

CAREERS

Women Find ways around Class Ceiling

Women have found a new way to break through the glass ceiling: Start their own businesses.

There are 8 million female-owned businesses in the United States, up 78 percent from 4.5 million in 1987, according to new estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Foundation for Women Business Owners.

In agriculture, construction and manufacturing, the number of female-owned businesses has jumped 140 percent in that span. By comparison, the rate of increase of all small businesses in that period was 47 percent.

California has nearly 1.1 million such businesses, up 81 percent from 1987. The growth rate trails a number of other states, including Nevada, Georgia, New Mexico and Florida, but is above the national average in revenues and jobs generated by those businesses.

The significant growth has not come easily for woman entrepreneurs.

They have a more difficult time than men in getting bank loans, aren't taken as seriously because of the false perception that they're running businesses only temporarily and remain largely shut out of inner circles, according to interviews Friday at a luncheon sponsored by the Silicon Valley chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

And, like it or not, they say, they have to act like aggressive men on the job.

"I'm not afraid to tell men that I disagree with them," said Francis Nevarez, president of the association's Silicon Valley chapter and president

of Automation Training Specialists, a Santa Clara software training firm.

"And I walk into negotiations knowing what I want and the conviction that I will accept that and nothing less."

Breaking into the inner sanctums of influence may be a stiffer challenge. Margaret Smith, national president of the association and a Los Gatos retailer, said she knows of no woman locally sitting on the board of a small or medium-sized company. "Women continue to be shut out of the circle of influence such opportunities offer," Smith said.

But if women are still forced to cope with unfair obstacles, at least they're being rewarded for their chutzpah.

Female-owned businesses employ 26 percent of the U.S. workforce, and the most explosive growth in women-owned firms is coming in non-traditional industries, such as construction, wholesale trade, transportation/communications, agriculture and manufacturing. Between 1987 and 1996, growth in the number of female-owned businesses in these sectors ranged from 112 percent in manufacturing to 171 percent in construction.

Such numbers are empowering by themselves.

"When a woman hears that 8 million other women own businesses, that tells her that she can dream big and grow a business," said Sharon Hadary, executive director of the National Foundation for Women Business Owners.

"Increasingly, women-owned businesses are no longer underdogs. Their profile is looking more and more like the profile of all small businesses."

Few technologically oriented women have pierced Silicon Valley's glass ceiling directly or indirectly by starting their own businesses. But there were several at Friday's association session. One was Marjorie Balazs, founder and president of Balazs Analytical Laboratory in Sunnyvale, whom the Silicon Valley chapter named its first "enterprising woman" of the year.

Others included Maria Guerra and Celeste Ford.

Guerra, formerly an engineer at Applied Materials, is president of Guerra Technologies, a San Jose designer and developer of wireless communications gear. If she had stayed at Applied, Guerra said, she probably would have become an engineering manager earning \$80,000 to \$90,000 a year.

But if her business takes off, she said, she can easily earn more than \$200,000 a year.

"I couldn't pass up this opportunity and face the prospect of asking, 'What if?'" Guerra said.

Ford, formerly vice president of operations at Scitor Corp., a Sunnyvale systems engineering and software firm, is now owner and president of Stellar Solutions Inc., a Portola Valley aerospace consulting firm. Ford's two-year-old company employs 12 people and is on track to generate \$2 million in revenues this year.

Ford has ambitious advice for today's young women. "Don't try to fit into somebody else's mode," she asserted. "Go for it. When you run your own company, you, not someone else, decide which projects are important and how to go about tackling them."

Christmas Tree Growers Meet

Christmas tree growers from Oregon and Washington will meet in Clackamas, Oregon, for the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association's annual Summer Meeting and Farm Tour held at the Monarch Hotel, Clackamas, Oregon, June 14 & 15, 1996 according to President Jim Heater.

The two day event will include educational sessions on Friday that will address such topics as retirement planning for Christmas tree growers, interior needle blight on

noble fir, analyzing Christmas tree harvesting costs, history of Christmas tree production in Norway, developing additional income with bough production, Oregon and Washington state legislative issues and an update on U.S. and Mexico export regulations.

Saturday, growers will tour several local operations including Ringle & Son Tree Farms, Beaver Creek; Hoffman Trees, Beaver Creek; and Highland Farm of Oregon, Beaver Creek.

