



KATHY BOE
President & CEO
of Boecore

* BEYOND THE
GLASS CEILING

PHOTO BY DENNIS REED

ENTERPRISING ENTREPRENEURS

HOW MANY OF US FANTASIZE ABOUT STARTING OUR OWN BUSINESS...BEING THE BOSS... CALLING THE SHOTS? WELL, THIS CLASSIC AMERICAN DREAM IS SPURRING WOMEN INTO ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTION. THE NUMBER OF WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES—MORE THAN 10 MILLION—IS GROWING AT TWICE THE RATE OF ALL U.S. FIRMS, ACCORDING TO DEPARTMENT OF LABOR STATISTICS. GENERATING \$2.5 TRILLION IN ANNUAL SALES AND EMPLOYING NEARLY 20 MILLION PEOPLE, FEMALE-LED COMPANIES ARE DRIVING MUCH OF THE NATION'S ECONOMY. AND THIS TREND IS NOT JUST EXEMPLIFIED BY SMALL BAKERIES OR CONSIGNMENT SHOPS, THE MOVEMENT INCLUDES POWERFUL WOMEN CEOS RUNNING MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR ORGANIZATIONS. CONSIDER SOME REMARKABLE LOCAL ROLE MODELS...

WRITTEN BY CATHY CLARK

KATHY BOE

“For the most part I have not found being a woman in business to be a hindrance. Sure there are a few individuals out there who take issue with it, but for the most part, I have received a huge amount of support from other executives, owners, friends, and family—both men and women,” says Kathy Boe, president and CEO of Boecore, an engineering services company recognized in 2005 as the third fastest growing woman-owned company in Colorado.

Boe’s approach is simply to ignore the gender issue. She is convinced that if you perceive it as a major problem, it will be. “And I will say that I enjoy exceeding the expectations of those that have been skeptical of my abilities,” she adds with a smile. “For example when men ask what I do and I reply that I am the president and founder of an engineering services company, they usually look surprised or even dumbfounded. Conversely, when I tell women, they think it is sensational!”

Her advice is to be positive, ignore the small stuff, and focus on building your company. But it’s not easy. Her greatest challenge was getting the guts to leave a lucrative, salaried position to start Boecore more than five years ago. The qualities that made the difference were confidence and belief in her mission—the same qualities that helped her set a goal of \$10 million in revenues this year.

She says she also owes her success to her previous background as a programmer in defense for almost 10 years and the 10 years she spent doing technical staffing. “It provided the foundation for the experience I needed to run Boecore,” she says. “Over those 20 years, I watched and learned, discarded those things that I witnessed in previous jobs that didn’t work, and replicated those that did.”

Her proudest entrepreneurial moment came last December when she got up to speak to her employees at Boecore’s five-year anniversary. “I realized that I had achieved the goal that I set out to accomplish. We had grown a team of almost 100 employees that understand the value that small business brings to the



KELLY ROTH
Owner and founder
of Delta Solutions
and Strategies

industry. Our employees know that it is their hard work that has built our reputation today. Boecore employees consistently overachieve for our customers. They like being a big fish in a small pond. Signing the profit-sharing letters recognizing our employees for their contributions was a great occasion.”

Boe believes that if you do the right thing for your employees and customers, the company will prevail. “We remain committed to treating our employees like customers, which, in turn, enables us to exceed our customers’ expectations.”

Boe enjoys the results that focus and collaboration have brought Boecore. She says she didn’t start the company just to make money. She wanted to create a team atmosphere that inspired excellence. “Ultimately, the fun is in setting the vision and working toward it alongside highly motivated people.”

KELLY ROTH

Boe’s philosophy is echoed by another local entrepreneur—Kelly Roth, owner and founder of Delta Solutions & Strategies, a nationally recognized provider of organizational strategic planning, program management, and organizational and acquisition transformation. The company works within the defense, intelligence, law enforcement, and domestic and international security marketplaces, specializing in providing highly classified and sensitive technical and staffing solutions.

The company works with an impressive list of clients—North American Aerospace Defense Command, U.S. Northern Command, Air Force Space Command, Electronic Systems Center, National Security Space Institute, and the Department of the Interior. It has also aided the Colorado Springs Fire Department and the Colorado Springs Police Department in counterterrorism planning. So strong is Delta Solutions & Strategies’ commitment to quality service, it was named the 2006 winner of the Small Business Administration’s Prime Contractor of the Year Award.

Roth functions quite successfully as a “boss lady” in this traditionally male-dominated industry. She says if she had perceived this role as a problem, it would have become a self-fulfilling prophecy. “I don’t believe a strong gender bias exists. No general sentiment that ‘she can’t do that because she is a woman’ dominates any field,” Roth explains. “When we do find challenges, innovative entrepreneurs—whether women or men—tend to find creative ways to deal with them, and I think that is what makes us successful.”

However, she does believe that women can capitalize on some intrinsic advantages. Assembling a network of people you trust is the core of constructing a strong, viable business, and women are especially successful in sharing the right kind of information, she asserts. “We can build powerful communi-

PHOTO BY WENDY PEARCE NELSON