

SHE'S IN A MOOD

BEING IN A RARE mellow mood, you aren't going to get a rant from me this time. Instead, I'm just going to offer a series of thoughts and questions for you to ponder. Some are my pre-emptive answers to questions I typically get about this particular issue; others are a symptom of my demi-centenary year and impending curmudgeon status (yeah, that's a fancy way of saying I'll be 50 in a few months' time).

Why isn't my CEO on the Top 50 list? Answering a question with a question: did you submit a nomination? For the record, nominations are open to the public. In fact, we encourage them. You should actually submit one right now on our website. It only takes five minutes or so—depending on how fast you can type in your nominee's name, company, phone number and email address. Bonus points if you include a one-liner saying why you think they deserve it.

Is it worth my while? In other words, you'd like to know the eligibility criteria before you sacrifice your fingers to keyboard. Is your nominee out before they're in? Here's the inside scoop: eligible nominees should lead a company or organization that's headquartered in Atlantic Canada. Yes, it can be the regional division of a larger national or international organization—provided the regional team leader has significant decision-making autonomy.

Does size matter? Yes—and no. Top 50 CEOs typically lead organizations making at least \$5 million in revenue per year, but it's not a hard rule. Exceptions can and will be made for nominees who excel in other ways.

How do you pick the winners? Well, I don't personally pick 'em (and just between us, I'm glad I don't). No, that responsibility lies entirely with the judges. Every year, I prey on the unsuspecting members of the Top 50 CEO Hall of Fame (five-time award winners) until I get a half-dozen of them to give up many, many, many hours of their time to evaluate the nominees. There are five judging areas: overall leadership assessment; organization growth over a three-year period; ability to manage challenging situations; ability to drive innovation; and, charitable activity. Just kidding! No, not about the level of difficulty and attention to detail in picking



DAWN CHAFE

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the winners, but about me having to prey on the Hall of Famers. These people take their judging seriously: if time and schedules permit, they're happy to sign on as volunteers.

Show up or put up Warning: this is curmudgeon-me speaking. Last year, we hosted our first regional thought leadership workshop series. It was something we'd been told was desperately needed: a venue for Atlantic Canadians to come together and brainstorm innovative solutions to regional economic growth. So we organized events in all four Atlantic provinces, recruiting keynotes and panelists to stimulate debate. There were some really great discussions, which you probably read about in our January issue (if you missed it at the time, it's archived on our website fyi). It went so well that we're doing it again. If you're ready to #thinkBIG, do yourself a favour and register online. If you don't show up and speak up, you can't expect to be heard. Just saying.

What happens when diversity doesn't show up? When we published our January 2017 cover, showcasing the people who made the time to show up to one of last September's #thinkBIG events, certain observers were quick to point out our lack of diversity. We know. It's something we tried very hard to avoid. While registration was wide open to the public, and promoted via a number of channels, I personally invited representatives of as many different demographic groups as I could think of in an effort to have as many different viewpoints as possible represented. I sent notices to youth groups, seniors, persons with disabilities, people of colour, Indigenous communities, and organizations for new Canadians—there were few responses and even fewer attendees. If you belong to any of those groups, please make the time to attend. We really do want you there.

Über and Airbnb and the shrinking middle class—oh my! Argh. I've run out of space. Plus I think this actually does deserve a rant. Guess I'll save this one for next issue...

Dawn Chafe started with *Atlantic Business Magazine* as a freelancer 23 years ago, becoming editor in 1998.

FEEDBACK

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