

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

2025 was a year of momentum, growth, and measurable impact for Axis Connects and Board Ready Women. As gender equity conversations continue to evolve - and in some cases, face renewed resistance - our community chose action. Together with our members, sponsors, and partners, we focused on what moves the needle: building the leadership pipeline, strengthening governance, and grounding our work in credible data.

I am pleased to announce that Axis Connects and Board Ready Women have officially joined forces as one organization. This expanded mandate strengthens our ability to deliver meaningful programs, workshops, and networking opportunities that empower women to achieve their professional potential - from mid-career through to the boardroom and beyond.

This year also marked a deepening of our partnership with The Prosperity Project, positioning Axis as a key national collaborator in advancing gender equity through evidence-based action. By anchoring our work to the findings of the Annual Report Card on Gender Equity & Leadership (ARC), we ensured our programming responds directly to the realities facing women in today's leadership landscape - particularly the weakening of the leadership pipeline and persistent gaps at senior and board levels.

I'm thrilled to announce that the Calgary Influential Women in Business Awards will take place on April 23, 2026 at the Calgary TELUS Convention Centre. Since its inception in 2020, CIWB has become one of Calgary's most anticipated events, bringing together more than 1,300 leaders each year to honour those shaping the future of business.

Sponsorship opportunities for the 2026 CIWB Awards are now available and selling quickly. I encourage anyone interested to connect with our team at hello@axisconnects.com to secure your spot and align your brand with one of Calgary's most prestigious platforms for advancing gender equity.

Our community experienced exceptional growth in 2025, surpassing 6,400 members - a testament to the demand for connection, development, and recognition within our network. As we look to 2026, we are excited to continue expanding our programming, partnerships, and reach.

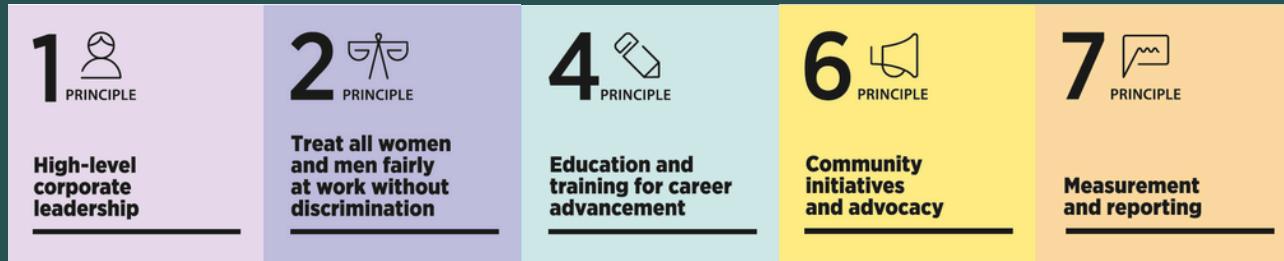
Every milestone in this report reflects the collective impact of our sponsors, members, speakers, and volunteers. Your support fuels the programs, platforms, and conversations that are shaping the future of leadership in Calgary and beyond.

Nuvyn Peters,
CEO, Axis Connects & Board Ready Women

OUR IMPACT

Axis Connects and Board Ready Women exist to advance gender diversity and inclusive leadership by strengthening the pathway into decision-making roles.

Our work aligns with the UN Women's Empowerment Principles, specifically:

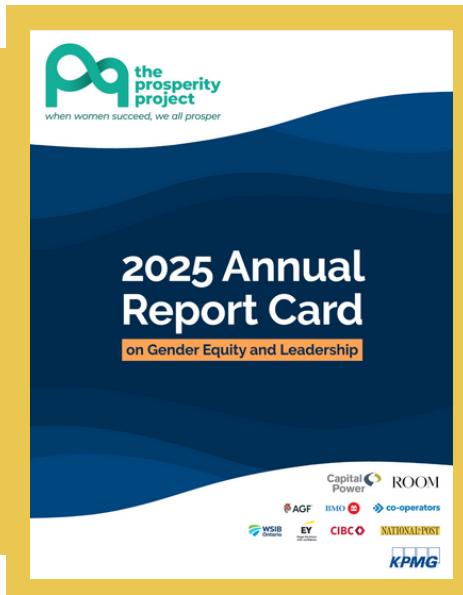


These principles continue to guide Axis's approach - combining leadership accountability, skill-building, and data to drive progress.

