



# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY™

*2026-2027 Program Syllabus*



**Lacy Schoen**

Founder, Women Rising Leadership Academy  
President/CEO, Brea Chamber of Commerce

## Elevating Women in the Workforce





# A LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE DESIGNED FOR YOUR ADVANCEMENT

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## MISSION

To explore the reasons for the under representation of women in top leadership positions, and to provide proven and actionable strategies to help women overcome the internal and external barriers they are likely to face to their advancement.

## APPROACH

Built on research and science, and focused on the realities of women's real-world experiences in the workforce.

WRLA is presented by subject matter experts, providing leadership development strategies proven to support career advancement for women.

## HISTORY

For over 11 years, this program has empowered more than 1,500 women across diverse backgrounds and industries to distinguish themselves as leaders, advocate for their value, and achieve meaningful advancement in their careers and businesses. **Participants consistently gain the confidence, clarity, and capability to increase their income, expand their influence, and step into elevated levels of success.** The program originated at California State University Fullerton, in the College of Business and Economics and was presented primarily to students. The program was launched through the Brea Chamber of Commerce in 2022 to working women.



# BREAKING BARRIERS. BUILDING LEADERS.



## Creating Opportunities for Women to Lead

WRLA was created to help women build confidence, expand their leadership presence, and step boldly into opportunities for advancement and influence.

## Barriers That Continue to Impact Women's Advancement

- Limited access to leadership representation and advancement opportunities
- The pressure many women feel to constantly prove their value
- Workplace dynamics that can impact confidence, visibility, and advancement



# THE WRLA EXPERIENCE

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## IMMERSIVE TRAINING ACADEMY

**Workshops are based on research and science!**

- 8-intensive 3-hour workshops, each focused on overcoming a specific barrier to advancement
- Presented monthly from September through April

## PROFESSIONAL COACHING

- Graduates receive continued support through access to professional coaching and mentorship

## BONUS SESSIONS

- Provides additional tools and ongoing skill-building resources necessary for career advancement
- Additional sessions are customized to cohort needs

## WRLA Women Lead

- Each Academy graduate has the opportunity to keep their momentum and mentorship going by joining Women Lead, an ongoing leadership program that fosters skill mastery after the Academy is over
- Access to Business Leaders Connect Networking Mixer to connect with business professionals and other business and community programs



# HOW WE'RE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER WOMEN'S PROGRAMS



| Traditional University Women's Leadership Programs | Women Rising Leadership Academy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| \$6,000+ per participant                           | <b>\$497 tuition</b><br><b>\$200 discount per participant for employees of our funders</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Generic leadership curriculum                      | <b>Designed uniquely on helping women overcome the internal and external barriers they are likely to face to their advancement, specifically tailored to the realities women face today in the workforce</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Limited post-program support                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Coaching eligibility included</b></li><li>• <b>Continued growth through our post-graduation program, Women Lead:</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Ongoing connection with women leaders and local businesses</li><li>◦ Bi-monthly lunch time workshops (LIVE Zoom Sessions)</li><li>◦ Reinforces and expands foundational leadership strategies</li><li>◦ Supportive community focused on long-term development</li></ul></li></ul> |
| Often inaccessible financially                     | <b>Supported by community funders allowing for low tuition and scholarships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |



# THE WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY EXPERIENCE

## Why WRLA Stands Apart

*A leadership experience intentionally designed for women's real-world growth and advancement*



### **Address the Real Barriers Women Face in the Workforce**

*Tackling the internal and external barriers  
impacting women's confidence and advancement*



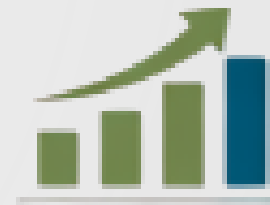
### **Research & Science-Based Curriculum**

*Proven strategies grounded in real-world  
application*



### **Practical Skills for Real Results**

*Workshops focused on actionable tools for leadership  
success.*



### **Proven, Measurable Impact**

*Graduates are getting promoted and contributing at  
higher levels in their workplaces*

*Empowering women to lead with confidence and influence in a community of growth-minded women*



# WORKSHOP DATES



| Session Dates: | Workshop:                                       |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Oct 9, 2026    | The Status of Women in the Workforce©           |
| Nov 13, 2026   | Insights from Executive Women©                  |
| Dec 11, 2026   | Developing Executive Presence©                  |
| Jan 8, 2027    | Salary Negotiation for Women©                   |
| Feb 12, 2027   | Mastering Courageous Conversations©             |
| Mar 12, 2027   | Navigating Gender Culture at Work©              |
| Apr 16, 2027   | How to Increase Your Influence©                 |
| May 14, 2027   | Workforce Advantage:<br>Becoming an "A-Player"© |



