

GROWTH-FOCUSED WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OVERCOME CHALLENGING ECONOMY TO REACH MILLION DOLLAR GOAL

Make Mine a Million \$ Business RACE Inspires Thousands of Women to Challenge Themselves to Grow Their Businesses and Help Boost Nation's Economy

NEW YORK, July 01, 2009 -- Make Mine a Million \$ Business (M3), the only national initiative committed to helping post start-up women entrepreneurs grow million-dollar firms, today announced the names of 27 program participants who, despite the turbulent economy, were able to grow their ventures past the \$1 million revenue level in 2008.

There are more than 10 million women-owned businesses in the United States, yet only 2.6%, or 242,000, report more than \$1 million in revenue, with the majority generating revenues below \$50,000. Make Mine a Million \$ Business, a program of Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence, the leading national not-for-profit provider of business resources and community support for women entrepreneurs, and founding partner American Express OPEN®, is helping to inspire thousands of women to survive and even thrive during the recession.

"Building a million-dollar business is an extraordinary achievement in its own right, and it is even more impressive when you can accomplish it during the worst economy in two generations," said Nell Merlino, founder and president of Count Me In. "These 27 gutsy and determined women seize opportunity when others see only challenges. Together, the Make Mine a Million \$ Business community is doing its part to make sure women business owners are moving ahead and can lead the United States out of this recession."

Since program inception in 2005, M3 has provided 175 women business owners with a formula of money, marketing and mentoring resources that can offer a game-changing impact to their businesses. These women are not only helping to narrow a gap in the US economy, but they are doing their part to stimulate the economy by creating jobs nationwide. On average, women hire three to six people when they grow to \$1 million in revenue.

"The success of this program's front-running women embodies the spirit and resolve of our country's women entrepreneurs to persevere in the face of adversity," said Susan Sobott, president, American Express OPEN. "Eighty-eight percent of women business owners say that managing through the current economy has made them a better business owner and are more likely to have a positive outlook on business over the next six months, according to the American Express OPEN Small Business Monitor."

To help accelerate the impact women entrepreneurs will have on our nation's struggling economy, Count Me In and American Express OPEN have launched the Make Mine a Million \$ Business RACE (M3 RACE) -- a year-long business growth marathon bringing together thousands of women entrepreneurs to network online and compete in a race to grow their businesses and create jobs.

Women who want to grow their businesses can join the M3 RACE by logging on to www.makemineamillion.org. Registration will remain open until September 30, 2009. The M3 RACE ends on midnight, December 31, 2009 and winners will be announced in February 2010.

The 2008 Make Mine a Million \$ Businesses

Tammy Adler of QWANTify, Inc.

Madison, WI-based information technology professional services organization specializing in developing, delivering and integrating custom business software
www.qwantify.com

Maribel Araujo of Caracas Restaurant

New York City-based restaurant specializing in Venezuelan cuisine
www.caracasarepabar.com

Colleen Bonniol of MODE Studios, Inc.

Seattle, WA-based company specializing in the application of multimedia and lighting design
www.modestudios.com

Maureen Borzacchiello of Creative Display Solutions, Inc.

Long Island, NY-based company specializing in trade show displays, graphics and event exhibits
www.creativedisplaysolutions.com

Leah Brown of Aten Solutions, Inc. (A10)

Cary, NC-based national clinical trials staffing company
www.atensolutions.com

Amelia Case of Universal Health Institute

Chicago, IL-based medical center that provides a unique combination of drug free, non-surgical traditional and alternative therapies
www.uhichicago.com

Amelia Ceja of Ceja Vineyards

Napa, CA-based ultra-premium family-owned winery
www.cejavineyards.com

Theresa Daytner of Daytner Construction Group

Mount Airy, MD-based commercial construction consulting group
www.daytnercorp.com

Claire Evans of amaZulu, Inc.

Winter Garden, FL-based supplier of natural and synthetic tropical theming materials
www.amazuluinc.com

Allison Evanow of Square One Organic Spirits, LLC.

Novato, CA-based developer and marketer of organic spirits
www.squareonevodka.com

Molly Fuller of Hands On Gourmet, LLC

San Francisco, CA-based cooking party company
www.handsongourmet.com

Theresa Hinton of Comprehensive Consulting

Louisville, KY-based company that provides medical utilization review and medical case management
www.compreconsult.com

Debra Johnson, of Eco-Edge, LLC

Chandler, AZ-based firm that helps diesel fleets and industrial operations function more efficiently and become more environmentally friendly
www.ecoedgeco.com

Virginia Jones of Kinetic Electric Group LLC.

Laurinburg, NC-based electrical contracting group serving the military, institutions and commercial customers
www.kinetic-electric.net

Fiona Macaulay of Making Cents International, Inc.

Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm committed to job creation and improved livelihoods and opportunities through training and services for entrepreneurs
www.makingcents.com

Tamara Mangum-Thomas of Sharpened Image, Inc.

Newark, NJ-based Human Resource Management Solutions provider designed to enhance workplace productivity
www.sharpenedimage.com

Bonnie Marcus of Bonnie Marcus & Co., a Westport, CT-based invitation and greeting card company specializing in chic, stylish greeting cards and invitations
www.bonniestylepress.com

Kimberly Martinez and Lisa Harrington of Bonitas International LLC

Englewood, FL-based manufacturer of beaded ID Lanyards, retractable badge reel jewelry and eyeglass holders
www.bonitasinternational.com

Suzanne Miller of SPM Communications

Dallas, TX-based public relations agency
www.spmcommunications.com

Garnett Newcombe of Human Potential Consultants, L.L.C.

Carson, CA-based employment solutions company
www.hpcemployment.org

Elizabeth Perelstein of School Choice International Inc.

Mamaroneck, NY-based global educational consulting firm working with families being

relocated

www.schoolchoiceintl.com

Cynthia Rubio of Radiant RFID

Austin, TX-based provider of RFID solutions for tracking assets and people in emergencies

www.radiantrfid.com

Gina Stern of d_parture spa

Newark, NJ-based business that runs three full service spas located in airport terminals

www.departurespa.com

Dawn Stokes of Texas Driving Experience

Fort Worth, TX-based high performance driving school held at the Texas Motor Speedway

www.texasdrivingexperience.com

Sandi Webster and Peggy McHale of Consultants 2 Go, LLC

Newark, NJ-based consulting firm that provides marketing and analytic solutions to Fortune 500 companies

www.consultants2go.com

Susan Wilson of The Judgment Group

Stevensville, MD-based professional judgment enforcement firm

www.judgmentgroup.com

Kris Wittenberg of SayNoMore! Promotions

Eagle, CO-based promotional products agency

www.saynomorepromotions.com

About Count Me In

Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence is the leading national not-for-profit provider of resources, business education and community support for women entrepreneurs seeking to grow micro businesses to million dollar enterprises.

About American Express OPEN®

American Express OPEN is dedicated exclusively to the success of small business owners and their companies. OPEN supports business owners with exceptional service. With tailored products and services, the team delivers purchasing power, flexibility, control and rewards to help customers run their business. Specifically, business owner customers can leverage an enhanced set of products, tools, services and savings, including charge and credit cards, convenient access to working capital, robust online account management capabilities and savings on business services from an expanded lineup of partners. To obtain more information about OPEN, visit OPEN.com, or call 1-800-NOW-OPEN to apply for a card. Terms and conditions apply.

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