

Game Changers: PINK magazine and Forté Foundation Select the “Top 15 Women in Business” 2007

-- New generation of influential business leaders is creating its own rules for success --

Atlanta, GA (January 16, 2007) – The “Top Women in Business” are transforming corporate America and beyond. Whether using innovative business ideas to invigorate a brand, bringing corporate practices to the nonprofit world or maximizing the potential of new media, these “game changers” are recreating the business world’s playbook - all while maintaining their own authenticity.

This second annual list looks at the achievements and career strategies of today’s most inspiring female business leaders along with exclusive interviews with the women themselves. Created by PINK magazine and Forté Foundation with input from corporate executives, industry watchers, members of the business media and business schools, the “America’s Top Women in Business: Game Changers” list is PINK magazine’s February/March 2007 cover story.

The women selected in “America’s Top Women in Business” are Gina Boswell (senior vice president and COO, Avon North America), Deborah Brooks (president and CEO, The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research), Beth Comstock (president, NBC Universal), Lisa Ellis (president, Sony Urban Music), Karen Flanders (director, The Coca-Cola Company), Aerin Lauder, (senior vice president, Estee Lauder), Duy-Loan Le, (senior fellow, Texas Instruments), Pernille Spiers-Lopez (president, IKEA, North America), Marissa Mayer (vice president, Google), Tamara Rosenthal (vice president, Lacoste USA), Stacey Snider (CEO, Dreamworks SKG), Susan Sobott (president, OPEN from American Express), Nina Tassler (president, CBS Entertainment), Lindsey Ueberroth (managing director, Preferred Boutique), and Robin Uler (senior vice president, Marriott International).

“These women demonstrate that taking risks and changing the rules of the game to find better solutions is smart business and more personally rewarding,” says Elissa Ellis, executive director of Forté Foundation, a consortium of business schools and corporations that is dedicated to boosting the number of women business leaders by increasing the number of women entering business. A core focus of Forté Foundation is to provide women with information and financial support to encourage them to attain MBAs. One-third of the “Top Women in Business” hold MBAs or advanced degrees.

“They prove that success in business is as much a function of passion for the work as it is technical or managerial skills,” continues Ellis. “These outstanding business leaders confirm for future generations of women business leaders that women need not sacrifice their authentic selves to get to the executive suite.”

Genuineness is important to many women in business. According to data compiled from women polled at recent PINK conferences (thanks to technology provided by KPMG), more than half say they can be fully authentic in the workplace.

This holds true for Forté Foundation members as well. A recent survey of more than 900 Forté Foundation members shows that authenticity in the workplace is enjoyed by some 43 percent of women across all age groups, who say they “felt comfortable speaking their mind at work.” However, one third say they “can feel authentic only with other women” and they still “edit themselves in the workplace.”

And the reason, nearly a quarter of Forté member respondents say, is “a boss who treats people differently based on gender”. This perception was highest among Millennials (ages 18-25), with 43 percent saying sexism is still a factor at their workplaces.

“It’s vitally important that our selected executives are ‘game changers’” says Cynthia Good, founding editor/CEO, PINK magazine, the only national business publication for professional women. “Today they are redefining the concept of success while changing corporate culture in a way that makes big business more appealing to women and more lucrative for all shareholders,” she says.

So how do women go about changing the status quo? According to the Forté respondents, the overall preferred method was to “jump in and let the results speak for themselves.” They follow the lead, for instance, of Duy-Loan Le, 44, senior fellow at Texas Instruments. She came to the United States from Vietnam when she was 12, speaking no English; she went on to receive an MBA from the University of Houston. Now, as the only woman engineer to be named a senior fellow at Texas Instruments, she says “My definition of success has and always will be: Be the best at what I do and be happy doing what I choose. One or the other is not enough. I let my passion drive me and I let the outcome dictate the material stuff.”

Social responsibility is another important factor, especially among Millennials. In the Forté survey, almost 40 percent of women in this group say “they consider the societal impact of everything they do”, with the figure hovering around 25 percent for older women. In this respect, they follow the example set by Deborah Brooks, 47. After a successful career in investment banking, Brooks now focuses her MBA skills on the public service industry, as president and CEO of The Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research, in New York City. “We are seeing many young women planning on using their MBAs in the public sphere,” notes Ellis, “such as Forté Scholar Kara Penn, who spent last year in Southeast Asia, analyzing market conditions and living expenses to help local artisans set better prices for their goods.”

To learn more about these “Top Women in Business” pick up the February/March edition of PINK magazine or visit pinkmagazine.com or fortefoundation.org.

About PINK magazine

PINK magazine is the only national magazine that delivers to women proven strategies for greater professional and personal achievement. Informative and inspiring articles bring to life real stories of how key women across the nation encounter and work through business and personal challenges. For more information about PINK, please visit: pinkmagazine.com

About Forté Foundation

Forté Foundation is a consortium of 26 leading multinational corporations, 27 top business schools in the United States and abroad, and the Graduate Management Admissions Council (GMAC). In just five years, the organization has become a powerful change agent directing women towards leadership roles in business and enabling corporations to more effectively reach and retain top female talent. It is the *only* organization that provides a national infrastructure for women at all stages of the career continuum to access the information, scholarship support and networking connections they need to succeed in business careers. For more, visit the Forté Foundation website at fortefoundation.org.

MEDIA CONTACTS:

PINK magazine: Carol Romashko, Director of Marketing of PINK Magazine, O: 404-601-3504, C: 770-630-6000, cromashko@pinkmagazine.com. Web site: <http://www.pinkmagazine.com/>

Forté Foundation: Suzanne Mannion, Newsmaker Group Public Relations, Inc.
O: 201.445.8451, C: 201.725.0471, smannion@newsmakergroup.com. Web site: <http://www.fortefoundation.org/>