

## MWAF Champions interview: Candace hill

**Work title/s:** Manager, Brand Planning and Execution at Farm Credit Canada

**Educational background:** Bachelor of Management, Marketing - University of Lethbridge (1998)

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### 1. What are the main milestones of your career?

For me the top milestones in my career over the last 20 years are:

- my first job after graduation in 1998 was with Credit Union Central of Saskatchewan as a project coordinator. That was an opportunity to work with consultants in marketing and training, and human resources to support credit unions in Alberta and Saskatchewan.
- the next milestone was 4 years later in 2002; my first management position as the Marketing Manager for two credit unions in Saskatchewan (Moose Jaw and Assiniboia). It was a milestone because it gave me the opportunity to lead a small team and the overall marketing function.
- the next was in 2004 when I joined MNP as their Regional Marketing Manager in Saskatchewan. It was a milestone because it was a brand-new position and my first opportunity to build a new role in a company.
- the next was my first job in agriculture when I joined Viterra as the Corporate Marketing & Brand Manager in 2008. It was unique opportunity to co-lead the creation of the Viterra brand strategy and then work with the agri-products and grain divisions to support their marketing needs.
- another career milestone was when I joined FCC in 2012. Over six years, I've had the opportunity to experience a variety of roles within the marketing division and to work closely with people across Canadian agriculture. Leading the Agriculture More Than Ever team and leading the development of the women in agriculture and agri-food strategy are milestone moments.
- my most recent milestone moment was the opportunity to share my *Leadership, Long Runs & Life* story at the Advancing Women in Agriculture conference in Niagara (Oct 2018).

### 2. What were the reasons of your milestones?

They represent “firsts” and the opportunity to try new things. Many of my milestones pushed me out of my comfort zone, allowed me to work with amazing people, and gave me the opportunity to share my story and create connections with people near and far. The positions also gave me autonomy which were opportunities for me to build the roles. I love a good challenge and continue to work on letting go of the unrealistic expectations I have of myself and others. I recently heard Rachel Hollis say - “*one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself is to stop worrying about what other people think and believe in yourself*”. This is so true.

### 3. Since you did not grow up on a farm, what made you develop your passion for agriculture?

The people who are part of the agriculture industry have fueled my passion for the industry. There is something about the people in agriculture which is hard to explain but it just feels like

family. As someone that did not grow up on a farm, I had a lot to learn. Many people took the time to help me learn and grow my perspective about agriculture practices and food production. Leading the Agriculture More Than Ever cause at FCC grew my exposure in agriculture which further ignited my passion and enthusiasm for all that is happening in the industry.

#### **4. What motivates you in good times and through road blocks?**

By nature, I'm a positive person and try to see the good in things and people. I am human and know that there are good times and not so good times. I try to keep perspective and focus on what's possible versus what could or did go wrong. I often remind myself to focus on the things I can control and let go of the things I can't. As well, I'm grateful to have a strong network of colleagues, family and friends who I rely on for support. I am committed to personal growth and self-discovery. Learning never ends but gives me a deeper understanding of who I am as a person. Through my journey I have found strength in hearing other people's stories. They provide me with ideas on how to move through challenging times, help me to know I'm not alone, and remind me to trust the journey that I'm on. I often lean into one of my favorite quotes by author Gabby Bernstein - "*Obstacles are detours in the right direction.*"

#### **5. Did you see yourself as a taking a leadership role in this field before?**

From an early age I aspired to be a leader. In kindergarten I aspired to be the major of Melville, SK one day. Although I didn't live out my 6 yr old dream, I do know that leadership positions fill my cup. When I was considering an industry to work in, I didn't even consider agriculture and agri-food as an option. I'm so grateful I started to work in the agriculture industry, filled with amazing people back in 2008, I have no plans to leave any time soon.

#### **6. Why are you involved with gender issues in ag?**

I feel I have a responsibility to understand the issues, participate in the conversation, stay curious, be more aware of my biases, and be part of the solution. Inclusivity and diversity are important topics. There are so many opportunities for people within the agriculture industry to participate.

#### **7. Please comment on what's been going on with women in ag up to now? What's going on now? What do you see happening in the future?**

Through my recent special project work at FCC, I was able to deepen my awareness, perspective and learn. I've learnt that we have work to do, barriers exist, and know that there are many groups, organizations, and individuals doing really great things to connect, empower and inspire women in agriculture. It's encouraging to see. There is a need for access and connections to people, resources, capital, and training to help women in agriculture grow themselves and their business. I feel there is a lack of awareness of what types of support exist today and how to access it. This represents an opportunity to collaborate across the industry and outside of it, to make it easier for people to connect and access the information and tools they desire.

#### **8. What are you doing now? Why?**

Professionally, I just started a new role at FCC in mid-January. I'm leading the brand planning and execution team. I'm excited by this new opportunity to lead a team of strategic marketing professionals who work cross-functionally across the organization. This role is also an opportunity for me to see how the strategic recommendations from the women in agriculture and agri-food strategy come to life. I continue to participate in the various women in agriculture

groups across Canada and enjoy connecting with people on various social media platforms. Personally, I continue to work on myself through embracing my purpose, practicing self-care, listening to a variety of audiobooks and podcasts, and connecting with people across the industry.

**9. What would you like to leave behind you after retirement?**

For me it's about positive impact. I would like to be known for the positive impact that I left on the lives on people in my life and for spreading kindness. I believe whole-heartedly that the world needs more kindness. We need to notice people and let them know that they matter.

**10. What do you think are the most important characteristic good leaders should have?**

I believe great leaders are: good listeners, curious, and good communicators. They are also able to empower teams to achieve success, embrace vulnerability and have the courage to stand up for the success of others and themselves.

**11. What do you think is necessary to engage industry in gender conversations and make progress for the women's file in Canada?**

I feel it is important for everyone to find a way to be part of the conversation, be open to working together, be aware of biases, and commit to understanding opportunities and challenges that exist. When we have a deeper understanding, stay curious, keep an open mind, and work together to be part of solution I believe it will create change at a faster pace. I see many groups doing great things. I feel that when we collaborate, we can build more momentum in support of a diverse and inclusive industry where everyone thrives.