

# At the Top of Their Game

## Jaime Caliendo

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*Michelle Smith, 2021 Huntsman School of Business Professional Achievement Award recipient*

Congratulations to Michelle Smith, 2021 Professional Achievement Award Recipient in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business.

Ms. Smith currently serves as Senior Vice President, Integration and Operations, for the Larry H. Miller Management Company (MMC). A self-described “business executive passionate about building culture and teams,” Smith leads the onboarding and integration strategy for newly acquired businesses at MMC. Fostering diversity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging are a priority for Smith because these are essential to the health of an organization. Differences in life experience, learning, and thought processes provide an enhanced ability to create solutions to problems, find new ways to engage with and enrich the organization, and promote long-term growth.

Smith, who was named to “30 Women to Watch” by Utah Business Magazine in 2020, observed, “Everything in an organization happens because of the people. It’s said that people are an asset, but they’re so much more than just an asset. The people are the company.” She continues, “If you can lead with true compassion for another human being that’s next to you or partnering with you in any space, then success will follow.”

Developing relationships is at the heart of her work. Smith notes, “The core of any relationship is trust, and that requires absolute vulnerability. Vulnerability includes so many things: to be courageously authentic, to remain true to one’s viewpoint, to present an idea with all of the power necessary to see it through to completion. Vulnerability means having the courage to pull from our individual ideation and creativity and lived experiences to identify areas where, together with our teams, innovation can occur and where we can go from great to greater. ”

“Human beings have an absolute need to belong. Environments where authenticity and vulnerability are valued and respected open up the power of empathy, which fosters a sense of belonging. This allows an organization to attract diversity and retain diverse perspectives. Belonging is a key component. It has business sense.”

Smith has spent more than 20 years developing business strategy in the sports and entertainment industry, including her most recent position as Chief People Officer for the Utah Jazz and Larry H. Miller Sports & Entertainment. She is an active voice for women and diversity issues in Utah. She is a founding board member of Women In Sports and Events

(WISE), an executive board member for Encircle, and has served as co-chair of the Gail Miller Women's Leadership Group.

Smith is a proud graduate of Utah State University, where she received a BS in Marketing ('99). "I've really connected with the Huntsman School's Dare Mighty Things motto because that's the core of absolute vulnerability. I love that the Huntsman School is inspiring students to see the power within that idea, and is challenging them to reach, stretch, grow, and to learn that everything can be achieved with hard work and resiliency."

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*Indra Nooyi, 2021 Stephen R. Covey Principle-Centered Leader Award Recipient*

Indra Nooyi, the former Chair and CEO of PepsiCo, was recognized with the Stephen R. Covey Principled-Center Leader Award. Famous for her mantra "Performance with Purpose," Indra Nooyi believes that purpose drives transformation, which ultimately leads to higher performance. She explains, "We need to engage our people's heads, hearts, and hands...Purpose is not about giving money away for social responsibility. It's about fundamentally changing how to make money in order to deliver performance."

Born in India in 1955 to a conservative Brahmin family that emphasized the importance of education, Nooyi earned degrees in chemistry and business administration in India before moving to the US for a master's degree in public and private management from the Yale School of Management in 1980. She worked for Boston Consulting Group, and then in executive roles at Motorola, Inc. and Asea Brown Boveri (ABB). She joined PepsiCo in 1994 as a senior VP in strategy, and became the first female CEO of PepsiCo in 2006.

"Indra Nooyi gets results in a way that inspires trust," says Stephen M.R. Covey, Board Chairman of the Stephen R. Covey Leadership Center in the Huntsman School. "She meets the needs of all of the stakeholders involved—communities, the environment, employees, customers and consumers."

Noting rising demand for healthier drinks and snack foods, Nooyi expanded PepsiCo's product line by acquiring companies like Tropicana, Quaker Oats and Gatorade, and reduced salt, sugar, and fat in flagship products. She considered the design aspect of every product, redesigning where necessary to better align with consumer preferences. She aggressively pursued environmentally conscious policies and embraced sustainability in PepsiCo's facilities, processes, and packaging long before green energy was mainstream.

Under her direction, PepsiCo grew from \$35 billion in 2006 to \$64.6 billion in 2018. She was consistently ranked among the world's most powerful women by Forbes and Fortune until her retirement in 2018.

Nooyi considers the building up of people an integral part of any organization's success. She assumes positive intent from those around her, and leads with an abundance mentality where each individual's contribution is celebrated. At PepsiCo, she strengthened relationships with employees through written letters praising their contributions and through

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personal visits to their families. Her genuine care for individuals cultivated PepsiCo's reputation as a "destination job" where talented individuals felt invested in the company. In her retirement letter she reminded PepsiCo employees, "No matter how smart your strategy, success or failure usually comes down to one thing: the team."

"Indra Nooyi is a great blend of humility and courage," says Covey. "She has the patience to invest in people and the strength to uphold principles of human and organizational effectiveness. She has the courage to perform with purpose. She's a true example of a principle-centered leader."