

THE DIVERSITY ISSUE

# ITACONLINE



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## Striking a balance at the top



Karen Wensley  
Former partner of Ernst &  
Young and past ITAC board  
member

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ITAC's study of gender diversity at the board level of Canadian ICT companies made one thing very clear: There is almost unanimous agreement among those surveyed that more women should be in the boardroom, and that putting them there would result in better decision making.

[Read the full article](#)

### **in Italics**

#### **The dividends of diversity**

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Looking back over the decades since the dawn of the era of women's liberation, it is easy to become despondent over the slow progress of women in the research lab, in the C-suite, and on boards of directors. But despondency does not breed progress; only a steady focus on forward movement can accomplish that...

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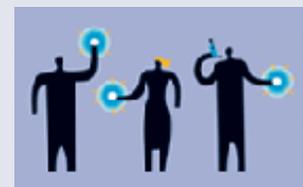
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## Mandy Shapansky urges authenticity, humour for future women leaders



Mandy Shapansky  
President and Chief Executive  
Officer of Xerox Canada

“Be confident and fearless,” was just one piece of advice Xerox Canada CEO Mandy Shapansky shared with a sold-out room of more than 100 women (and four courageous men) on September 19 in downtown Toronto.

Mandy was the final speaker in a four-part series co-hosted by ITAC and CWC that gives top female leaders a platform to share insights and advice with women striving to succeed in the corporate world. The series wrapped up in Toronto after earlier and equally compelling events in Montreal and Vancouver.

[Read the full article](#)

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## Changing models



Dr. Eleni Stroulia  
University of Alberta

One large company (IBM), plus passionate student-researchers, and funding from NSERC equals? A winning equation.

Four years ago, IBM funded its first NSERC Industrial Research Chair (IRC). Today, this collaboration is producing state-of-the-art research and solid long-term benefits. As IBM’s University Relation’s Manager Stephen Perelgut explains: “Our partnership yields concepts and sometimes even proposals for improvements that can influence future product releases.”

[Read the full article](#)

## **The dividends of diversity**

It seems anachronistic, but in 2013 we are still waiting for true balance in positions of influence and direction setting.

Looking back over the decades since the dawn of the era of women's liberation, it is easy to become despondent over the slow progress of women in the research lab, in the C-suite, and on boards of directors. But despondency does not breed progress; only a steady focus on forward movement can accomplish that.

This issue presents sage advice from two successful women—Xerox Canada CEO Mandy Shapansky and Dr. Eleni Stroulia, NSERC Industrial Research Chair at the University of Alberta—and an overview of ITAC's groundbreaking study of gender diversity on the boards of directors of Canada's ICT companies.

Mandy Shapansky counsels authenticity and humour, while Eleni Stroulia hopes that young women can overcome the “self-fulfilling prophesy” of the failure of women to step into exciting research leadership roles. ITAC's focus on the boardrooms of Canada's ICT sector highlights the scope of the challenge. As author Karen Wensley illustrates, Canada is falling behind other industrialized economies in terms of the percentage of women on boards of directors.

The good news is that Canadian ICT companies are on par with other companies when it comes to diversity in the boardroom. From that position, they hold the potential to take a leadership role in introducing more women at the top and serving as an example for other sectors. The survey itself sets one firm example: the solid conclusion that more women should be in the boardroom, and that putting them there would result in better decision making.

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# Striking a balance at the top



Karen Wensley  
Former partner of Ernst & Young and past ITAC  
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ITAC's study of gender diversity at the board level of Canadian ICT companies made one thing very clear: There is almost unanimous agreement among those surveyed that more women should be in the boardroom, and that putting them there would result in better decision making.

But almost all of those interviewed also place a low priority on recruiting more women to the boards in which they are involved.

Yet, the study, written by Karen Wensley—a former partner of Ernst & Young and past ITAC board member—illustrates that Canada's largest public ICT companies have about the same percentage of female directors as other types of corporations. The boards of the 10 largest Canadian ICT companies are 16.5 percent female, compared with an average of 17 percent for larger Canadian companies. Companies in the financial sector beat the average (for example, Canada's five largest banks have an average of 29 percent female board membership), while those in the resource sector lag.

Wensley, who is the author of *The Power of Personal Branding for Career Success*, makes the point that, "The academic literature is clear—more diverse groups make better

decisions."

Further, she notes that, "The corporate sector has begun to buy into the theory," citing a 2011 survey by the Canadian Institute of Corporate Directors.

But Canada is beginning to fall behind. Wensley cites a TD Economics report that shows us slipping to ninth place among industrialized economies in terms of the percentage of women on boards of directors.

