

# Reimagining The Networking Model

An Interview with Alexandra Blum, Executive Chairman, ROOM Holdings, Inc. and Founder, ROOM Women's Network

**EDITORS' NOTE** Alexandra Blum is the Co-Founder and Executive Chairman of ROOM Women's Network (roomwomen.com). As the Co-Founder of ROOM, she and her team are guiding the North American and global expansion of this powerful platform that champions the advancement of women in leadership. Renowned for her expertise in branding, communications, and customer experience, Blum is a highly sought-after advisor to CEOs and executive teams across North America. She



Alexandra Blum

has played a pivotal role in shaping and enhancing the reputations of globally recognized brands like Fairmont, adidas, Saks Fifth Avenue, Le Labo and BMW. As the Founder of Silver Lining Marketing (silverliningmarketing.com), Blum specializes in identifying white-space opportunities and creating impactful campaigns that build trust and forge emotional connections with customers and stakeholders. She has made it her mission to be a bold, yet approachable mentor to the next generation of formidable women in business. Blum holds an MBA from Ivey Business School at Western University and has served as a Board Member to many admired institutions including Butterfield & Robinson, Ivey Business School Alumni Network, the

Nature Conservancy of Canada and Appleby College.

**ORGANIZATION BRIEF** ROOM Women's Network (roomwomen.com) is a Canadian-headquartered, global leader in the advancement of women. Through data, research, education, and community building, ROOM Holdings empowers corporations to drive gender parity and helps its women lead at the highest levels.

## Will you discuss your career journey?

I focused my career on being recognized as a wealth creator for the brands and companies I worked with. When you're seen as someone who drives value, opportunities follow – and eventually, so do the best jobs. I often joke that I built a career out of asking questions no one else wanted to ask in the boardroom. I started in corporate brand strategy, where I had a front-row seat to how the most iconic brands in the world were built, and, more interestingly, where they quietly missed the mark. Over time, that curiosity became a calling. I transitioned from advisor to builder, first launching Silver Lining Marketing, a strategic communications and marketing agency, and most recently, ROOM Women's Network.

These companies are both rooted in the idea that better questions lead to better systems, brands, and outcomes. My journey has been nonlinear, and I'm thankful for that. It's made me a sharper listener, a braver strategist, and helped me shape incredible teams.

## What was your vision for creating ROOM Women's Network and how do you define its mission?

ROOM was built from the belief that we could do better, for women, for companies, and for leadership at large. When women thrive, we all thrive. While plenty of platforms offer inspiration, few offer infrastructure. We wanted to build something that would move the needle. ROOM exists to close the ambition-reality gap by giving executive women the tools, relationships, and data-driven development they need to rise, and stay, in leadership. Our mandate is simple: to be the most effective ecosystem for retaining, growing, and accelerating women in business.

## How is ROOM helping women build powerful networks that propel their careers forward?

We've reimagined the networking model. ROOM curates confidential, cross-industry forum groups – pairing women with non-direct competitors – to foster mentorship, peer coaching, and strategic growth. But we don't stop

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*ROOM Co-Founders (from left) Alexandra Blum and Sarah McMillan at the inaugural Work the ROOM Summit in Toronto, May 2025*

there. We use behavioral data – in partnership with Predictive Index – to help members understand their strengths and leadership style, which makes every conversation richer and more actionable. We also remove the fluff: no performative panels or vague advice – just real leadership, honest dialogue, and women championing one another through big decisions and bigger dreams. These forum groups are not networking groups, but peer-based upskilling groups that help close leadership skill gaps – for example, helping our leaders manage P&L – that are necessary for them to reach the highest levels of leadership.

#### **What are your priorities for ROOM as you look to the future?**

Scale with purpose. We're expanding across North America, deepening our corporate partnerships, and building out our Women's Incubator Fund. We've also brought on a powerhouse President, Linda Kuga-Pikulin, to lead both ROOM and our sister company, Women of Influence (WOI+). A respected leader with deep operational expertise and a bold vision for growth, Linda is already helping us accelerate ROOM's expansion into North America, with plans for global expansion in 2026 and 2027.

But beyond growth, our focus remains on depth: richer data, stronger community, and ensuring every woman, whether she's navigating the C-suite or the messy middle, feels seen, supported, and sharpened.

It's never been a better time to be a woman in business, and we're just getting started.

#### **What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you approach your management style?**

Effective leadership starts with curiosity, not control. I lead like I build, with clarity, a long view, and an openness to challenge. The best leaders I've worked with actively avoid echo chambers and are brave enough to be both decisive and deeply human. I try to emulate that. I don't believe in micromanagement, but I do believe in momentum – keeping the mission front and center while giving people room (pun intended) to lead in their own way. I'm also a big believer in feedback. It's the fastest way to grow, if you're willing to listen.

#### **What advice do you offer to young people beginning their careers?**

Don't chase titles, focus on creating value. The most impactful people I know aren't trying to be impressive; they're building valuable, profitable businesses that solve real problems. Great companies start with a great product. When you build something that works, you earn trust, credibility, and the ability to grow. That's when more doors open.

My father, who was a hugely successful publisher, taught me that before anything else, you need to understand what makes a business profitable. That has to come first. If you lead a business that makes money, you can reinvest in better products, attract the right partners, and create lasting impact.

And while relationships matter, especially peer groups that challenge and support you, none of it works without a strong foundation. Start with value. Build something that lasts. The rest will follow. ●

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