



# pearls of WISDOM

BY HEDY RATNER | ROSEMARY FANTI ILLUSTRATION

Celebrating 30 years in business is a milestone, but it's all the more significant when the entrepreneur is a woman in publishing. Sherren Leigh, the original *Today's Chicago Woman*, has the distinction of being that entrepreneur as both founder and publisher of the city's only magazine for and about professional women. Other women-owned publications have come and gone, and none have had TCW's staying power, strong content and excellent graphics.

To pay tribute to a woman whose first issue of TCW rolled off the presses in October 1982, I offer 30 "pearls of wisdom" (the pearl is the 30th anniversary symbol) from 30 successful women business owners. If you own a business – or plan to start one – and need a formula for longevity and success, read on.

"Always treat your customers as you'd want to be treated, and let them know how much you appreciate their loyalty."

**PATT GALLAGHER** co-founder, Evergreen Supply Company

"Love what you do. Share what you do. Whether you know it or not, you'll be marketing what you do!"

**GEMMA ALLEN** partner, Ladden & Allen, Chartered

"Don't be so tied down that you can't float with trends, but stay committed to your passion and focus on your niche."

**MARY WALTER** owner, Mary Walter

"Business evolution and success require a steady simmer of creativity, adaptation and financial smarts. Get expertise where you need it."

**DIANA WIDMAN** owner, Diana Widman Design

"The more you strive to make your dream a reality and the harder you work to maintain it, the ultimate outcome will be that much more successful and rewarding."

**ALEXIS COZZINI** owner, SARCA

"Get clear about what you're doing and why. Then use that clarity as an empowering business development and time management tool."

**CHARISSE WITHERSPOON** president/CEO, Witherspoon Marketing Group, Inc.

## 30 business owners share business-building advice.

"Be willing to give advice and counsel that what you believe in your heart is right for your client, even if it's not always what she wants to hear."

**CHRIS RUYS** president, Chris Ruys Communications

"Keep up with technology and new resources like social media. Remain responsive, efficient and reliable."

**ELAINE SOLOWAY** president, Elaine Soloway Public Relations

"Watch the bottom line very carefully and cut expenses where you can. Do this well and you can survive for 30 years or more, even through economic ups and downs."

**KAREN JOHNSON** president, Roughneck Concrete Drilling and Sawing Company

"Your network determines your net worth."

**CAMEKA D. SMITH** founder/CEO, The BOSS Network

"Do what you love and stay true to yourself. Use your job for the greater good of others – it organically creates success."

**KATHLEEN HENSON** founder/CEO, Henson Consulting

"Maintain a balance of growth, adaptation, focus and experimentation to secure longevity. Think big, while managing small."

**JANICE BOND** president/chief strategy officer, SAVANT

"Own your niche. Focus on a small segment of your industry or profession, and market yourself as the go-to expert in your field."

**MERILEE ELLIOTT** owner, Merilee Elliott Interiors

"Be responsive. We acquired two projects this year because we were the first to call the prospective client back."

**MELISSA LAGOWSKI** owner/manager, Big Buzz Idea Group

"Be new, different and forward-thinking. Be the one who makes a difference for your customer."

**TOSCA RAGNINI** owner, ToscaTech

"Stay true to your core values. It will increase employee loyalty and customer satisfaction and generate more revenue long-term."

**MAUREEN BEAL** president/CEO, National Van Lines

"Never give up and embrace change; never be too proud to ask for help."

**KAREN BARNETT** president/CEO, Valley Screen Process

"Nurture and cherish your passion – it's the key to business longevity. Make ethically sound decisions because, in the final analysis, the right thing to do is always right."

**LORETTA ROSENMYER** founder/CEO, INTREN

"In business, diversification is integral to success. It's important that any ventures pursued play to your strengths."

**SHEA L. SOUCIE** partner, Soucie Horner, Ltd.

"Impart courage in everyone around you, inspire performance and focus on growth, prosperity and desire to give back!"

**LAUREL DELANEY** founder/president, Global TradeSource, Ltd.

"Be open, flexible and always focused on how you can be of service to another person or business."

**DIANE VALLETTA** owner, Valletta Associates

"Do more than is required. The distance between someone who consistently achieves their goals and those who spend their lives and careers merely following is the extra mile."

**MARIE BARTKOVA** owner, Ambra Salon & European Spa

"Your business should have a healthy balance of creativity and innovation, and a driving force of passion!"

**CORRI MCFADDEN** owner/founder, eDrop-Off

"Surround yourself with people smarter than you and challenge you to think outside the box...then listen to them!"

**CHERI MCESSY** owner/chief nursing officer, BrightStar of Chicago

"Having integrity is key to running a company; you have to be able to network and follow through to make your clients happy – and don't stop until they're happy."

**TAMMY KOHL** owner, Tahkol Design

"When employees are happy, customers are happy. They are both equally important to the success of any company."

**JOANNA SOBRAN** president/CEO, MXOtech

"There's no one key to success – that's impossible – but first, you have to start with education, determination and hard work."

**ELIZABETH ADAM** owner, Elizabeth Adam Salon

"If you want more business, give more business and referrals to others. What goes around comes around – jut not always from the same source."

**ELLEN ROGIN** president, Strategic Financial Design

"Wear fabulous jewelry – and exceed your customer's expectations!"

**SHERRY BENDER** owner, The Goldsmith Ltd.

"Surround yourself with other entrepreneurs and encourage an honest exchange about running a successful company. It will make you feel more connected and less stressed."

**TIFFANI KIM** owner, Tiffani Kim Institute ■