



## Advisory Link & Career Dimensions Winter 2006 Newsletter

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### 2006—Off to a Great Start

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With temperatures in the mid 70s here in Dallas, it is hard to believe it is February and the start of yet another great year. Terrific things are happening with Advisory Link. Our Women's Executive and Business Owner Exec-U-Link group is scheduled to have its first meeting of the year February 16 and 17. We have many returning members and a couple of new ones. This group, made up of successful female business owners, high level corporate executive and top-notch academicians, serves as:

- A sounding board for brainstorming new ideas and solving existing challenges
- A board of directors to assist business owners who don't have their own
- A source of support, inspiration and fresh perspectives
- A safe, confidential venue for highly motivated women who face many challenges in their day-to-day business and personal lives.

After a year hiatus, we are reconvening the Women's Automotive Dealers Exec-U-Link. In addition to the previous members, automotive dealers who both owned and participated in daily operations, we are inviting some female general managers to join the group in 2006. We will be meeting three times a year for a day and a half. Our first meeting is April 19 and 20 in Dallas. If you know some dynamic women in the automotive industry who would enjoy being a part of this incredible group, contact Gerry Myers at [gerry@advisorylink-dfw.com](mailto:gerry@advisorylink-dfw.com). Women in this predominantly male industry need more opportunities to come together as leaders and receive and provide support, solutions and thoughts on their day-to-day issues.

Our Women's Advisory Board program is generating lots of new ideas and potential for 2006. Judging from the feedback from successful Boards and the lack of knowledge about recruiting and marketing to women on the part of many businesses, we anticipate many exciting new ventures. Our mission is to help companies attract and retain this very lucrative and talented market segment as both longtime buyers and employees.

How is your year shaping up? We hope you have lots of interesting goals and exciting undertakings that will help you grow both professionally and personally. If not, set aside some time to rethink and develop your plans. There is still a lot of 2006 left, but before we know it, we will be thinking about 2007.

*Gerry Myers*      *Tamara Benson*

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## **Portland, the City of Powerful Women**

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When one thinks about the location of powerful women in this country, names like Washington DC and New York City frequently come to mind. But according to the Center for Women's Business Research, Portland-Vancouver's metro area has the highest percentage of women-owned companies in the country. More than half of all privately held firms in the Portland-Vancouver area are at least 50 percent owned by women.

According to reporter Heike Mayer of *The Oregonian*, "These companies tend to embrace and nurture more female employees, flexible schedules and inclusive management styles. Between 1997 and 2004, Portland-area women have started an estimated 21,600 companies."

Craig Chambers, owner of Oregon Financial Services, realized that he could increase the number of female associates and clients at his agency by having Advisory Link create a Women's Advisory Board (WAB) for him to tap into this new powerhouse. His WAB, comprised of influential women in all sectors of the economy and chaired by Joanne Van Menashe, is focusing on providing financial literacy to girls and women in the community. Chambers said his firm has brought in five women as financial professionals in the past year.

"We were not surprised at the caliber of women that Advisory Link attracted," said Chambers. "What amazed us was the level of commitment women have to help us learn what is important to women, help us increase financial literacy and help us find high caliber women interested in joining our 116 year old firm. Each meeting of our Women's Advisory Board reaffirms the value of our decision and our investment of time and money."

"Portland is in an ideal position to take advantage of the emerging 'Matriarch Economy,'" said Mayer. "The region, like many other areas of the US, draws well-educated people, many of them enterprising women."

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## **Women are Driving the US Economy**

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Portland isn't the only place women shine. They virtually drive the US economy. Women are responsible for 83 percent of all consumer purchases, including 51 percent of consumer electronics spending. This number is even more amazing when you consider that Americans are the biggest spenders on the planet, spending more each week than the annual GDP of Finland.

Women's economic clout continues to increase. The number of women earning \$100,000 has tripled in the last three years. In one-third of dual income couples, the woman out earns her husband. Single women are purchasing homes at twice the rate of single men. Within the first year of ownership, women spend almost \$9,000 on home improvement projects, totaling more than \$70 billion worth of purchases in the home improvement industry last year. This is up from just over \$55 billion in 1995.

Women make up more than 50% of all new automotive purchases, an \$83 billion market. They influence 85% of all car purchases. More than 65% of customers who take their vehicles to repair shops are women. Women spend \$300 billion annually on used car sales, maintenance, repairs and service.

Thus women are influential employees, business owners and customers. Companies both large and small should recognize the face of the economy and that it often wears lipstick, not aftershave.

