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50 FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS RECOGNIZED FOR STRONG BUSINESS GROWTH

The Women Presidents' Organization and American Express Recognize 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies; 10th Annual Award Ceremony Held in Orlando

Orlando, FL (May 5, 2017) – The [Women Presidents' Organization](#) (WPO), in partnership with [American Express](#), today released the 10th annual ranking of the 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies – marking one decade of honorees. The companies on this year's 50 Fastest list span a range of industries including technology, retail and consulting. The companies generated a combined \$7.2 billion in 2016 revenues (mean of \$155.6 million) and collectively employed 46,000 people in 2016 (mean of 725). The awardees who took home the top rankings are:

- **Fitness studio franchise Orangetheory Fitness** is the fastest growing women-owned business and is appearing on the list for the second time, moving up from the #3 spot in 2016. The seven-year-old Boca Raton, FL-based company, led by Ellen Latham, saw its revenue flourish over the past two years (\$86,842,513 in 2014 to \$451,101,433 in 2016) and hired 98 employees during that time span. Ellen's advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to turn the "I can't" channels in their brain into "I can" channels.
- **Pinnacle Group, an IT workforce solutions firm based in Dallas**, remains at the #2 spot for the second year in a row. Nina Vaca, President and CEO, saw her 21-year-old company approach \$2 billion dollars in revenue (\$1,887,230,307 in 2016, up from \$665,504,491 in 2014). The entrepreneur, who still owns 100% of the firm she founded at age 24 with \$300 of startup capital, attributes her company's success to its ability to meet the ever-changing demands of clientele.
- **IT services firm Technology Concepts Group International**, a newcomer to the list, is the third fastest-growing company in the 2017 rankings. Based in Somerset, NJ, the nine-year-old business, founded and led by Avis Yates Rivers, saw its revenue rise from \$6,726,000 in 2014 to \$49,000,000 in 2016. Avis' primary strategy for success has been to deliver value and create solutions to respond to customer challenges.

“We are proud to announce the 10th class of 50 Fastest honorees. This year, we’re excited to have awardees from a diverse range of industries and locations, including three international winners,” said Marsha Firestone, Ph.D., President and Founder of the Women Presidents’ Organization. “Our partnership with American Express has been crucial in acknowledging the influence women-owned and led companies have in job creation and growing the global economy.”

“Supporting the growth of women-owned and led companies is a true mission for us at American Express, and we are delighted to recognize these trailblazing women for their success,” said Susan Sobott, President, Global Commercial Payments, American Express. “We hope these awardees and the stories of their business success will inspire others to create and lead prosperous businesses.”

Each of the honored business owners will be offered a congratulatory prize from American Express.

Applicants do not have to be WPO members. All eligible companies were ranked according to a sales growth formula that combines percentage and absolute growth; the top 50 were selected for the list. To be qualified for the ranking, businesses are required to be privately held, woman-owned/led companies and have reached an annual revenue of at least \$500,000 as of January 1, 2012.

More about the 2017 50 Fastest:

- Average honoree age: 50
- CEOs that founded the business: 92%
- Started the business with their own funds: 72%
- CEOs that are active in day-to-day operations: 100%
- Companies that do business globally: 36%
- Plan to continue to grow their company: 92%
- Provide health insurance: 94%

All 50 companies will be honored at a special event hosted by American Express at the 2017 WPO Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida on Friday, May 5, 2017. The lunch and awards ceremony will take place from 12:30 PM to 1:30 PM at the Ritz-Carlton Grande Lakes.

Immediately following the lunch and awards ceremony, American Express will also host a Guide to Growth Panel from 1:30 PM to 2:15 PM. The panel will feature 50 Fastest honorees, who will share insights and advice for WPO members looking to grow their businesses.

The 2017 50 Fastest-Growing Women-Owned/Led Companies include:

| | Entrepreneur Name | Company Name | City, State/Province/Country |
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| 1 | Ellen Latham | Orangetheory Fitness | Boca Raton, FL |
| 2 | Nina Vaca | Pinnacle Technical Resources, Inc. d/b/a Pinnacle Group | Dallas, TX |
| 3 | Avis Yates Rivers | Technology Concepts Group International | Somerset, NJ |
| 4 | Dr. Rebecca Thomley | Morning Sun Financial Services | Golden Valley, MN |
| 5 | Catherine Downey | CATMEDIA | Tucker, GA |
| 6 | Elizabeth Hammond | Contract Direct | Southfield, MI |
| 7 | Phyllis Winchester Newhouse | Xtreme Solutions Inc | Atlanta, GA |
| 8 | Claudia Mirza | Akorbi | Plano, TX |

