

## The Most Influential Women in Bay Area Business



**Susan Smartt**

*President and CEO, NatureBridge.*

**Residence:** Oakland.

**Education:** B.S., accounting, San Diego State University; master's, public administration, University of San Francisco.

**Community involvement:** League of Conservation Voters; Chabot Space & Science Center; National Women's Political Caucus.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:**

Twenty-one years ago I followed my passion, took a leap of faith and successfully changed careers. At that time moving from corporate CFO positions to nonprofit environmental work was highly unusual. Best career decision I ever made!

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Don't stand still. Look for opportunity. Build a strong foundation for growth so you'll have significant forward momentum when the economy turns around.

**What makes you influential:** I have a direct and honest approach to working with people at all levels.



**Dianne Snedaker**

*Executive vice president and chief marketing officer, First Republic Bank.*

**Residence:** Larkspur.

**Education:** B.S., journalism, University of Florida; M.S., journalism, Medill School, Northwestern University.

**Community involvement:** Homeward Bound board of directors; Women's Forum West; World Presidents Organization.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:**

Nurturing and developing the First Republic brand, which is like no other. It's rewarding to hear so many people say they love the bank.

**Advice for young women:** Now more than ever, the world needs the strength of resilient women. Sky's the limit for resilient women who think innovatively, manage compassionately and demonstrate flexibility.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Know what is important and what is not. Listen with an open mind. Stay true to core strengths and values. Welcome change. And remember to laugh.

**What makes you influential:** Helping talented people realize their potential by developing their unique strengths. Helping companies discover the distinctive character and power of their brand.



**Pat Splinter**

*Managing director, human capital, VantagePoint Venture Partners.*

**Residence:** Los Altos Hills.

**Education:** Attended San Francisco State University.

**Community involvement:** Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Clara; The Tech Museum of Innovation; The California Museum.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:**

Being a part of shaping the human capital environment and culture of the microprocessor industry.

**Advice for young women:** No job is too small, every job is worth doing well and above all, live up to your commitments.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Same as above. You should behave no differently in a tough economy than you would in a booming economy.

**What makes you influential:** I'm direct and honest with people and try to treat everyone the same regardless of their status or title.



**Beth Springer**

*Executive vice president for international and natural personal care, The Clorox Co.*

**Residence:** San Mateo.

**Education:** A.B., economics, Bryn Mawr College; M.B.A., Harvard Business School.

**Community involvement:** Board of Coyote Point Museum for Environmental Education advisory board; Bryn Mawr College board of directors.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:**

Creating new businesses.

**Advice for young women:** Understand what you really enjoy, and build the skills and network that will help you make a career of it.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Pare back to the essential, improve customer value, take care of your best talent and have the courage to invest when others won't in order to gain ground when the economy rebounds.

**What makes you influential:** Influence comes when you deliver excellent results the right way over time, develop and reward other people, and are humble enough to acknowledge your failures yet confident enough to keep changing and taking on new challenges.



**Valari Dobson Staab**

*President and general manager, KGO-TV/DT.*

**Residence:** San Francisco.

**Education:** B.B.A., University of Texas at Tyler; M.B.A., Baylor University.

**Community involvement:** United Way of the Bay Area; California Association of Broadcasters; San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:** Improving the ratings and profitability of all three television stations I have operated.

**Advice for young women:** Work hard and smart, but have fun.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Advertise while your competitor's are not!

**What makes you influential:** I run the most-watched television station in the Bay Area.



**Susan St. Ledger**

*Senior vice president, high-tech and manufacturing vertical, Salesforce.com.*

**Residence:** Los Altos.

**Education:** B.S., computer science, University of Scranton, Pennsylvania.

**Community involvement:** University of Scranton President's Business Council member; Forum for Women Entrepreneurs and Executives; Step Up Women's Network.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:**

I played a critical role in helping Salesforce.com transition beyond SaaS CRM to create the first major enterprise platform for cloud computing.

**Advice for young women:** Take risks, hire people that are smarter than you and never stop learning and investing in your career.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Stay calm under pressure and continue to deliver and demonstrate your business value.

**What makes you influential:** I've served in leadership positions with influential companies and agencies like Salesforce.com, Sun Microsystems and the National Security Agency for over 20 years.



**Gayle Starr**

*Senior vice president, capital markets, AMB Property Corp.*

**Residence:** San Francisco.

**Education:** B.A., University of California at San Diego; J.D., University of California at Davis.

**Community involvement:** National Association of Industrial and Office Properties; Jewish Community Federation; American Heart Association.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:** Completed more than 35 capital market transactions for a total of approximately \$2.6 billion during 2008.

**Advice for young women:** Reach out to other women, create opportunities by making new contacts, expand your knowledge. When you're seasoned, be a mentor.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Work your relationships. Fostering those professional contacts enables you to identify potential opportunities in every situation.

**What makes you influential:** I'm one of the few people financing international relationships.



**Rita Steel**

*President of Western U.S. and Canadian operations, Robert Half International.*

**Residence:** Alamo.

**Education:** B.S., accounting and economics, Rutgers University.

**Community involvement:** Women's initiative for Self-Employment; founder of a West Coast pilot program that became the model for Robert Half International's annual suit drive.

**Proudest professional accomplishment:** I am most proud of the amazing team we have built here at Robert Half International.

**Advice for young women:** Find your passion, follow it, and create your own opportunities. If you exceed expectations — both your own and those of others — you will always be successful.

**Strategy for success in a tough economy:** Persistence, perseverance and a strong commitment to providing your customers with the best service and value.

**What makes you influential:** The opportunity to positively influence the career progression of our talented team.