

LEAD WITH AMBITION

2026

June 23–24, 2026

Virtual

REGISTER NOW

2026 Lead With Ambition Conference *Strategic Resilience in Action*

Seramount's Lead with Ambition conference is a premier gathering for all employees, including mid- to senior-level leaders, HR professionals, and inclusion practitioners alike. This event fosters community, equipping participants with actionable career strategies and provides a unique forum for leadership development. Through interactive workshops and best practice sharing, attendees gain the insights and connections needed to navigate the workplace and advance their careers.

This year's Lead with Ambition conference will dive into what it means to lead with resilience—cultivating adaptability, inspiring confidence, and sustaining momentum in the face of challenge.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Lead with Ambition is designed for leaders at every level and across every profession. We invite all who are eager to learn, grow, and exchange ideas to join us—coming together to learn from one another and from the expert speakers who will shape this year's conference.

- Senior Executives
- Mid-to-Senior Level Managers
- High Potential, High-Achieving Employees
- Corporate Team Leaders
- Inclusion/HR/Talent Practitioners and Professionals
- Executive Sponsors and ERG Leaders

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Day 1 Agenda, June 23

12:00 – 1:00 pm

WELCOME REMARKS & KEYNOTE

Making the Most of a Life Interrupted

At 22, Suleika Jaouad was diagnosed with leukemia and given a 35% chance of survival. From her hospital bed, over the following 3.5 years of intense treatment, she transformed her limitation into an opportunity and wrote an award-winning New York Times column called "Life, Interrupted." When the doctors deemed her "cured", she hit the road on an ambitious 15,000-mile road trip around the US, interviewing dozens of strangers from all walks of life about how to overcome hardship. Now, she shares their wisdom, and hers, with you.

In this fierce, funny, and moving talk, Jaouad tells her story of how a harrowing illness became a springboard for extraordinary personal and professional transformation. Audiences will leave with tools to thrive in the wake of life's unexpected interruptions.

- **Welcome Remarks:** Subha V. Barry | President | *Seramount*
- **Keynote Speaker:** Suleika Jaouad | Emmy Award-Winning Journalist, Writer, Artist, Author

1:00 – 1:20 pm

BREAK

1:20 – 2:35 pm

RESILIENT LEADERSHIP

Cultivating a Strategic Mindset in Times of Change

Seramount's research shows that constant crisis response diminishes strategic focus and organizational capacity. This session explores resilient leadership when urgency never fully goes away, and how leaders can move from reactive firefighting to intentional decisions about where time, attention, and authority are spent. Leaders will leave with practical strategies to protect energy, restore strategic thinking, and strengthen workforce and organizational resilience.

Presenter: Shyama Venkateswar, Ph.D. | Senior Director, Learning Solutions | *Seramount*

Seramount Breakout Facilitators

- Diana Forster, Ph.D. | Senior Director, Qualitative Research
- Mija Lieberman | Associate Director, Advisory

2:35 – 3:00 pm

BREAK

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3:00 – 4:00 pm

CONCURRENT BREAKOUT SESSIONS

THINK STRATEGICALLY: RESILIENCE REDEFINED

Learning to Thrive Amid Constant Change

In an era marked by rapid technological advances, shifting market dynamics, and global uncertainties, building resilience is essential for sustained success. This engaging session equips leadership professionals with actionable strategies to foster resilience at every turn. Attendees will gain insights into creating a mindset that embraces change, supports employee well-being, and drives continuous growth.

Presenter: Amy Goodson | Director of Leadership, Workforce and Culture | *University of Louisville*

LEAD WITH PRIORITIZATION: LEADERSHIP REDEFINED

Building Strategic, Inclusive, and Future-Ready Teams

This session challenges leaders to move beyond title-based authority and lead through influence, intention, and measurable impact. We examine how leadership is experienced across teams, how inclusion is a strategic driver of performance and trust, how culture is shaped through what leaders say, tolerate, reward, and model, and how leaders can more intentionally identify, develop, and elevate talent from within.

Presenter: Desirree Potts, M.S.Ed | Founder & CEO | *DivEra Bots™*

SEIZE OPPORTUNITY: THE ROI OF CULTURE EVOLUTION

Building Future-Ready Organizations Through Intentional Change

What if the most underestimated lever in your business isn't your strategy, your tech, or your talent pipeline — but your culture? Join us for a bold conversation on how to transform inclusion, belonging, and psychological safety from standalone initiatives into the structural backbone of organizational performance. You'll leave with a concrete activation playbook, the language to win over skeptics, and a renewed mandate to lead culture as strategy.

Moderator: Rumbi Petrozzello | Head of Assessment & Strategy | *Seramount*

Fortitude Re Presenters

- Amanda Stewart | SVP, Head of Employee Experience
- Carmen Warren | SVP, People Partnership

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Day 2 Agenda, June 24

12:00 – 12:45 pm

OPENING REMARKS & LEADERS WITH AMBITION AWARDS
During this special awards segment, we will take a moment to celebrate the ambitious leaders who are driving innovation, inspiring others, and creating meaningful impact within their organizations and communities.

Opening Remarks: Rumbi Petrozzello | Head of Assessment & Strategy | *Seramount*

Awards Presenter: Fabiola Roman | Senior Director, Relationship Management | *Seramount*

Panel Moderator: Nichelle Wash | Director, Advisory | *Seramount*

Panelists:

- Tracie Anderson | Principal, Strategic Planning | *TransUnion*
- Katherine Pinkert | Principal Data Analyst; Women's BRG Co-Lead | *American Family Insurance*

12:45 – 1:00 pm

BREAK

1:00 – 2:30 pm

CONNECTION CIRCLES

This interactive facilitated experience invites participants to reflect on how pressure shapes leadership, trust, communication, and organizational culture. Through guided reflection, live polling, connection circles, collaborative discussion, and practical application activities, participants will explore how resilient leadership requires intentional, human-centered design—not just endurance. Together, we will process the realities of urgency culture, burnout, and trust, and explore healthier ways to lead through uncertainty and change.

Workshop Facilitator: Eva Vega | Founder & Chief Connector | *More Connected Humans*

Seramount Breakout Facilitators

- Richelle Caday | Associate Director, Advisory
- Chantel Smith | Associate Director, Advisory
- Tanya Tanis | Associate Director, Advisory

2:40 – 2:55 pm

MOVEMENT BREAK

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Day 2 Agenda, June 24

3:00 – 4:00 pm

FROM PRESSURE TO PERSPECTIVE PANEL & CLOSING

Leading Resiliently at Every Level

Resilience is not just a leadership trait, it is a system-wide capability that must be built across every career stage. Yet leaders today face very different pressures depending on where they sit: executives are navigating uncertainty and execution at scale, managers are translating strategy amid constraints, and early-career professionals are trying to find clarity in ambiguity.

This dynamic panel explores how resilient leadership shows up differently and must be cultivated intentionally at every level of the organization. Drawing on research on strategic mindset, crisis thinking, and organizational resilience, panelists will share how they move from reactive to strategic, distribute leadership, and design environments that sustain performance without burnout.

Panel Moderator: Tyra Orange | Director, CDOC | *Seramount*

Panelists

- Kim Chesir | Chief Human Resources Officer | *Komatsu*
- Mira Niswonger | Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging Director | *Capital One*
- Micah Wood | Senior Specialist, DE&I | *Ross Stores Inc.*

Closing Remarks: Nichelle Wash | Director, Advisory | *Seramount*