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| 9 | Christina Seelye | Maximum Games | Walnut Creek, CA |
| 10 | Debra Gentry | Contingent Resource Solutions, LLC | Duncan, SC |
| 11 | Raegan Moya Jones | Aden & Anais, Inc. | Brooklyn, NY |
| 12 | Jamila Stanford | Nugate Group, LLC | San Jose, CA |
| 13 | Rebecca Cenni | Atrium Staffing | New York, NY |
| 14 | Patti Massey | MYCA Material Handling Solutions | Cary, NC |
| 15 | Kay Ivie | Ivie & Associates | Flower Mound, TX |
| 16 | Tierra Kavanaugh (Turner) Wayne | TKT & Associates, Inc. | Louisville, KY |
| 17 | Pamela Evette | Quality Business Solutions, Inc. | Travelers Rest, SC |
| 18 | Mary Kariotis | Merrimak Capital Company | Novato, CA |
| 19 | Shelly Sun | BrightStar Franchising, LLC | Gurnee, IL |
| 20 | Britt Whitfield | The Revel Group | Chicago, IL |
| 21 | Elizabeth Prim | Prim Construction, LLC | Fort Worth, TX |
| 22 | Elizabeth Scherle | Inflenster | New York, NY |
| 23 | Liz Elting | TransPerfect | New York, NY |
| 24 | Margaret Marcucci | CorAnet Corp | New York, NY |
| 25 | Yi Li | Renogy | Ontario, Canada |
| 26 | Katie Conovitz | Twelve, Inc. | Brooklyn, NY |
| 27 | Stacy Knight | CA South | Atlanta, GA |
| 28 | Roberta Roberts Shank "Sissie" | Chas Roberts A/C & Plumbing, Inc. | Phoenix, AZ |
| 29 | Tana Greene | Greene-Group | Davidson, NC |
| 30 | Anjali "Ann" Ramakumaran | Ampcus Inc | Chantilly, VA |
| 31 | Simone Schendel Reese | Schendel Mechanical Contracting Ltd | Edmonton, Alberta, Canada |
| 32 | Jennifer Smith | Innovative Office Solutions, LLC | Burnsville, MN |
| 33 | Michelle Baker | Swoon Group, LLC | Chicago, IL |
| 34 | Patricia Bible | Katom Restaurant Supply, Inc. | Kodak, TN |
| 35 | Karen McPartland | TSAC Engineering | San Diego, CA |
| 36 | Sushumnaa Roy Jalajam | Softpath System, LLC | Norcross, GA |
| 37 | Pamela O'Rourke | ICON Information Consultants, LP | Houston, TX |
| 38 | Margrit Anne Wolff | Mercury Freight (PTY), LTD | Johannesburg, South Africa |
| 39 | Ronia Kruse | OpTech, LLC | Troy, MI |
| 40 | Kathleen Benson | Office Remedies, Inc. dba ORI | Herndon, VA |
| 41 | Victoria Vasques | Tribal Tech, LLC | Alexandria, VA |
| 42 | Cordia Harrington | The Bakery Cos. | Nashville, TN |
| 43 | Linda A Sullivan | Administrative Strategies, LLC | Fishers, IN |
| 44 | Tamara L. Nall | The Leading Niche | New York, NY |
| 45 | Diane Astley | Xclusive Staffing | Westminster, CO |
| 46 | Patty Klein | A-Plus Meetings & Incentives | Coral Gables, FL |
| 47 | Natalie McDonald | Create NYC | New York, NY |
| 48 | Annette Johnson | CMT Services, Inc. | Hyattsville, MD |

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| 49 | Cheryl Pia | PIA Agency | Carlsbad, CA |
| 50 | Lindsay McCutchen | Reliant Staffing Systems, dba Career Start | Rochester, NY |

About the Women Presidents’ Organization (WPO)

The WPO is the ultimate affiliation for successful women entrepreneurs worldwide. In monthly meetings across the world, women from diverse industries invest time and energy in themselves and their businesses to drive their corporations to the next level. Local WPO chapters are coordinated by a professional facilitator and meet monthly to share business expertise and experience in a confidential setting. For more information, call 212-688-4114 or visit www.womenpresidentsorg.com. Follow WPO on Twitter (@womenpresidents) and like us on Facebook.

About American Express Global Commercial Payments

Through its Global Commercial Payments division, American Express offers a suite of payment and lending products that help businesses and organizations of all sizes gain financial savings, control and efficiency. Global Commercial Payments provides solutions for travel and everyday business spending, cross border payments, global currency solutions, and business financing.

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