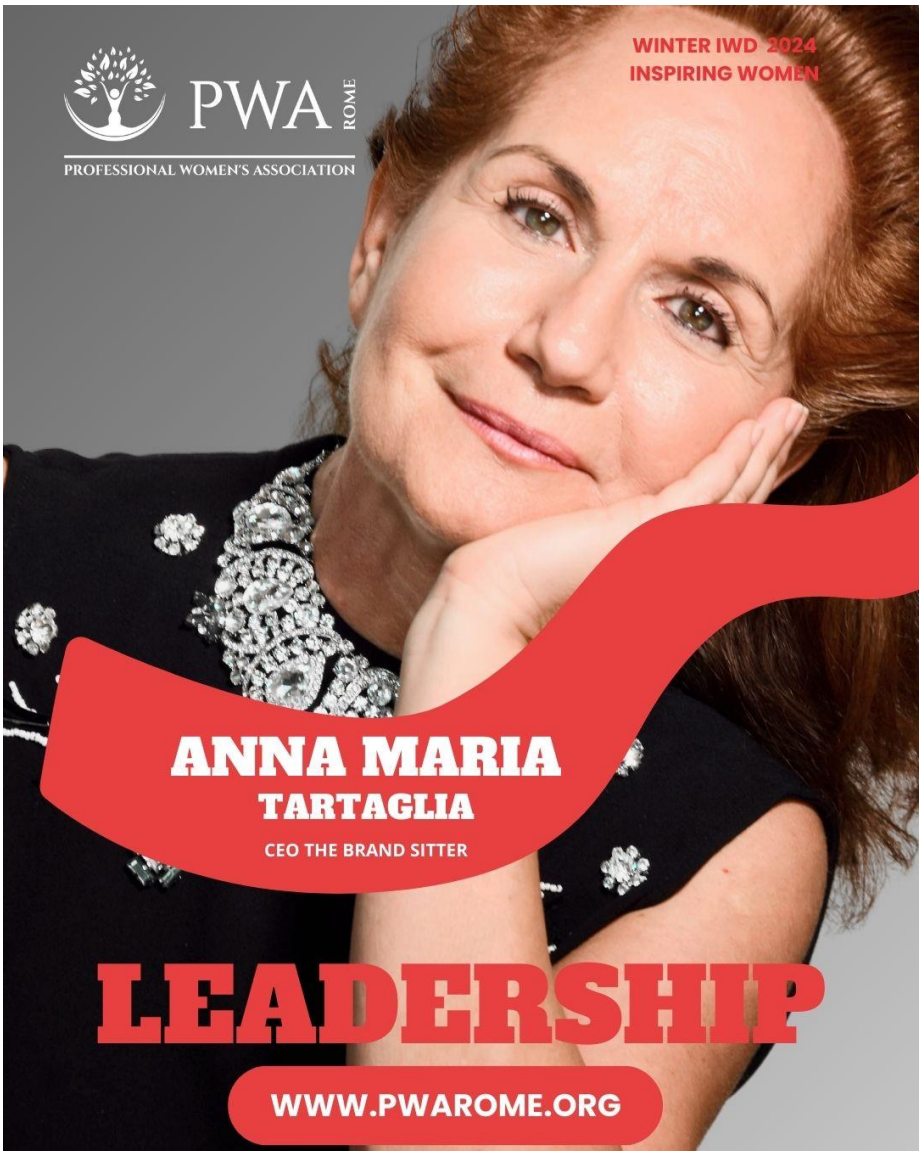
PWA ROME

PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2024



ANNA MARIA TARTAGLIA, *CEO of TheBrandSitter*

"Diversity is a catalyst for positive change"

*by **Dora Rossetti** | Language Service Provider | PWA Board Secretary*

Can you describe your career path and how it led you to your current position?

Currently, I am the CEO of TheBrandSitter and a co-founder of Angel4Women, a community uniting female business angels to invest in women-led businesses. After graduating, I began my career in advertising before transitioning to the fashion industry, working with brands like Trussardi, Ferragamo, and Superga. This experience allowed me to delve into the lifestyle sector, which was undergoing significant changes, driven by digital transformation.

In 2012, during the early stages of a tech wave that would redefine the industry, I founded TheBrandSitter to support both established brands and emerging talents in developing forward-thinking strategies. At the time, the retail landscape was slow to adapt, e-commerce was in its infancy, and stores were seen purely as physical spaces. I saw a gap and a potential for change, recognizing the need for a new approach in Italy, where reference points for innovation were sparse and business hubs nearly nonexistent.

To address this, I began scouting opportunities globally, collaborating extensively with international schools to explore and develop fresh business concepts. My goal was to help young talent build innovative projects, from new collections to unique distribution models. Today, TheBrandSitter stands as a creative hub and a vital resource for new generations of talent, offering guidance and inspiration for those shaping the future of fashion and lifestyle.