# HEAR WHAT WOMEN ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ACADEMY



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*“The Women Rising Leadership Academy changed my life. I was stuck in an entry level position for 3 years. After the Academy, I applied what I learned and I’m now the District Director for Assemblyman Phillip Chen. There is nothing like the Academy out there. I want every woman to go through this program.”*

**Paulette Maskarino**

**District Director, Assemblyman Phillip Chen**

*“I have worked for the City of Brea for the last 12 years, and I had never presented at a City Council study session. Through WRLA, I was able to elevate to put my talents out there. Last night, for the first time, I presented to City Council and did a great job. I could just hear my boss in the background clapping. I could not have made this leap without the confidence I build in WRLA.”*

**Kristin Steyerman**

**Supervisor, Special Events, City of Brea**

*“During my time in WRLA, my self-confidence and career has flourished. I have learned how to set leadership goals with tangible strategies on how to achieve them. The opportunity to connect with other working women as we navigate the stepping stones to our career advancement is priceless. I was able to connect with established women executives in STEM, education, business and local government. These connections and the tools and strategies I learned will benefit me throughout my lifetime.”*

**Halley McIntire**

**Office Manager, Academy 831 Dance Studio**

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# HEAR WHAT EMPLOYERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ACADEMY



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*“Sierra has taken more initiative to elevate her value to our company since she’s been in WRLA. She has taken work off of my plate, expanding my bandwidth. I’m seeing her future as a leader so much more clearly now. Thank you to whoever has made WRLA possible. It’s not only elevating Sierra’s career, but it has elevated our company, our capacity, and our profitability.”*

**Ray Waters**

**Account Director, NVE Experience Agency**

*“Halley came back after one workshop and sat me down to ask what my top 3 priorities were and how she can help me meet them. I was pleasantly taken aback. Since participating in WRLA, I see Halley as a leader in my company. I now trust her with projects and running the company in my absence. We all, including our customers, have benefited greatly from Halley’s participation in WRLA.”*

**Krista Casey**

**Owner, Academy 831 Dance Studio**

*“I had three employees in WRLA last year. I started noticing upgrades in their performance after the first 2 sessions. The excitement the women felt translated to their work environment here at the city. Prior to the Academy, one participant in particular was very reserved in her speech and interactions. After the Academy, she seemed to find her voice. She has gained tremendous credibility by leading from her strengths, rather than trying to emulate others’ leadership style.”*

**Jason Killebrew**

**Director Community Development, City of Brea**

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# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

## Workshop 1 The Status of Women in the Workforce©



Many women enter the workplace without a clear understanding of the broader dynamics that can shape their experiences: **systemic barriers, opportunities, and dynamics that influence advancement.**

Participants explore how women have progressed in leadership, the challenges that still exist today, and the strategies, support systems, and resources available to help women navigate the workforce.

### Transformative Results

- A clearer understanding of the barriers and opportunities ahead
- Confidence in how to fully engage in and benefit from the Academy
- Awareness of how employers and the broader community are invested in their success
- A strong sense of motivation and possibility for what they can achieve

Participants leave inspired, informed, and ready to take ownership of their leadership journey—fully prepared to maximize the impact of their WRLA experience.



# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



## Workshop 2 Insights from Executive Women©



**Charlene Reynolds**  
Airport Director  
John Wayne Airport



**Brinda Leon**  
Superintendent  
Brea Olinda Unified School Dist



**Letitia (Tish) Berbaum**  
Founder & CEO  
Blue Sands Wealth



**Bonni Pomush**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Working Wardrobes



**Claudia Keller**  
President & CEO,  
Second Harvest Food Bank

## The Power of Representation

Women often struggle to see a clear path to leadership because few have **access to relatable examples of women who have successfully navigated the barriers** they themselves face.

Participants learn from role models what is possible and attainable for them.

## Transformative Results

- Greater confidence in their ability to navigate leadership challenges
- Increased clarity around practical pathways to advancement
- A stronger belief that executive leadership is both attainable and achievable
- Expanded perspective through real-world examples of resilience and success

Participants begin to reframe their perspective—not as individuals limited by barriers, but as professionals capable of navigating and rising beyond them.



