

“For generations Hispanic women...have owned their own business.” pg. 4

COMERCIO

The Houston Hispanic Business Newspaper

Hispanic Women Entrepreneurs GROW and SUCCEED



NHPO
FALL CONFERENCE ...3

**PROFILES ON BUSINESS
LEADERS... 9**

**ADVICE FOR THE
SMALL BUSINESSES... 10**

Vol 5 | First Quarter 2009

HOUSTON CHRONICLE
Apoyando a Nuestra Comunidad

ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT

LA VOZ
DE HOUSTON
lavozdehouston.com

Women *IN Business*



Laura Lopez Cano

Liz Lara-Carreño

Marisol Graham

Anna Marie Guzman-Protz

Hispanic women entrepreneurs are drawing much attention and prestige as their businesses expand and grow.

Hispanic women entrepreneurs are not a new phenomenon, drawing the limelight though, is something new.

“For generations, Hispanic women, like many women from all cultures, have owned their own businesses and been in businesses. With the Hispanic population growing into the majority of Houston’s community, their businesses have grown and they have been able to move into positions of community leaders,” said **Anna Marie Guzman-Protz**, president, AMP Benefits, LLC.

Guzman-Protz said her mother, like many other Hispanics, had her own businesses.

“My mother had a taco shop and a flower shop. In watching her, I learned, and it had nothing to do with gender or culture, it has more to do with being a business owner. Today, I am an insurance agent, assisting companies and organizations with their employee benefits. This is an industry that was dominated by males in the past, but that is now changing,” Guzman-Protz said.

Women in general are moving into fields

they have not been in before. Women were expected to marry and become mothers. If they did work, they worked in female-dominated industries, but not anymore.

“For generations, Hispanic women, like many women from all cultures, have owned their own businesses and been in businesses.”

- Anna Marie Guzman-Protz

“If I stop and think about being a woman or being Hispanic, I am creating a glass ceiling for myself, which is not there if I do not imagine it. I do not put any limitations on myself. I do not see barriers just because I am Hispanic, or a woman. If I did, it would affect me negatively. If I fail, I learn from it. If I succeed, I appreciate it. But either way, I get up the next day and go

forward,” Guzman-Protz said.

Liz Lara-Carreño, president of Carreño Group, a public relations company, agreed with Marie. “Hispanics have always been business owners, and we have been educated. I do not know what to say when people ask me about being a Hispanic woman in business. I am a business owner, and I am successful because I work hard, and I’m good at what I do,” she said.

Prior to joining her husband in the Carreño Group in 2008, Lara-Carreño worked for Continental Airlines for 21 years. When she retired from the airline, she held an executive position developing training programs using her human resources experience for the next group of management. She traveled around the world training the 50,000 Continental Airlines employees.

continues on page 8

from page 4

"The trend of Hispanic women is not new, but what might be new is our businesses are no longer just mom and pop shops, they have grown and expanded so they are winning larger contracts, working with larger corporations. They are front runners now because through the years they have worked hard and their businesses have grown," Lara-Carreño said.

Marisol Graham, owner of Baxter Graham Designs, also said the challenges of starting one's own business is not about being part of one ethnic group, or gender. It is about being a business owner, and having all the challenges that come with it.

"However, the Hispanic community is very good at helping support and mentor Hispanic business owners starting out... I am a member of the National Hispanic Professional Organization. This provides help and support, creates opportunities to work with each other, provides excellent advice and helps keep the desire to succeed alive," Graham said.

Women in the past couple of generations realized they could be more than mothers and wives, Graham said. They can have successful careers, and do whatever it takes to get the college degree or training they need to succeed. There also are many avenues of help, and taking advantage of

them really makes a difference.

"I also attend Hispanic Women in Leadership meetings, with over 200 members, and we talk about these topics. This organization also provides a lot of support. Yet, the Hispanic community wants to help each other. Older Latin business owners struggled when they were first starting out and they want to help others so they will not have to go through what they did," Graham said.

Graham has been in business a little over a year, and worked a full-time job while she was building her business. Finally she took the leap into her business fulltime, in which she provides custom web designs, advertising and marketing tools to help companies succeed.

Laura Lopez Cano, an artist who has been producing art for over 20 years for corporations and organizations, has found innovative and creative ways to help her succeed.

"Many organizations will contact me to create an art piece for a special occasion that can be used as a poster to support the event and serve as the cover for invitations," Cano said.

She said Hispanic or Latino women have always worked hard and been in business. If the men were working in the

fields and the family needed extra money, they made homemade jellies or tacos and sold them to the community.

"My mother could not find a job, so she began cleaning houses, and then she began contacting builders to clean the new houses before they showed them, which was very innovative in the 1960s. We have a creative spirit, and we can come up with new and innovative ways to increase our business," Cano said.

"I am a business owner, and I am successful because I work hard, and I'm good at what I do."

- Liz Lara-Carreño

When Cano was in school she worked for her mother, and she was told she could either go to college or continue cleaning homes, so she went to college.

"Hispanic women have always been under the radar, we do not blow our own horns in public. We are busy working, taking care of our homes and families, helping in the community and attending church," Cano said.

According to Dr. Laura Murillo, president and chief operating officer, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Houston,

it has not been as acceptable for women to be in business as it is today, which is one of the changes that has helped women entrepreneurs grow and succeed.

The number of Hispanics enrolled in colleges and participating in community leadership also is up, which might be due to an overall rise in the Houston Latino population, more available opportunities and the support received from the successful Hispanic community.

"More men with daughters also are realizing they want their daughters to have the same opportunities as men have, which is changing women's mindset, allowing them to reach for higher goals," Murillo said.

Murillo is a first-generation American. When her immigrant parents came to America, her father had his own business and her mother had a traditional role of wife and mother. Murillo spent a great deal of time with her father, and he encouraged her to work hard and be successful. Today, she is only the third woman to serve as president of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 33 years, and she is the youngest.

"Hispanic women have come a long way, but we still have a ways to go," Murillo said. ♦

Your Premier Family-Owned Service Provider



- ◆ Traditional Funeral Services
- ◆ Domestic & International Shipping
- ◆ Cremation Services Available
- ◆ Pre-need Arrangements
- ◆ Kitchen Facilities Available

"WHEN YOU NEED THE STRENGTH OF FAMILY"



For information please contact **Gregory D. Compean**
713-924-6900 or Mobile: 281-224-2778
CompeanFuneralHome.com
 2102 Broadway Blvd., Houston, TX 77012