these newest versions that are coming out now focuses on specialized areas. In addition, machine learning, I think it will also have the greatest impact.

Do you think it will impact all industries?

Oh yeah! I cannot imagine an industry that is not impacted by ChatGPT and AI, I mean, if you are working in manufacturing perhaps is not going to immediately impact on the manufacturing floor but there are also leaders, managers and supervisors, people who are working in offices that run the manufacturing companies and facilities in plants. In the spirit of innovation and disruption, what unconventional or surprising industry do you think

WHO IS JACOB?

Full Name: Jacob Morgan.

Occupation: Author, Speaker, and futurist.

Where do you live? Los Angeles, United States.

Do you have kids? I do, I have two Kids.

Do you have pets? Two yorkie rescue dogs.

Favorite Food: Desserts.

Hobbies: Play Chess and raquetball.

Favorite place in the world: Where all my family is.

will play a significant role in shaping the future of work?

I do not think any industry shapes the future of work, what shapes the future of work is the sort of society, culture, and business trends. So, industries can help to shape the future of their industry. For example, banking companies can help to shape the future of banking, communications companies can help shape the future of communication so in essence all the industries play a role in shaping the future of work collectively, but everyone has a little piece in the puzzle on the role they play in and shaping the future.

"Leading With Vulnerability" sounds like an intriguing concept. Can you give us a sneak peek into what readers can expect from your upcoming book?



How would you describe yourself in one word? Ambitious.

Favorite movie or TV Show: It is hard to choose a favorite one, but I am watching now "The Bear" and "Better Call Saul"

Favorite Book: The foundation.

If you could turn into an animal, what would it be? A Dog.

Favorite music band or genre: House Music.

Your grounding activity is... Exercise.

What are 2 things that can't be missing from your backpack? My phone, Waterbottle.

Do you like sports? Are you a fan of a sport team? I do not necessarily watch sports, but I like to play Raquetball and different sports.

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world?
Creating better leaders. It is part of what I do with my work.

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: Be a leader not a follower.

Sure, vulnerability is showing up and saying "Hey, I made a mistake" and that is a very vulnerable thing to do, especially inside of an organization, but the challenge is because there is no leadership, there is no action that we are taking. So "Leading with Vulnerability" means you show up and share the mistake you made but also what you learned from the mistake, you also talk about what you are going to do to make sure the mistake will not happen again. So, it combines two pieces, leadership, which is being good at your job, and vulnerability, which is about connecting with people. Often, inside organizations we are constantly taught to be vulnerable and be vulnerable means keep connecting with people, which is good, but if you do not have the leadership piece, if you are not good at your job then the connection element does not really do as much as it should be... So what I have found after interviewing a 100 of CEOs and certain fourteen thousand employees, is that ultimately what the most successful CEO'S do is they lead with vulnerability and bring together these two important pieces of the equation, you have to be good at your job and also have to connect with your people; If you just do one and not the other, it does not work out well.

Can you please give us an example of it?

For example, if I am good at connecting with people and always vulnerable, I show up to the world talking about my emotions, feelings, mistakes, failures,

*"I WOULD LIKE TO IMAGINE
A WORLD WHEREBY THE
TIME MY KIDS GROW UP
THEY WILL BE ABLE TO
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and challenges but if I am not good at my job then people are going to show up and say “Jacob is a really good person, I love spending time with him, we have this great connection, but I am not sure he is good at his job or if he should be leading this company”. Similarly, if I am only good at my job somebody would say “Wow! Jacob is good at his job, he is killing it every time, but I do not really know Jacob, I have a hard time creating a relationship with Jacob, there is no chemistry or engagement there.” So, on the one hand, you can be viewed as incompetent, or on the other hand you can be viewed as being a robot, so “leading with vulnerability” brings together both of those pieces in the puzzle: leadership and competence.

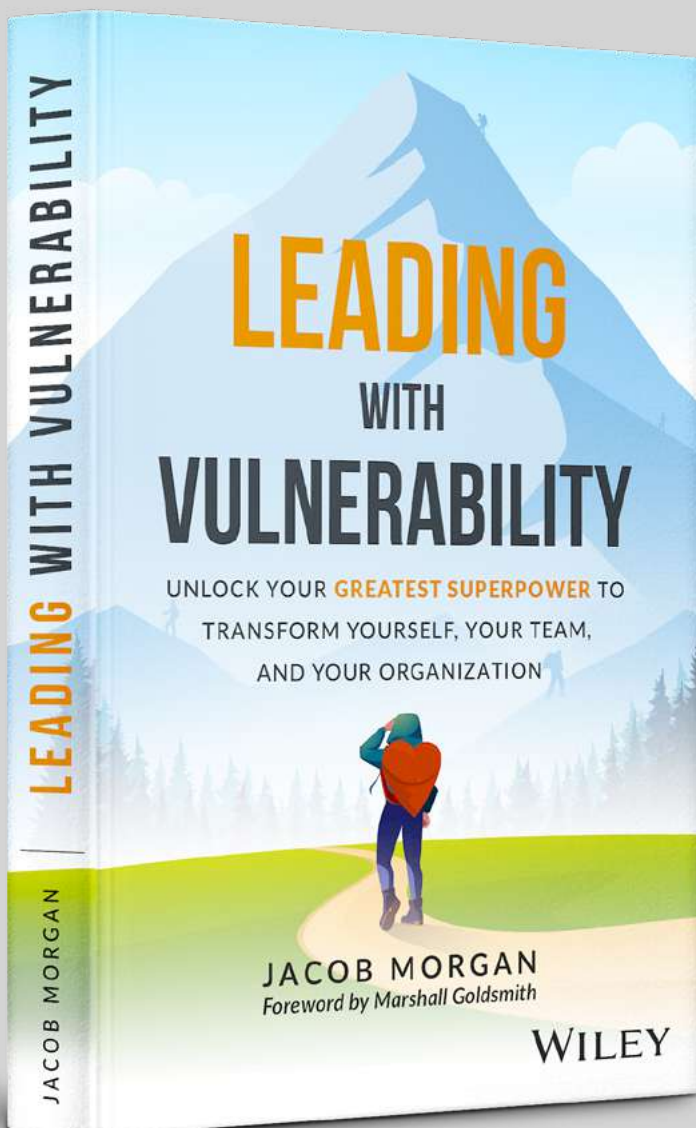
What inspired you to explore the theme of vulnerability in leadership?

A few things, so number one is I grew up not being very vulnerable, as I mentioned, my family came from the Republic of Georgia so growing up my dad was always telling me not to show emotions or feelings, he told me “Nobody cares about your problems” so I spend most of my adult life being just like that, and a few years ago I had a panic attack, my heart started

beating very quickly, my vision got blurry and I was feeling like I was about to have a heart attack. The reason I was having these panic attacks was that I was writing this book, all these things happen a few weeks after I signed the contract to write this book, and after seeing a couple of therapists it became clear that the fact I was writing a book about vulnerability is something that makes me feel so uncomfortable and awkward, the fact that I committed to spending the next months of my life diving in deep into this topic gave me serious panic attacks. It was because it is not something that my body or my mind wanted to do, and is not something I am good at, so, I knew then that a lot of people struggle with it, especially leaders, so when I was writing my last book I talked to a lot of executives which makes me think about this topic, so I was thinking “Why not explore how to be a competent and vulnerable leader and bring both elements together?” so it was a motivating factor to write and combine with the fact that I do not think it has ever been done before.

What do you hope readers will take away from “Leading With Vulnerability”? What impact do you aspire to make with this book?

Number one, I hope to give them the tools and the resources they need to be able to deal with vulnerability. Number two, I hope it will help make them more effective leaders and let them excel and grow in their careers, and number three, I hope it will help them to improve their teams inside their organizations, so that is my goal: How do we create better leaders? And I believe that the concepts in this book are the most essential elements to be able to do that and be somebody who can inspire others, unlock the potential of others, and unleash the superpower that we all have, it is being able to lead with vulnerability.

