



## The Betsy Magness Leadership Institute:

Opening the door to opportunities

The fast-evolving cable telecommunications industry has been a great place for professionals to build careers over the past few decades. But, for women in this traditionally male-dominated field, getting to the top has been a challenge.

“Women have a complex path to navigate in the corporate world,” says Benita Fitzgerald Mosley, president and CEO of Women in Cable Telecommunications (WICT). “And through a lot of our industry’s history, the support and guidance they needed to move up to key decision-making circles just wasn’t there.”

Women were moving ahead, but slowly, when WICT took up the challenge. In 1993, the organization and the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL®) put their heads together on a plan aimed at speeding things along. The result of their collaboration, the Betsy Magness Leadership Institute (BMLI), was an instant phenomenon when it launched in 1994. Finally, here was a program where senior-level executives could concentrate on perfecting their leadership style, practice new strategies in a safe environment, and form strong bonds with peers.

Alumni have trumpeted the impact BMLI has made on their careers. “This program gives you insights into leadership styles and life balance challenges that women only get in bits and pieces in their companies,” remarks Grace Killelea, vice president of human resources at Comcast Spotlight. “You learn how to speak the language of office politics, and the value of the networking and support system is incredible. You really stay connected as a community, acting as mentors and sounding boards for each other.” Jeannine Sommer, senior vice president with Carlsen Resources, says BMLI helped her “stand up for what I believe in. It gave me a real belief in myself and my abilities.”

The program opens each fall with a weeklong workshop at CCL, where the class is immersed in eye-opening personality and leadership assess-

### OBJECTIVES:

- Increase the presence of women among the cable telecom industry’s executive ranks
- Develop proven leadership skills, techniques and strategies for transitioning from effective managers to enduring leaders
- Provide genuine industry connections and networking opportunities

### OUTCOMES:

- Greater visibility at senior levels and opportunities to engage in new leadership roles
- Better understanding of the industry and each person’s role in it
- Increased capacity for building alliances and handling conflict
- Improved team performance due to introduction of constructive feedback and problem-solving techniques

ments, feedback, personal coaching, and group activities. With that foundation, they move on to a series of seminars and learning assignments before graduating in the spring.

BMLI began as one annual class of about 25 fellows, but with applications far outstripping openings and interest throughout the industry on the rise, the size of the program has doubled in recent years. To date, more than 350 executives have graduated, with many quickly moving into new jobs or gaining promotions. Alumni include some of the most powerful women in the industry.

WICT’s Mosley can’t imagine a time when the BMLI won’t be needed to play a crucial role. “We all know that diverse perspectives bring strength and sustainability to our industry, and there continues to be too few women in key leadership positions,” she says. “We’ve seen some progress, but the door to the top needs to open wider.”

