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Branding. By Design

Female Leaders of the Pack

As the book *Women Who Run With the Wolves* says, “A healthy woman is much like a wolf: robust, chock-full, strong life force, life-giving, territorially aware, inventive, loyal, roving.” As we approach International Women’s Day on March 8th, I choose to honor a new breed of women in brand leadership – women doing it their way. Although the glass ceiling has historically prevented women from rising completely to the top, today, female leadership is making great strides as we enter the C-suite (25% women) and gain a seat at the board table (30% women).

For some women in branding, achieving equality has been no easy feat. Former Hint CEO Kara Goldin remembers how she was turned down by multiple large beverage corporations before launching her fruit-infused water brand. She says that ultimately the key to success was to find people who “got it,” and that those people grew into her loyal consumer base and the source of the majority of her capital. Goldin exemplifies

brand leadership through resilience.

A new breed of women in brand leadership has emerged—women doing it their way.

Women are also leading the branding industry by way of innovation. In 1998, entrepreneur Sara Blakely started cutting the feet off of her tights to achieve a smoother appearance under tailored garments. By 2000, Blakely had brought her idea to a manufacturer and conceived a prototype for Spanx – now a 1.2 billion dollar empire with products that are dear to women worldwide.

A newer brand pioneer who has carved out a new category in a world fraught with gloom and doom is Shannon Goldberg, founder and Chief Zero Waste Officer of the beauty brand Izzy. Goldberg is a new, rare, accomplished breed of leader in the zero

waste sustainable beauty movement—Izzy is the first completely sustainable, certified zero waste DTC beauty brand. Goldberg says that a key part of her carbon neutral initiative is to inspire a brighter future for her daughter, and to create a world where women can do the right thing and look beautiful while doing it! Often brand leadership is fueled by a personal mission—a desire to leave the world a better place than it is today.

Anna Maxwell, the trailblazer of Rx-to-OTC Switch, exemplifies this kind of personal initiative. She founded her company Maxwellia in 2013 with an initiative to convert traditionally prescription medicines to OTCs. Fast-forward to 2022 and Maxwellia is one of the first companies in the world to launch a DTC contraceptive pill; the progesterone-only Lovima is now available to purchase without a doctor’s prescription. By providing women easier access to contraception and other medicines, Maxwell



Clean. Cruelty-free. Endlessly Refillable: Izzy cosmetics is paving the way for sustainable women-led brands.

is leading the initiative to encourage women to take control of their health and wellness. These brand leaders are guiding the industry by integrating themes of innovation, perseverance, and empowerment. I am honored to call these fabulous leaders my peers, and look forward to what they and all the other fearless women in this industry have in store for the future.

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