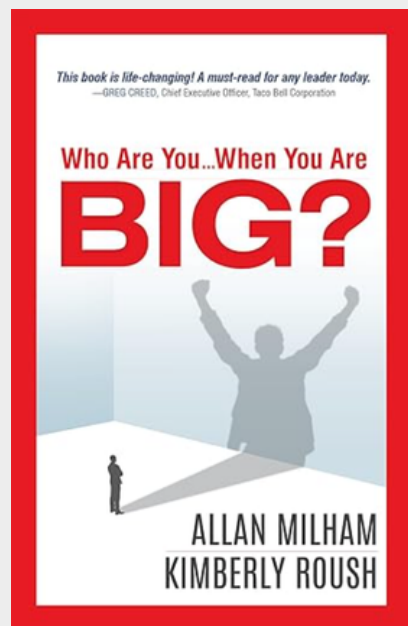
# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



## Workshop 3 Developing Executive Presence©



**Kimberly Rousch**  
Executive Coach,  
All-Star Executive Coaching



## Building Confidence & Authentic Leadership

Many women in the workplace **struggle with confidence and feel pressure to conform to others' style of leadership.** Without the opportunity to define their own approach, they may hold back or limit their potential.

Participants experience a shift from uncertainty to clarity about who they are as leaders and how they want to show up.

## Transformative Results

- Increased confidence in their voice and leadership presence
- A clearer definition of success aligned with their values
- The ability to lead authentically, rather than conforming to a one-size-fits-all leadership mold.
- Greater readiness to step into opportunities with composure and credibility

Participants become better equipped to engage their full leadership capability with the confidence and presence needed to lead effectively.





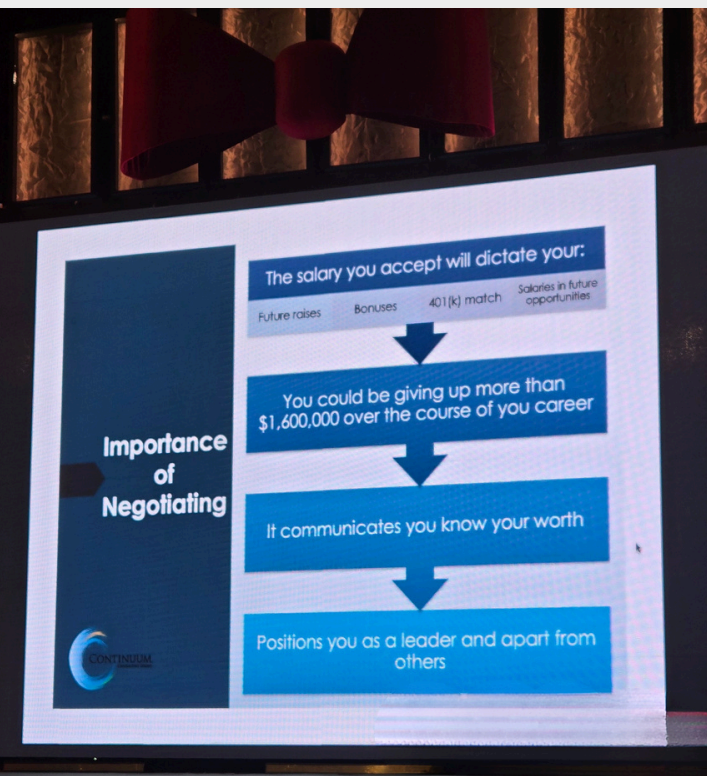
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## Workshop 4 Salary Negotiation for Women©



**Katerina Hencova**  
Financial Planner,  
Continuum Consulting Group



## Advancing Equity Through Compensation & Negotiation

Many women don't fully understand what can be negotiated—nor how to advocate for their value. As a result, they may accept less than they deserve, reinforcing pay inequities that impact both financial security and confidence. The principles taught also apply to business owners charging what they are worth.

In this workshop, participants gain the clarity and confidence to approach compensation conversations differently—handling them as opportunities rather than barriers.

## Transformative Results

- Greater confidence in advocating for their value
- An understanding of the importance of equitable compensation
- The ability to clearly articulate their contributions through benchmarking similar positions
- Increased readiness to negotiate with professionalism

Participants leave excited to pursue opportunities that reflect their true value—**strengthening their financial future and sense of professional confidence.** They gain valuable skills to negotiate effectively on behalf of their employers, and themselves adding to their value.



# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



## Leading Through Difficult Conversations

Many women hesitate to address challenges in the workplace due to fear of being perceived negatively or lacking the tools to initiate difficult conversations. As a result, issues may go unaddressed, limiting both individual effectiveness and team performance.

In this workshop, **participants learn to approach difficult conversations with confidence and clarity**—seeing them not as risks, but as opportunities to lead, build trust, and create solutions.

## Transformative Results

- Increased courage to initiate and navigate difficult conversations
- A deeper understanding of how different individuals show up in the workplace
- The ability to meet others where they are and communicate more effectively
- Greater readiness to lead in challenging situations and contribute to positive change

Participants leave empowered to step into adversity with confidence—**equipped to address challenges directly and take an active role in improving workplace dynamics through strong, solution-focused leadership.**

## Workshop 5 - Mastering Courageous Conversations©



**Lauren Sweeney**  
Chief Growth & Impact Officer  
The Riviera Group



# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



## Workshop 6 Navigating Gender Culture at Work©



**Lacy Schoen**

Founder, Women Rising Leadership Academy  
President/CEO, Brea Chamber of Commerce

## Navigating Bias & Building Understanding

Women in the workplace often encounter unconscious bias and **cultural differences that can impact how their contributions are perceived**, leading to missed opportunities and causing them to be undervalued despite their capabilities.

In this workshop, participants gain awareness of these dynamics and **learn how to navigate them with confidence and intention.**

## Transformative Results

- A stronger understanding of bias and how to address it
- Increased ability to bridge differences in communication and leadership styles
- Greater confidence in creating opportunities for understanding
- Practical approaches to elevating visibility and value

Participants leave better equipped to navigate workplace dynamics and leave with clear strategies to lead through bias and gender difference challenges.





# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



## Workshop 7 How to Increase Your Influence©



**Lacy Schoen**

Founder, Women Rising Leadership Academy  
President/CEO, Brea Chamber of Commerce



## Building Influence & Strategic Relationships

Many women underestimate the role influence plays in leadership success. Without strong relationships or the tools to build them, their contributions may go unrecognized and their impact limited.

In this workshop, **participants gain a clearer understanding of influence as a core leadership capability**—one that enables them to build relationships, expand their visibility, and advance their goals.

## Transformative Results

- Greater confidence in leveraging their female strengths to build influence
- The ability to cultivate meaningful, strategic relationships with the right influencers
- Increased awareness of how to use influence effectively

Participants leave empowered, recognizing they can create opportunities and achieve their goals through intentional action and strategic relationships.



# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



## Workshop 8 - Part I Workforce Advantage: Becoming an "A-Player"©

Many organizations invest in talent development but struggle to **connect leadership mindset, habits and behaviors to business outcomes**. At the same time, emerging women leaders may not fully understand how their soft skills contribute to organizational success.

In this workshop, participants gain a clear understanding of how their mindset, habits and behaviors drive value—strengthening productivity, retention, performance and profits.



## Transformative Results

- A clearer understanding of their impact on organizational success
- Increased confidence in aligning their approach with their leadership and business goals
- The ability to position themselves as strategic contributors through soft skills

Participants leave with a stronger understanding of success factors and how to apply them —recognizing that how they align upward is a key driver of organizational success and economic impact.



# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

## Workshop 8 - Part II

### Commencement Speaker: Charlene Reynolds

The Women Rising Leadership Academy was honored to welcome **Charlene Reynolds**, Director of John Wayne Airport, as this year's Commencement Speaker—an accomplished leader whose career **exemplifies the growth, resilience, and leadership potential the Academy seeks to cultivate.**



With more than two decades of experience in aviation and public service, Charlene leads one of Orange County's most vital transportation hubs, overseeing strategy, operations, and innovation at John Wayne Airport.

As one of the few women—and among an even smaller number of women of color—to lead a major U.S. airport, her journey exemplifies the extraordinary impact of perseverance, vision, and authentic leadership.

In her address, Charlene reinforced a defining message of the Academy:

*“Leadership is not determined by title, but by the courage to step forward, challenge perceptions, and create opportunity.”*

***“Sometimes you have to take off your cape.”***

***— Charlene Reynolds***



**Charlene Reynolds**  
Director, John Wayne Airport  
**Commencement Speaker**

**Charlene's story provided a tangible example of what intentional leadership development can achieve.**

Participants left the program with renewed confidence, expanded perspective, and a clearer vision of their own leadership potential.



