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## **Make Mine a Million \$ Business™ Program Awards Ten Women Entrepreneurs at Marquee New York Event**

*Diverse Group of Awardees Brings Total Number to 102; Online Community Surpasses 30,000*

*Three New York-Based Companies Take Home Top Prizes*

**NEW YORK – October 23, 2007** – Ten women entrepreneurs are now poised to break through the million-dollar barrier after winning Make Mine a Million \$ Business Awards at The Michael Schimmel Center for the Arts at Pace University in New York City. The event was held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, marking the third year in a row a Make Mine a Million \$ Business ([www.makemineamillion.org](http://www.makemineamillion.org)) competition was held in Manhattan. This year's program was highlighted by rousing keynote speeches from CNBC anchor Maria Bartiromo and Verizon CEO Ivan Seidenberg. The diverse group of successful and inspiring winning business owners came from around the country; three were from New York City. Each awardee receives money, marketing, mentoring, and technology assistance to help their businesses grow into million-dollar enterprises.

Launched in 2005 by Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence and founding partner OPEN from American Express®, the Make Mine a Million \$ Business (M3) program was created to help post-start up, women-owned businesses grow to one million dollars in annual revenue. Since the inception, the program has hosted 11 competitions in cities around the country and grown into a nationwide movement. Over 700 applications were submitted for this year's New York competition from which 20 finalists were selected to compete. Winners were selected after each women business owner delivered a pitch to a live audience and panel of judges who collaborated on the selection process.

“The growth of this program mirrors the growth of our entrepreneurs' businesses and the New York event exemplifies how far we all have come,” said Nell Merlino, founder and president of Count Me In. “In the same way women business owners are innovating to bring new products and services to market, we are innovating in the ways we help them grow.”

“There are more than 10 million women-owned businesses in this country, each with a distinct vision,” said Susan Sobott, President of OPEN from American Express. “By joining the M3 movement, women business owners are reaffirming their vision, declaring their intent to build million dollar enterprises and joining a community of like minded peers to help them succeed”

With the addition of this year's New York winners, the number of Make Mine a Million \$ Business awardees has grown to 102. Ten awardees have already surpassed one million dollars in annual revenue and 30 more are projected to reach the million-dollar level this year. Twenty-three awardees have come from the tri-state area, including three that have already broken the million-

dollar barrier. Thirty-thousand women entrepreneurs have joined the Make Mine a Million \$ Business community and declared their intent to build million-dollar enterprises.

There are a total of 634,599 women-owned enterprises in New York, third most in the nation, but only 16,744 (2.6%) exceed \$1 million in revenue\*. The Make Mine a Million \$ Business program is committed to closing this gap. One of the program's goals is to encourage one million women entrepreneurs to declare their intent to build million-dollar businesses by 2010. When one million women grow their businesses to \$1 million, the economic impact on the state will be substantial, contributing \$69.1 billion in additional economic activity and creating almost 470,000 new jobs\*.

### **New York Awardees**

The following 10 women were selected as new members of the Make Mine a Million \$ Business program based on their ability to build significant and sustainable companies with the growth potential to achieve \$1 million or more in annual revenues.

