

# Profile of Success: Linda Descano, Managing Director & Head of Branded Content & Social at Citi – Part Two

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In part two of this series, Managing Director & Head of Branded Content & Social at Citi Linda Descano outlines how being involved with the Girl Scouts has allowed her to help in the fight towards advancing girls, obstacles to overcome in financial services, and how being a member of the FWA has impacted her career.

Check out her top tips from [part one](#) that are helping women in every industry see success!

**Question: How does being involved on the board of the Girl Scouts of America align with your goals for advancing girls?**

**A:** Much of the inspiration that has motivated me to devote much of my life to propelling women and girls forward came from my grandmothers. My maternal grandmother, Nina Pennachietti, was an orphan who found herself widowed too young, with barely any education and seven children to support. My paternal grandmother, Anna Fortunato Descano, wasn't educated past elementary school. And yet, these women were the backbones of our family. They provided their children and grandchildren with a family structure, strong values, and a secure environment that shaped our identities and put us each on a path to success.

So looking back at those two amazing women and the path that they paved for their families to succeed, I find myself seeking out every opportunity to provide girls with the building blocks they need to care for themselves, their families and their communities. I believe women provide the financial foundation for their families and I want to enable girls to become responsible for their financial well-being, regardless of the life path we follow.

What's amazing about the Girl Scouts is that they're not only helping girls build financial knowledge, but they're also giving them the opportunity to apply that knowledge in real-life situations through programs like the K-12 Financial Literacy Badge curriculum and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. The hands-on experience that girls gain from these programs about making financial decisions and managing money is critical to building the financial muscle that will serve them a lifetime. It was a privilege to serve on the national board of the Girl Scouts of the USA and have the opportunity to support the work they are doing to prepare girls to be confident, courageous and responsible leaders in every facet of their lives.

**Question: What are some challenges you have overcome or seen others overcome within the financial services sector?**

**A:** The factors that shaped my perceptions about myself and I believe influenced how others perceived me were my body type (I've been managing my waist since age three) and lack of an MBA. Over time, I gained confidence and learned how to manage my own insecurities. I

also learned how to shape other people's perceptions and examine things from their perspectives. I worked hard and smart, built strong relationships at multiple levels, joined internal networks and professional organizations to raise my visibility and credibility both externally and internally, and delivered on whatever the "task" was at hand.

Another challenge that I, along with many, continue to struggle with is the double standard that persists among female colleagues. I recently wrote about my own experience for LinkedIn with the hope of encouraging all of us – women and men – to think more critically about the unintentional or intentional ways we undermine one another's accomplishments.

**Question: How has the FWA impacted you and your career?**

**A:** Membership in the FWA has been a positive factor in my career, especially since I've spent the bulk of my financial services career at one company. Through the FWA, I've built a strong network with smart, savvy women working at different financial services brands and in different business and functional areas. Being able to tap this network for perspective and guidance has been incredibly powerful. I've also benefited from the professional development programs, which always leave me with at least 2-3 "a-ha" moments that make me work smarter.