# WRLA ICF & CTA CERTIFIED COACHES



**Lee Anne Maki**



**Tara Norton**



**Nahid Casazza**



**Dr. Renee Christensen**



**Greta Boye**



**Elizabeth Olson**



**Karen Holmes**



**Lois Carson**



**Joanne Larson**



**Karen Gifford**



**Nancy Hauschildt**



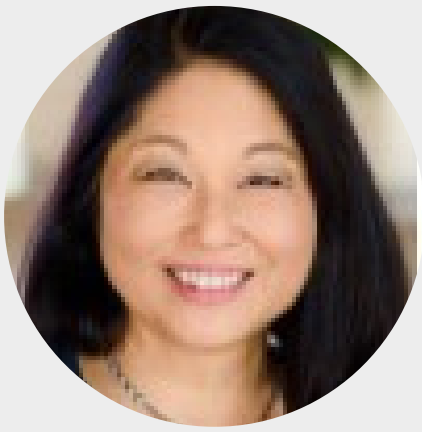
**Nanor Ohenesian**



**Paloma Gonzales**



**Maria Medina**



**Sarah Takehara**



**Anne Tammel**



**Alexa Fleur**



**Trixi Mendardt**



**Monica Horner**



**Lauren Sweeney**



**Colleen Hauk**



## **PARTICIPANT RESIDENCY**

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**62% Orange County**

**25% Los Angeles County**

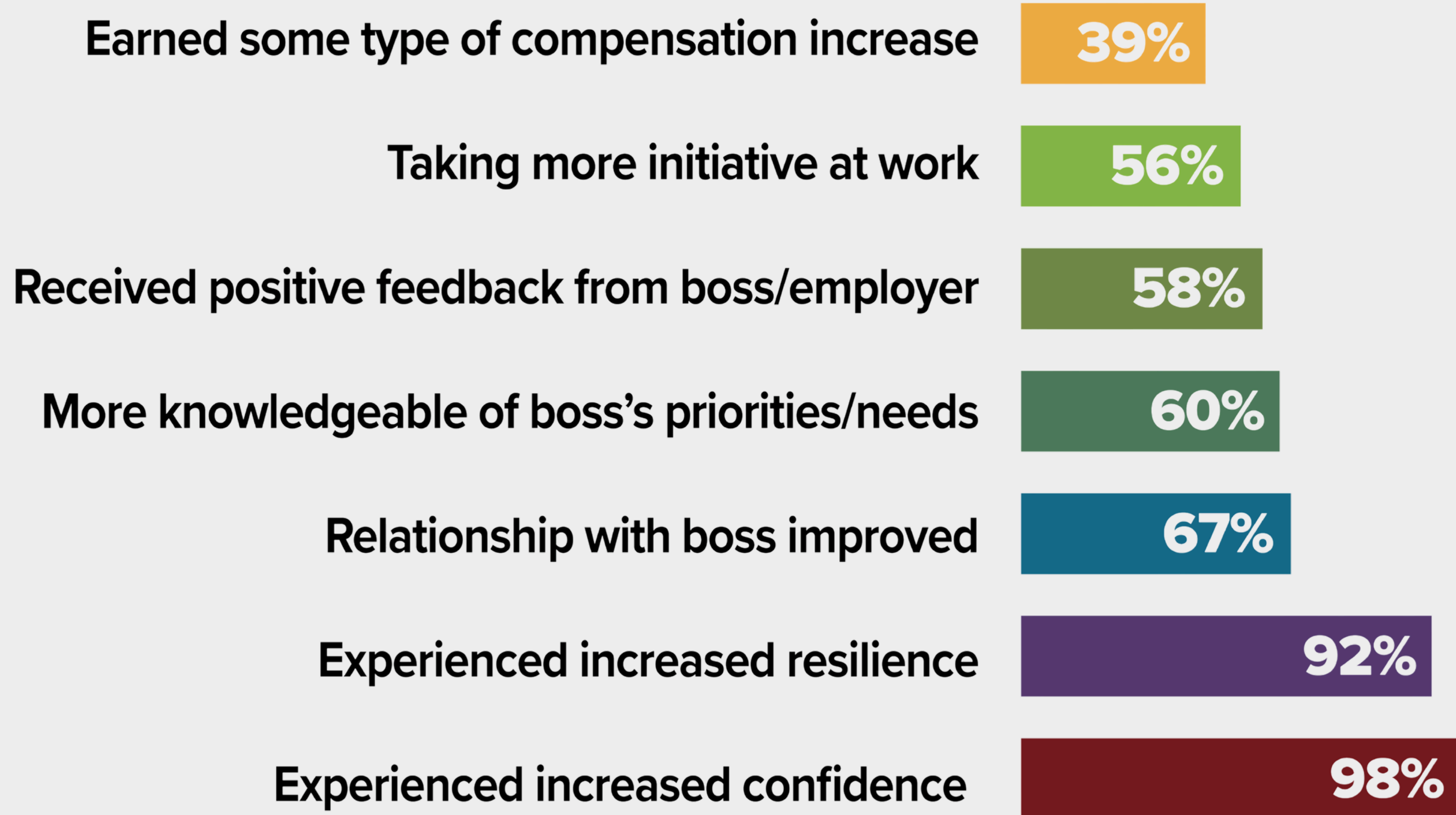
**6.5% Riverside County**

**6.5% San Bernardino County**

**Including participants all the way from  
San Diego County and Sacramento County!**



# **WRLA – YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS – PROVEN RESULTS**



# WRLA EMPLOYERS REPRESENTED



A Pinups Secret  
**American Red Cross**

Amway  
Antioch University

Aprilrae.com

Be the Sunshine

Beyond Blindness

Brea City Lift

Blunt Wealth Services

**Chapman University**

Chase Suite Hotels

Chic Party Rentals

Childhood Drowning Prevention Foundation

**City of Brea**

**City of La Habra**

Cordova Media Group

**County of Orange - Supervisor Chaffee's office**

Coyote Hills Golf Course

Crown Capital Securities

Easterseals

Ensign Services

Farmers & Merchants Bank

Fast Signs

First Foundation, Inc.

Friar Tux

Glidwell

**Goodwill Orange Ccounty**

Habitat for Humanity

HdL

Healthcare Property Advisors

Hollis

House of Representatives

**In n Out Corporation**

Inspira Behavior

**La Habra Police Department**

Lander Chiropractic

Lewis Group of Companies

Life Touch Photography

Light & Life Christian Fellowship

Little Scholars Academy of California

M & R Jewelers

**Mercury Insurance**

Michelle's Apron