A major shift among ICT companies is needed, she concludes, noting that Canada's large banks achieved their numbers by "(changing) the expectations, such that it would now be embarrassing for the CEO if their bank did not have at least four women board members. Large ICT companies have not, in general, embraced that goal."

The study examines two ICT companies—Softchoice and OpenText—that have been leaders in diversifying their boards. The former says that greater board diversity has set a tone for the entire company; the latter, which has the best male/female ratio of any large Canadian ICT company, reports that its gender balance has helped it recruit better talent throughout the organization.

Among the 20-plus ICT stakeholders she spoke to she found a range of perspectives. One result was clear: The size and evolutionary stage of companies play large roles in the number of female directors. Smaller ICT companies face a number of challenges, which make it almost inevitable that board gender diversity becomes a low priority.

It is therefore important that larger companies set an example, and it is essential that women step into board roles to serve as models for younger women who are at developmental career stages.

Wensley says that everyone in ICT leadership positions, as well as industry associations, government, regulators, and aspiring female board members themselves have roles to play in changing the status quo.

She notes that it is important that board diversity not be considered in isolation. She concludes: “All of the components— young women choosing careers in ICT, corporations developing and championing their women, and getting women into the executive suite— will provide a pipeline of tomorrow’s women directors.”

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# Mandy Shapansky urges authenticity, humour for future women leaders



Mandy Shapansky  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Xerox Canada

“Be confident and fearless,” was just one piece of advice Xerox Canada CEO Mandy Shapansky shared with a sold-out room of more than 100 women (and four courageous men) on September 19 in downtown Toronto.

Mandy was the final speaker in a four-part series co-hosted by ITAC and CWC that gives top female leaders a platform to share insights and advice with women striving to succeed in the corporate world. The series wrapped up in Toronto after earlier and equally compelling events in Montreal and Vancouver.

She revealed her own penchant for risky career choices during her intimate and interactive conversation, which was moderated by colleague, Jim Muzyka, senior vice-president of Xerox Services. Declining the fast-track route to her current position, taking two lengthy mid-career sabbaticals, and showing an unwillingness to sacrifice her family (four children and an equally busy entrepreneurial husband) for personal success, are just some of the steps along Mandy’s atypical path to lead one of the world’s major information services companies.

When asked about the challenges facing female leaders in today’s workplace, she replied: “Many of the issues commonly considered ‘women’s issues’ are actually men’s issues as well, and the qualities that make great female leaders (which used to be referred to as ‘soft skills’), also make great male leaders.

She went on to urge women to embrace their own unique and authentic leadership styles rather than conform to an idea of what a leader should be and also to “use humour” as appropriate to get gender differences out into the open.

A diversity champion in his own right, Jim, who is currently the chair of ITAC and former ITAC diversity committee chair, urged the audience to invite more men into the conversation by framing diversity as a business imperative. “Men are more likely to need to buy into the business case,” he said.

Both leaders agreed on the critical importance of sponsorship and mentorship of emerging female leaders in today’s organizations. “There’s no room for ego,” Mandy argued, “Few things make me happier than to see a woman I personally coached rise as a leader in her own right.”

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# Changing models

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Dr. Eleni Stroulia  
University of Alberta

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*The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) partners with more than 2,400 companies, supporting researchers who collaborate with them to meet their R&D needs. For one researcher, it is also helping to increase diversity in a male-dominated field.*

One large company (IBM), plus passionate student-researchers, and funding from NSERC equals? A winning equation.

Four years ago, IBM funded its first NSERC Industrial Research Chair (IRC). Today, this collaboration is producing state-of-the-art research and solid long-term benefits. As IBM's University Relation's Manager Stephen Perelgut explains: "Our partnership yields concepts and sometimes even proposals for improvements that can influence future product releases."

He adds that funding the IRC made good business sense for IBM. "We've always found value in supporting different projects; it just made sense to support the full line of research rather than 'cherry pick' one project."

Chairholder Dr. Eleni Stroulia at the University of Alberta is equally excited by the potential outcomes for her students, science, and Canadians. Despite it being a male-dominated world, she loves her career choice. Unfortunately, diversity in

IT is still elusive.

"My perspective is that it's getting worse," she says. "Fewer women are in my courses. We need to encourage women to come in and not leave."

What can businesses/learning institutions do to make things better? Eleni says the solution lies in being more active in changing models. "It's a self-fulfilling prophecy; if no women are there, no women will come."

Two female students are currently in her lab and she hopes others will see IT as an interesting career option once word gets out about the range of exciting projects with 'real-world' applications. One current project involves development of a new mobile app for personal diabetes management along with a general product line for similar self-management applications.