The tour will include demonstrations on true fir culturing techniques, stump grinding and removal, a choose and cut operation showing customer service ideas such as bailing, drill stands and lot decorations, driving tour of loading areas showing how tree corals and conveyor belt systems help during harvest time, view Hoffman's cane berry operation that is being used as a rotation crop and a walking tour of Highland's black walnut plantation and Douglas-fir timber stand converted from Christmas tree ground.

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National Survey Conducted In Fifteen Cities

As a result of 5,000 interviews conducted in fifteen cities and seven languages, Market Segment Research & Consulting has released the 1996 MSR&C Ethnic Market Report, the most comprehensive report to date detailing the demographics, consumer behavior, media habits and social attitudes of Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans and Anglos residing in the United States.

"Our report will provide policy makers, community leaders, private and public decision-makers, communications professionals and the media with strategic information on social, political and economic issues facing the nation," said Gary L. Berman, President of Market Segment marketers who need to make well-informed and competitive business decisions in the ever-changing landscape of The New America."

By using the latest innovative techniques for imagery and psychographics while working in multiple languages, with culturally appropriate interviewers, MSR&C was able to elicit deeper responses from consumers in telephone and

face-to-face interviews.

"When examining or dealing with any culture that's different from your own, nuance and subtlety are very important. Context plays a critical role. Facts need to be filtered through the lens of relevance," Berman explained.

The 1996 MSR&C Ethnic Market Report will be published in a 10-volume set, which covers a wide range of social, marketing and demographic issues and is the third in a series of highly-regarded, award-winning examinations of ethnic America. The study spans such diverse and sensitive areas as attitudes towards sex education and homosexuality, physical disabilities, alcohol and drugs, healthcare and natural medicines, cultural identity, political affiliations and voting habits, immigration and bilingual education, elder care, homeownership, consumer spending and credit, travel habits and seatbelt usage, and entertainment preferences and movie-going habits.

Among the survey's findings are:

--African Americans and Hispan-

ics are more likely than Anglos and Asian American to support legal protection and equal rights for gays and lesbians.

--One-third of ethnic minorities routinely use herbal or natural medicines, as compared to only one in five Anglos.

--Barely half of African Americans feel they know enough about the AIDS virus.

--Although more Hispanics than other groups believe government agencies violate their rights, Hispanics show the greatest confidence in the U.S. judicial system and have more than twice the confidence in police and law enforcement than African Americans and Anglos.

--Nearly 30 percent of Asian Americans --four times more than African Americans and almost twice the number of Anglos -- consider themselves politically independent and not affiliated with either the Democratic or Republican parties.

--Hispanics have more difficulty than any other group speaking to their kids about sex and drugs.

Edward Jones to Host National Career Day

Tony Stonger, the local investment representative for Edward Jones, announced today that (his/her) office will participate in Jones' National Career Day to be held Thursday, May 16.

The event will feature a program to be broadcast live over the firm's satellite network. The program, which will air twice, will examine opportunities and challenges offered by a career with Edward Jones.

"Because Jones is so different from other Wall Street firms, it offers its investment representatives unique opportunities," Stonger said. "The typical Jones office is staffed by one investment representative unique opportunities," Stonger said. "The typical Jones office is staffed by one investment representative and one support person and is lo-

ated in smaller communities or in suburbs of metropolitan areas. Because our investment representatives live in the communities they serve and work with individual investors exclusively, they develop very strong relationships with their customers."

In a time when many U.S. businesses are experiencing zero growth or are actually downsizing, Edward Jones is aggressively expanding its sales force.

"Edward Jones has more than 3,200 offices in 49 states; our goal is to have 10,000 branch offices by 2004," Stonger said. "Our 3,200 investment representatives have diverse backgrounds. Teachers, bankers and engineers have all joined the ranks of Edward Jones. They, all however, have one thing in common. They are self-starters who enjoy working with and

helping other people."

Jones offers an extensive training program for new brokers. As part of that training and after it is completed, Jones representatives build their businesses by calling on people face-to-face in the communities when they have chosen to put down roots and build their businesses.

"The idea is that we want our new brokers out where people can take their measure and decide if they are the kind of people they want to do business with," Stonger said.

Edward Jones was founded in 1871. It's investment representatives offer insured tax-free bonds, mutual funds, certificates of deposit and the common stock of companies with histories of sound management and solid performance.

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