



M Booth Alex Della Rocca 212-539-3203 alex@dmbooth.com	American Express Melissa Filipek 212-640-8658 melissa.j.filipek@aexp.com	Women Presidents' Organization Susan Johnson 917-601-5778 sjohnson@womenpresidentsorg.com
---	---	---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**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
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
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
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.

To learn more about Global Commercial Payments visit business.americanexpress.com

To learn more about American Express OPEN, which provides products and services for small businesses and entrepreneurs in the United States, visit www.OPEN.com

About American Express

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 americanexpress.com and connect with us on facebook.com/americanexpress, foursquare.com/americanexpress, linkedin.com/company/american-express, twitter.com/americanexpress, and youtube.com/americanexpress.

Key links to products, services and corporate responsibility information: [charge and credit cards](#), [business credit cards](#), [Plenti rewards program](#), [travel services](#), [gift cards](#), [prepaid cards](#), [merchant services](#), [Accertify](#), [corporate card](#), [business travel](#) and [corporate responsibility](#).

###