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Journey To A Board Seat

By Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D.

As an Executive Coach who works with senior executives, I have the privilege of hearing them think through the big questions of their professional lives.

- Where do I want to make an impact?
- How does my work make a difference?
- What will my legacy be?

There are personal questions, too.

- How can I expand my skills and get that C-level position I've always wanted?
- Where can I lend my skills after I leave the Big Corporate Job?
- What if I want to work less but not retire?



For more and more women in business, the answer points them in one direction: to get a seat on a corporate board.

Today I am launching this article series on the topic of the Journey to a Board Seat. To receive this series – one newsletter-style article each month for 12 months – please join me.

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The problem many women leaders face is that their career path at some point hits a dead end. Either they want a senior executive position and can't seem to get it; or they have that position and know they need to expand their skills to succeed; or they have had it and are ready to ease off – they want to move into a new phase of their professional lives without giving up their professional identities.

Becoming a member of a corporate board solves each of those problems. It is the best kind of professional development for senior executive leaders, and it's also a way to transition out of the workaday world into a less intense but more fulfilling phase of contribution and meaning.



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Nevertheless, few women actually find their way to a board seat. Why? Perhaps they don't know how valuable that role could be for them, or perhaps they don't know how to get there. Perhaps they simply don't believe it's possible, given that most board's seats are filled by men.

Enter The Athena Alliance, an organization that prepares women to succeed in finding a board seat – and for corporate boards to find them. The Athena Alliance offers Membership options for individual leaders. Even better, companies often cover the costs of Membership for their employees as a benefit, knowing that the journey to a board seat will actually make them better leaders.

I became acquainted with The Athena Alliance when I was promoting my book [*The New Advantage: How Women in Leadership Can Create Win-Wins for their Companies – and Themselves*](#). The Athena Alliance helps women to be successful in finding a board seat by preparing them, educating them, and connecting them to a network, until they find the board seat they want.

In my coaching, I have seen women take this journey with remarkable results.

- Laura was an Executive Vice President who tried for years to break into a C-level role. Only when she joined The Athena Alliance and took the journey to a board seat did she get the visibility, credibility and opportunity she needed to finally gain the title of CEO.
- Nancy had been a CFO in a Fortune 500 company for years and was ready to retire ~ but at 52 felt she had much life ahead of her. Taking the journey to a board seat led her to explore many new interests and gave her the opportunity to support companies she believed in and help them succeed.
- Lillian had led a company as the CEO before it sold. After a year's rest and retirement, she started to get restless. She loved her work and felt she had a lot to offer. Her journey to a board seat gave her a way to exercise her mind and share her skills while maintaining an easy, peaceful quality of life – and get paid well to do it

Whether you are a business leader who wants to succeed as an executive, or an executive who wants to transition to a board member, you will benefit from understanding what The Athena Alliance has to share with women about how to succeed.

Join me for this 12-part series as we explore your Journey to a Board Seat – up next: An Interview with the leader of The Athena Alliance, CEO Coco Brown. As a sneak peek, here are a few words from an Athena member:



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“Athena Alliance is tireless in its mission to bring valuable opportunities and indispensable resources to its membership. There are only actions and results—from matching me to stimulating board roles, promoting my company and my profile among industry leaders, to helping me make the most important business connections. When I think of any organization that is a must to be a part of, I first think of Athena Alliance.”— **Caroline Tsay, CEO & Co-founder of Compute Software, Board Director @ Coca-Cola Company and Morningstar**

As always, I send my best to you. If I can help you in any way, or if you'd like to explore Executive Coaching to support your success, please email me directly at Info@JoelleKJay.com. I'd be delighted to hear from you.



Joelle K. Jay, Ph.D., is a Director with the Leadership Research Institute and an executive coach specializing in leadership development. She strategizes with business leaders to enhance their performance and maximize business results. Her clients include presidents, vice presidents, and C-level executives in Fortune 500 companies such as Microsoft, Google, and Adobe. She is the author of The Inner Edge: The 10 Practices of Personal Leadership and The New Advantage: How Women in Leadership can Create Win/Wins for Their Companies and Themselves. To connect with Joelle, go to www.JoelleKJay.com or email Info@JoelleKJay.com.