

# EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN AWARDEES NEWSLETTER

BY LARRAINE SEGIL

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*Featuring: Kathy Ross,  
Division Vice President,  
US Workplace Solutions,  
Abbott*



Imagine being part of the team who brought the BinaxNOW COVID-19 self-test to a drugstore near you. Well, Kathy Ross is one of those pioneers, helping us all in the fight against COVID. She joined Abbott in February 2020 to run their drug and occupation health testing business, just weeks before the pandemic shutdown. Talk about fortuitous timing!

Prior to Abbott, Kathy enjoyed a 25-year career at ADP, rising from door-to-door business sales to senior vice-president. I'm delighted that she is also one of our Exceptional Women Awardees (EWA). I created the EWA Foundation ([exceptionalwomenawardees.com](http://exceptionalwomenawardees.com)) to bring women executives together as a community of mentors and

supporters. With this newsletter, I'll introduce you to these remarkable women and share their real-world experiences. I know they will inspire you!

In this edition, Kathy shares some lessons about flexibility:

**Exercise your adaptability muscle.**

"Before COVID, we had planned to relocate from Atlanta to Kansas City, where my team is predominantly located. With COVID, people have changed how they look at life and values. And so, we decided that a relocation was no longer aligned with our lives. This required me to adapt to another brand-new situation—working and living in two different places. When you're working and living in two different states, you must make sure that you look at your time and what you're prioritizing. While I have adapted well to this new paradigm, I am also even more intentional about where and with whom I choose to invest my time."

"At Abbott this past year, we've experienced what I call 'COVID whiplash' relative to the shifting demand for COVID self-tests, requiring further adaptability and agility. With vaccines and variants coming into play, we've seen demand dramatically drop and then soar again, forcing us to have a more flexible strategy—and we are absolutely much stronger because of it."

**Never limit yourself by what you "think" is the case.**

"Earlier in my career, I had this limiting and rigid notion that you had to have your MBA to go into marketing. When given the opportunity at a marketing position, what I found was I didn't need my MBA, because I brought something different to the table—I had sales experience. I knew how to sell a product and how to position it from a selling perspective. It was a big lesson for me to make sure that I wasn't limiting myself with the beliefs and things that I *thought* were true but weren't. As I continue in my career, if I catch myself citing assumptions that I don't have proof are true, I stop myself and make sure they aren't holding me back. By the way, I eventually earned my MBA, and it was for the right reasons."

**Employers must be open to flexibility.**

"As employers, it is incumbent upon us to be more sensitive and open to flexibility—the flexibility to help our employees accommodate whatever they're dealing with in their lives. People want to know they're valued as humans first and foremost. They're not just 'an asset' working for us. So, now more than ever, especially with a labor shortage, we have to be really in tune with what's going

on in our employees' personal lives and be responsive to that in order to keep them engaged and feeling valued."

Kathy has certainly had a varied career and a very busy and interesting 2 years thus far at Abbott. She's been fearless in following her interests and taking her career in new directions. Something for us all to strive toward—**being open to possibilities**; they may arise at unexpected places or during expected times.

Interested to hear more from Kathy? [Watch the full EWA Live program](#) any time on our YouTube channel.

And I hope you'll join us for our next LinkedIn Live program on January 19, 2022, where we'll gain great insights from our other Exceptional Women Awardees and take your questions.

Until next time,

*Lorraine*

Founder, Chair, & CEO  
Exceptional Women Awardees Foundation

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