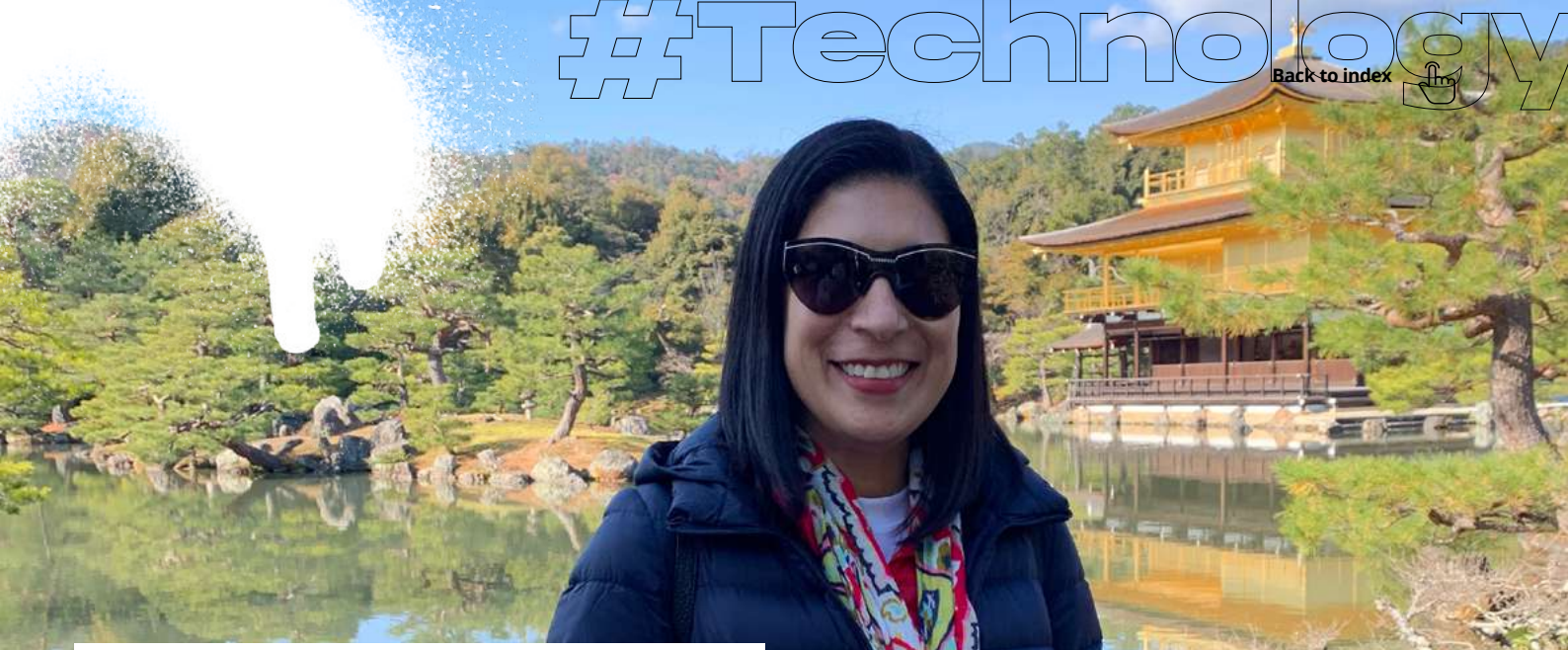


You MUST BE GOOD AT YOUR JOB AND MUST CONNECT WITH YOUR PEOPLE; IF YOU JUST DO ONE AND NOT THE OTHER, IT DOES NOT WORK OUT WELL.



Fast and FURIOUS

Mayra González is the global sales director of one of the world's leading companies in the automotive industry. She has shown herself as a brave and competitive woman who has been able to break paradigms within the industry globally.



Mayra González is Mexican, lives in Japan, and has stood out as a global pioneer in the automotive industry. Although her passion was not cars, she was passionate about health, but she became passionate about the automotive industry through her path. "I discovered that I have gasoline in my veins because I liked the environment, I liked selling cars, and I never felt strange for being the only woman, which for many years I was in all the teams I was part of. That is how I got into the automotive industry, the same industry that brought me to Japan today," Mayra says proudly, smiling as she talks about the begin of her professional career.

Please tell us a little about your history, childhood, and how it influenced your professional career.

I had a very "abnormally normal" life, as I usually say, because it was hushed, happy, a traditional family, but what I have always emphasized is that I was taught that I could become anything I wanted to be and aspire to achieve. There was never a conversation in my family that women could do one thing and men should do another. I was raised with the concept of "whatever you're going to do, do it, but you have to be the best," I grew up with that belief. Also, I have always been competitive, it is part of my personality, and my biggest competition is myself... more than comparing myself with others, I live constantly comparing my own growth.

Was there anything in your childhood that influenced your interest in cars?

My dad likes cars, and he used to buy car magazines 40 or 50 years ago, and I liked to look at them... However, it was something other than what I was passionate about. I was never really interested in the automotive industry. I wanted to be a medical representative; that was my dream. I wanted to go to hospitals, talk to doctors, talk about medicines and treatments.

And then, how did you become interested in the automotive industry?

WHO IS MAYRA?

Full name: Mayra González Velasco.

Occupation: bachelor's in marketing.

Nationality: Mexican.

Where do you live? Tokyo, Japan.

Age: 46 years old.

Favorite food: Chiles rellenos de queso (chili stuffed with cheese).

Hobbies: Reading and exercising.

Favorite clothing item: Sweater.

Favorite place in the world: Anywhere. I do not have a specific place. Wherever I am happy.



When I was 19 years old, I wanted to buy a car, I told my dad to help me buy it, and he told me: "Very well, but you have to work, and I will help you." At that time, I did not know how; I was noticeably young, and I wondered, who was going to give me a job? So, one day I saw the newspaper and found a vacancy as a "professional sales consultant"; I applied, and it was a car agency: there they gave me a job as a salesperson, and I discovered my passion.

You mention that you were always the only woman... What are the essential skills needed to work in a male industry?

The main thing is to be good and stand out in what you do; at the end of the day, this is not a club, and the important thing is to give results. You will have many more opportunities if you are good at your job. The second thing is to believe in yourself because if you think you can do it and present yourself as such, that is how you will project yourself; the reality is that many women feel like a minority, and maybe they are not listened to, but in fact, we are different, and we do not have to be like men to fit in.

I still believe that women can still be everything we are and still bring value and contribute to organizations, that is our value, to be different, and I noticed that because it was never something that made me uncomfortable or made me feel less, nor did I worry about being the only woman in a board full of men. For me, it was also an advantage; my competitive advantage was being a woman because no one else could be that one woman, Mayra Gonzalez, and everyone knew who I was and even more so if I stood out for my results.

How has your career path made you the first Mexican woman to be appointed Global Sales Director in a well-known multinational company?

I have 22 years of experience. I started working in sales in Mexico, as I mentioned, visiting distributors and in the financial area. Then I was in charge of all the sales at a national level, first of a part of the



Mexico area and then of the whole country. From there, I moved to the distribution network, and then I went to the United States, where I also spent two years on another distribution network project. After that, I returned to Mexico to be responsible for Latin America.

Then I was appointed general manager in Mexico, the first woman, the youngest, and Mexican... because I had always been managed by foreigners. Sadly, that was the highlight, that I was a woman, not that I was Mexican or that I had had satisfactory results. I think that when everyone stops framing that headline, and when diversity or gender stops being news, then we will have made progress as a society. However, I was there for three years and then came to Japan in 2019, almost four years ago, as general sales manager.

You are a persistent and focused woman. What do you consider has been the most challenging moment in your career so far?

I have had many, but one of them was moving to this country. It is not the same moving to the United States, the neighboring country, and you are used to moving 11,000 km away from everything you know when you leave family, friends, your home, and your food. When you leave absolutely everything you know and come to a country where you do not know if your family will adapt, when you do not know how to ask for a glass of water or what the business culture is like... leaving everything and coming here, taking the plunge... That is why I define myself as a brave person. It is not for everyone, and it is not just about getting here, then it is about adapting and trying to fit in, giving results, and that your family is well, that you are well. There are many things you must manage and balance. That is why I admire all the people who dare and have had the opportunity to leave their countries, be on their own, and have those challenges.

Diversity is not about putting different people in a room, an office, or a group. It is about the interaction those people generate and the exchange of ideas and solutions they have.

"I HAVE BEEN A PIONEER OF THOSE OF US WHO ARE THERE BREAKING PARADIGMS, BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING. THE GOOD THING IS THAT THE CEILING IS NOT CONCRETE AND CAN BE BROKEN."

Let's
ROCK 

A word to describe yourself: Brave.

Favorite movie or TV Show: The Devil Wears Prada.

How would be your best photo?
Sitting in front of a Torii gate.

Favorite music band: Soda Stereo.

Your grounding activity: Thinking, my mind brings me back to Earth every day.

What are the 2 things that can't be missing from your backpack? My cell phone and my credit card.

What small contribution do you feel you make for a better world?
Being able to inspire more people through my story, helping them make decisions and take actions to improve their lives.

A piece of advice you were given and would give: Never take it personally.



TOP 3

TRENDS IN TECHNOLOGY AND THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

- 01.** Electrification
- 02.** Service development
- 03.** Technology integrated into vehicles

And the most exciting moment?

The most challenging and the most exciting are the same. Do you know the chemical reaction in your body is the same when you feel excitement and tension? It is just the meaning your brain gives it. Still, it is chemically proven that what happens in your body is precisely the same, the same substances, reactions, and connections, but the only difference is how your brain interprets it, whether it is exciting or challenging.

Have you seen any changes in the automotive industry regarding including more women and minorities in the workforce recently?

Yes, I have seen it and feel satisfied and proud. For example, in Mexico, after my designation, many more women came from many other brands. Before me, there was not even one, so there was that opening, and since I worked in the leading company, many more small companies started to do it and continue to come. In the labor force, I also see it; the most curious thing is that 80% of the decision to buy a vehicle is made directly or indirectly by women.

What do you think about the relationship between diversity and inclusion in the workplace and business innovation?

It has been proven that the more diverse teams are in terms of gender, culture, generation, religion, sexual preferences, backgrounds, etc., the more they generate exchange and innovation. When you have that diversity, different points of view come with different experiences, and you create innovation through exchanging ideas and different perspectives that generate innovative solutions to current problems.

What do you think about the role of automotive industry organizations in the fight against climate change and other environmental problems?

The automotive industry has taken a clear position on where it wants to go in the future, and one of those pillars is electrification. You can see it in the varied brands and how they have clear plans to achieve their electrification or CO2 reduction goals. What you see in the TV Shows like "The Jetsons" as "the future" is what will happen and already happening. It is inevitable because the new generations are going there. All automotive companies must have a particular commitment to products with fewer emissions, using less water, being more efficient, and connected with the ecosystem. It is urgent!

Interviewed by: Fernanda Cala



SERVANT LEADERSHIP



Isabel is from Cali, Colombia. She started her journey in the United States in Seattle but now lives in Miami, Florida. Her career in Human Resources is a testament to her unwavering passion for creating positive change in the world. Through her remarkable journey, she has seamlessly woven her dedication to people with a profound commitment to Latin America region's betterment.

Isabel's strategic foresight and compassionate leadership have elevated her career and sparked a transformative shift in how HR is perceived in the organizations she has served. She stands as an inspiration, showcasing that true excellence in HR not only drives business growth but also fuels the positive evolution of society at large.

Her story is full of challenging and rewarding moments she shared with us, smiling.

WHO IS ISABEL?

Full Name: Isabel Montes.

Age: 46.

