

WOMEN IN AESTHETICS



The Groundbreaking Original Series from Industry Vet Wendy Lewis



GET TO KNOW MARY GARDNER
CEO & FOUNDER OF DELNOVA, INC.

Mary Gardner has dedicated her entire career to the areas of innovation and commercialization for the pharma, biotech, and life science industries with positions across process design, technology, engineering, and project management.

She earned an MBA in Finance and Innovation from McMaster University, Hamilton and a BEngSc in Chemical and Biochemical from the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. She is also a Certified Licensing Professional.

Mary spent 11 years at Hospira, a Pfizer company, as Director of Technology Assessment, responsible for the front end of innovation. Prior to joining Hospira, she led the Business Development Office of The Lawson Health Research Institute and London Health Sciences Centre in London Ontario.

As CEO and Founder of DelNova Inc. since 2016, she has reached the pinnacle of an impressive career. DelNova is focused on applying drug delivery expertise for superior therapeutic benefits. She is the inventor of ReVivox, a novel product currently under development.

WL: Who were some of your mentors throughout your career?

Mary: My earliest mentor was my high school chemistry teacher. I've had the pleasure of working for many great leaders throughout my career. My goal has always been to keep things interesting and challenging.

It's easy to take criticism personally but best to learn to use the advice to do better next time. Prior to founding DelNova, I was Director of Technology Assessment for a Global Pharmaceutical Company and reported to the CSO. He is now a valued member of my Board of Directors. Under his direction, it was clear that details were of utmost importance. I also cannot give enough praise to my now lead investor and DelNova Board Member. I would categorize him as a "big picture" and "bottom line" kind of guy. I have learned along the way the critical importance of networking and keeping focused on priorities with a view to the end goal. Having mentors who can provide an overall balance is extremely helpful.

WL: How did you get your start in the aesthetics field?

Mary: After many years in life sciences, biotech, and pharma, it came to my attention that women were experiencing side effects that impacted their quality of life, yet there was no remedy. I also learned that the side effects were an even greater issue in certain medical therapies. I became concerned that some individuals were minimizing the serious nature of facial neuromuscular side effects as being "mild and transient."

No one can underestimate the importance of aesthetics to someone's

daily well-being and self-confidence. Everyone, male or female, strives to look their best, especially in a world of ever-increasing expectations. Aesthetics plays a crucial role in our daily lives. We all want to be our best so anything that detracts from our goal can be a struggle.

Given the expansive knowledge of pharmaceuticals and biologics today, I felt that a solution to the issue that may impact our lives should be available. My motivating factors were these lingering problems, which are most likely under-reported, and the advent of technology that exists today.

WL: What advice do you have for women who are rising stars in this industry?

Mary: Stay focused and be practical, always look for the hidden gem, and above all, be tenacious. Keep going until you get the answers you are looking for. It is easier for observers to say no. If you've done your homework, eventually you can get them to yes, but that can take patience. If you believe in what you are doing and have the right team around you to support your vision, you can get there.

I have been working in a male-dominated environment for my entire career; my undergraduate degree was in Biochemical and Chemical Engineering with very few women. I have always considered merit and hard work to be the most discerning factors in achieving success. I deal with all my business associates on the same basis. I am agnostic as to their "pedigree" so to speak. For me, it's all about results. I am offended when I hear the phrase, "token female," as I see this as an attempt to discredit or undermine true value. I recognize that women need to work harder and smarter in many fields and nothing comes easily. My father encouraged me to excel in the respected field of my choice and no one can take that from you. ■

Read this column online to learn about Mary's management style.