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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Trailblazing Women Business Owners Achieve Rapid Growth Despite Challenging Economy**

*American Express OPEN and the Women Presidents' Organization Name Top 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies*

Ft. Lauderdale, FL (April 23, 2010) – [American Express OPEN](#), the small business division of American Express, in partnership with [Women Presidents' Organization](#) (WPO), today released the third ranking of the 50 fastest growing women-led companies in North America. The Top 50 generated a combined \$2.3 billion in gross revenues (2009) and averaged 128 employees (2009).

Argent Associates, Inc., a New Jersey-based Supply Chain company providing managed services in warehousing, logistics and product life cycle management, topped the list and illustrates the vigor of women-led businesses across the continent. Beatriz Manetta, President and CEO, saw her 12-year old company gross revenue grow more than 12 times in two years from \$9,238,850 in 2007 to \$115,000,000 in 2009.

BrightStar, a home healthcare and medical staffing company based in Illinois, came in second on the list. Shelly Sun, the company's CEO plans to take her business public. Artech Information Systems LLC is the third fastest growing company reported. The New Jersey-based business more than doubled its number of jobs from 1,560 in 2007 to 3,500 in 2009.

“The Top 50 list exemplifies the vital role women business owners have on boosting the economy and enhancing job growth overall,” says Marsha Firestone, Ph. D., president and founder of the WPO. “We are pleased to partner with American Express OPEN to honor these powerful women and recognize their triumphs.”

“There are 10 million women-owned businesses in the US that employ over 13 million people and generate nearly \$2 trillion in annual sales,” says Nancy Hood, Vice President at American Express OPEN. “We at OPEN are honored to support this group of women business leaders that thrived in a challenging economic climate.”

All eligible companies were ranked according to a sales growth formula that combines percentage and absolute growth. From this list, the 50 Fastest are selected. To be qualified for the ranking, businesses are required to be privately held, woman-owned/led companies in the U.S. or Canada and have reached revenue of at least \$500,000 by the first week of 2005 and \$2 million in 2009.

In order to help the Top 50 continue to seize even more business opportunities, each of the honored business owners will be offered a [Business Platinum Card](#)<sup>1</sup> from American Express OPEN. The card will include 100,000 Membership Rewards® points, which may be used on capital investments including: the funding of employee recognition programs, business travel or the purchase of office equipment and supplies.

46 of the Top 50 women were polled to examine what makes them tick and uncover how they were able to grow their businesses at breakneck speed and in such a difficult economic environment. The survey touched on key themes including: overcoming business growth challenges, reexamining business strategies despite the current economic condition and prioritizing the important characteristics for being a successful woman leader.

The key findings include:

**Reasons for success**

- *A commitment to high growth* – 71% agreed or strongly agreed that their goal from the very beginning of their leadership of the company was to build a large company
- *Inspiring leaders* – 64% believe their “ability to motivate employees” is the most important characteristic for being a successful woman entrepreneur
- *Surrounding yourself with a skilled team* - 78% say “Hiring the right people” was the most important action that contributed to their company’s growth
- *Adapting to a changing environment* - The strategy most frequently chosen (64%) to meet the challenge of the current economy is to “enter new markets”. Sixty-one percent admitted current economic conditions caused them to change their business strategies

**Toughest challenges**

- *Lower sales* – 56% say their biggest challenge in our current economy is “existing customers reducing purchases.”

**Positive Outlook**

- *Doubling their workforce* – Nearly all (96%) plan on adding employees this year.
- *Boosting the economy and their communities* – Their ability to create much needed jobs is the greatest benefit of being a successful woman entrepreneur

All 50 companies will be honored at a special event hosted by American Express OPEN at the WPO annual conference in Ft. Lauderdale on April 23, 2010. The awards reception will take place from 6:30PM to 8:30PM at the Ritz-Carlton Ft. Lauderdale.

Top 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies Include:

	<b>Entrepreneur Name</b>	<b>Company Name</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Description of Business</b>
1	Beatriz Manetta	Argent Associates, Inc.	NJ	Supply Chain Management
2	Shelly Sun	BrightStar Care	IL	Staffing services
3	Ranjini Poddar	Artech Information Systems LLC	NJ	IT Consulting
4	Gail Warrior-Lawrence	Warrior Group	TX	Premier construction services
5	Elizabeth Elting	TransPerfect	NY	Language services provider
6	Amy Gonzales	AK Environmental, LLC	NJ	Consulting firm
7	Fran Lessans	Passport Health	MD	Provider of travel medical services
8	Hallie Satz	HighRoad Press	NY	Printing solution
9	Vicki Raport	Quantum Retail Technology, Inc.	MN	Software solutions
10	Elaine Osgood	Atlas Travel International	MA	Full-service travel agency

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<sup>1</sup> Based on approvals