Occupation: Human Resources Vice President.

Nationality: Colombian and American Citizen.

Where do you live? Miami.

Do you have kids? I have two kids.

Pets? No.

Favorite Food: Thai food.

Hobbies: Watching a good movie with my husband.

Favorite place in the world: A beach in Key Largo.

Isabel, tell us your story, how do you remember your first job?

I was born in Cali, Colombia. I am the daughter of two; I remember my childhood with happiness; I used to play a lot with my little brother, the love of my family always surrounded me. I studied at a catholic school, and I remember consistently challenging the concepts of religion as a dogma; despite this, I graduated with honors, achieving the highest score of "ICFES" (a high school test administered to high school students). This achievement opened the door for me to study at an excellent university. I decided to study industrial engineering, and in the middle of my studies, I came to the US to learn English. When I graduated, I moved to Bogotá to work as an HR coordinator for Procter & Gamble. It was a fantastic experience because it allowed me to understand the role of HR and how it contributes to delivering business strategies.

Why did you end up in HR if you studied an engineering field?

HR was not on my radar when I was studying engineering. I thought I was going to focus on logistics, but when I was invited to the position in Bogotá, it was something that I could not turn down, and I am glad I 'didn't because it made me discover a passion for the role HR plays in society.

How was the process to move to the United States?

The Procter's factory I was working for closed, and I was hoping to find another job opportunity in Cali to return to be close to my family; however, I ended up finding another job in Bogotá again, this time with Arthur Andersen, where I got hired as a business consultant. After a couple of years, I moved to the US due to personal reasons. I moved to Seattle, which represented a significant change. When I was ready to look for a professional job, September 11th happened, so it was tough to find a job then. I did not want to stay home, so I joined TARGET as a cashier. I thought it was a perfect opportunity to practice English and learn about the US system; I got exposure to the "American way of living" thanks to this experience. I worked there for about ten months, feeling like I was on double shift, working for TARGET during the day and applying for jobs at night; looking for a job is work in itself.

It had to be very challenging...

Yes, but finally, I was contacted by a headhunter to talk about an opportunity for Starbucks. I remembered



CRITICAL
THINKING,
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BUSINESS.





meeting the headhunter in the Starbucks coffee shop amid the delicious coffee smells, bags of Colombian coffee, and friendly baristas. I loved it and decided I wanted to join this company. I got an offer as a functional analyst in the HR Technology team. I think it was one of the happiest days of my life; it was my opportunity to enter the American workspace for a company I wanted to be part of. During that time, I decided to study and return to the university, so I joined Chapman University to do my master's in HR. After graduation and some years in different positions, I set my eyes on the Starbucks Latin America division. I wanted to return to my roots and contribute to the region's development. My dream became to be the leader of HR for Latin America at some point.

Did you achieve that dream?

I did; I packed my bags and moved from Seattle to Miami. It was a great experience. My role initially was to help establish the Starbucks culture as we opened new countries while setting the foundational people practices. I left the organization 20 years later as the HR Director for Latin America. Being part of the team that grew the brand from four to 22 countries was fulfilling.

Can you tell us about a particular project or achievement you are most proud of, and why it stands out?

As you know, in countries like Colombia, when you get to a certain age, it is hard to find a job, and I always find it very sad because, in the forties, you are at the top of your life. You have much experience, self-confidence, and many things to offer. So, when I was at Starbucks, we created a program designed to give career opportunities to 40+ people. I witnessed how senior citizens were proud of returning to work, feeling financially independent, and wanting to work shoulder-to-shoulder with the new generations. There are many great stories about how other companies replicated our approach; we also took the initiative to other countries around the region. Profound changes emerge when the courage to challenge the familiar exceeds the comfort of the status quo, when collective action transcends self-interest, and empathy becomes the cornerstone of our interactions. I am very proud of this initiative!

Your passion for HR strategic leadership is evident. What, in your opinion, are the key qualities that make HR a strategic partner to the business?

The challenge is not only to distribute employment opportunities symmetrically but to guarantee the sustainability and richness of trajectories for those involved.





Critical Thinking, listening with curiosity, a learning mindset, and influencing.

As the Vice President of Human Resources at Newmont Corporation, what role does HR play in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization?

Our role is to identify new trends, explore the company's gaps and opportunities, provide expert advice, leverage accelerators, and promote our position and objectives. We then implement and even disrupt our people's systems, and establish expected behaviors so everybody can deliver on our commitments. We need to push for progress, ask the right questions, and help the leaders to advance the agenda and stay accountable. Creating a diverse, equal, an inclusive culture is everybody's responsibility. You will not foster innovation, curiosity, and collaboration unless you have a more diverse, distributed and connected workforce. Create an inclusive environment that allows people from all sorts of diverse backgrounds — whether it's gender, race, ethnic minority, LGBTQI+ — and you will genuinely get behavior where innovation is welcome, curiosity is welcome and people will collaborate together.

How do you foster a culture that embraces these values?

It is about being a thought partner, available to have meaningful conversations, while helping leaders understand how they contribute or not to building the desired culture. Progressing an inclusive workplace culture is critical for tackling the challenge of retaining and attracting the most diverse top talent in the mining industry and our success globally. As part of this, we continue to focus on achieving gender parity, elevating nationals in the countries where we operate, and maximizing employment opportunities for local and Indigenous stakeholders.

We are eliminating basic symbols of exclusion. We also provide basic amenities for all employees not just the majority. These have been a simple yet impactful way to engage leaders to act and a meaningful measure of inclusion. Our hypothesis is that the more symbols of exclusion are eliminated, the more inclusive we become. We have also been conducting Stay Interviews with our women in operations to allow us to identify our highest retention risks and address those.

Interviewed by: Fernanda Cala

Let's
ROCK 

How would you describe yourself in one word? Persistent.

Favorite movie or TV Show: Matrix.

Favorite Book: "La insoportable levedad del ser"/ The Unbearable Lightness of Being (Milan Kundera).

If you could turn into an animal, what would it be? I would be a cat (that belongs to loving owners).

Favorite music band or genre: Dave Matthews Band.

Your grounding activity is... Meditation.

What are two things that cannot be missing from your backpack? My phone to listen to music and a water bottle.

Do you like sports? Are you a fan of a sports team?

I love to watch Soccer, especially during the World Cup, and I am a fan of "America de Cali"... a sports team in Colombia.

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world? I use my position to influence the business to make investments that can improve the lives of the people I represent.

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: Trust the silence.



MARIBEL DIZ

A CATALYST

FOR CHANGE

AT Visa

Maribel Diz is the Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Visa for Latin America and the Caribbean and lives in Miami, Florida. She is a first generation American born of Cuban parents who came to the US to find a better life filled with choices and freedom.

BY FERNANDA CALA





Maribel lives aligned with her purpose to change lives and uplift people to see their potential and the impact they make. She is passionate about her job and committed to Visa for the last 27 years. "People always ask, "Why have you stayed at Visa for so long?" Not only do I love the company, but I especially love its dynamism. No day is the same and when dealing with humans, it always promises to be interesting. Our craft is important and critical, we are the company and its culture. We must never underestimate the power of Human Resources and its reach." Maribel confessed smiling.

We would like to get to know your story. Who is Maribel and what is her story?

I was exposed to the importance of hard work and grit at an early age, understanding that being patient and prepared was key. Education has always been of key importance to me, and I made it a point to always make time to learn. I am a Doctor in Business Administration and apply my skills and knowledge. I am fascinated by human behavior and always strive to leave things better than when I find them. I am a wife of 28 years and still get butterflies when I see my husband walk in a room. I am a mother of two wonderful young adults who are starting on the journey of figuring out how they will impact the world. I am a sister to a brilliant educator and a daughter to two loving parents who are still kicking strong. I am an executive with a strong voice in the room, and I am an inspirational servant leader.

Who or what inspires you the most in your career? Any person, book, or experience that has had a profound impact on you?

I have been blessed to have many smart experienced people come into my life. I have made it a point to observe, listen, and apply what I learn from each of them. I have also been exposed to not-so-great leaders of which I also learn from, but in this case, I do not apply what I learned. Instead, I make it a point to NEVER do as they do.

Can you tell us about your greatest achievement as Senior Vice President Human Resources at Visa?

I feel responsible for our employee base. I play a critical role in building our culture and ensuring that we hire the best and the brightest, providing opportunities for continued growth. Then, something that blends the personal and professional that I consider an achievement, is being able to apply my Doctoral dissertation research, around the combination of Gen Zers and Millennials in the workforce, into my work at Visa. Together, these two generations already make up more than a third of the workforce, and in less than 10 years, they will represent 60%. Not a lot has been studied about this combination and how it will affect management, so using my research I was able to help our managers understand best these generations. For instance, Gen Z and Millennials were specific in describing

"OUR CRAFT IN VISA IS IMPORTANT AND CRITICAL, WE ARE THE COMPANY AND ITS CULTURE. WE MUST NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ITS REACH."

WHO IS MARIBEL?

Full Name: Maribel Diz.

Occupation: Human Resources or as it is known now—the People Team.

Nationality: American.

Where do you live? Miami.

Do you have kids? Yes, a daughter (25) and a son (21).

Pets? Yes, a cat by the name of Macy.

Favorite Food: So many but mostly Mediterranean.

Hobbies: Orchids, traveling and learning about new cultures and experimenting in the kitchen with complex recipes.

Favorite place in the world: Amalfi Coast.

Let's ROCK

How would you describe yourself in one word?

Exuberant. I always find the positive in all situations (although sometimes it is hard and a stretch) no matter how hard. I am genuinely happy for others when good things happen to them and always find joy in mostly everything that I do. I love to laugh and find that it is contagious. It really disarms people and helps one get closer to them.

Favorite movie or TV Show: Sixth Sense. I love movies that take down a path where I am feeling one way and then at the end, it is all different and I had it all wrong. I love that! I am not a fan of predictable movies.

