

# SHIRIN BEHZADI

**BEST-SELLING AUTHOR • SPEAKER • INVESTOR • GAS STATION CASHIER TURNED BILLION-DOLLAR CEO**



**Shirin Behzadi** is a best-selling author, keynote speaker, investor, and entrepreneurial CEO who brings a rare combination of hard-earned business experience and extraordinary personal resilience to the stage. From working as a gas station cashier after leaving Iran at 17 to building and leading a billion-dollar company, Shirin has navigated transformation, high-stakes growth, and profound adversity firsthand. Today, she helps leaders and organizations navigate change, build stronger cultures, and turn challenge into a catalyst for growth. With candor, insight, and practical business perspective, Shirin inspires audiences to think bigger, lead more courageously, and recognize the opportunity hidden inside adversity.

## Signature Keynotes

### **FROM GAS STATION CASHIER TO BILLION-DOLLAR CEO: THE SUPERPOWER OF ADVERSITY**

Adversity can be the ultimate accelerator. Shirin shows how setbacks can become launchpads for reinvention and growth, forging your leadership edge in high-pressure moments, carving fresh paths no one has dared to walk, and creating what she calls “the superpower of adversity.” Drawing on lessons from business and life, she gives audiences practical strategies to recognize what adversity is revealing, reframe challenges, and take purposeful action through uncertainty. When understood and harnessed intentionally, adversity can become not only a catalyst for growth, but a true competitive advantage.

### **TRANSFORMATIONAL CULTURE: THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT EQUATION**

Employee engagement is not a byproduct of good intentions; it's built intentionally. As highlighted in Forbes' 2026 “America's Best Employers By State”, Shirin believes effective leaders invite employees into conversations, strategies, and vision that shape the organization's future. She explores how listening with respect and curiosity, creating meaningful channels for input, and communicating clearly transforms employees from observers into invested contributors. It's an equation that transcends industry, geography, and generation and matters more than ever in the age of AI.

### **PLANNING FOR AND SECURING CAPITAL INVESTMENTS**

The right capital partner can accelerate your growth, but the wrong one can cost you your vision. Shirin shares what she learned securing equity partnerships on her way to building a billion-dollar company and drawing on her experience participating in \$900 million in private equity transactions, offering practical insight into how leaders can determine whether outside capital is right for their business, prepare for the process, choose the right partners, and operate successfully after the deal. She explores what to expect from outside ownership and the decisions and disciplines that help companies use capital effectively, accelerate growth, and create greater enterprise value.



### **2026 SPEAKER REEL**

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“Stories like Shirin’s remind me how powerful the entrepreneurial journey can be. When leaders bring resilience, perspective, and purpose to their work, they expand what growth and leadership can look like.”

- Stasia Mitchell, Global Entrepreneur Leader at EY

AS SEEN IN:

SCALE GLOBAL

Entrepreneur

Bloomberg

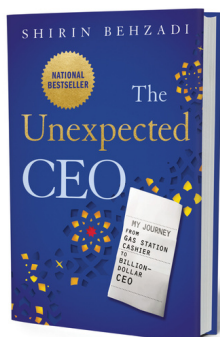
Forbes



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# National Best-selling Author



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“ Shirin’s leadership journey—from bulletproof glass to the boardroom—shows that deeply empathic, values-driven leadership isn’t just possible, it’s profitable. Her focus on trust, culture, integrity, and people development isn’t a detour from performance—it’s the path to it. For current and aspiring leaders, Shirin challenges outdated models of power and sets a new, more humane standard—one that today’s workforce demands and future generations will expect by default.

— TAL GOLDHAMER, FORMER CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER, EY AMERICAS

## Podcast Appearances



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## In The Media

### Entrepreneur

**She Moved to the U.S. at 17 and Worked at a Gas Station — Then Became CEO of a \$1 Billion Brand**

Shirin Behzadi's journey from a war-torn childhood to the C-suite is a masterclass in resilience.



Business Insider: As-told-to Essay based on a conversation with Shirin Behzadi, The Unexpected CEO



Nasdaq Celebrates the Launch of the Unexpected CEO by Shirin Behzadi



**7 Best-Seller**

**The Unexpected CEO: My Journey from Gas Station Cashier to Billion-Dollar CEO**

### Forbes

From Gas Station Cashier To CEO: Lessons In Leading By Listening



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