- **Michelle Madhok** of NYC-based **SheFinds.com** ([www.shefinds.com](http://www.shefinds.com)), an online media company that provides content and discussion around practical and functional fashion and style purchases;
- **Julia Goldman** of NYC-based **The Original Runner Company** ([www.originalrunners.com](http://www.originalrunners.com)), makes the first non-slip fabric aisle runners in the world;
- **Sarah Endline** of NYC-based **sweetriot, Inc.** ([www.sweetriot.com](http://www.sweetriot.com)), manufactures healthy, natural, and socially responsible sweets;
- **Jennifer McKinley** of Charlestown, MA-based **Plank LLC** ([www.plankdesigns.com](http://www.plankdesigns.com)), produces a patented yoga mat, high end bags (totes, messenger bags, etc.) that have yoga-mat carrying functionality, bamboo fibre towels and robes;
- **Natalie Boden** of Miami, FL-based **BodenPR** ([www.bodenpr.com](http://www.bodenpr.com)), a boutique PR firm that develops communications campaigns for both the general and U.S. Hispanic markets.
- **Leah Brown** of Cary, NC-based **Aten Solutions, Inc. (A10)** ([www.atensolutions.com](http://www.atensolutions.com)), provides highly skilled clinical trials support professionals to global biotech and pharmaceutical companies, as well as government agencies and academic medical centers both domestically and internationally;
- **Stephanie McCutchan** of Scottsdale, AZ-based **Andorra Credit Repair Corp.** ([www.andorracreditrepair.com](http://www.andorracreditrepair.com)), provides credit education and repair services to consumers who are trying to obtain home financing or trying to refinance their current mortgage;
- **Nancy Tanchel** of Vienna, VA-based **Liberty Laser Eye Center.** ([www.sweetriot.com](http://www.sweetriot.com)), conducts refractive surgery – services to help patients eliminate their glasses and/or contact lenses;
- **Monica Tomasso** of Falls Church, VA-based **Health e-Lunch Kids** ([www.healthelunchkids.com](http://www.healthelunchkids.com)), provides healthy and delicious lunches to kids at school each day;
- **Susan Wilson** of Stevensville, MD-based **The Judgment Group** ([www.judgmentgroup.com](http://www.judgmentgroup.com)), a professional judgment enforcement firm that offers creditors a solution to get their delinquent accounts litigated, enforced and paid

The Make Mine a Million \$ Business program has garnered support from organizations who are all joining hands in order to make an impact in women's lives and strengthening the US economy. The impressive list of blue-chip national sponsors include OPEN from American Express, AIG®, Cisco®, FedEx®, QVC®, Jet Blue®, Marriot®, and Dell®. Sponsors provide an array products and services that serve as invaluable tools for growth.

Award packages for the Make Mine a Million \$ Business winners include:

- Coaching, Mentoring, Financing and Community
- Up to \$50,000 in financing from OPEN from American Express and Count Me In.
- Services and consulting from AIG to help with work/life balance, small business insurance needs and financial planning.
- Cisco Smart Business Communication network from Cisco Systems valued at up to \$20,000 for select awardees.
- Discounts from FedEx select shipping and office and print services.
- A marketing consultation from QVC.
- A \$500 credit for hotel stays at any Marriott in the U.S.
- Dell Vostro notebook™, built exclusively for small business valued up to \$1000

For more information about how women can grow their businesses please visit [www.makemineamillion.org](http://www.makemineamillion.org).

#### **About Count Me In**

Count Me In for Women's Economic Independence is the leading national not-for-profit provider of on-line business loans and resources for women to grow their micro businesses into \$million enterprises. Find us at [www.countmein.org](http://www.countmein.org) or call 212-245-1245.

#### **About OPEN from American Express**

OPEN from American Express is dedicated exclusively to the success of small business owners and their companies. OPEN supports business owners with unparalleled service. With tailored products and services, the team delivers purchasing power, flexibility, control and rewards to help customers run their business. Specifically, business owner customers can leverage an enhanced set of products, tools, services and savings, including charge and credit cards, convenient access to working capital, robust online account management capabilities and savings on business services from an expanded lineup of partners. To obtain more information about OPENSMS, visit [OPEN.com](http://OPEN.com), or call 1-800-NOW-OPEN to apply for a card or loan. Terms and conditions apply.

American Express Company ([www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com)) is a leading global payments, network and travel company founded in 1850.

\* Data source: US Census Bureau. Economic Census, Survey of Business Owners: Women-Owned Firms, 2002. Published January 2006. (SB02-00CS-WMN). Prepared by Julie Weeks, President and CEO of Womenable, [www.womenable.com](http://www.womenable.com).

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