



# The Bay Area's Most Influential Women In Business



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**Relishing the hunt:** Cristina Morgan (left) pursues technology clients with a single-minded purpose.

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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Area's dynamic women inspire tomorrow's leaders



'You are the role models, mentors, advisers and shining examples of what is possible.'

Mary Huss  
Publisher, San Francisco Business Times

We are once again proud to present this annual recognition of the Bay Area's Most Influential Women in Business. For more than a decade, the San Francisco Business Times has been committed to honoring some of the most dynamic and accomplished women in our business community.

In these pages, we present a who's who of outstanding women executives who are making a difference in the organizations they lead, in their industries and in their communities.

As the number of women in top leadership has grown in the Bay Area, we have expanded our recognition to include nearly 150 women leaders. This section honors women in the highest ranks of corporations and large public, nonprofit and government organizations within the San Francisco Business Times coverage area (San Francisco, San Mateo, Marin, Alameda and Contra Costa counties).

In September the San Francisco Business Times will honor an equally stellar group of Bay Area women entrepreneurs and business owners.

The articles herein focus on women's career journeys — from Cristina Morgan, one of the Bay Area's top investment bankers, and Laura Alber, president of Williams-Sonoma — to women who are navigating the corporate lattice networks that are replacing more traditional career ladders.

We also report on women in their 40s and 50s who have transitioned out of successful executive positions in the corporate arena, and now are bringing their expertise to nonprofits. And we describe how women are finding ways to re-enter corporate leadership roles after stepping away for various reasons.

We will honor all of the Influential Women featured in this publication at a gala dinner celebration June 3 at the San Francisco Hilton.


This is always an inspirational event. Many of our honorees bring their mothers, their daughters and young women and men from their companies who aspire to follow in their footsteps.

Many thanks to our Most Influential Women presenting partners Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman, and Deloitte, with special thanks to Pillsbury's Mary Cranston and Barbara Adachi from Deloitte.

Also, thanks to the generous sponsors of Most Influential Women:

AAA of Northern California; AT&T; AT&T Mobility; Bank of America; Kaiser Permanente; Mills College; Robert Half International.

Congratulations to each of the accomplished women who made our Most Influential List. You are the role models, mentors, advisers and shining examples of what is possible for the leaders of tomorrow. I look forward to meeting and celebrating with you on June 3. ■



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# The Most Influential Women in Bay Area Business



## Laura Stein

Senior vice president and general counsel, the Clorox Co.

**Residence:** Lafayette.

**Education:** B.A., M.A., Dartmouth College; J.D., Harvard Law School

**Board memberships:** Franklin Resources Inc.

**Community involvement:** Caridad Partners Giving Circle, member; ABA Asia Rule of Law Initiative, chair; Corporate Pro Bono, co-chair; Family Violence Law Center, volunteer; Lex Mundi Foundation supporting social entrepreneurship, advisory board; California Justice Gap Fund, task force member.

**What makes you influential:** Building trust, always showing integrity, creating a vision and strategy that people want to be part of, giving back to the community and having a great position with a well-respected company.

**What has most contributed to your success:** I've had amazing support from my family and mentors. I've also been fortunate to study at terrific schools and work for great employers. I believe in working hard ... and really living life.

**Biggest issue or opportunity for women in the workplace:** Creating a women's support network to advance more and more terrific, talented women and help each other focus on what truly matters.

**Leader you most admire:** My father, for his unwavering integrity and vision; for always getting things done the right way; for being a phenomenal mentor and champion of diversity, the rule of law and other values I hold dear; and for having a great life with much laughter and love.



## Vivian Stephenson

Chair, board of trustees, Mills College; vice chair of the board, AAA Northern California, Nevada and Utah.

**Residence:** San Francisco.

**Education:** B.A., New York University; M.B.A., University of Havana; Doctorate (HC), Mills College.

**Board memberships:** CarMax Inc.

**Community involvement:** Board member, San Francisco Opera Association.

**What makes you influential:** Influencing women's lives through education so that they may lead in whatever field they choose.

