



CBN Celebrates Strong Business Women
By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC
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Women bring a certain essence to the world of business — a blend of passion, intuition and insight. A willingness to listen deeply and be flexible. An eagerness to ask for help when needed. To create something that hasn't been created before. Or, to improve the status quo dramatically.

The growing trend of women supporting female colleagues is exciting. In part we can credit Sheryl Sandberg's book *Leaning In* for emphasizing the importance of this trend. In 2017 women owned more than 11.6 million firms in the U.S., employed nearly nine million people, and generated sales of \$1.7 trillion. This represents 39 percent of all privately held firms and eight percent of U.S. employment.

How does a woman build the courage and vision to create her own business? What does it mean for a woman to be successful in business and how does this change through the years?

For many women it begins with a goal of financial success, which leads to a passion for thrilling her clients or customers. This naturally leads to creating opportunities for others to excel and succeed.

Other female entrepreneurs start slowly with a goal of making a difference in the world, contributing to the greater good. And then there is the life goal of true success in getting to a place of having it all — time for work, friends, family, self and community. I always smile inside when hearing a woman or man state that they want to start their own business to have time for all these things, for life balance. Starting your own business is hard work and all encompassing. With focus and effort life balance will come in time yet is typically not a goal attained in the initial few years.

As you'll see glancing through Cascade Business News' (CBN) list of 40 Top Women Owned Businesses there is quite the diversity of expertise, passions and interests. Strong women business owners listed range from services such as insurance, real estate and executive search; to retail as in boutiques, pets and gourmet foods to manufacturing and health care and so much more.

If CBN listed all women-owned businesses in Central Oregon, it would take up the entire paper, according to publisher Jeff Martin. That's exciting! What does it take to be a successful woman in business? Curious about the strong business practices that make these women successful, I asked a few local powerhouses what works for them. Here are a few ideas to perhaps put in your tool chest.

Work hard and contribute:

It's no secret what made our beloved late founder and publisher of Cascade Publications, Pamela Hulse Andrews, was an immense success. CBN started from a concept and grew to include several publications through the years. According to son Jeff Martin, Pamela's business practices to succeed has always been, "Hard work, stellar customer service and community involvement." In addition, she was incredibly generous with her time, expertise and financial contributions, along with being creative, loyal and open-minded.

Seek out mentors:

Connie Druliner, owner of Express Employment Professionals believes in seeking the advice from others, "Woman owning a business should consider having a personal advisory board of trusted professionals for those times you need extra support on a major decision." Druliner emphasizes to pick wisely and don't limit your choices to women. I would also add that Druliner has been extraordinarily generous through the years with her savvy business knowledge and generosity in serving on boards and mentoring up-and-coming women and men.

Be open to all opportunities:

Appreciating the 'now' and looking toward the future, Jeanie Dumont, president of Alliance Supply Company credits their success to appreciating her clients, large and small, "To us no customer is too small, we have no minimums. We feel that small businesses become bigger businesses and if we take care of their needs when they are small, they will trust us to take care of their needs as they become bigger and more successful. We all benefit."

Be flexible:

Joanne Sunnarborg's Desperado Boutique in the Old Mill is celebrating a milestone 22 years in business this October. Due to popular demand she added Shoes & ... by desperado in 2016. Sunnarborg attributes her success to strong business practices as, "People are most important to me, my customers and employees." We all feel this when entering her stores. Sunnarborg also credits her business success to being flexible with changes like on-line competition which wasn't present 22 years ago. "I've navigated many changes after moving to Bend from the Pearl District, moving from Western to boutique, shifting inventories with the changing demographics in Bend."

Think Globally:

We all love Sisters Coffee, who will celebrate their 30 year anniversary next year. Co-owner Jesse Durham credits their Sisters and Portland success to two strong business practices. First, "Proactive engagement in my industry on a larger scale. When you get firsthand experience of what other leaders are doing in your industry, it challenges you to improve and innovate." Secondly, "Create a team atmosphere of open communication and encourage team members to take responsibility. Listen and empower them to make wise decisions."

Listen deeply:

People are not used to being truly listened to. Surprising results occur when you are quiet, curious and ask a lot of questions. The key is to wait for the answers and not interrupt while the other person is still thinking. In my experience women are more curious and patient in asking powerful questions. Patience is not only a virtue but key to success. My company, Golden Visions and Associates, is celebrating our 20 year anniversary this year. As with the dedicated business women above, we base our success on many strong business practices.

The one tried and true business practice that has produced the best results is to relax and listen deeply. How can you know what a client wants unless you ask them? Clients often don't know what they want until they hear themselves say it out loud.

I thank CBN for this annual feature celebrating brilliant, hard-working business women in our community and congratulate each woman and business listed on your success. Central Oregon is an amazing home for all of us and the women owned businesses make a true difference in our community.

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