



**NEWS RELEASE
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**Report Released Today: Women Leaders in Insurance Face Major Challenges
Mentorship and More Support Needed to Encourage Female Leaders**

September 21, 2011, Toronto, Ontario – Women working in the insurance industry continue to fight challenges that affect their professional development, according to the Women in Insurance Leadership Insight Report, a new research study released today at the *Insurance Networking News* Women in Insurance Leadership Forum in National Harbor, Md. This follows a recent Conference Board of Canada study reporting women's advancement to senior management has come to a dead-halt since the 1980s. Potential Unlimited warns corporations that the number of women executives could be a lot higher if the right support was put into place for women leaders and rising stars.

One of the top reasons cited by the Women in Leadership Insight Report for women not making it or staying in the senior ranks is due to the lack of mentorship programs they receive from their employers.

"I work with women executives all the time in my WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP program who need more support," said Carey-Ann Oestreicher, Chief Engagement Officer, Potential Unlimited. "I have been a vice president in the insurance industry and I know there are a lot of one size fits all corporate initiatives out there and the reality is they are not meeting the needs of women executives. That is why I created my own program for women leaders to help companies offer women targeted one-on-one development and support, customized for their individual needs on an ongoing basis."

Potential Unlimited's Top Tips for Female Leaders and High Potentials:

1. Be true to yourself. Trying to be somebody you are not will not get you ahead in the long term.
2. Speak up. Share your ideas – they could make the difference.
3. It's okay to take risks and make mistakes. Many women have developed the 'perfectionist' gene and are afraid to take risks. Or if they do make that leap, they worry about it and cause themselves a lot of undue stress.
4. Get in shape to go the distance. If you aspire to the senior ranks, then get your mind and body in shape by implementing regular exercise, healthy diet and meditation/yoga into your life to help manage your stress levels.
5. Work with a coach and mentor. There is no regulated training for coaches, but Potential Unlimited coaches have all completed the Coaches Training Institute program. Before hiring a coach, research his/her qualifications.
6. Don't try to be all things to all people. We know this doesn't work in business so why do women continually do this in their own lives? The reality is that work-life balance at the senior level is about deciding on priorities and delegating or outsourcing the rest.
7. Sell yourself. Women tend to be modest and like to support others, which is great for building relationships but they need to promote themselves too. Ensure the president and boss (if they differ) know the details of your successful projects. Also, these conversations are a great chance to build relationships. And, people often promote those capable individuals they also like.
8. Find a networking group of other women to join for support. If you can't find a suitable one, create it yourself!

Potential Unlimited is a life and career development firm that works with individuals and companies around the world to help them reach their full potential. This organization offers a variety of services such as executive, life and career coaching as well as training, strategic consulting services and retreats at world-class destinations in the areas of work-life balance and strategic focus. For more information, visit www.potentialunlimited.ca. Carey-Ann Oestreicher, Chief Engagement Officer and Owner of Potential Unlimited holds a MBA and has completed her coaches training through the Coaches Training Institute with a certification in coaching executives from York University. Oestreicher has been nominated as one of Canada's Most Powerful 100 Women, and has held a variety of senior positions including vice-president level and she has worked in industries such as: financial services, automotive and transportation, publishing, cosmetics and fashion.