

Traci Leigh-Ane Skolaski, Featured By Influential Women, Transforms Risk Management Through Enterprise-Wide Expertise

BELOIT, WI, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Seasoned Risk Executive, Educator and Community Leader Uses Decades of Diverse Experience to Help Organizations Navigate Uncertainty, Strengthen Operations and Make Strategic Decisions

Beloit, Wisconsin – Traci Leigh-Ane Skolaski is a seasoned enterprise risk executive with more than two decades of experience building and leading comprehensive risk management programs across complex, multi-location organizations. Currently serving as Senior Vice President of Risk Management at Hendricks Commercial Properties, she oversees a broad portfolio encompassing insurance strategy, claims oversight, safety and loss control, regulatory compliance, cyber insurance, property tax appeals, and vendor risk governance.



Throughout her career, Traci has developed a practical, enterprise-wide perspective shaped by an unusually diverse professional background. Her experience spans commercial real estate, hospitality, transportation, manufacturing, healthcare operations, emergency response, financial services, and legal administration. Rather than following a conventional career path, she has used each experience as an opportunity to develop skills that continue to inform her approach to leadership, problem-solving, and risk management.

Her academic foundation reflects the same commitment to continuous growth. Traci earned a

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a Master of Science in Management from Cardinal Stritch University, where she achieved a 4.0 GPA and received the Highest GPA in the Region Award. She was also selected from a highly competitive group to attend the prestigious Lloyd's Academy in London, further strengthening her professional knowledge within the risk and insurance field. In June 2026, she added a Lloyd's Academy Certificate to her credentials.

Her professional certifications include a Human Resources Management Certificate from MRA, The Management Association; Living as a Leader; OSHA 10 Hour through the Wisconsin Safety Council; CPR/First Aid through the American Red Cross; Rapid Eye Trainer through the Wisconsin Safety Council; HazMat Level A Certification through Briggs & Stratton; ISO Lead Auditor through Briggs & Stratton; a 911 Dispatcher License through the Wisconsin State Patrol; and Certified Nurse's Aide certification through Bethesda Lutheran Communities.

The breadth of Traci's credentials reflects the practical foundation she has developed throughout her career. Her understanding of safety, emergency response, human resources, compliance, auditing, hazardous materials, and business management allows her to approach risk from multiple perspectives. That experience has helped her establish and transform risk functions, bringing structure, accountability, and financial discipline to organizations facing complex challenges.

Her leadership has produced measurable results. At Hendricks Commercial Properties, she has delivered more than \$1.8 million in realized savings. During her time at Milwaukee County Transit System, she reduced workers' compensation costs by \$2.67 million in a single year. At Tankstar USA, she cut actuarial reserves by \$2 million, while her broader work has supported more than \$1 million in insurance premium reductions. These accomplishments demonstrate the financial and operational impact that effective risk management can have when it is integrated into an organization's broader business strategy.

For Traci, however, professional success cannot be separated from the personal experiences that shaped her. She attributes her accomplishments to resilience, determination, and an unwavering belief that circumstances would not define her future. She grew up in a difficult environment marked by instability, abuse, and limited support. Frequent disruptions included changing schools and starting over academically, yet she excelled in the classroom and graduated high school with a 4.25 GPA and 36 credits.

As a young mother, Traci made sacrifices and chose a different path from the one she had originally envisioned. She continued pursuing her education and professional goals while navigating responsibilities that demanded determination and persistence. She eventually earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees while raising four children and working full-time, completing her master's degree with a 4.0 GPA.

Her journey was also marked by profound professional and personal setbacks. Abusive relationships and other difficult experiences tested her resilience, while a devastating car

accident abruptly ended a career she loved. The accident left her unable to work for nearly nine years, living with chronic pain and rebuilding nearly every aspect of her life.

Those years changed her perspective. Traci learned that resilience does not mean avoiding setbacks; instead, it means refusing to allow those setbacks to define the future. When she was finally able to return to work, she started over, rebuilt her career, and ultimately returned to executive leadership. The experience deepened her empathy and gave her a greater appreciation for the challenges people may be carrying without others realizing it.

That perspective continues to influence the way she leads. Traci believes strong leadership requires both accountability and compassion. She recognizes that people can face circumstances that are not immediately visible, and she strives to create environments where individuals feel respected, supported, and valued.

Another important lesson in her leadership journey has been learning to pause and listen. Naturally inclined toward strategic thinking and problem-solving, Traci often sees challenges and potential solutions several steps ahead. While that instinct has been valuable throughout her career, she has learned that leadership is not simply about identifying the path forward. It is also about understanding the perspectives of the people walking that path alongside her.

She acknowledges that listening remains an active area of growth. Her instinct can still be to move quickly toward a solution, but some of her most meaningful leadership lessons have come from slowing down and recognizing that valuable ideas can come from anyone in the room.

Her perspective was reinforced by reading *The Let Them Theory*, a book she wishes she had encountered earlier in her career. The lessons helped her recognize that not everything requires her energy, response, or effort to change. As a confident woman in leadership, Traci has sometimes been told that she can be intimidating. Earlier in her career, she spent considerable time thinking about how she was perceived. Today, she focuses on what she can control: how she shows up, how she treats others, how she listens, and how authentically she leads.