In 2025, we intentionally anchored this work more deeply in Canadian evidence. Our strategy and programming were informed by the Annual Report Card on Gender Equity & Leadership (ARC), produced by our partners at The Prosperity Project. The ARC provides the most comprehensive national view of women's representation across four levels of leadership: pipeline to senior management, senior management, executive officers, and corporate boards.

The ARC confirms a challenge Axis has long observed through our community:

- Women's overall representation in leadership has grown modestly, but remains below its 2022 peak
- The leadership pipeline is weakening, with significantly fewer women positioned to advance into senior management
- Representation gaps widen at senior, executive, and board levels - particularly for Indigenous women, Black women, women of colour, women with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ women
- The implication is clear: progress at the top cannot be sustained without intentional investment in the pipeline.



Axis Connects and Board Ready Women are uniquely positioned to respond. Our programs focus on the precise points where the data shows women are most likely to stall or exit the leadership path - career transitions, access to sponsorship networks, board readiness, and exposure to decision-makers. The sections that follow outline how each program contributes to strengthening the pipeline and translating data into action.

DRIVING CHANGE PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS



The programs outlined next reflect Axis Connects' and Board Ready Women's core focus in 2025: strengthening the leadership pipeline at critical transition points, expanding access to networks and decision-makers, and equipping women with the skills and confidence required to advance into senior leadership and governance roles. Each program is intentionally designed in response to the challenges highlighted by Canadian leadership data and the lived experience of our community.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS HAVE TO SAY

"Axis has high quality educational and speaker events and does an excellent job of escalating the gender conversation in corporate Calgary."

-Axis Connects Member



PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

BOARD READY WOMEN

Board Ready Women (BRW) is Axis Connects' governance-focused platform, strengthening the pipeline of qualified, diverse board candidates while supporting organizations in building effective, future-ready boards. In 2025, BRW experienced significant growth and evolution - driven by rising demand for governance readiness, increasing board complexity, and the introduction of the Board Readiness Series.

Throughout the year, BRW increasingly served as a bridge between talent and opportunity. More women engaged with the platform to build confidence, credibility, and capability for board service, while organizations across the private, public, and non-profit sectors relied on BRW as a trusted partner in identifying board-ready leaders.

The launch of the **Board Readiness Series** marked a pivotal shift in BRW's approach - from access alone to intentional readiness. Designed as a structured pathway into governance, the Series moved beyond traditional board education to focus on real-world boardroom dynamics, fiduciary responsibilities, strategic oversight, and long-term board career development. Participants gained practical skills, strategic context, and the confidence to contribute meaningfully in complex governance environments, resulting in deeper engagement and a growing, more board-ready community.

The series proved to be a significant growth driver for BRW, attracting an **18% growth in active membership** - and strengthening the overall readiness of women actively pursuing board opportunities.

BRW's 2025 programming and thought leadership reflected the rapidly evolving landscape facing boards today. Through in-person sessions in both Calgary and Edmonton, discussions explored geopolitical risk, evolving DEI expectations, board effectiveness, and the human dynamics that shape strong governance. These conversations supported both seasoned directors and emerging board leaders, fostering cross-sector learning and candid dialogue.



CONNECT WITH US AND BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!



WWW.BOARDREADYWOMEN.COM



HELLO@BOARDREADYWOMEN.COM



PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

THE QUIET PART OUT LOUD PODCAST



Launched in May 2025, Quiet Part Out Loud was created to scale one of Axis Connects' most effective leadership models: intimate, honest conversations with senior leaders about career progression, decision-making, and how to "do it all".

Hosted by CEO, Nuvyn Peters and Executive Director, Alexandra Stante, the podcast is an intentional extension of the wildly successful Lunch with a Leader program. LWAL events consistently sell out and are limited by design to small groups; the podcast removes geographic and financial barriers by making these conversations accessible at no cost.

The podcast responds to findings that show leadership advancement is not only about skills, but about access to insight, visibility into pathways, and exposure to real-world leadership experiences.