Favorite Book: Lord of the Flies. I read this book in my junior year in High School, which really impacted me. It taught me at an early age that humans are complex and complicated beings. It also taught me there is a dark side in all of us which makes it important to have rules in society to help us coexist.

If you could turn into an animal, what would it be?
Eagle.

Favorite music band or genre: Jason Mraz.

Your grounding activity is... Having nightly dinner with my family and sharing our highlights and lowlights of the day. One thing that was especially important when my husband and I got married was having our meals together. Our children now think it is weird when their friends do not eat meals as a family. We passed this on to them that they will carry when they build their families. Our legacy.

What are 2 things that cannot be missing from your backpack? Laptop and journal.

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world? I would like to think that I live by my purpose which is 'Changing Lives.' I like to uplift all of those that I encounter and help them see their potential and the impact they make.

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: Given-Never let them see you sweat.
Give-Do not worry about things that you do not have control over.

what behaviors they look for in a leader. All participants including leaders concur that being a caring leader that values work-life balance is important. "Caring and balanced," "relatable and authentic" and "honest and trusting" are characteristics the two generations valued most in a manager.

How can we understand these generations?

Interestingly, these younger generations are not all about fun, though leaders thought so – placing a higher value on fun in the workplace than Gen Z and Millennials. Instead, they are more concerned that managers be serious, respectful, and confident. They are also looking for a leader that leads by example, a protective leader that provides guidance, has their back, coaches, and provides feedback. Another area where perceived notions differ from the findings: leaders feel that Gen Z and Millennials are looking for a motivational leader. The respondents, however, made clear they are looking for an inspirational leader. It is a fine line, but the difference is around a leader that touches their instincts, excites them – inspirational vs. a leader that provides reasons and pushes behind actions - motivational.

The findings are fascinating, and I can talk about it for hours, as it has become a passion of mine, and these and many others have truly helped us guide and counsel our leaders at Visa and help them retain this talent pool.

"I WAS EXPOSED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF HARD WORK AND GRIT AT AN EARLY AGE, UNDERSTANDING THAT BEING PATIENT AND PREPARED WAS KEY."



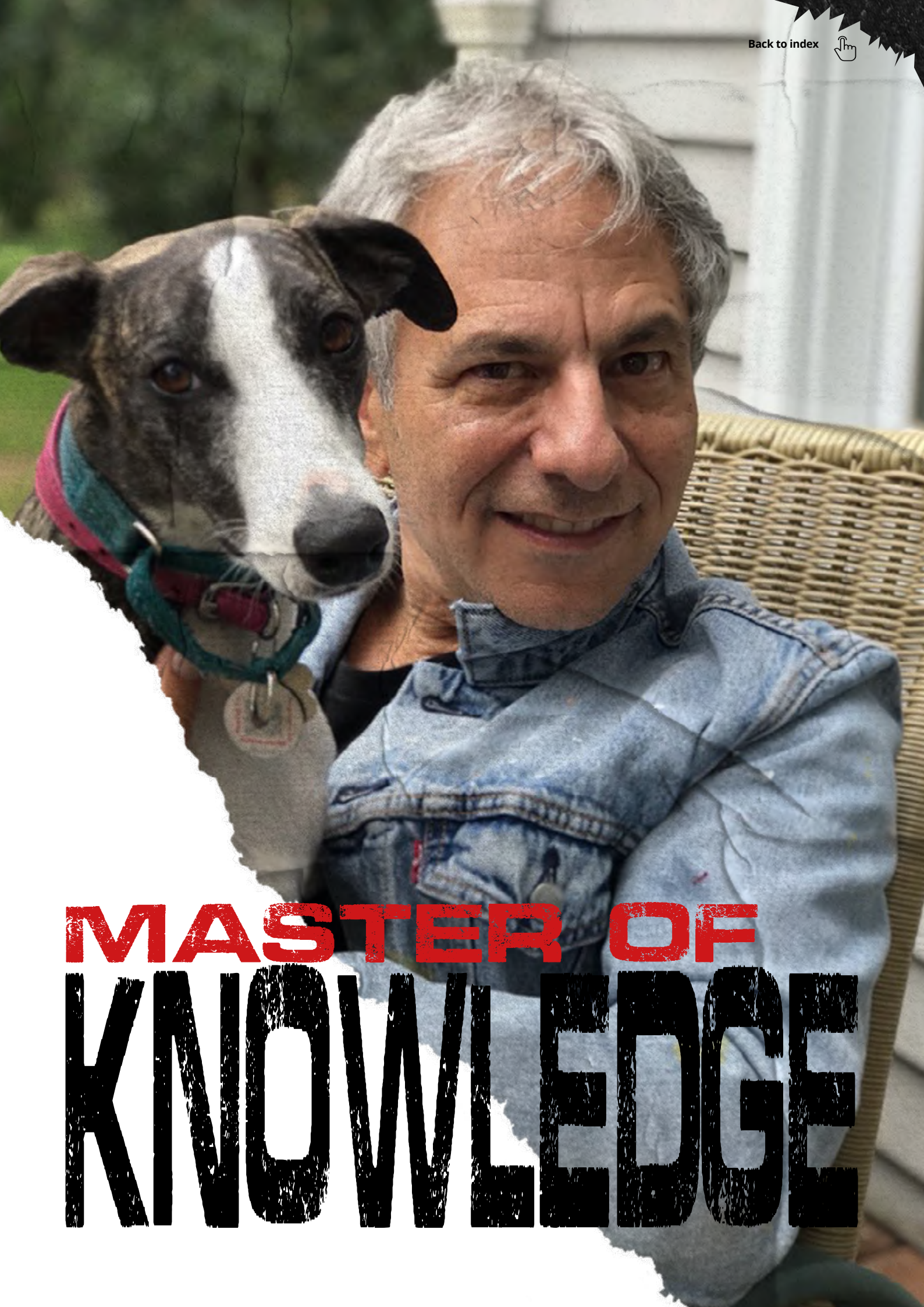
Visa has a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion. How do you ensure that these values are not only embraced within the organization but also reflected in the talent acquisition and retention strategies?

Currently our region has a 50/50 gender split. This makes me incredibly proud. We not only hire the best and the brightest but ensure that we have representation in gender, diverse cultures, generations, etc. We look at the person in its entirety. This goes beyond the talent acquisition process. We need to ensure that once we hire, we have the right environment for the individual to thrive. That means having active resource groups, providing clarity on development opportunities, and learning frameworks, competitive benefits and providing activities for employees to give back to society/communities to make a broad impact. Retention is an outcome of all these activities.

Metrics can be the rock and roll anthem of HR. Could you share some of your favorite HR metrics that can really make a difference in driving business success?

I am a data junkie. I look at lots and lots of data (e.g., time to hire, turnover/attrition, exit interview data, internal requisition fills, career promotion data, exiting demographic, cost per hire, training and development hours, employee engagement data, etc.). I especially like to understand what the numbers are telling me and match them to the company's P&L. I find that if I am numbers savvy, it will allow me to best tell a story to the business and/or anticipate regional needs.

VISA



MASTER OF KNOWLEDGE



Marc is from the United States and he is currently living in Miami. He has an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley, a M.A. degree from Middlebury College, Monterey, and a doctoral degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has distinguished himself through his research and passion. Since 2015 he has served as Faculty Director of the M.S. in Human Resource Management program at Florida International University (FIU).

We would like to get to know your story, Marc. What is your favorite memory from your time as a student? How did that experience shape your career path?

My favorite memory was from when I was a second-year student at UC Berkely. I was in a large enrollment class in political science. I recall visiting the professor during his office hours, and he began the conversation by commenting on the high quality of my work. Until that time, I did not even realize he knew who I was.

This gave me the confidence to pursue academic research and, later impressed upon me how impactful a few meaningful words can have.

If you could go back in time and give your younger self one piece of advice about employability, what would it be?

Work experience is a multiplying force for education. Higher education is great but is most valuable when built up life experience.

Diversity and inclusion are crucial aspects of modern education. How does your FIU foster an inclusive learning environment that celebrates different perspectives and backgrounds?

Diversity and inclusion are part of the DNA of FIU and reflects diversity of Miami, where about 30 percent of our residents are foreign born. Unlike, most Americans, most FIU students are multi-lingual. Diversity in the graduate program in HR at FIU goes beyond the ethnic and racial diversity. Our student's range in ages from 23-60. Many have military experience; others come from the hospitality industry; others are already highly experienced in HR across multiple industries.

The pandemic has brought about significant changes in the education landscape. How has FIU adapted to these challenges, and what lasting changes do you see in the future of higher education?

Prior to the pandemic, about 1/3 of classes were already being offered on-line. With the onset of the



WHO IS MARC?

Full Name: Marc Weinstein.

Occupation: Professor, Faculty Director, MSHRM Program.

Nationality: US

Where do you live? Miami Beach.

Do you have kids? Yes, an adult son.

Pets? A dog.

Favorite Food: Pizza.

Hobbies: Travel, history.

Favorite place in the world: Spain.

pandemic, we quickly and seamlessly transitioned to on-line delivery. The transition was so successful, many students and faculty have expressed a decided preference for remote delivery. While I do hope for a re-invigoration of campus life, I do anticipate that remote delivery options will be a permanent part of higher education.

If you had the chance to switch careers for a week, what profession would you like to try out, and why?

I would enjoy being a captain on a large cruise ship. I like being in the role of directing others and travelling at the same time.

Technology has undoubtedly transformed education. What is the most mind-blowing tech tool or app you have seen that revolutionizes the way we learn?

Let's
ROCK 

How would you describe yourself in one word? Curious.

Favorite movie or TV Show: The Americans.

Favorite Book: 1984.

If you could turn into an animal, what would it be? A dog.

