

# CAN'T WAIT FOR JANUARY

By Dawn Chafe



Generally speaking, I use my column to give you the inside scoop on the current issue. Not this time. Remember when I got myself in a bit of hot water back in March? We published a cover saluting entrepreneurs – and all five cover subjects were men. I somehow (!) didn't notice that fact during our planning sessions but as soon as I had the print edition in hand, the sexism of it hit me like a smack in the face. But that's not all: our publication date coincided with International Women's Day. Colour me red and call me stunned – I deserved it.

I apologized, and immediately pledged to make it right. Not only have we made a point of deliberately including women in every issue since, but we're dedicating our January 2017 edition to celebrating women in business.

I approached this issue with very ambitious goals in mind. I wanted it to be the smartest, most provocative and powerful issue we've ever produced. I wanted to do justice to women by celebrating their accomplishments while acknowledging their challenges. I wanted a magazine that includes stories of triumph (absolutely), but I also wanted an issue that respects women enough to point out what we get wrong – and offer solutions to help us get it right. Finally, I wanted an issue that would inspire people from all sides of the gender spectrum. In short, I wanted an issue that I will look back on as a professional highlight.

I knew I couldn't do it alone.

I recruited a crew of veritable super stars for my editorial advisory board: women who have made a career out of kicking butt and taking names. Women like Eleanor Beaton, career coach extraordinaire, whose column in this magazine was the first – and remains the only – column in any magazine in the region that specializes in professional development for women. And Lisa Drader-Murphy, entrepreneurial leader and eminent Canadian fashion designer. And award-winning communications consultants Caron Hawo and Lynn Hammond; three-time Top 50 CEO Jessie Inman; former deputy premier of New Brunswick and independent businesswoman, Aldéa Landry; techpreneur and innovation mentor, Dana Parsons; chair of the Atlantic Chapter of the Women Presidents Organization Laurie Sinclair; and, five-time International Business Award winner Melanie Wildman. These amazing women have given generously of their time and expertise, inspiring me time and time again with their insights and resilience, their focus and accomplishments.

But you know what I enjoyed most about working with these women? It was the depth and diversity of their opinions. While they didn't always agree, these Type-A

personalities always respected each other's ideas. And ultimately, it was the points on which they differed that, I think, offered the richest fodder for editorial exploration.

Such as, you ask?

Such as the magazine equivalent of a streeter (stopping a person on the street for their opinion on a particular topic), asking random people whether they agree or disagree with mandated gender quotas for boards of directors and cabinet posts. ('Yes' or 'no' won't be satisfactory answers either; they'll have to explain 'why' they think that way.)

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We're also digging into the business case for having women in leadership roles, looking for answers to the all-important question for any business: is there numeric proof that being inclusive delivers hard returns to your bottom line?

But that's not all – not by a long shot. We'll identify regional companies that are doing an exceptional job of fostering woman-friendly workplace cultures, while examining the policies and practices that enable these progressive attitudes.

And we'll speak to trailblazers – pioneering women who cleared the path. We'll ask them to share their personal journeys and talk about the sacrifices they made along the way.

Lastly, we'll engage some of Atlantic Canada's most successful women in candid conversation. We'll talk about the challenges they've faced as well as the strategies that helped them make it to the top.

The more I look at it, the more I know this is going to be a landmark issue, not just for us but for the entire region. I can't wait to share it with you.

Dawn Chafe started with *Atlantic Business Magazine* as a freelancer 21 years ago, becoming editor in 1998.

#### FEEDBACK

✉ [dchafe@atlanticbusinessmagazine.com](mailto:dchafe@atlanticbusinessmagazine.com)

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