



**WORLD BUSINESS CAPABILITY CONGRESS 2012**  
DRIVING EXCELLENCE > INNOVATION > PRODUCTIVITY > EXPORT GROWTH

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Auckland, New Zealand  
[www.worldbusinesscapabilitycongress.com](http://www.worldbusinesscapabilitycongress.com)

**Annah Stretton**

**The World Capability Congress**

**Topic: Leadership**



Material: Draft Abstract

Approx 500 words

## Leadership Inspiring the Best

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Publisher HER Magazine since 1995 [www.herbusinessmagazine.co.nz](http://www.herbusinessmagazine.co.nz)  
Founder Her Digital Network, formerly HER Business Network  
Breast Cancer Advocate and Philanthropist [www.pinkmagazine.co.nz](http://www.pinkmagazine.co.nz)

[CV: Annah Stretton](#)    [Annah Stretton Blog](#)

Abstract:

Annah Stretton, a New Zealand fashion icon and business with proven ‘built-to-last’ ability, is this year celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is also enjoying the hard won position as one of the few remaining made-in-New Zealand-garment company’s of its size. An even fewer number can boast 30 NZ stores, 5 in Australia and the status of ‘multimillion dollar success story’. How is this possible when all we hear is that companies must relocate offshore to China and Asia in order to be profitable?

The House of Stretton exemplifies what innovation, creativity and company culture can do when aligned with a values driven ethos, and when propelled by a bow wave of formidable leadership out front. “Leadership Inspiring the Best”.



**Vision:** Stretton's launch and management of her company has taken place in an era of unprecedented change; a burgeoning online economy, the advent of free trade agreements, labour relations reform, international economic boom and bust and now the first light of disruptive abundance. Of extraordinary significance is that her company vision has stayed true to its point of genesis in the rural heartland of Morrinsville famed for its race horses, dairy herds and now women's fashion wear.

**Voice:** The philosophy of 'paying it forward' and respecting her customers as three dimensional women, has shaped the conversation and designs that both 'brand Stretton', and Annah Stretton herself have shared with her customers for more than two decades. The acquisition of HER magazine in 1995, promoting women's success and independence, positioned the fashion brand as a front runner in the engagement stakes, years before social media was conceptualized.

**Scale:** 'Seeing we are going to be *thinking anyway*, we might as well *think big*'— could have been written by Annah Stretton instead of Donald Trump. Scale has always been important and the larger the scale and more audacious, the more the company has achieved dominance and profitability. The development of Her Business Network in rural and metropolitan centres throughout the country, harnessed a core base of 10,000 women nationwide.

**Thought Leadership:** Today the Business Network is transitioning into a globally connected aggregator of women's success and inspiration; 'Her *Digital Network*'; uniting Kiwi expats around the world with the new Digital magazine, giving them a voice back into New Zealand; and for those domiciled here, a glimpse of success beyond our shores.

**Values:** "I want to give my customers something compelling to talk about every day. Leadership is about winning minds, connecting people *who aspire to more*, with dynamic



people *doing great stuff*. We are a conduit for learning, sharing and motivation, and we share our customers values”.

**Expectations of Excellence:** The slate of activities to accomplish the garment production, marketing, retail store management, publishing regime, promotional schedule, social media and customer engagement, is enormous and can only be accomplished by a team that lives and breathes the brand and company culture.

Stretton’s Leadership and decisive management style are enshrined and worth close scrutiny.

The “Leadership Inspiring the Best” presentation, uses multi-media with video, PowerPoint, social media case studies, imagery and an extensive series of professional anecdotes and visuals to illustrate:

- How today’s leaders need to have a **Vision** and develop a unique **Voice**;
- How ‘gaining a foot-hold’ needs to adapt fast to gain significant **Scale**;
- How to drive your own **Thought Leadership program** and empower customers and staff to participate in the conversation;
- How set out **Expectations of Excellence**, to grow the company capability and competency and why you should accept nothing less;
- How **Black and White Thinking**, Stretton’s hallmark leadership style, allows leaders to back themselves and trust their intuition;
- How alignment of your brand to your core customers **Values** leads to an authentic and enduring relationship and a sustainable model for product re-invention.

Annah Stretton has made mainstream fashion desirable, affordable and highly sought-after, and she wants to share the formula.



## Biography

Founder director of Stretton Group, Annah Stretton leads a multimillion dollar international vertical women's fashion company from its headquarters in Morrinsville where it exports Stretton designed and manufactured clothes to Australia, UK, Ireland and Europe. Celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012, Stretton has built a company of 150 staff working across a network of 30 Annah Stretton retail stores in New Zealand, and with new stores opening in Australia.

Stretton was recognised for services to fashion, business and the community with a New Zealand Order of Merit in 2008. This award underpins her extensive roles as a business mentor and philanthropist. She was also recognized for marketing innovation in 2009 with the prestigious Veuve Clicquot Businesswomen of the Year Award.

## Presentation Experience

Annah Stretton is a highly sought-after presenter on the national speaking circuit by academia, professional groups, schools and universities with audiences and students eager to hear and understand Stretton's recognised approach to business. [Regular Blogger](#), acting Designer in Residence at WINTEC, host of a television interview series and now presenter of a webinar business series on the Her Digital Network, are all strings in the versatile Stretton bow.



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*Annah Stretton*

Annah passionately creates two designer collections (Annah Stretton and Annah.S) each season under the umbrella of the Stretton Group. Infamous for being both a left and right thinker, she has a creative but sharp eye on her company's bottom line. With continuing and substantial growth, Annah currently exports to stores throughout the world. With a platform of 30 of her own sites in New Zealand, this well-established vertical retailer has her global growth well under control. Recently Annah has added two retail stores in Australia, with a view to opening an additional 10 in 2011.

**her**  
SUCCESS & INDEPENDENCE

Her Magazine is published by Stretton Publishing Company Limited and is NZ's leading women's business magazine. If your goal is to be self-employed, start your own business, grow your business, become an entrepreneur or follow your dreams, you'll love Her Magazine.

Her Magazine will continually inspire you! We share the stories and success strategies of the country's most inspiring businesswomen. We include business management tips and business advice to help your organisation flourish and prosper. We have articles to help you grow personally and to realise your potential so you can be, do or have whatever you choose.



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