Favorite music band or genre: Alternative, Talking Heads.

Your grounding activity is... Exercise.

What are 2 things that cannot be missing from your backpack? Water bottle, laptop.

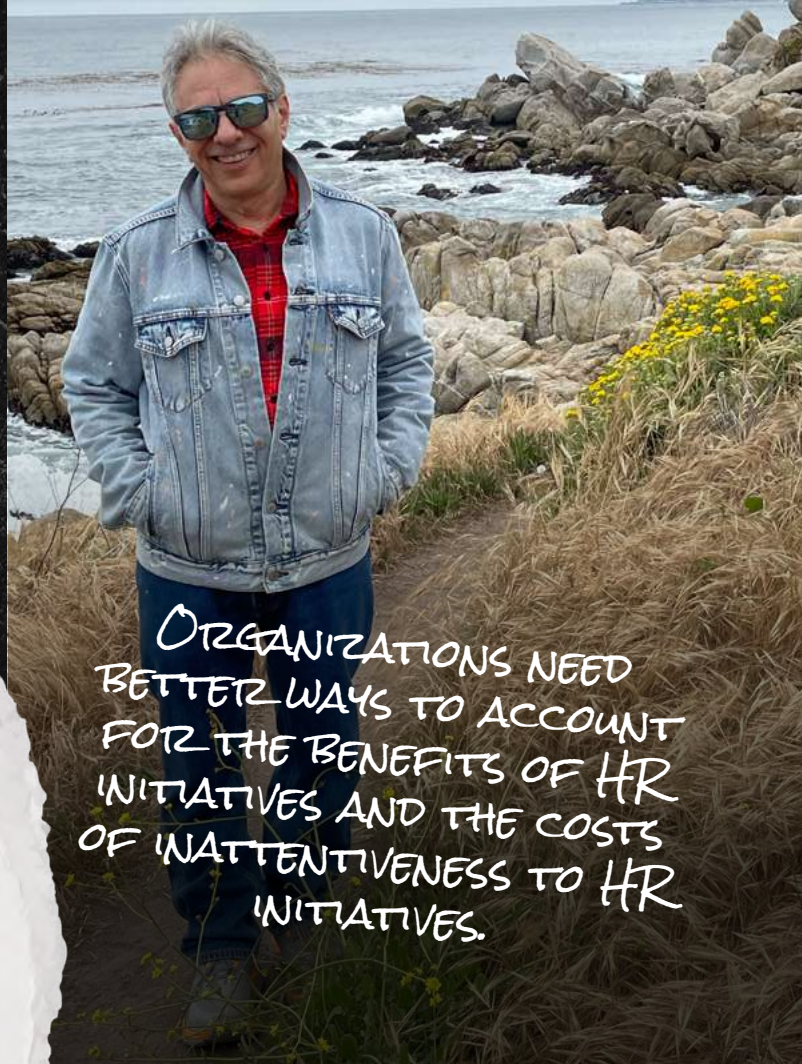
Do you like sports? Are you a fan of a sports team? Basketball a fan of Lakers.

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world? Helping students achieve their goals.

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: "Plan for the future and live in the moment"

Well, I am fascinated by the evolution of AI and ChatGPT 4. Although there are challenges with how best to integrate this technology into education, particularly in K-12 and for undergraduates, it holds a lot of promise. With our graduate HR students, we have already begun to incorporate this in our education, with the aim of training our students to use human intelligence to refine and build upon AI-output.

Interviewed by: Fernanda Cala



ORGANIZATIONS NEED
BETTER WAYS TO ACCOUNT
FOR THE BENEFITS OF HR
INITIATIVES AND THE COSTS
OF INATTENTIVENESS TO HR
INITIATIVES.

FIU
Business



EVA WUGHES



EMPATHY + KINDNESS:
A BRIDGE TO BUSINESS
SUCCESS

Eva is from Spain and grew up in Miami, Florida, she has distinguished herself through her work as one of the most prominent business leaders in the fashion industry. As Founder and CEO of Adira Consulting, she advises brands looking to consolidate their business in established and emerging markets.

BY FERNANDA CALA

WHO IS EVA?

Full Name: Eva Hughes.

Age: 50.

Occupation: Business and Leadership Expert.

Nationality: Spain.

Where do you live? Coconut Grove.

Do you have kids? No.

Pets? No.

Favorite Food: French fries and meat, seafood, angulas, and tacos.

Hobbies: Watching documentaries.

Favorite place in the world: My home.

Can you share with us some of the key moments that shaped your journey and led you to establish Adira Consulting?

Throughout my journey, I embraced leadership early on, learning on the job as I did not shape my professional profile at the University. At just 29, I became the youngest Vogue Editor-in-Chief for Mexico and Latin America, facing the challenge of leading and negotiating with diverse personalities and cultures while respecting experienced teams. This taught me the vital lesson of valuing and listening to those who have been doing things their way successfully for years. When named CEO of Condé Nast, I applied for it, and the rewards have always been immeasurable. After 20 years in publishing, I decided to reinvent myself, leading me to establish my own company. Now, I help others with their business and leadership challenges to ensure maximum performance and optimal efficiency. By guiding leaders to develop critical business skills, attitudes and behaviors for success and developing organizational capabilities through alignment of people, structure, behaviors, and processes, I continue my own journey of sharing my career insights and experience. In the end, it is about respect, listening with an open mind, and building teams, and then moving forward with a determined step.

As a leader and mentor, what is the most memorable piece of advice you have received in your career, and how has it shaped your approach to leadership?

Keeping calm, cool, and collected as a mentor has positively shaped my approach to leadership in several ways. It always reminds me and those participating in my coaching programs of the importance of resilience in challenging situations. Your ability to stay composed allows you to handle conflicts and demanding situations with a level head, which can create a more supportive and safer environment. It also enables us to make thoughtful and rational decisions, rather than reacting impulsively. Overall, by maintaining a calm, cool, and collected approach to leadership, you can inspire and guide others with a positive influence, empowering them to develop their skills and reach their full potential.

We have heard about your podcast, Eva Talks, where you interview influential personalities from various fields. What do you enjoy most about hosting these conversations, and could you share a memorable moment from one of your interviews?

The most enjoyable aspect for me is the opportunity to connect with brilliant minds and learn from their insights and experiences. It is fascinating to dive deep into their expertise and share their knowledge with the audience. Eva Talks has given me the unique opportunity to foster meaningful conversations that



"THE MOST ENJOYABLE ASPECT FOR ME IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH BRILLIANT MINDS AND LEARN FROM THEIR INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES".

Let's
ROCK 

How would you describe yourself in one word? Reliable.

Favorite movie or TV Show: Big Bang Theory.

Favorite Book: Make your bed.

If you could turn into an animal, what would it be? Dog.

Favorite music band or genre: Soundtrack.

Your grounding activity is... Meditation.

What are 2 things that cannot be missing from your backpack? Phone and reading glasses.

Do you like sports? Are you a fan of a sports team? I like all sports!

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world? Empathy and kindness are compatible with business success!

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: Always keep calm, cool, and collected!





can inspire and educate others. I would express my gratitude for the overwhelming support when I started podcasting. Their willingness to open and discuss their inner thoughts about leadership and life-changing experiences was not only an honor but also a testament to their generosity and commitment to benefiting others.

As a board member of various organizations, such as Sachamama, Latin American Fashion Summit, and Cleverfunds. What drives you to contribute to these different initiatives?

They all align with my values and beliefs. LAFS is a global platform for Latin American fashion and designers that provides networking opportunities and access for the design and fashion community creatives, buyers, and executives. Sachamama has a beautiful mission of building support for a clean economy and sustainable lifestyles. Cleverfunds is an ecosystem of private solutions in Latin America to accelerate the mobilization of resources towards sustainable development. Fashion education and talent development are also at the core of what I do. Not only in my coaching and consulting programs, also as Executive Vice President of Istituto Marangoni Miami. I firmly believe that investing in fashion education and supporting emerging talent can help nurture a thriving creative community in the region. My involvement with these organizations focused on fashion, community, networking, opportunity, education, and sustainability, and the incredible work they do has enriched my life and allowed me to give back to the community and positively influenced both your life and the lives of others.

Having experience in Latin America and the US, how do you see the future of the fashion industry evolving in these regions, and what opportunities do you believe lie ahead?

The region has enormous potential. The fashion market has changed from when I started my career 25 years ago and the fashion world is looking towards Latin America. The region has fabrics, materials, and natural and sustainable resources that can give it a competitive edge. Countries such as Peru and Brazil provide organic cotton for ethical brands while also producing a significant socioeconomic impact in local communities by working with local artisans. The fashion ecosystem must work in close collaboration with the support of public and private sectors. Collaboration is the key, and sustainability is a path for growth! The biggest challenge for a sustainable fashion company is to accept that the business model must direct its steps towards a circular business model. Sustainability is not a simple objective to meet, it must be the DNA of the company. All the actors in the process, including the end customer, must change their habits to interpret their role in the most sustainable and efficient way possible. There is an important level of craftsmanship and design that Latin America's



"Keeping calm, cool, and collected as a mentor has positively shaped my approach to leadership in several ways".

diverse culture has to offer. To do so, we must create the right path and opportunities for them and begin with fair labor wages and practices, and profit-sharing models that allow artisans to benefit from the success of the products they are creating. By prioritizing fair wages and treating artisans as valued partners, we can then contribute to the well-being of local communities and help build a more sustainable and equitable fashion industry in Latin America.

The fashion industry has historically faced criticism for its lack of diversity in various areas. As a leader, how do you ensure that diversity and inclusion are prioritized within your company and the brands you advise?

By fostering an environment based on a set of values to live and act through a culture of inclusivity and diversity where everyone feels valued, heard, and respected.

What changes do you hope to see in the fashion industry and leadership landscape regarding gender diversity and inclusion in the next decade?