In 2025, featured guests included:

- Manjit Minhas
- CIWB award winner Alison Jackson
- CIWB award winner Shelley Powell
- Dr. Martha Piper & Dr. Indira Samarasekera
- Vassy Kapelos

Podcast Reach & Engagement (2025):

- **106,000+** measured video views
- **250,000+** impressions across YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok
- **3,300+** audio plays/downloads
- **830+** total listening and watch hours
- Highly engaged professional audience, primarily ages 35-64

QUIET PART
OUT LOUD



PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

PODCAST MERCH

Check out our products: www.quietpartoutloudpodcast.ca



Since launching Quiet Part Out Loud merchandise in November 2025, Axis Connects saw strong early uptake, reinforcing merchandise as a meaningful extension of our programming and community engagement efforts. In its first year, the collection generated **74 individual orders** and nearly **\$4,000 in total revenue**, demonstrating clear appetite for products that reflect women's real leadership experiences and spark conversation beyond our events and platforms.

Product performance highlighted candles as the standout category, with over **100 units sold**, making them by far the most popular item. Their success underscores the appeal of accessible, giftable products that carry powerful messaging into homes and workplaces. Apparel also performed well, with over **22 sweatshirts and t-shirts sold**, creating visible touchpoints for the Axis Connects brand within professional and community spaces.

Together, these results validate Quiet Part Out Loud merchandise as both a community-building tool and an emerging earned-revenue stream, supporting Axis Connects' commitment to sustainability while extending the reach and impact of our leadership conversations into everyday life.



PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

CALGARY INFLUENTIAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS

The sixth annual Calgary Influential Women in Business Awards, presented by National Bank Financial and TransAlta, brought together more than 1,300 attendees to recognize six exceptional leaders.

As Axis Connects' primary fundraising event, CIWB fuels year-round impact. In 2025, the gala reached a historic milestone, raising nearly \$1.2 million - the highest total to date. This record-breaking success reflects the growing momentum behind our mission and the generosity of our community.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ALISON JACKSON
Managing Partner of EY
Calgary

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE

ALLISON GRAFTON
President & Founder of
Rockwood Custom Homes

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

HILARY FOULKES
Board Member for Chord
Energy & Pine Cliff Energy,
Senior Advisor TPH Canada,
Vice-Chair Let's Talk Science

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

SUE TOMNEY

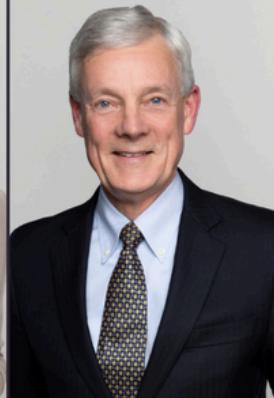
CEO of YW Calgary

MALE CHAMPION

DAVID SMITH
Retired CEO of Keyera
Corp.; Director of Advantage
Energy Ltd. & Wajax Corp.

LARGE ENTERPRISE

SHELLEY POWELL
SVP Operational
Improvement & Support
Services of Suncor



WHY IT MATTERS

CIWB elevates visible role models, shifts narratives of leadership, and directly funds the programs that build the next generation of women leaders.



CALGARY
INFLUENTIAL
WOMEN
IN BUSINESS
APRIL 23, 2026

2026
AWARDS

PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

LEADERSHIP FORUM

The Leadership Forum is Axis Connects' annual full-day leadership conference, designed to bring together leaders across sectors for bold dialogue, shared learning, and connection. By convening senior leaders, decision-makers, and rising talent in one room, the Forum creates shared accountability and reinforces gender equity as a strategic business imperative.

In 2025, the Forum once again convened a diverse audience of emerging and established leaders to explore inclusive leadership, organizational impact, and the future of work. Through keynote conversations, panels, and interactive sessions, participants examined how gender diversity strengthens decision-making, innovation, and long-term business performance.



2025 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

VASSY KAPELOS

CTV News Chief Political Correspondent



DR. SCOTT TINKER

Global Energy Visionary & Educator; Chairman, Switch Energy Alliance



HETTY PYE

Co-Founder, RRA Artemis; Board & CEO Advisory Partner, Russell Reynolds Associates



ANTHONY VIEL

Chief Executive Officer, Deloitte Canada



"Vassy was by far the best part of the whole day -- her candidness and vulnerability in discussing leadership, her experiences, and the consequences of them were truly inspiring and thought-provoking. Those are the types of conversations that can't be easily found, but are among the most valuable."

