

## So what's next?

By Kathy Kraus

As we screech into the last weeks of the year, preparing for a much-needed break and working tirelessly to tie up the million loose ends and inevitable last minute requests and projects at this time of year, I am, as always reflecting on the year, or 2, gone by.

Now, 2019 was a tough year, full of challenges, for Catalyst. We welcomed new Cats, new clients, new projects, and also said a few goodbyes. We established new partnership and got our Global business off the ground. It was a year that stretched the Cats sometimes to breaking point. Through it all, reimagined our world completely, we built new capabilities, streamlined our operations, and ultimately forged a path through the unknown and to success. We entered our new financial year in March with refreshed energy and vigour for surely a much better year ahead. Little did we know what was to come.

Lockdown hit us and, like the rest of the globe, we again found ourselves digging deep for those golden resources to find even more ways to be agile, stay focused on the positives, imagine the impossible and then make it happen, play with new ideas and fundamentally new ways of working, continue to research and build future-fit thinking and new tools, and still stay connected.

The Cats managed the pivot to facilitating deep, personal experiences and learning journeys, and also continuing ongoing strategic HR consulting projects in an entirely virtual setting with empathy, patience and good humour (most days). I am as always deeply humbled by their tenacity, resilience and commitment. And, in spite of the COVID chaos and uncertainty, Catalyst went Global in a big way. We established new partnerships in Europe and South America, and we strengthened existing relationships across Africa and the Middle East. Oh and did I mention Catalyst launched Debbie's new book, PowerUp<sup>8</sup>? But I'm sure you already knew that.

So, as I look forward to what's coming in 2021, I am reminded of an African word from the Akan tribe in Ghana. "*Sankofa*". The literal translation of the word and the symbol is "*it is not taboo to fetch what is at risk of being left behind.*" And while it is so tempting to close the door on 2020 and never ever look back, it is important to remember all the successes, the positive changes, and the lessons we have learned along the way.

I have learned that when I feel like I have hit a wall, it's more often than not, just the edge of my comfort zone, and that with a little courage to push through the wall and some discipline and planning, I can achieve great things. I have also been reminded to listen to my body when it's crying for rest. I have learned that I can't do it all, and that prioritizing the right things makes all the difference. I have learned that every challenge, every experience, every loss, every difficult relationship, every lost deal and every successful project sets us up for success.

Our lives, the world, will never go back to the way it was. It will never be the normal we are all grieving for again, and so we must evolve. We must level-up once again. We must continue to build the capabilities and the resilience to carry us through whatever changes come our way. We must adapt or ultimately become irrelevant.

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As the impact of PowerUp<sup>8</sup>, helping individuals to build the individual capabilities required to navigate a turbulent world gains momentum, Catalyst continues to focus on adapting our own skills to keep bringing new future-fit thinking and solutions to our clients and associates.

Talent*SHIFT* launches in the first quarter of 2021. We have designed this exciting new framework, tools and learning programme in collaboration with key clients and partners over the last year to bring the agile HR solutions and teams that organisations need, to continuously adapt to an ever-changing social, economic, technological and environmental landscape.

As we continue to strengthen our infrastructure and networks to expand our reach and ability to deliver impact on a truly global scale, I am excited for what the future holds. Will it be easy? Of course not! But it will definitely be worth it.