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Rana Florida: Shaping Business, Creativity, and Philanthropy

In the dynamic realm of business, Rana Florida stands as a trailblazer, steering the helm as the Chief Executive Officer of the Creative Class Group (CCG). At the forefront of new business development, marketing, consulting, and research, she has spearheaded global operations, serving an impressive array of clients, including industry giants like Meta (Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram), BMW, Converse, IBM, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Zappos, and Starwood Hotels.

Rana's journey in the business world encompasses over two decades of experience. Her role as the former Vice President of Marketing for HMSHost, the world's largest airport developer, showcases her expertise in corporate strategy, communications, and marketing. Prior to this, she played a key role in communications for Disney on Ice and Disney Live! through Feld Entertainment. Rana's influence extends to the helping cofounding and launching of CityLab, a digital platform for The Atlantic, where she also contributed to events and programming for The Aspen Ideas Institute and Bloomberg.

A prolific writer on business and leadership, Rana has contributed to Fast Company, Inc.com, the Huffington Post, The Globe and Mail and the Miami Herald. Her insights have reached a wider audience through appearances on The Today Show, MSNBC's The Cycle, and as a Fox News contributor. Featured in renowned publications such as The New York Times, Vogue Magazine, and The Wall Street Journal, Rana's influence extends globally.

Beyond her professional endeavors, Rana is deeply involved in philanthropy, contributing to various causes such as Silver Art Projects, The United Nations Global Network on Digital Technologies, The Olympics Committee for Canadian Freestyle Skiing, and organizations like the Isabella Blow Foundation, Girls E Mentorship and Best Buddies Canada.













Creative Class Group (CCG):

As the CEO of CCG, Rana leads a strategic firm comprised of top researchers, thinkers, and business experts. Leveraging proprietary datasets, CCG advises corporations, governments, non-profits, and universities on topics ranging from economic development and growth to inclusivity and sustainability. Rooted in the research of urban theorist Richard Florida, author of *The Rise of the Creative Class*, CCG plays a pivotal role in shaping economic strategies for cities worldwide.

Growing up in a family of Jordanian immigrants, Rana faced expectations to pursue traditional professions. Opting for business school, she earned an MBA in marketing and management, eventually finding her calling in the business world.

A defining moment in Rana's journey occurred when, despite a successful corporate career, she found herself unfulfilled. The decision to leave a stable position and co-found the Creative Class Group marked a courageous leap that transformed her career trajectory. As a woman in the business world, Rana recognizes the challenges but advocates for taking a seat at the table. Becoming the CEO of CCG in 2007, she emphasizes the importance of contributing meaningfully once you secure that seat. In addition to her business acumen, Rana is an accomplished author, with her book, *Upgrade—Taking Your Work and Life from Ordinary to Extraordinary*, earning acclaim as a 'Business Best Seller.'

Rana Florida draws inspiration from trailblazers in the business world, with Sara Blakely, the visionary founder of Spanx, occupying a special place. Blakely's entrepreneurial success, resilience, and focus on embracing failure have significantly influenced Rana's perspective. She values the profound idea that failure is an indication of trying, challenging the success-driven culture assumptions.

Greatest Achievement and Giving Back:

Rana considers her most significant achievement to be her commitment to giving back. Believing in the importance of societal cohesion, she emphasizes the need for a shift from an "I" to a "WE" society. Through the Creative Class Group, she has donated to a diverse range of organizations, supporting causes that contribute to happier, healthier, and more economically resilient communities. Her dedication extends beyond financial contributions, with active involvement in organizations such as Silver Art Projects, GEM, and UNMet Gala.

Work-Life Balance and Leadership Philosophy:

Managing a thriving career while nurturing a family, Rana seamlessly integrates work and life. From taking calls on playgrounds to conducting meetings from the carpool lane, she embraces the meshing of professional and personal spheres. Her leadership philosophy centers on trying to make the world a better place through community and giving back. Recognizing the societal challenges and advocating for collective efforts to create a brighter future for generations to come.

Rana sheds light on the unique qualities that make women distinctive leaders. Female entrepreneurs, she notes, are more likely to start socially and environmentally responsible businesses, reinvest profits, and create jobs. Despite these positive trends, she acknowledges the ongoing need for support to create a more level playing field for female entrepreneurs globally. Highlighting the importance of diversity in collaboration, Rana believes that a creative mix of backgrounds sparks innovation and discovery. She echoes the sentiment that diversity alone is not enough; inclusion is crucial for creating an environment where every member feels valued and empowered. Rana draws inspiration from the Mayo Clinic's approach, emphasizing the role of diversity in accelerating innovation and solving problems.

Future Goals and Aspirations:

Looking ahead, Rana envisions a future where the playing field is leveled, with more women assuming CEO positions. She emphasizes the unique contributions women can make and advocates for breaking down traditional barriers in leadership. Rana emphasizes the pivotal role women play in shaping the future of business and the global economy. Recognizing the benefits of diverse leadership teams, she underscores the importance of women's unique perspectives and skills in driving innovation, better decision-making, and financial performance.

Rana Florida's journey is a powerful narrative that embodies a commitment to purpose-driven leadership, philanthropy, and the advancement of women in business. Her story is characterized by resilience, innovation, and a profound dedication to creating positive societal change. It serves as a testament to the transformative power of taking risks, finding purpose, and contributing meaningfully to both the business world and society at large.