



Rangapriya (Priya) Kannan

Dean & Professor, Lucas College of Business, San Jose State University

What inspires you?
What inspires me every day is the transformative power of education.

Career advice you give to others?
Do what energizes your spirit and pursue excellence — success will follow.

What book did you last finish?
The Last Queen: A Novel of Courage and Resistance by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.



Laura Kreuger-Najera

Executive Director, Asset Locale

Best advice you have received?
Network: approach networking as a way to connect, uplift and add value — surround yourself with people who inspire, support and believe in you, and become a master at doing the same for others.

Biggest thing holding women back in leadership?
The biggest thing holding back women in leadership, which they have control over, is a lack of confidence, not in their ability, but in courageously taking risks and betting on themselves.



Joanie Kriens

Co-Founder & President, 1440 Multiversity

Best advice you have received?
Don't make assumptions.

What keeps you up at night?
Our very large house cat that insists on sleeping on top of me, and at times the state of our country!

What book did you last finish?
The Yellow Wife, by Sadeqa Johnson.



Nita Laad

Founder and CEO, Nexia

Best advice you have received?
Everything is possible with focus and discipline.

Surprising fact about you?
I am a computer engineer and trained in Indian classical dance.

Career advice you give to others?
Bet on yourself. Odds of success are 50% if you try and 0% if you don't.



Natalie Le

Growth & Development Director, Northwestern Mutual San Jose

Best advice you have received?
Confidence is when you know who you are, own who you're not and choose to embrace all of it.

First job?
I worked at a boba shop!

What book did you last finish?
Hidden Potential, by Adam Grant.



Jessica Lewis

Partner, WilmerHale

Career advice you give to others?
Take your time and really focus on building your skills — you can take them anywhere.

First job?
My first and hardest job was as a busser and waitress at our family restaurant — talk about stress!

What keeps you up at night?
Two cuties named Griffin and Genevieve.



Chin Lin

President, CD and H International LLC

Best advice you have received?
When you think [it] is [the] right thing to do, never give up.

Career advice you give to others?
Keep going! Never give up.

What keeps you up at night?
When I have exciting things to do.



Karla Lomax

Senior Public Affairs Director, Kaiser Permanente

What inspires you?
My husband and my three girls and my community.

Surprising fact about you?
The first vehicle I drove was a motorcycle.

Biggest thing holding women back in leadership?
Fewer mentors and sponsors who can advocate for career advancement and share opportunities.

A woman in leadership you admire?
Melinda Gates for her contributions to global health, gender equality and education.



Shawna Lucey

CEO, Opera San Jose

What inspires you?
The wild diversity of talent and complete tenacity of the team needed to put on opera.

Surprising fact about you?
I lived in Moscow, Russia, for 5 years.

Career advice you give to others?
Holding yourself accountable is key to growth and, therefore, success.

What keeps you up at night?
Nuclear weapon proliferation.

What book did you last finish?
Anna in the Tropics, a play by Nilo Cruz.



Ritu Mangla

CEO, Infostride Inc.

Best advice you have received?
Move with people who fuel your future, not your comfort zone.

Surprising fact about you?
I actually find my best ideas while painting, it's where I reconnect with my myself — my happy place.

What keeps you up at night?
The desire to build a legacy my kids — especially my daughter — can be proud of. I want her to see that strength, kindness and purpose can go hand in hand, and that she can lead without limits.