**What has most contributed to your success:** Developing and fostering a high-performance team.

**Biggest issue or opportunity for women in the workplace:** The often elusive top job.

**Leaders you most admire:** Robert J. Ulrich, chairman and CEO Target Corp.



## Lisa Stevens

Executive vice president, San Francisco Bay Area regional president, Wells Fargo & Co.

**Residence:** San Francisco.

**Education:** B.S., political science, Santa Clara University; postgraduate school, Pacific Coast Banking School.

**Board memberships:** Pro Active Business Solutions.

**Community involvement:** Member, San Francisco School Alliance; San Francisco Connect; Jewish Vocational Services.

**What makes you influential:** I believe in serving others by collaborating and working together. The success of our company reflects the success of our community. There is a trickle effect. I am passionate about the work I do because it helps people. Helping people be financially secure and achieve their dreams are admirable. Team members have the ability to make a difference in other people's lives. We are financial doctors.

**What has most contributed to your success:** I maintain a positive attitude realizing that I don't get to choose what happens to me, but I do have control over how I respond to a situation. I try to make the best out of situations.

**Most important advice you ever received or gave:** Life is not fair and there are times when things don't happen the way you want them to. Take control of what you can. You can create and live your dreams if you work hard.

**Leader you most admire:** Dick Kovacevich.



## Polly Sumner

President, platform, alliances and services, Salesforce.com.

**Residence:** Menlo Park.

**Education:** B.A., history and political science, Arizona State University; M.S., international management, American Graduate School of International Management.

**Board memberships:** Tradecard.

**Community involvement:** 4-H sponsor in Trinity County; Forum for Women Entrepreneurs.

**What makes you influential:** I have been in the technology industry for more than 20 years, serving in various leadership positions at Oracle and Telcordia. Recently joined San Francisco-based Salesforce.com. In this role, I am helping to lead the company's Force.com platform strategy.

**What has most contributed to your success:** Being a team player combined with a strong desire to succeed. Never abandoning a customer or partner and making sure that they are successful first and foremost. Brutal honesty with myself about what I can and cannot do.

**Biggest issue or opportunity for women in the workplace:** Choosing what you want to pursue with a maniacal focus that makes you stand out above all others. Deciding when and how you need to change course and constantly evaluating yourself and others on fact-based metrics.

**Leaders you most admire:** Winston Churchill, Eleanor Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Joan of Arc, my mom.



## Sara Thorpe

Partner, managing partner of San Francisco office (January 2003 through March 1, 2008), Gordon & Rees LLP.

**Residence:** Kentfield.

**Education:** B.A., University of Santa Barbara, B.A., J.D., University of San Francisco, School of Law.

**Community involvement:** Board member, development chair, First Graduate; participant, member, Against the Odds for the Breast Cancer Fund,

San Francisco; steering committee member, program chair, speaker, Insurance Committee of the Defense Research Institute.

**What makes you influential:** I am a positive influence on the lives of people around me through optimism and energy, looking for opportunities and experiences for myself and others. I encourage those with whom I work to identify what they are passionate about. This leads to success. I set a good example.

**What has most contributed to your success:** Personal drive, from my parents — both hardworking doctors who believed hard work, family and community involvement were all very important — and very supportive family and friends.

**Most important advice you ever received or gave:** Tell a person two positive things before you deliver any criticism.

**Leader you most admire:** Dion Cominos, Gordon & Rees' managing partner, a great combination of intelligence, efficiency, eloquence and humor.



## Carrie Tolsted

Senior executive vice president, Wells Fargo & Co.

**Residence:** Alamo.

**Education:** B.S., business administration, University of Nebraska; Pacific Coast Banking School, University of Washington.

**What has most contributed to your success:** Because I love what I do, I focus on following my passion and sense of purpose, rather than on where my career will take me. I believe success is the outcome of great teamwork.

**Most important advice you ever received or gave:** (My dad) was a small business owner who taught me that customers are friends and neighbors, that discipline and focus are critical, that anything worth doing is worth doing well, and that each day is a new opportunity to learn and discover.

*You can create and live your dreams if you work hard.'*

## Lisa Stevens

Executive vice president, Bay Area regional president, Wells Fargo & Co.