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## Advisory Link Named as Finalist in 2005 Stevie® Awards for Women Entrepreneurs



**Advisory Link** was named a Finalist in the 2005 Stevie Awards for Women Entrepreneurs in both the **Women Helping Women** category (recognizing businesses and individuals who supported and contributed to the development of women in business) and the **Community Involvement Program of the Year** (recognizing best practices in corporate social responsibility and community activities). We were selected from more than 470 entries.

The Stevie Awards for Women Entrepreneurs, [www.stevieawards.com/women](http://www.stevieawards.com/women), is an international awards competition recognizing the accomplishments of women executives and business owners. The awards are produced by the creators of the prestigious American Business Awards, hailed as “the business world’s own Oscars” by the New York Post (April 27, 2005).

“The Winners and Finalists in the 2005 Stevie Awards for Women Entrepreneurs comprise the most dynamic women in business today. These executives and entrepreneurs have accomplished innovative and extraordinary things while building their businesses and serving their communities,” said Michael Gallagher, president of The Stevie Awards. “We congratulate all of them on their achievement.”

Advisory Link focuses on helping organizations increase their number of female employees, managers, executives and customers. We enable our clients to achieve these goals by developing and facilitating external Women’s Advisory Boards (WAB) and Exec-U-Link (EUL) peer-coaching groups.



The WABs have assisted in educating companies about career opportunities, marketing and product needs important to women. We are proud that all our boards spearhead community outreach programs that focus on the needs of women and girls in their local areas. Additionally, we have created a database of more than 300 WAB members nationally who can network with each other to do business, provide contacts and share best practices.



## Close-Ups: Good News from Our Readers



**Debbie Braden**, a former TV producer, is now the owner of **Kinetic Art Works**, a company that rents or sells wall art and sculpture to organizations, individuals and TV production companies. Her gallery will be opening in March. She represents a variety of artists and enjoys working with her clients to make art available on an affordable basis. If you would like to consult with Debbie on increasing the aesthetics of your office or home, visit her website at <http://www.kineticartworks.com> or call her at 214.821.0744.

**Donald Graff** has recently joined PlansCapital Bank as a senior vice president in the commercial real estate lending group. He will be working on the acquisition, construction and mini-perm financing and refinancing of retail, multi-family, office, industrial and warehouse projects.

Having enjoyed a marriage of many years, **Steve Goldman** and **Karen Almond** have decided to build a business together as well. **Goldman Tech Solutions** offers computer services for small businesses and homes, including onsite computer repair, upgrades and tutoring on PCs and Macs. If you need help, call 214.282.1161.

**Lisa Dial** has a new radio show about women called **WiseWomen on KEOM 88.5**. Tune in on Saturday at 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. or Sunday at 10:30 a.m. or 9:30 p.m. for information on women entrepreneurs and other issues important to listeners of both genders.

We have good news from another attorney who ran from the law. **Shelly Ferguson, JD**, has found a satisfying career with **The Princeton Review** managing its high school operations, which include the SAT, ACT and PSAT prep classes.

**Garland Van Dyke** is the new **minister for the Church of Christ in Sinton, Texas**, north of Corpus Christi. A recent note from him thanks Taunee “for helping to clear the path through the forest.”

A former HRVP, **Jack Wiggans** is now a Vice President and Executive Director of **TrinNet Inc.**, which provides HR services to professional firms including high tech, legal, banking, VC, accounting and other service companies.

**Teal Besson** is very excited about her internship with **Green Grass Studios**, a small, fast-growing company known for its exceptional 3-D modeling and animation. She says she’s amazed at how networking introduced her to the animation community and put her in touch with her current employer. According to Teal, “No one should graduate without being taught how to network.”

### Community Kudos

**Becky Sykes** was presented with the ATHENA award last fall at the Greater Dallas Chamber’s annual Women’s Business Conference. This is an awards program active in 100 cities across the USA.

**Leia Francisco** in Fairfax County, Virginia, tells us that the Capitol Financial Partners’ Women’s Advisory Board’s signature program, the **Financial Education Center for Women Entrepreneurs**, received a \$50,000 grant from The Claude Moor Foundation to expand volunteer services.

**Leia** will be one of the keynote speakers for the annual **Women and Money Conference** sponsored by the YWCA in Tucson this April, giving a motivational speech, *Your Financial Future: The Power of One*.

