

Becoming future-ready through a better cross-generational dialogue

Marina Cvetkovic, has always been a visionary – thinking big and empowering others into their “bigness” is in her DNA. Serbian by origin, she spent most of her career between Zurich and NYC. Her professional journey started like many others: honors degree, followed by an impressive career in leading management consulting and financial services firms. In her last corporate role, Marina was a VP Strategy, working closely with the CEO and leadership team of a global financial institution. “It was in this role that I realized – as important as strategy is, the number one bottleneck to innovation and transformation is actually on the human side of the equation – it’s the leadership and the culture of the organization”. This was a moment when Marina decided to leave her other business-related responsibilities behind and dedicate herself fully to helping executives and leadership teams accelerate performance by unlocking their full leadership potential.

Today, Marina belongs to the group of leading executive coaches in the world, MG100, and has a set of impressive leadership coaching credentials under her belt. She believes that the culture of the organization is set at the top. Therefore, her mission is to help executives and boards have better conversations and stronger leadership alliance culture, as the ripple effect of such shifts at the top is enormous. Each leader casts a shadow – the more senior and influential the leader, the stronger the shadow. In this case, transforming one means essentially transforming thousands who operate in the shadow of that leader every day. Marina’s work today is two-fold: on the one hand, as a Senior Partner of Nicole Heimann & Partners AG, she coaches executives and top teams on authentic leadership and leadership alliance culture. On the other hand, as Chief Commercial Officer of The NextGen Project, she opens doors for transformation through better cross-generational dialogues.

"I find it fascinating that while everyone is talking about gender diversity at top levels, generational diversity is still not quite at the forefront – although we live in the world in which the average age in the boardroom is still 64+," adds Marina. "At times when the pace of change in the market is unprecedented and when disruption is the only constant, I believe that traditional “legacy” expertise is losing importance while the relevance of “fresh”, tech-enabled thinking that new generations bring is increasing." says Marina. “The NextGen Project value proposition is pretty simple – if you want different outcomes for your business, you need to think differently”.

The NextGen Project is a growing international community of young leaders working in start-ups, corporations, and non-profit organisations who help senior executives to discover how to stay relevant and attractive to their future customers, employees, and investors. It is all about enabling the cross-generational dialogue at leadership levels by bringing in external, independent top-class nextgen voices from across all industries and geographies. "To this date, we have inspired 100+ CEO’s, boards, and executive teams to think differently, challenge outdated practices, and lead their organisations into a more sustainable future" adds Marina.

Some of the challenges The NextGen Project usually helps their clients with are attracting future talent, designing sustainable organizations, defining future of work and workspaces, social media presence and impact. The reverse mentoring sessions held between the nextgen leaders and executives of one of the world’s largest family-owned private banks is an instance to remember for Marina. The goal was to strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset and collaboration within this organization. "We have organized multiple advisory sessions between the client’s leadership team and the next-gen leaders and have been told that these have been the most productive sessions this leadership team attended in a while!"

The NextGen Project has tremendous potential, and Marina is proud to be co-writing its story with the rest of the team. "We believe that our mission of tearing down the barriers to facilitate a powerful, effective cross-generational dialogue will best be accomplished by expanding our long-term corporate partnerships as those allow not only innovative insights on a one-off basis but create an opportunity for a much more transformational impact on the client organization." For the days to come, Marina and her team are hoping that through this work, corporates will gain a better understanding of the future needs and transform their businesses so that they are future ready: for the future generation of their employees, customers, investors.[IE](#)

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Marina Cvetkovic
Chief Commercial Officer