IBM benefits from the partnership in many ways. As Stephen says: "We benefit from a better understanding of the research team working on the project. Some of them will be the highly sought after 'top talent' and we'll try to hire as many as possible. Others will continue in academic careers and thus become future partners (and creators of top talent)."

Another huge benefit is knowledge transfer. Students gain access to IBM's vast resources; the company

gets a fresh perspective. “Having her students work directly with our R&D teams results in an osmotic transfer of knowledge which is effective.”

Industry-academia collaboration equals positive results. Eleni summarized it best: “This IRC initiative truly is more than the sum of its parts.”

You can find out more about NSERC’s suite of granting opportunities to put researchers to work for your organization at: [nsercpartnerships.ca](http://nsercpartnerships.ca), or by contacting the organization: [rpp@nserc-crsng.gc.ca](mailto:rpp@nserc-crsng.gc.ca) or 855-275-2861.

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# ITAC Events

October 15 (evening) - 16	Joint ITAC Executive Forum and CMC Symposium, Gatineau
October 31	Marketing Roundtable, Toronto
November 5	Executive Briefing, Ottawa
November 13	CCIO Event, Toronto
November 27	Ingenious Awards Gala, Toronto
January 14, 2014	Outlook Conference, Ottawa
January 21, 2014	Ontario Annual Reception, Toronto

# ITAC Committees and Forums

October 8	Ontario PSBC, Toronto
October 17	HR Forum, Hosted by CGI
October 29	Federal PSBC, Ottawa
November 20	HR Forum, Toronto
November 26	Federal PSBC, Ottawa
December 10	Cyber Security Forum, Ottawa

**For a full list of events, and to register for ITAC events, visit [itac.ca](http://itac.ca)**

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# ITAC News

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## [Registration Open for Strong Program at Executive Forum in Microsystems/CMC Microsystem Symposium](#)

In 2002, ITAC joined forces with the Strategic Microelectronics Consortium to serve the microelectronics and microsystems industry in Canada within the framework of ITAC. Since that time, we have been dedicated to bringing the microsystems industry together to discuss technical, business and public policy issues through a number of events and forums. The keystone event in our calendar is the annual Executive Forum in Microsystems. For several years now we have presented this jointly with CMC's Microsystems Symposium. This collaboration has produced the principal gathering for the microsystems industry in Canada. This year we have assembled a strong program of speakers and produced a superb opportunity for networking, learning, business development and engaging with the next generation of talented students building their careers in microsystems. The full program is [here](#)...

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## [Celebrate Canadian Innovation at the Ingenious Awards Gala](#)

It's the night when Canada's ICT sector gathers to celebrate the best and brightest in technology innovation. On Wednesday, November 27, you are invited to Toronto's Allstream Centre (105 Princes' Boulevard, Exhibition Place) to join your colleagues in honouring this...

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## [Ingenious Awards Nominations go to the Jury](#)

Sixty-four nominations for the Information Technology Association of Canada's (ITAC) second Ingenious Awards have been received and forwarded to the Ingenious judges. The nominations come from across Canada and represent a broad cross-section of organizations in the private, public, and...

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## [ITAC Comments on Inter-company Transfers](#)

Citizenship and Immigration Canada recently conducted a consultation on proposed changes to the rules and definitions surrounding inter-company transfers. ITAC believes that access to the global work force, through measures like ICTs is vital to the growth and competitiveness of...

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# Other News and Events

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### [Nulogy Wins Innovation Award](#)

ITAC member Nulogy has won the 2013 CATA Innovation Through Technology Award from the Canadian Aboriginal and Minority Supplier Council (CAMSC). The award is presented to an Aboriginal or minority-owned business for demonstrating innovation in a technology-based product or service...

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### [National RFP Targets Business Incubators and Accelerators](#)

The National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program has issued a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit applications for funding support from Canadian business incubators and accelerators. Announced jointly by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and Greg Rickford, Minister...

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### [Federal Government Reaffirms \\$50 Million For Job Creation](#)

On September 20, the federal government reaffirmed its \$50-million investment to help innovative businesses access the capital they need to expand. The investment is part of the government's Venture Capital Action Plan (VCAP). The VCAP includes a commitment by the...

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### [Federal CIOS Focus on Applications](#)

Canada's Chief Information Officer, Corinne Charette, says the Government needs to shift its focus from infrastructure to modernizing its applications. That was one of the themes at ITAC's Executive Briefing on September 10, featuring a panel discussion with Ms. Charette...