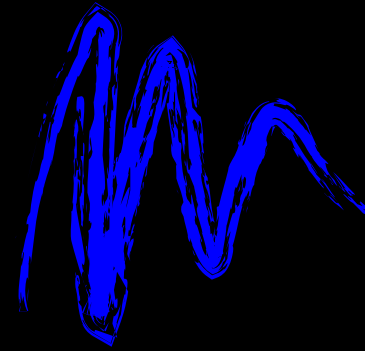
Closing the gender pay gap and ensuring equal opportunities for career advancement and promotions. Integrating gender diversity and inclusion education into their curricula, promoting an understanding of the importance of diverse perspectives. It is crucial for the fashion industry to embrace and champion gender diversity and inclusion to foster a vibrant and sustainable future. Lastly, practicing empathy towards each other is essential for fostering understanding, compassion, and stronger relationships. By putting ourselves in others' shoes and seeking to understand their perspectives, we can build bridges of connection. Empathy is something that I speak of consistently to the people I mentor. It helps create a supportive and inclusive environment where people feel heard, valued, and respected, leading to improved communication and cooperation in various aspects of life.







Nicki Becker is an activist, she has only 22 years old and is an environmental communicator, and Co-Founder of "Jóvenes por el clima" in Argentina: "We have to understand that solving the climate crisis is done collectively, and if we have the privilege, we have to rethink our lifestyle, such as our food diet," she says.



BY Fernanda Cala.

Nicki was born in Argentina and lives in Buenos Aires, in 2019, out of curiosity and a mixture of frustration, she became interested in environmental activism. "That curiosity to look for information was awakened in me, and I began to realize that in Europe there were people my age who had information that I did not have about the environmental crisis," confessed, and assured that after passing the indignation, she set out to generate a collective action.

We know you are a fantastic activist, but tell us your story and how you got into youth activism?

I used to participate in a Jewish youth movement where I had activities every Saturday and they were non-formal education activities on different social and general topics. Later I was the group's coordinator and led many activities of reflection and introspection, but so far, nothing to do with environmental issues. I did feel involved with social issues regarding feminism and gender equality because it touched me closely, I went to the marches, etc. I was always very restless and liked to work on various projects, I was also involved in solidarity projects at my school.

And how did you end up in environmental activism?

Only in February 2019 did I come across a video by Greta Thunberg, calling for the first international climate march in Europe. That is when I started to question why I did not know anything about climate change if I felt so involved with social issues. I began to read, and I realized that people my age in Europe could have this information and in Argentina we could not. I started to be flooded with a feeling of indignation. I joined to call the first march in Buenos Aires, we were 18 years old at the time, and that is how we created Youth for Climate. In that first mobilization more than 5000 people came, it was crazy, when I went on stage, because I had to speak, I could see how many people there were, and I felt incredible.

What other actions do you carry out besides the marches?

WHO IS NICOLE?

Full name: Nicole Becker.

Position: Co-founder.

Organization: "Jóvenes por el clima".

Occupation: Environmental activist and communicator.

Nationality: Argentinian.

Lives in: Buenos Aires.

Age: 22.

Pets: Ringo, a little dog.

Favorite food: Anything with pumpkin and mango.

Favorite sport: Soccer.

Hobbies: Play soccer with friends.

Favorite clothing item: Dressing in pink.

Favorite place: Any lovely beach.



"THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE IS VERY LITTLE TIME TO REVERSE CLIMATE CHANGE, THE TIME IS THERE TO TAKE THE NECESSARY ACTIONS AND SECURE A FUTURE FOR OUR GENERATION AND THE NEXT."

Let's
ROCK 

One word to describe yourself:

kind, passionate, persevering, and empathetic.

Favorite singer or band: C Tangana.

The most crucial moment of the day:

Sunset.

Your grounding activity: playing soccer.

What is your contribution to a better world: Everything I do with young people for the climate, activism, and the environmental struggle.

Who do you admire? Fellow youth climate activists and Messi.

What you value most in people: They are good people.

Day or night? Day.

Hot or cold shower? Hot.

Today, in Youth for Climate, apart from working on social pressure in the streets, we also perform a lot from the beginning of political advocacy. We met with different deputies and senators to demand they start legislating on the climate crisis. We achieved several things during these four years, such as the Climate Change Law, the Environmental Education Law, and the Yolanda Law. All this was part of that advocacy work, then we worked a lot in education and giving workshops in different schools. Now I am working and launching a project called "School of Environmental Educators" to teach high school children, in a 3-month course, about the climate crisis and they can also give workshops in their schools. We also work a lot on communication, and to communicate the climate crisis in an accessible and daily way to understand how it affects our quality of life. We share in channels such as social networks, content in Spanish about climate change because sometimes it is challenging to find it.

Being part of Youth for Climate Argentina and the Fridays for Future movement is fantastic. What inspired you to join this movement and become an environmental advocate? Tell us your story.

From the beginning, "*Jóvenes por el Clima*" was born as one of the local chapters of the Fridays for Future movement led by Greta Thunberg at the international level. However, our name is "*Jóvenes por el Clima*" because it did not make sense to put a name in English where most people do not speak English, and skipping school every Friday, when access to education is a privilege in Latin America, did not make sense as a demand strategy either. So, we call ourselves Youth for Climate, we are part of this international movement in every country and there have been marches of more than a million people. I have had the opportunity to work with people from many countries and we did international campaigns.



Many young people sometimes feel overwhelmed by the idea of making a difference in the world. What advice would you give those who want to get involved, but need help knowing where to start?

My first piece of advice is to get started, there are a lot of fears one has about getting started. The best thing to do is to realize along the way your challenges, how to improve, redefine your course, etc. The most difficult thing is not to start; it is to stay, to give continuity and create something that transcends. Joining with people who are on the same page helps, making an excellent work team, getting together with other people, can have more impact, can be more fun, and it is nice to be able to share it. The most beautiful thing about militancy and activism is the people you meet, and the feeling that you are not alone.

Youth is a powerful engine for change. How do you think young people can influence the fight against climate change and have a positive impact on their environment?

Young people have a super significant impact on the fight against climate change. We managed to change the narrative of what is happening in climate change and make people understand that it is something we are already living in today, affecting the most vulnerable sectors. Talking about the climate crisis

"I dream of a world where the climate crisis is not a problem, and we don't have to struggle to live in a livable world."



YOLANDA LAW IN ARGENTINA:

Law 27,592, or Yolanda Law, guarantees comprehensive environmental training for people working in public service with a sustainable development perspective and emphasis on climate change. It was sanctioned on November 17, 2020.

CLIMATE CHANGE LAW IN ARGENTINA:

Law No. 27520 - Law on minimum budgets for adaptation and mitigation to global climate change. This law establishes the minimum budgets for environmental protection to guarantee adequate actions, instruments, and strategies for adaptation and mitigation of climate change throughout the national territory.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION LAW IN ARGENTINA:

The Comprehensive Environmental Education Law, enacted on June 1, 2021, is a federal public policy promoted by all provinces to promote environmental awareness and responsibility in decision-making and reach all formal, non-formal, and informal education settings.

means understanding that it affects us all, and not equally. This narrative change was essential to place it more on the social, cultural, political, and media agenda.

Besides your work fighting climate change, are there any other social issues you are passionate about or think deserve attention and action by young people?

Yes, of course. Feminism attracts me and is part of my identity; feminism formed me and helped me see through other lenses what is happening in the world and understand what is happening in the climate crisis. It also helped me to build my identity. I do not believe in leadership as we used to associate it with men, who talk a lot and are the only ones who have the word. It is something more collective to make others shine too, and feminism made me rethink a lot.

What would that call be if you could call all the people in the world to take concrete measures to protect our planet?

The first thing is to get informed. Once we have the information, any action takes care of itself. Share knowledge and think about how to consume less energy or use it when necessary. Understand that solving the climate crisis is done collectively, not just thinking about individual actions.



MARIA AZOFRA AND LUCIA CLIFFORD
**FROM SOCCER
PITCH TO**

STARTUP VICTORY

BY Fernanda Cala.



"WE SEE OURSELVES
IN THE NEXT FIVE-
TEN YEARS BEING
ABLE TO HELP
WOMEN IN THE
START-UP'S WORLD."

WHO IS MARIA?

Full Name: Maria Azofra.

Age: 27.

Occupation: Entrepreneur.

Nationality: Spanish.

Where do you live? San Francisco.

Do you have kids? No.

Pets? Two pets, one dog Russell.
And a cat Bagheera.

Favorite Food: "Cocido Madrileño,"
a Spanish typical food.

Hobbies: Play Soccer, eating,
traveling and scuba diving.

Favorite place in the world: Cadiz.

María and Lucía are two Spanish girls currently living in San Francisco, California; they are two rockstars who are making waves in Silicon Valley with their startup, Sharpei, a sustainable fintech platform that empowers retailers and manufacturers to integrate try-before-you-buy, rental, subscription, and second-hand resale options into their checkout process. They compare their entrepreneurial life with a soccer game, as they feel in the entrepreneurial world the competitiveness and collaborative environment they used to live in when they played first division in a soccer team.

We would like to get to know you girls, tell us about your story. How did you become business partners?

Maria: We used to play in the same soccer team thirteen years ago, and as we grew up, we discovered that we liked founding businesses, and we started creating our own clothing brand at school; we also sold wine and olive oil. Both of us like to learn about each other, we have complemented skills and interests, so we started having adventures together.

Lucia: The first company we started was "*The Eco-host*", we managed touristic apartments, it was in 2018 before COVID and then obviously COVID was an extremely tough time for this industry, before we were just selling things around until we started a real project.

Sharpei is your brainchild, and it makes waves! Can you share the moment when you realized that this startup idea had the potential to be a game-changer in the business world?