**Taunee Besson** has been speaking to a number of community agencies and churches such as **Career Connections and Jewish Family Services** on career issues and job search techniques. If you are in the Dallas Metroplex and have a group that needs career advice, contact her at [tauneeb@careerdimensions-dfw.com](mailto:tauneeb@careerdimensions-dfw.com) or 972.239.1399.

### On a Personal Note

With **Mari Paz** as his partner, **Dick Dunstan**, who is “enjoying life after MCIWorldcom” achieved a 40-year goal of dancing the Flamenco Sevillanas for the first time at DeTapas Spanish Restaurant in Addison, TX. Congratulations, Ricardo!

**Maria Thereza** and **Matt Neisler** have settled into a new home with their new baby. Maria’s mother came the whole way from Brazil to help get everyone settled in.



## Do You Need a Career Checkup?



Now that you've had time to recover from the holidays, it's time for a Career Checkup. Here's a short quiz to help you decide if you're on the right path or if you need a course correction to make the most of your career/business.

### Do any of these statements sound familiar?

- I'm trying to decide what I want to do when I grow up.
- I'm good at my career, but I hate it.
- There are skills I would love to use, but my job doesn't require them.
- I'm stagnating in my current position. I want to move to another, more satisfying job within my company, but I don't know how.
- My small business is growing quickly. I have a tiger by the tail. I need a plan.
- Every Sunday night my stomach turns into knots when I think about going to work Monday morning.
- I've reached the top of the mountain and I don't like the view.
- I want my career to make a difference. What I've been doing doesn't.
- My career is going well, but I need a coach/mentor to advise me on how to move to the next level. I've found that doing excellent work isn't enough.
- I'm tired of swimming with the sharks.
- The job market has collapsed in my field and it isn't coming back any time soon, if ever.
- My small business isn't prospering. I'm lonely, bored and frustrated, but I don't know how to pull myself out of this rut.
- I've always had a yen to be an entrepreneur. Is now the time?
- Money has never been that important to me, but with two kids heading to college and my mother dependent upon me, I need to increase my income.
- Money used to be very important to me, but career satisfaction is now number one.
- I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. Surely there must be a happier way to live.

If you checked any of the above statements, Career Dimensions can help you:

- Move into a more satisfying career
- Take you business/career to the next level
- Plan a career path that uses your best skills
- Develop strategies to enhance your position while benefiting your employer's profitability and
- Achieve the right balance between your personal and professional time.

Please contact Taunee at 972.239.1399 or [taunee@careerdimensions-dfw.com](mailto:taunee@careerdimensions-dfw.com) if you have a career/life management issue that requires expert attention. She will work with you in person or via phone to achieve your career/life mission.

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## **Check Out Our New Website**

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We've revamped The Advisory Link website [www.advisorylink-dfw.com](http://www.advisorylink-dfw.com) to provide visitors with more information about women as both employees and clients. A rotating quote featuring some of the most respected names in business tops our new homepage. A brief overview of our [Women's Advisory Board](#) and [Exec-U-Link](#) programs links to more detailed information. Additionally, two interactive short quizzes let readers test their company's score on attracting and keeping women employees and customers.

A list of hyperlinks from the homepage takes you to the [Career Dimensions](#) website, [news](#) about our business, [award-winning articles](#) that Gerry and Taunee have written, and much more.

An extensive new section, [Facts on Women](#), documents studies and trends about the importance of marketing and selling to women and presents a solid business case for hiring, retaining and promoting more women.

Below is a sampling of the type of information you will find in this section including quotes from other marketing gurus, statistics on women business owners, women's purchasing power in home improvements, automotive and electronics, and data to support a business case for hiring, retaining and promoting women within your organization.

- More than half of the managerial positions in major corporations are held by women.
- Over half (258) of Fortune 500 companies have two or more female corporate officers.
- 11.2% of corporate officers are women.
- Women hold 11.1% of board seats in the Fortune 500.
- Of Fortune 100 companies, 97% have at least one woman on their boards.
- In 2005, in the U.S. Senate, there are 14 women senators, or 14% of the 100 seats.
- In the House of Representatives, there are 67 women representatives, or 15.4% of the 435 seats.

While the percents are increasing, we have a long way to go to reach 50%.

Our website is evolving as the company grows and the environment changes. Bookmark our site at <http://www.advisorylink-dfw.com> to check in regularly for valuable information.

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## **Thank You for Your Referrals**

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**Career Dimensions would like to thank the following people for their kind referrals:**

Garland Van Dyke  
Nicci Glick  
Nancy Polk

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Larry Sykes  
Robert Redfearn

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Rosanna Stanley

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