What advice would you give to women who are starting their careers?

A My key advice to women starting their careers is to cultivate a deep awareness of their own worth and abilities, paired with courage and determination. Don't confine yourself to well-worn paths; instead, be bold in defining your own goals, including those that may seem ambitious. Every professional journey includes an element of uncertainty, but it's within this space that innovation and growth truly thrive.

Equally important is building a network of meaningful relationships. Networking isn't merely about making connections; it's about creating a supportive network of individuals who share your values and vision, inspiring and enriching each other. Opportunities expand when you're surrounded by mentors, colleagues, and partners who challenge your perspective and push you to grow.

Continuous learning is another vital aspect. In an era of rapid change, intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness are essential for adapting and driving innovation. Investing in both technical and personal development empowers you to tackle challenges with a broader, more strategic outlook.

Lastly, embrace flexibility as an essential strength. Career paths aren't always linear; there will be setbacks and difficult moments. But it's precisely in these instances that resilience shines: rather than being discouraged by challenges, use them as stepping stones for growth.

Being authentic, persistent, and ambitious - while staying true to your values and determined to make an impact - are key ingredients for a successful and fulfilling career.

What inspires you or are your greatest passions in life?

As co-founder of ANGELS 4WOMEN, I am inspired by the transformative power of bold ideas and the critical role of entrepreneurship in driving social and economic progress. My greatest passion lies in elevating female talent by equipping women entrepreneurs with the tools and resources to bring their visions to life. I'm a firm believer that innovation thrives through diversity and inclusion, and that women have a pivotal role in reshaping long-standing paradigms across both economic and social landscapes.

What motivates me daily is the ambition to build an ecosystem that values female leadership and fosters ambitious ideas. For me, investment isn't just about financial returns; it's a chance to create meaningful, lasting impact. This long-term vision aims to fuel structural change by strategically supporting innovative, women-led projects.

My dedication to women's empowerment is deeply intertwined with a commitment to cultural transformation, one that redefines not only business but also our understanding of leadership. Working alongside courageous and visionary women allows me, every day, to contribute to a future where gender equity is not merely an aspirational goal but an essential foundation for entrepreneurial success.

How would you describe your leadership style, and how is it evolved over time?

My leadership style is best described as participatory and transformational, centered on fostering an inclusive, collaborative environment where each team member can reach their full potential. From the outset of my career, I've prioritized amplifying individual strengths and cultivating a culture of active listening, where open dialogue and discussion are key to making informed, collective decisions.

Through a journey of learning and adaptation, shaped by hands-on experience and exposure to diverse perspectives, my approach to leadership has evolved significantly. Initially, I leaned toward more direct control, but over time, I've come to appreciate the power of delegation and trust, empowering my team with autonomy and accountability. This shift not only nurtures the growth of those I work with but has also enabled me to develop a flexible, expansive strategic vision, capable of responding to the complexities of a constantly evolving environment.

A deep commitment to conscious leadership, rooted in empathy, integrity, and transparency, has also shaped my leadership evolution. I believe a true leader does more than guide: they inspire and drive positive impact within the organization and beyond. My role as co-founder of Angels 4Women has further reinforced this outlook, bringing me into contact with exceptional women and fostering a vision that emphasizes inclusion and the elevation of female talent, driving leadership as a force for social change.

In essence, my leadership has grown into an approach that champions collaboration and co-creation, grounded in respect for others and a continuous drive for innovation and excellence.

What role do you believe diversity and inclusion play in the workplace, and how do you foster it in your organization?

Diversity and inclusion are not just foundational values for a modern organization; they are powerful drivers of growth and innovation. At TheBrandSitter, we believe that an inclusive work environment - one that embraces varied perspectives and backgrounds - is essential to tackling market challenges with creativity and agility. For us, diversity extends beyond gender equality to include a welcoming openness to different cultures, experiences, and skill sets, all of which enrich our strategic outlook and enhance critical thinking.

At Angels4Women, we champion diversity on multiple fronts. First, by supporting and investing in startups founded or co-founded by women, we actively promote gender balance in industries traditionally dominated by men. Additionally, we cultivate a culture of dialogue and collaboration, ensuring every

voice is heard and valued. Our commitment extends to building a network of investors and partners that reflects societal diversity, creating a more balanced and representative entrepreneurial ecosystem.

In short, we believe diversity is a catalyst for positive change: sparking innovation, strengthening decision-making, and ultimately contributing to sustainable success. We actively foster inclusion as a cornerstone of our mission, dedicated to building a professional community where everyone can thrive, regardless of gender or background.