MVS Foundation

New Directions for Women

Newport Printing Solutions

**North Orange County ROP**

One Digital

**Orange Chamber of Commerce**

**Orange County Business Council**

Park Lane Jewelry

Purple Notary Signings

R Legacy Construction

Renee Jean Makeup & Skincare

RISE Advising Services

Rabby Films

**Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce**

**Segerstrom Center for the Arts**

**Southern California Gas Co**

State Fund

**Sully-Miller**

**Suzuki Motors**

Teachtaire Design

The Sisters of St. Joseph Orange

Vital Link

Western University

Winn Financial Management



FUNDERS



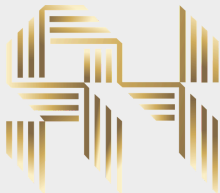
Argyros College of Business and Economics  
Leatherby Center for Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics



JOHN WAYNE AIRPORT  
ORANGE COUNTY



JUKEBOX



ADERS & HERRER  
YOUR PERSONAL INJURY | OUR PERSONAL MATTER



aa/r/r Atkinson, Andelson  
Loya, Ruud & Romo  
A Professional Law Corporation



PHILLIP CHEN  
59TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT



SULLY - MILLER  
CONTRACTING Co.  
A COLAS COMPANY

MERCURY  
INSURANCE  
WE ARE ONE TEAM



CSUF | COLLEGE OF  
Business  
and Economics



SUPERVISOR  
Doug Chaffee  
COUNTY OF ORANGE,  
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 4





# Women in Leadership Council



**Jill Dunn**



**Maggie Dunn**

**JUKEBOX**



**Dr Anastasia Lander**



**Jennifer Ta**



**Leticia (Tish) Berbaum**



**Jodean Hudson**



**Tammy Lawton**



**Tracey Aders**



**Dr. Lori Muse**



**Clarissa Serpas**



**Ann Smith**



**Dr. Cynthia West**

Author, Public Speaker



**Anna Sophia Servin**





# HEAR WHAT WOMEN ARE SAYING ABOUT THE ACADEMY



To watch this video go to:

<https://womenrisingleadershipacademy.com>





# WOMEN RISING LEADERSHIP ACADEMY™



**BREA**  
**CHAMBER**  
CATALYST. CONVENER. CHAMPION.