- 2025 LF Attendee

550+

Total Attendees

115

Companies Represented

11

Corporate Sponsors

83%

Plan to Attend Next Year

PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

IALOGUES

Career Development Dialogues (CDD) are designed to support women at key career transition points - moments where confidence, access, and timely skill-building can determine whether women advance or exit the leadership pathway.

In 2025, our CDD series brought together approximately 400 participants across eight events, with an additional 360 participants engaged through board-focused sessions, each designed to inspire, educate, and support professionals on their career journeys.

Sessions focused on highly practical, in-demand skills that directly address barriers women face as they progress into senior leadership, including:

- Negotiate for the Compensation You Deserve - Jillian Climie, The Thoughtful Co.
- Powerfully Negotiating Your Value - Jillian Climie, The Thoughtful Co
- Leadership in Motion: The Art of Navigating Your Next Step - Karen Radford
- Strategic Networking: Make Your Contacts Count - Joanna Shea, Negotiations Collective

CDD programming directly responds to ARC findings that show a weakening leadership pipeline, particularly at the mid-career level. By focusing on negotiation, career mobility, and strategic relationship-building, these sessions help women build the confidence, capability, and connections required to continue advancing.

CDD events also serve as an important on-ramp into the Axis community, introducing new participants to our broader ecosystem of leadership development, mentorship, and governance-focused programming.

"What an amazing experience! Joanna was so engaging and left us all feeling inspired. It has been a long time since I have attended a networking event that felt this energizing. I walked away feeling empowered and grateful for the wonderful connections made."

-2025 CDD Participant



PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

ANNUAL REPORT CARD

LAUNCH EVENT



On September 9, 2025, Axis Connects partnered with The Prosperity Project to launch the 2025 Annual Report Card on Gender Equity & Leadership (ARC) in Calgary - marking the first-ever ARC launch held outside of Toronto. This milestone positioned Axis as a key national partner in advancing evidence-based gender equity across Canada.

The Annual Report Card is the only national benchmark tracking women's representation across four levels of corporate leadership, making the Calgary launch a significant moment for regional business leaders and policymakers seeking credible, comparative data.

The event drew a strong and engaged audience of corporate leaders, policymakers, and community members for an evening focused on data, dialogue, and action. The Honourable Tanya Fir, Alberta's Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, opened the event, underscoring the relevance of the findings to Alberta's economic and workforce priorities.

The panel featured senior leaders and national voices in gender equity, including **Dawn de Lima** (TC Energy), **Candace Newman** (Cenovus Energy), and **Julie Savard-Shaw** (Executive Director, The Prosperity Project), and explored how organizations can translate data into meaningful leadership action.

Participant feedback reinforced the value of grounding leadership conversations in data:

"As one of the few males attending, I feel I have a strong role to play as an ally and to intervene more and share insights with my own organization and gender equity networks."

"The data is so helpful as we are always wanting to know how our organization compares to others, and to realize the relatively untapped leadership potential we should be developing."

86%

of participants rated the event excellent

14%

rated it very good

100%

indicated they would attend again

PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

LUNCH WITH A LEADER

Lunch with a Leader offers Axis members rare access to senior executives, board members, and industry leaders through small, intentionally curated conversations.

In 2025, the Lunch with a Leader program expanded significantly, welcoming more participants and hosting a broader range of leaders across sectors. Axis hosted **15 events**, welcoming **182 participants** and **15 accomplished leaders** who shared their expertise and perspectives. The small-group format allows for candid discussion about career progression, leadership challenges, and decision-making at the highest levels - insight that is often inaccessible without established networks.

The small-group format allows leaders to speak openly about career progression, decision-making, and the challenges encountered at different stages of leadership - insight that is often inaccessible without established networks. This model directly addresses barriers identified in the ARC related to access, mentorship, and informal leadership knowledge.



Participant feedback consistently reinforces the value of this approach:

"I absolutely love this format. The smaller intimate setting allowed [the leader] to share the real-life challenges she's faced and how she's approached and overcome them throughout the stages of her career. She was relatable and I left feeling inspired by her dedication to exceptional work with integrity, grace and resilience."

