

CELEBRATING THE WOMEN LEADERS WITHIN MICHIGAN'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Q: Why is it important for Michigan Works! to have women in leadership positions?



Kristen Wenzel
**Interim CEO,
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A: Women make up over 50% of the population, so it's logical for there to be so many of us in leadership roles. I am fortunate to be in a position where my colleagues are strong leaders in their local area and in the Michigan Works! network. I learn from them all and appreciate the varied perspectives they bring to the conversation. We make a strong voice for advocacy for our regions and our state.

Q: Throughout your career, have you ever been so discouraged that you wanted to give up? How would you encourage other women not to give up?

A: I think it's natural to have ups and downs in one's career. I've had plenty of learning opportunities along the way. The important thing is what you do with these learning lessons. Sometimes they make you pause, reflect, and reevaluate, which may lead you in a different direction. That's absolutely ok. In my career, I've held a variety of leadership roles. I learned from each of them, and from the people that I've met along the journey. I think, collectively, these experiences and people have helped me learn and grow as a person and a leader.

Q: What advice do you have for young women in high school preparing to graduate?

A: I would say to believe in yourself and your capabilities. You can do anything you set your mind to. I would also advise them to not define themselves by the opinions of others. Learn who your people are and spend time with them. That human connection will help you navigate your journey far better than any technology that comes along.



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2

Q: What would you tell your 20-something self?

A: I would tell myself to trust your faith and listen to your inner self. If you take the time to do this, your stress will be much less.

Q: What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders?

A: I learned early in my career how to be a servant leader. It shaped my leadership style and has proven effective in my career progression. I would encourage young women that this leadership style doesn't make you weak. It makes you stronger. I support my team by providing them with the tools they need to be effective, a clear expectation for outcomes and then letting them loose. I am always available for questions and coaching, but I want them to learn as they go. It's a more powerful lesson that way.

Q: What do you think is the most significant barrier women in leadership face?

A: That's a loaded question! At the end of the day, I think the biggest barrier we face is our internal voice. When our internal voice is saying positive things, we are better equipped to face challenges with confidence.



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3

Q: Why is it important to celebrate Women's History Month?

A: Women today are in leadership positions because of the brave women who challenged the acceptable standards of their time. Learn about them and their sacrifice. It will motivate you to do the same.

Final Words:

Learn to be a lifelong learner. Look for opportunities for professional development. If you stop learning, you stop growing!