

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes-Benz Canada establishes award for female visionaries

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Mercedes-Benz Canada is honoring women leaders. Image credit: Mercedes-Benz Canada

By STAFF REPORTS

Mercedes-Benz Canada is partnering with the Women's Executive Network (WXN) to honor women who are up-and-coming leaders.

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As part of WXN's annual Canada's Most Powerful Women: Top 100 Awards, Mercedes will be presenting a new category centered on emerging innovators. Mercedes' earliest history includes a pioneering woman, making this award an opportunity to not only spotlight current talents, but to also honor the brand's heritage.

Female focus

The Mercedes-Benz Emerging Leaders Award will be given to a woman between the ages of 30 and 40 who show potential for leadership. Nominees will be considered based on their passion for innovation, motivation of others, integrity and problem-solving skills.

Automotive inventor Karl Benz's wife Bertha Benz served as his business partner and was instrumental in establishing the car industry. In 1888, she drove the Benz Patent Motor Car 188 kilometers, or about 117 miles, marking the first long-distance journey in an automobile.

"Mercedes-Benz is a brand that was built on innovation and continues to succeed because of a relentless drive to keep improving," says Virginie Aubert, vice president of marketing at Mercedes-Benz Canada, in a statement. "We are thrilled to expand our support of WXN and its community of highly ambitious and accomplished Canadian women.

"In order to adapt to and thrive in the changing world around us, organizations need perspectives from people of different generations, backgrounds and experiences," she said. "We're proud to sponsor the new Mercedes-Benz Emerging Leaders Award, and to introduce an important category that celebrates contributions from the next generation of Canadian female leaders."



Mercedes is partnering with WXN. Image credit: WXN

Nominations will close on May 15, and winners will be selected by an independent advisory board. WXN will announce the chosen women on Nov. 21, a day before the Leadership Summit and Awards Gala.

Among the 1,004 previous recipients of WXN's Top 100 Awards are author Margaret Atwood and Roberta Bondar, the first female astronaut from Canada.

"For over 20 years WXN has been empowering women and showcasing female leaders," said Sherri Stevens, CEO of PhaseNyne, the parent company of Women's Executive Network, Canadian Board Diversity Council and SRG, in a statement. "Initiatives like the Top 100 Awards help to drive positive change and progress towards gender diversity and equity in all walks of life.

"We're proud to be partnering with Mercedes-Benz to continue striving for positive change together."

The automotive industry has been slow to realize the importance of women as consumers, with many brands missing out on the force behind the growth in the industry.

During Luxury Daily's Women in Luxury conference Sept. 26, a Walton Isaacson executive stressed the detriment of women being left out of the auto marketing industry, not just as a social issue but as a business issue. The session, "Driving Seat: Women Take the Wheel in Luxury Automotive," revealed that women are the biggest drivers as customers in the luxury auto industry, particularly multicultural women ([see story](#)).

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