~ 2025 Lunch with a Leader attendee

2025 Leaders included:

ANDREA ROBERTSON
GITANE DE SILVA
BYRON NEILES

WENDY BEAUCHESNE
SHANNON PESTUN
JOHN KOUSINORIS

HEATHER CAMPBELL
ROSELLE GONSALVES
ANY MANY MORE.

PROGRAMS & PLATFORMS

NETWORKING & COMMUNITY EVENTS

In addition to structured programs, Axis Connects hosts networking events throughout the year that create informal, welcoming spaces for connection. These events are designed to strengthen relationships, expand professional networks, and increase access to mentorship and sponsorship opportunities across our community.

In 2025, Axis hosted its most attended Stampede event to date, welcoming more than 775 guests to the Deane House. With remarks from The Honourable Tanya Fir, Alberta's Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, the event brought together leaders from across sectors and raised proceeds in support of YW Calgary.

To close out the year, Axis hosted Women Who Sleigh on December 9, bringing together more than 100 Axis and Board Ready Women members for an evening of connection and reflection. The event provided space for members to strengthen relationships and celebrate the community built throughout the year.

These informal touchpoints play an important role in sustaining engagement, fostering trust, and reinforcing the relational networks that underpin leadership advancement.



AXIS CONNECTS STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



Strategic partnerships are a critical lever in expanding reach, relevance, and impact. In 2025, Axis and Board Ready Women strengthened relationships that connect our community to new sectors, networks, and opportunities.

INTERGEN

Axis and Board Ready Women formalized a partnership with InterGen to build deeper connections between our network and Calgary's tech and innovation ecosystem. This partnership supports our strategic goal of attracting more diverse members from the tech sector by providing access to curated networking, mentorship, and board-readiness opportunities within InterGen's community.

EAU CLAIRE ATHLETIC CLUB (ECAC)

Axis activated an exclusive member trial program with the Eau Claire Athletic Club as a value-added partnership, creating informal touchpoints for connection and visibility within Calgary's business community and extending Axis engagement into everyday leadership and wellness spaces.

Together, these partnerships extend the impact of Axis programming beyond individual events - strengthening cross-sector collaboration and advancing inclusive leadership across the broader business community.

THE51 & WILD FC

Axis partnered with The51 and Wild FC to pilot a VIP Access program for members. Through this initiative, Axis and The51 members received Executive Suite access to two Wild FC matches, combining intentional networking with the opportunity to champion Calgary's professional women's sports.

CALGARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – CONFLUENCE YYC

Axis partnered with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce on the Confluence YYC series in September, contributing to a dialogue focused on workforce talent and the future of leadership.

AXIS CONNECTS CORPORATE ENGAGEMENT



Axis collaborates with organizations to design and deliver programs and services that actively support the advancement of women in leadership. Leveraging our networks, expertise, and access to national data, we work alongside corporate partners to build stronger, more inclusive teams across Calgary and beyond.

Our corporate engagement in 2025 focused on three core areas:

CORPORATE ADVISORY:

Axis can provide tailored advisory services supporting leadership accountability, talent development, and long-term culture change.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT:

From exclusive training sessions to practical tools and resources, our initiatives equip leaders and teams with the skills needed to foster inclusive workplaces and build diverse leadership pipelines.

RESEARCH & INSIGHT:

Axis is establishing itself as a trusted resource for workplace diversity insights. By exploring topics such as parental leave policies, recruitment practices, and leadership representation, we help organizations implement data-driven strategies that deliver lasting impact.

Corporate Engagement in Action: TransAlta

One standout example of Axis's corporate engagement strategy in action is our work with TransAlta's She/Her/Elle Women's Group.

Axis delivered a curated workshop, "Take Control of Your Financial Future," focused on how women uniquely experience money and how to build financial confidence. More than 100 TransAlta employees registered, the session received highly positive feedback and led to a follow-up invitation for Axis to deliver a workshop on compensation negotiation - a clear signal of the impact these sessions have.

2025

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CIWB SPONSORS

Presenting Sponsors



Event Sponsors



Collaborator Sponsors



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Presenting Sponsor

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