

Osler virtual fireside chat: In conversation with Rania Llewellyn, President and CEO, Laurentian Bank (Webinar)

OCTOBER 20, 2021 2 MIN READ

Related Expertise

- [Banking and Financial Services](#)

Author: [Shahir Guindi, Ad. E.](#)

A fireside chat between Osler National Co-chair [Shahir Guindi](#) and Rania Llewellyn, President and CEO, Laurentian Bank, provided some insights on what it is like to be the first female leader of a major chartered Canadian bank.

Rania has been in this executive role with Laurentian for almost a year after a 26-year career with another large Canadian bank. She saw this position as an opportunity to set the cultural tone from the top, to build her own leadership team, and to be at the forefront of transformative change. Rania views culture as the most important foundation of any organization.

She believes the value of banking to Canadian society became most apparent at the start of the pandemic when prompt payments were needed to keep the country running. "Banking is a noble profession that isn't fully appreciated," she says.

Rania sees resiliency and transparency as important leadership traits. "Leaders need to take calculated risks," she says. "And we need to hold each other accountable. That's the only way to bring about change."

Diversity and inclusion is close to Rania's heart and she started a conversation series at Laurentian where employees are given the opportunity to express and share with their colleagues the challenges they have faced as a result of their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Three diversity and inclusion resource groups have also been established at the bank over the past year.

Rania believes the challenge for banks in the future will be how best to create a human experience in a digital world. "This is what will distinguish one bank from another," she says. The use of data also will be a competitive feature. "The question will be: how do you best use data to provide value added advice," she says. "At the end of the day, you have to create value for your customer."

[Watch the fireside chat with Shahir Guindi and Rania Llewellyn.](#)