Lucia: In December last year, we had a week of non-having any connection to the internet and an intense experience. We had another project ongoing called "Yakk", it was working and growing but nonetheless, we decided to change the approach, as it made more sense to enable companies with the software that would allow them to start a circular economy business rather than just the selling channel as we were doing with Yakk.

With both of you having had remarkable careers in sports, how do you ensure that the competitive spirit on the soccer field translates into a collaborative and supportive environment within Sharpei?

Maria: As a professional soccer player you experience pressure and competitiveness; when it comes to being an entrepreneur, it is similar. We try to create an open environment to make people collaborate as a real team. It is important in a start-up to build a formidable team connected to achieve a unique goal. Employees must feel like they are working towards a personal and global goal. They need to be on edge, competitive but willing to step down for the team's best interest. As a group we are driven to achieve our mission while taking Sharpei to being one of the best and most well-known start-ups in the world.



Lucia: I was thinking about this recently because I saw a documentary which quoted: "Pressure is a privilege. It only comes to those who earn it" so by the time when you are competing in a remarkably important level in sports you feel a similar stress and pressure when you are going to pitch your company, you need the best of yourself to come out in the most challenging time. You need to be constant, have the right mindset and take care of yourself to manage it.

Let's ROCK

How would you describe yourself in one word? Dreamer.

Favorite movie or TV Show: Breaking bad.

Favorite Book: Sapiens, Noah Harari.

If you could turn into an animal, what would it be? Whale.

Favorite music band or genre: House music.

Your grounding activity is... Reading or listening to music.

What are 2 things that cannot be missing from your backpack? My laptop and Googles.

Do you like sports? Are you a fan of a sports team? I love sports, I love playing soccer and paddle. I am a fan of Real Madrid.

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world?

Encourage women to start their own businesses promoting gender equality, and I try to integrate social and environmental impact into all my projects. I believe that any step can lead to a more sustainable and equitable world. I put a lot of effort into those topics and being a reference to other woman can start their own businesses.

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: Prioritize the most challenging task first.



"I GUESS THE ONLY WAY TO LEAD IS BY EXAMPLE, IF PEOPLE THINK OF ME AS A LEADER IS PROBABLY BECAUSE THEY SEE WHAT WE ARE BUILDING MAKES SENSE AND IT'S A GOOD PRODUCT."

WHO IS LUCÍA?

Full Name: Lucía Clifford.

Age: 29.

Occupation: Entrepreneur.

Nationality: Spanish and English.

Where do you live? San Francisco.

Do you have kids? No.

Pets? Two cats, Taco and Oliver.

Favorite Food: Italian Pizza.

Hobbies: Travelling and sports.

Favorite place in the world: Ibiza.

The Sharpei team must be a powerhouse of diverse talents. Maria, as the CEO, how do you align the different strengths and skills of your team members to achieve your collective goals?

Maria: I believe the most important thing is to set clear goals and roles to oversee different tasks. We must identify our different strengths and see how they complement each other and promote collaboration and an open space to talk with our colleagues, it is important to be able to learn from your colleagues and communicate enough to evolve and learn as fast as possible.

Lucía, as a woman in a leadership position and the CTO of Sharpei, you are breaking barriers in the tech world. How do you see your role as an inspiration for other aspiring women in STEM, and what advice would you give them to thrive in male-driven industries?

Lucía: I guess the only way to lead is by example, if people think of me as a leader is probably because they see what we are building makes sense and it is an excellent product. I think is important to have role models in the industry, especially in the tech industry which is full of men. For me, it is more about making the younger women generations think of leadership as something they are part of instead of something that is only for men. As a woman, you need to work harder to earn your place, is not going to be easy and it is important not to overshare your feelings and to stay at professional as possible. If you are in an industry which is primarily full of men, you should not show your weaknesses because they will take advantage of it and take you less seriously. It is all about playing their game.

As founders, you have experienced the highs and lows of startup life. How do you celebrate the small wins and lift each other's spirits during challenging times?

Maria: Firstly, I think you must celebrate each small achievement, in the past we have not done it and we think it is important from now on. We try to be enormously proud of ourselves and celebrate, sometimes we open a bottle of champagne when we are celebrating something and of course with a small party.

Lucía: What we do is celebrate, as Maria said, sometimes when you are so ambitious or have lot of pressure makes you be so focus on the goals which is good, but sometimes it can be so frustrating when you compare yourself all the time to other founders or companies, so it is important to celebrate, sometimes I like to do escape for a long weekend just to clear my mind and have a little bit of "me time".



Let's ROCK

How would you describe yourself in one word? Ambitious.

Favorite movie or TV Show: Black Mirror.

Favorite Book: The wind-up bird chronicle, Murakami.

Favorite music band or gender: Techno Music.

Your grounding activity is... Meditation.

What are 2 things that cannot be missing from your backpack? Sunscreen and Laptop.

Do you like sports? Are you a fan of a sports team? Football, snowboarding, martial arts and recently paddle. I am a fan of Real Madrid.

What contribution do you feel you make to a better world? We are creating innovation for everyone in the world, especially in Sharpei, we would like to change the way people consume and have access to stuffs... and then off course, being the next generation of female founders.

One piece of advice that you were given and would give: Do not give up, it will pay off eventually.



NAVIGATING THROUGH BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE

Ailin is from Argentina. Her turning point started while pursuing a Master's in New York. Her initial goal to apply neuroscience in the field led her to become a Behavioral Scientist expert. Her passion for social impact projects has always been reflected in her path and has led her journey until today.

We would love to hear your story, Ailin. What is your favorite memory from your time as a student? How did that experience shape your professional journey?

Of course, I will not delve too far back into my adolescence, but I can share that it was a challenge for me to define the career path I wanted to pursue. I found myself drawn to a wide range of subjects, particularly within the artistic realm and anything related to creation and creativity. Simultaneously, I harbored a curiosity for the sciences and an eagerness to comprehend the inner workings of the world, delving into the underlying causes of our perceptions. This exploration led me down various avenues: I initially began studying architecture, then dabbled in biology, later completed half of a philosophy degree, and found my way to studying psychology and neuroscience. Amid this constant quest to uncover a connection between creativity, idea generation, research, and understanding of reality, I can confidently say that I experienced a moment of clarity, an "insight," during my time pursuing a master's degree in New York. It was then that I honed in on psychology with a focus on neuroscience.

Could you tell us about your early experiences in the workforce?

Well, when I graduated from my degree, I had the opportunity to connect with someone who became my mentor, Estanislao Bachrach, a renowned biologist in Argentina. He was focused on creativity within businesses, which marked my initial foray into applying neuroscience knowledge in corporate settings. This intrigued me. Then, during my master's program and while studying neuroscience of aesthetics at the Metropolitan Museum Medialab, I discovered my interest in social impact and creating well-being for diverse populations in real-life situations. After completing my master's, I decided to return to Argentina and work for the City of Buenos Aires Government. Here, I delved into what is known as behavioral sciences, focusing on understanding how people behave and how

to maximize their well-being within society. I was among the pioneers in Argentina working on these matters, which led me to establish connections with international organizations in search of specialized talent in this field. In Latin America, the application of behavioral sciences is still relatively uncommon, and the perspective of addressing practical issues from a scientific foundation motivated me to seek out new opportunities.

Did you experience a turning point that made you reevaluate your path?

Now, I realized that if I stayed solely within the city government, my path would be constrained. I yearned to explore further and apply my knowledge across diverse domains. This is when I founded my own behavioral science consultancy and began collaborating with international organizations, not only in Argentina but also in countries like Paraguay, Uruguay, and eventually the United States. My work

WHO IS AILIN?

Full Name: Andrea Ailin Tomio.

Occupation: Psychologist with a focus on neuroscience.

Nationality: Argentine.

Where do you live? Washington DC.

Do you have pets? Pampa, she is always in my heart.

Favorite food: "Milanesa con fideos," an Argentinian typical food.

Hobbies: Playing music (guitar and piano) and painting.

Age: 35.

Favorite place in the world: The sea.

Let's ROCK

How would you describe yourself in one word? Sassy.

Favorite movie or TV show: Seinfeld.

Favorite book: "Descartes' Error" by Antonio Damasio.

If you could become an animal, what would it be? An eagle because it soars high, can see everything around it, and has no predator.

Favorite music band or genre: Serú Girán.

Your grounding activity is... playing music.

What are two things that cannot be missing from your backpack?
Hand sanitizer and a book.

Do you like sports?
Yes, I love playing mixed soccer.

What contribution do you believe you make to a better world?
Since I was young, I have been interested in social impact projects, and I joined an initiative of the **World Economic Forum** called "**Global Shapers**" that brings together young individuals who are either thinking about or creating local impact in society through different projects. In my profession, I strive to reduce the carbon footprint in various parts of the world and work on inclusion-related issues.

A piece of advice you were given and would give: "This too shall pass".

extended to Asia, South Africa, and Central Europe, enabling me to apply my expertise within a variety of global contexts.

Well... for those of us who are less familiar with this subject, how would you define behavioral sciences?

Absolutely, behavioral sciences constitute a collection of disciplines dedicated to the study of human behavior and the factors that influence the promotion or inhibition of certain behaviors in specific contexts. This is an interdisciplinary perspective, meaning that one does not need to be exclusively an expert in behavioral sciences. You could be an economist, psychologist, neuroscientist, sociologist, anthropologist, and from within your field of study within this interdisciplinary group, you seek to measure and assess through data the factors that determine certain behaviors. Additionally, you aim to test solutions to adapt these behaviors to the environments in which people live.

Perfect. So... Are you the founder of one of the first consulting firms in this field in Latin America? How did that come about? What is your company like and more?

