

women IN AUTOMOTIVE LEADERSHIP

THE WOMEN IN AUTOMOTIVE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2018

This year's Women in Automotive Leadership Summit looked to support, develop, and further the careers of women in the automotive industry. The summit celebrates the diversity and gender equality seen within Birchwood Automotive Group. WIAL was created to address stereotypes and develop a program that brings us together to offer support and inspiration at all levels.

At the 2018 Women in Automotive Leadership Summit, Birchwood team members, general managers, directors, and executives were invited to discuss, interact, and network amongst each other. Guests were treated to key note speaker, Maria Soklis, and trade show booths featuring Keith Macpherson, Addison Herosian, Denise Zaporzan, and Wallace Greenlay. Following the speakers, all were invited to a networking reception where they could interact and build relationships throughout the levels of Birchwood Automotive Group.



Mike Dobush (VP Operations), Maria Soklis, and MaryAnn Kempe

Maria Soklis, President of Cox Automotive Canada, told of her journey in the automotive industry. She showed courage and inspiration while dealing with adversity. Maria piloted herself to the top of a predominantly male automotive industry, while maintaining her personal values. She stressed the importance of women supporting one another, being yourself, and setting an example for others. Each of these contribute to the change and evolution of women in the automotive industry. She allowed participants to open up and ask questions, providing positive feedback and advice on how we can move forward and face our own adversities. Maria proved it is possible to achieve our goals while not having to sacrifice our values and things we love. She showed her dedication to the community and her automotive peers. All in attendance felt a sense of motivation and inspiration to make our own success stories as we move throughout our own journeys.



Keith Macpherson



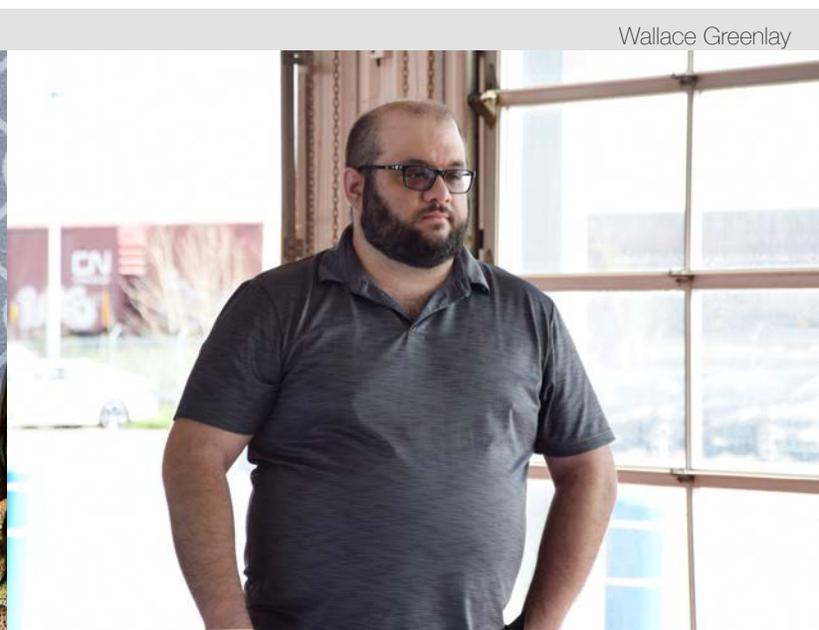
Addison Herosian

Each trade show booth offered engaging topics to help develop self and career. **Keith Macpherson**, mindfulness coach, author, and not to mention Canadian Idol finalist, joined the summit to shed light on the importance of health and wellness. He used his 5 principle framework to assist in the understanding of mindfulness. Keith stressed to slow down, breathe, and notice your surroundings, to live in the moment, and incorporate the practice of mindfulness in your daily life. **Addison Herosian** from Social Savvy Homes, showed his passion for marketing and personal brand. He has a personal drive for branding, whether it be for a company or personal. Addi gave team members an insight on how you can develop your own personal brand in a fun, creative, and energetic manner while using the power of social media.

Denise Zaporzan, a strategy and leadership advisor, shared her knowledge on networking and mentorship. She told her story of facing adversity in the automotive industry due to being a woman. Denise refused to let anyone dictate the sacrifices she would have to make in her own career. She is innovative and creative, giving example of how team members can make their own networking call to action. **Wallace Greenlay**, a 12 year team member of Birchwood and active Toastmasters affiliate, brought his knowledge and expertise on communication and public speaking. He gave participants the opportunity to create and share their own elevator pitch in a comfortable and stress free environment. Wallace shared his passion for the benefit of our own to help develop both leadership and communication skills.



Denise Zaporzan (right)



Wallace Greenlay



Following booth rotations, [MaryAnn Kempe](#), CHRO of Birchwood Automotive Group, shared the upcoming and exciting mentorship program Birchwood will soon be offering. The program provides the opportunity to build relationship with influential leaders while also developing networking and leadership skills. The graduates of Birchwood University 2017 will be matched with the new 2018 students to mentor and share experiences from their journey. Birchwood's mentorship program looks to continue building a diverse team while reinforcing learning and job application.



The networking reception was a huge success bringing together Birchwood team members, executives, general managers, and guest students from around our province. Everyone was able to interact over dinner, dance, take photographs ([Found Here](#)), and appreciate the hard work put into this event.



Birchwoods Women in Automotive Leadership Summit 2018 was a huge success and we are thankful for all participants, volunteers, attendees, and the WIAL Steering Committee. Reflecting back on the summit, fill out our survey ([Here](#)) so we can continue to make the WIAL Summit a success moving forward. We hope you enjoyed this event as much as we did and we hope to see you in 2019! For any information visit us at <http://womenautoleaders.com/>.

WIAL Steering Committee

The Woman in Automotive Leadership Summit absolutely exceeded my expectations.

“I am so proud to work for a company that emphasizes women supporting and empowering other women.”

I hope that one day I will be in a leadership position where I can share my experiences and be a role model to the next generation of woman leaders

- [Megan Belos](#)



BIRCHWOOD TEAM MEMBER TESTIMONIALS

“There is power in connecting and it’s not just about gender.”

From experiencing the struggles of Maria Soklis as she navigated her way to the top of the predominantly male automotive world to practical solutions for moving forward coupled with the common thread of be yourself from each and every breakout session, I left there inspired and ready to make change. There was a vulnerability in the air and everyone seemed to feel safe to share their struggles as complete strangers offered up their own experiences. Being new to the Birchwood family (May 2018) this event

allowed me the opportunity to network and make connections with other staff which will allow me to do my job better. My only complaint is it was over too fast! It's obvious a huge amount of thought and effort was spent on each and every detail to make this event successful and I look forward to attending in the years to come.

- [Karla Van der Schaaf](#)