The combination of pausing and listening with letting go of what she cannot control has strengthened her leadership approach. One encourages curiosity and openness to the perspectives of others, while the other helps her avoid carrying the weight of perceptions that are outside her control. Together, they have helped her approach leadership with confidence and humility.

Traci brings that philosophy into her view of the risk management profession as well. One of the persistent challenges she identifies is the perception that risk management exists primarily to say no. In her view, effective risk professionals are problem solvers who can help organizations identify risks, develop creative solutions, and move forward with greater confidence.

For Traci, one of the most important opportunities for the profession is to continue shifting that

perception and demonstrate that risk management can function as a strategic business partner. When risk professionals are engaged early in the decision-making process, they can help organizations recognize potential challenges before they become costly problems while supporting responsible growth.

The profession is also navigating an increasingly complex environment shaped by technology, cyber threats, and a more litigious society. Artificial intelligence represents one of the most significant developments affecting the field. Traci embraces AI as a tool that has increased productivity, accelerated analysis, and created opportunities for professionals to devote more time to strategic decision-making.

At the same time, she emphasizes that AI does not replace expertise, judgment or experience. Subject matter knowledge remains essential for validating outputs, recognizing blind spots and making informed decisions. The same technologies that create efficiencies can also create new risks, including increasingly sophisticated cyberattacks, fraud schemes, data privacy concerns, and misuse of AI.

As organizations adopt emerging technologies, Traci believes risk professionals have an important responsibility to help balance innovation with appropriate governance and controls. Her goal is to help move the profession beyond being viewed solely as a function responsible for insurance purchasing or compliance and toward a broader role as a strategic advisor helping organizations navigate uncertainty.

Her diverse professional history supports that perspective. Before establishing herself in enterprise risk management, Traci worked in healthcare, emergency dispatch, legal administration, commercial lending, and operations. At different points, these roles may have appeared unrelated, but each provided knowledge that became useful later in her career. They taught her critical thinking, communication, empathy, problem-solving, and the ability to remain calm under pressure.

For young women entering the industry, Traci encourages them to embrace opportunities with curiosity, humility, and confidence, even when the path ahead does not appear clear. She believes careers do not need to follow a straight line to become successful and meaningful. Experiences that initially seem disconnected can eventually become some of the most valuable parts of a professional foundation.

She also encourages women not to fear unconventional paths. Challenges, setbacks, and career changes can provide lessons that are difficult to gain through traditional professional experiences. Rather than allowing others to define their potential, she encourages emerging professionals to continue learning, showing up, and doing the work.

For Traci, confidence is not about having every answer. It is about trusting oneself to figure things out. She believes that an individual's experiences, perspective, and voice can become

valuable strengths rather than obstacles.

Her commitment to education has also extended beyond her own academic achievements. For more than seven years, Traci served as an Adjunct Business Instructor at Madison Area Technical College, teaching working adult learners in business law, human resources, project management, and labor relations. Through teaching, she had the opportunity to share practical knowledge while continuing to learn from the experiences of others.

She has also contributed to her community through leadership and service. Traci is a former president, vice president, and board member of the Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce and has held similar leadership roles with the Jefferson County Area Safety Network. She is also a member of RIMS. Her community involvement has included serving as a church treasurer, reflecting the same fiduciary responsibility and accountability that characterize her professional work.

As a frequent speaker at workers' compensation and OSHA seminars, Traci continues to share knowledge beyond her own organizations. Her approach to professional development is rooted in continuous growth, and she remains naturally curious about emerging technologies, new approaches, and lessons that can improve the way organizations manage risk.

Integrity remains at the center of that philosophy. Traci believes in doing the right thing even when it is difficult, unpopular, or comes at a personal cost. For her, trust is earned through consistency, honesty and accountability. These principles guide the decisions she makes as an executive and the relationships she develops with colleagues, employees and business partners.

Resilience is equally central to her story. The challenges she has faced have reinforced her belief that adversity does not define people; how they respond to it does. Difficult experiences have become some of her greatest teachers, giving her perspective that extends beyond professional accomplishments.

Compassion is another defining value. Traci understands that every person may be carrying challenges others cannot see, and she believes people perform at their best when they feel respected and supported. Her leadership philosophy therefore balances high expectations with empathy and understanding.

Continuous growth completes the foundation of her approach. Whether learning about AI, listening to colleagues, teaching working adults, or reflecting on her own experiences, Traci remains committed to evolving. She sees professional development not as a destination but as an ongoing process.

Her story ultimately reflects a career built through persistence, education, adaptability, and an ability to begin again. From difficult early circumstances to executive leadership, from a

devastating accident and years away from the workforce to rebuilding her career, Traci has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to move forward.

The result is a professional perspective grounded not only in decades of enterprise risk experience, but also in an understanding of resilience, people, and the realities organizations face when navigating uncertainty. Her work continues to focus on helping businesses identify risks, develop practical solutions, and make informed decisions while creating environments where people can contribute and grow.

For Traci, confidence was built each time she refused to let adversity write her story. Every time she chose to begin again, she became stronger than before. That philosophy continues to inform the way she leads, teaches, serves her community, and approaches the evolving field of enterprise risk management.

Learn More about Traci Leigh-Ane Skolaski:

Through her Influential Women profile: <https://influentialwomen.com/connect/traci-skolaski>

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