11	Sue Butler	Butler/Till Media Services, Inc.	NY	Media agency
12	Dr. Padma Allen	TECHNODYNE LLC	NJ	High-end technology solutions
13	Jill E.M.Kusic Esq.	NRA Group LLC. d/b/a National Recovery Agency	PA	Revenue Recovery Services
14	Cheryl Lang	Integrated Mortgage Solutions	TX	Collateral protection resources
15	Tomima Edmark	Andra Group	TX	Online lingerie store
16	Jeni Bogdan	THE SAXON GROUP, INC.	GA	Heavy industrial construction
17	Carol Koffinke	Beacon Associates, Inc.	MD	Consulting and program support
18	Vickie Wessel	Spirit Electronics, Inc.	AZ	Supply-chain solutions
19	Magdalah Silva	DMS International	MD	Management, consulting training
20	Anjali Ramakumaran	Ampcus Inc	VA	Biz, tech, engineering solutions
21	Stephanie Point	Point 2 Point Global Security, Inc.	MD	Security patrols services
22	Carole Borden	C.B. Transportation, Inc.	PA	Transportation management
23	Nicole Geller	Government Contract Solutions	VA	Professional services and solutions
24	Susan A. Morano	Suzanne's Specialties, Inc.	NJ	Makes Organic Sweeteners
25	Cynthia B. Kaye	Logical Choice Technologies, Inc.	GA	Promethean integration & training
26	Francine Farkas Sears	Fabrique Ltd.	CT	Design & Make accessory case
27	Min Cho	Nova Datacom	VA	Information assurance
28	Lee Ann Cochran	Cochran Electric	WA	Electrical contractor
29	Donna K. Alligood	Knowledge Link Incorporated	VA	Information technology services
30	Dr. Ellen H. Yankellow	Correct Rx Pharmacy Services, Inc.	MD	Pharmaceuticals
31	Cynthia J. Pasky	Strategic Staffing Solutions	MI	Consulting and staff augmentation
32	Pamela O'Rourke	ICON Information Consultants	TX	Recruiting
33	Katherine Dietzen	MedEdNow, LLC	NY	Medical education communications
34	Elizabeth Williams	roxbury technology corp	MA	Remanufacturer/distributor of ink
35	Sonu Ratra	Akraya, Inc.	CA	Staffing
36	Melissa Cather-Thiede	ProActive Solutions, Inc.	KS	IT services and solutions
37	Lori Matthews	ISOFLEX	CA	Distributor of stable isotopes
38	Liz Lasater	Red Arrow Logistics	WA	Transportation provider
39	Jennifer Scully	Clinical Resources LLC	GA	Staffing firm
40	Wendi Goldsmith	Bioengineering Group	MA	Ecological restoration
41	Laura K.T. Schriver	Language Services Associates	PA	Foreign language communication
42	Priti Parikh	Sweta systems Inc	AZ	Tech Consulting services
43	Lisa Moore Turano	Providus	TX	Legal Staffing
44	Sherry S Deutschmann	LetterLogic, Inc	TN	Manufactures mail, letters
45	Danielle Waske	DNT ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES INC	GA	Contracting specialty
46	Juli Spottiswood	Parago	TX	Rewards-based incentive solutions
47	Noreen Guanci	Long Term Solutions	MA	Elder care coordination& support
48	Maria D Bradley	Benefit Express Services, LLC	IL	Admin and enrollment services
49	Kiran Gill	PARS Environmental, Inc.	NJ	Environmental consulting firm
50	Heidi Ganahl	Camp Bow Wow	CO	Pet care franchise

### About the Women Presidents' Organization

The Women Presidents' Organization (WPO) is the premier peer advisory organization which internationally connects top women entrepreneurs at the multimillion-dollar level (\$2 million in gross annual sales or \$1 million for service-based business) for greater professional success. In monthly meetings across four continents, chapters composed of 20 accomplished women presidents from diverse industries and backgrounds invest time and energy in themselves and their businesses to drive their corporations to the next level. For more information, call 212-688-4114 or visit <http://www.womenpresidentsorg.com>.

### About American Express OPEN

American Express OPEN is the leading payment card issuer for small businesses in the United States and supports business owners with products and services to help them run and grow their

businesses. This includes business charge and credit cards that deliver purchasing power, flexibility, rewards, savings on business services from an expanded lineup of partners and online tools and services designed to help improve profitability. Learn more at [www.OPEN.com](http://www.OPEN.com) and connect with us at [openforum.com](http://openforum.com) and [twitter.com/openforum](https://twitter.com/openforum).

American Express is a global services company, providing customers with access to products, insights and experiences that enrich lives and build business success. Learn more at [www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com) and connect with us on [www.facebook.com/americanexpress](https://www.facebook.com/americanexpress), [www.twitter.com/americanexpress](https://www.twitter.com/americanexpress) and [www.youtube.com/americanexpress](https://www.youtube.com/americanexpress).

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