That is correct, before the pandemic, I was already working as a behavioral scientist, and as an independent consultant. I realized that there was a high demand in the market for this. I applied behavioral sciences in combination with strategic design, better known as design thinking. Both the government and private companies needed to address complex problems that involved behaviors and relationships among people. At that moment, I started to have a lot of work and I realized that I needed to structure myself as a team. I also understood that the research process, hypothesis formulation, and design always benefit from interdisciplinary collaboration within a team. So, I began to gather a team, which eventually evolved into a consulting firm. Currently, we are a stable team of about five individuals. When projects come in, we assess the knowledge required for each project, organize ourselves, and work on these applied research endeavors.

We have also noticed that you have specialized in environmental issues and social inclusion. What inspired you to focus on these topics and contribute so positively to society?

Well, these three issues are some of the most crucial challenges our society is facing today. Firstly, climate change demands immediate action, as our future likely hinges on how humans adjust our behavior to prevent harmful consequences. Regarding gender and social inclusion, there has historically been a debt owed to certain populations that the current system tends to disadvantage. This is tied to how we behave and what beliefs we hold, as well as breaking down the historical stereotypes



"IT IS ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE A BALANCE BETWEEN PERSONAL LIFE AND WORK. WE CANNOT DEDICATE 40 HOURS A WEEK, 5 OUT OF 7 DAYS, EXCLUSIVELY TO THINKING ABOUT WORK, AND DISCONNECTING FROM OUR PERSONAL LIVES".



we have constructed. These stereotypes can be dismantled and lead us toward a more just society. The focus on gender and inclusion is important to me because it guides us toward a more equitable and just society. As for climate change, we cannot continue to ignore the reality that, as a species, we must rectify what we have damaged if we want to ensure our long-term survival.

What differences do you notice in behavior between the United States and Latin America?

There are significant differences in how people interact between Latin America and more Nordic societies like Canada and the United States. In Latin America, there is a noticeable openness, willingness to spend time together, and spontaneous inclusion in activities. In contrast, Nordic cultures tend to be more organized, requiring planned meetings and keeping private and social lives more separate. I have experienced varying degrees of warmth and integration in different cities. Both cultures have positive aspects, but differences exist in how quickly one is integrated into groups and the level of shared information. Understanding these cultural dynamics can be a challenge, as seen in my interactions with colleagues from Colombia. For instance, I have learned to interpret indirect requests, which has been enlightening for an Argentinian whose culture promotes more direct ways of communicating. These cross-cultural experiences highlight the

diverse behaviors humans exhibit within diverse cultural contexts.

What positive aspects do you see related to artificial intelligence?

Well, I see that artificial intelligence has enormous potential in repetitive tasks or in handling data that may not necessarily need to be retained internally. It functions like an assistant that is available for one to access that knowledge immediately, saving time. For instance, in my work, artificial intelligence significantly reduces time and increases my productivity. If I need to search for a series of articles or academic references on a topic, I use a specific tool that provides me with the bibliographic references I am seeking. Then, in the case of the GPT chat, I ask it to help me draft something (I work a lot in English), to phrase it perfectly for presentation, or to generate a PowerPoint presentation. This way, the time I used to spend on these tasks becomes free time that I can fill with more productivity or even enjoyable activities. I believe that the ideal would be to have a better balance between personal life and work, as that makes us healthier and allows us to allocate time to physical exercise and activities that make us feel good, like playing music or taking a walk in the park.

Interviewed by: Ximena Desaloms



DESPA

Your voice matters



A FLAG-BEARER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Marcela Coen Moraga is a Counselor at the Diplomatic Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland, where she seeks to negotiate resolutions and speak out for the human rights of all people.

BY Alexander Aguilar.





Marcela Coen Moraga, 34 years old and a native of Escazú, San José, holds a position at the Diplomatic Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland, where she works as a Counselor. There she sought to negotiate resolutions and raise her voice for all people after Costa Rica was elected by the United Nations General Assembly to the Human Rights Council for 2023 - 2025. She is passionate about her work but remembers her country with nostalgia. "What I miss most about Costa Rica are the beaches and the sunsets. I also miss the tortillas with cheese and the carne mechada". She said smiling.

She has a bachelor's degree in international relations from the National University and an Inter-University master's in international relations and diplomacy. She is finishing a master's in human rights from the Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), pending her thesis. To enhance his professional area, he speaks, besides his mother tongue, English, French, and Portuguese.

Who is Marcela Coen outside of international relations?

I am from San José, Escazú. I consider myself friendly; I love to go out to eat and be with my family. I love food, and I love to travel. I like to learn about new cultures and new languages. I consider myself a proactive woman. I like to do sports activities, go to the gym, swim, play soccer, and go to the beach.

We know you have an extensive career; at 34 years old, what do you feel most satisfied with what you have achieved as a professional?

Since I started studying at university, I have always had an idea of what I wanted, and it is very satisfying to see today how my decisions helped me get to where I am now. I am proud of all those decisions, and I always have a phrase that says, "Persevere, and you will overcome." Everything I have achieved is because I have worked hard and had a clear direction.

"ONE REALIZES THAT THE WORLD IS AN OPEN BOOK AND THAT UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER IS BASED ON EMPATHY AND TOLERANCE."

WHO IS MARCELA?

Full name: Marcela Coen Moraga.

Position: Counselor at the Diplomatic Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland.

Institution: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship.

Occupation: International Relations.

Nationality: Costa Rican.

Lives in: Geneva, Switzerland.
Age: 34 years old.

Family: My father, Daniel Coen, is a civil engineer and is already retired, but he works in the world of motorsports; my mother, Katia Moraga, is the director of a library, and my brother Mauricio is an aerospace engineer, and lives in the United States.

Pets: I don't have one now.
Favorite food: Peruvian food.

Sports: I like swimming very much.

Hobbies: I like dancing, going to the gym, going out to eat, and traveling.

Favorite clothing item: Casual clothes.

What is your dream place? I love the Caribbean of Costa Rica.

If we are talking about challenging moments, what is the most demanding thing you have overcome in your professional journey?

Being away from home. Diplomacy becomes a lifestyle because you get used to making a life in another country for 4 or 5 years, return to Costa Rica, and then leave again. You must be resilience to deal with many situations, such as the illness of a family member, and you are thousands of miles away and cannot return quickly. Being away from home is difficult.

Where or when did your passion for international relations and diplomacy come from?

Since I was a little girl, when I was 11 years old, I used to go to international camps that brought together people from about 15 countries for a month. Since then, I have been attracted by sharing and learning about diverse cultures and different languages, and nations, their history, geography, and economy. One realizes that the world is an open book, and that empathy and tolerance are essential to understand each other. That is when I became interested in diplomacy.

Based on what you observe and your experience, how do you think Costa Rica is viewed internationally?

They see Costa Rica as a country that respects human rights and protects the environment. They also see us with a lot of respect for the issue of peace and for always building in favor of disarmament. Not having an army and respecting democracy is another issue they always admire about our country worldwide.

You have participated in diplomatic missions. What work does such a mission entail in United Nations offices?

We are now elected as members of the Human Rights Council for 2023 - 2025, so this is the bulk of the mission. It is up to us to negotiate resolutions and raise our voices for the human rights of all people. We also work with different international organizations, such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and other migration and disarmament issues. Geneva is home to several international organizations' headquarters, and the office's day-to-day work is very varied.

You like to write opinion articles about your work on the digital page Delfino.cr. For what purpose did you write the articles?

When I was in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, one of my positions was Candidacy Officer. I wanted to let people know how important it is for a country to have certain international positions and be in that spectrum. Those articles I wrote were to inform about some candidacies that we were reaching and are tricky to achieve for Costa Rica.

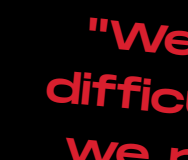
As you mentioned, the work team you are part of managed to get Costa Rica elected by the United Nations General Assembly to the Human Rights Council for 2023 - 2025. What challenges and possibilities must you transcend as a country in this position?

The challenge is always to maintain the standard we have had for so many years as a country. That foreign policy of the State that we have managed to keep for a long time must be sustained to continue its continuity in many areas, such as freedom of the press, education, and human development, among others.


What role does women's leadership currently play in international politics?

It is quite important and relevant. Historically, politics and diplomacy have been careers exercised by men, and now that women have this space and continue to fight for more opportunities in high political decision-making spheres, it is essential to break with gender inequality and stereotypes. We have a chance, and as new generations, we also want to open the way for other women who come after us.

And... How far along that road did you mention? There is still a long way to go, but we are all breaking new ground for others. It is essential to be clear that this is not only a women's issue but that men must contribute by breaking that masculinity mentality. Women are there to make decisions and make a difference.



"We are living in difficult times, but we must always bet on diplomacy and the multilateral arena to resolve differences with others."





Professionally, what is your biggest dream?

My greatest aspiration is to become an ambassador for Costa Rica. That would be a great honor to represent the country at that high level. I would also like to work in a leadership or management position in an international organization.

What would you like to express to those women building their great desires and goals, both personally and professionally?

They should not give up; they should continue and take control of their lives because one is the only one responsible for the path they forge in their professional life. They should also study hard because now there are so many tools and opportunities for training that we should take advantage of them. We are competitive, and they should always maintain that motivation. They should rely a lot on their family and friends.

**Let's
ROCK**

One word to describe yourself:

Determined.

Favorite movie: A Good Year.

A song: La tierra del olvido by Carlos Vives.

Car or subway? Subway.

What superpower would you like to have? Teletransportation.

Favorite quote? Persevere, and you will win.

The best advice you ever got? Do not do good things that seem wrong.

Who do you admire? My parents.

What do you value the most in people? Empathy and respect.

One Costa Rican food you miss: Tortillas with cheese, carne mechada, and pejibayes.

Who is your favorite person in the world? My grandmother, Yeye.

What are you afraid of? Death.

A natural soft drink: Cas.

Last book you read: "Casada con una leyenda" by Henrietta Boggs.



PDA

