

# In the Footsteps of Shackleton: Taking Surveying to the Future via Antarctica

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## SUMMARY

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It is seemingly universally concerning that our profession is struggling to hold relevance for the future, to generate a sustainable workforce through attracting and retaining new people, and that we function in silos. These challenges, and others, are present at different scales – global, national, and even within small local communities. They are not new – in fact, they have been staples of conference papers and watercooler conversation for decades. But now, with 6 of 9 planetary boundaries crossed, raging bushfires and surging floods happening monthly around the world, wars breaking out and conflict-related tensions escalating, we have run out of time. Taking even a brief look at the megatrends which are now more than ever shaping our future, especially from the lens of complexity and emergence, we see that the opportunities for surveying as a profession are immense – but will we step forward to seize them?

There is hope in solutions for the way forward through shifting the way our profession considers soft skills – often much harder than technical skills in reality – for how we approach our future as a vital global profession. Approaching leadership differently to cement and broadcast in a clean, simple and relevant way why we matter, so that the rest of the world finally understands, is within reach, if we are willing to brave new perspectives on ourselves. How might we transform the way we work to be inclusive, collaborative, legacy-minded and trusted with assets so we are recognised and appreciated for our expertise?

Grounded in an understanding of these challenges not just across surveying but across dozens of STEM fields, and informed by world-class leadership expertise specifically for STEM sectors, this presentation will share thinking on the framework for the way forward. It explores the deep

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questions of what kind of leadership got us here, and what kind of leadership can we create consciously to lead us to where we want to be as a profession – and how can we each activate ourselves to create this?

This presentation will also share the once-in-a-lifetime journey to Antarctica with 100 other women global leaders in STEM to collectively unpack this challenge across sectors, using multidisciplinary insights and reflective practice for transformational change. It will showcase the unique story of how being in Antarctica, one of a handful of places on Earth that is relatively untouched by humanity, revealing the true intertwined and interdependent nature of earth's complex systems. This iconic environment has captured the imagination of leaders in the past, and now we are seeing it show the fastest responses to some of the global sustainability problems we currently face. Antarctica offers an unparalleled opportunity to observe first hand the influence of human activities on the environment and provide critical insights into the global-scale change required.

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