

HOW _____ 2020 EDITION **SHE LEADS**

UNITED HEALTH CENTERS OF THE SAN
JOAQUIN VALLEY

**President and CEO
Colleen Curtis**



CENTRAL VALLEY'S PREMIER WOMEN EXECUTIVES

Highlighting their leadership principles, business advice, and lessons learned.

**THE
BUSINESS JOURNAL**

HOW 2020 EDITION SHE LEADS

“ If your actions create a legacy that inspires others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, then, you are an excellent leader. ”

- Dolly Parton

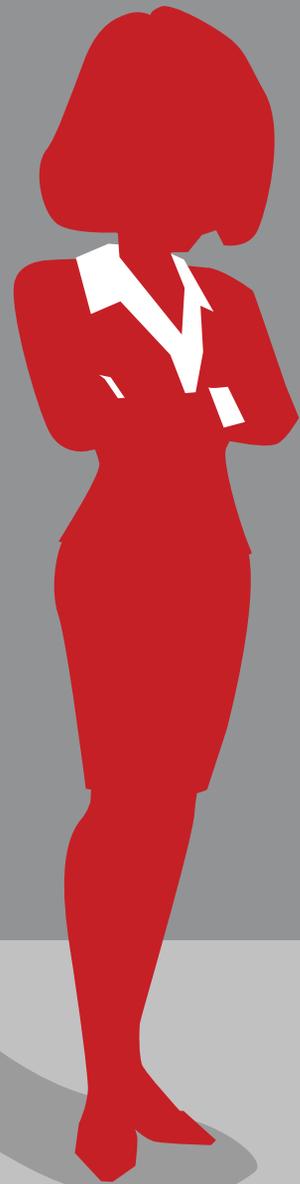


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Taking the High Road



Colleen Curtis
President and CEO

UNITED HEALTH CENTERS OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

As the President and CEO of United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley (UHC), I currently lead a core staff of 1,000 employees in operations of 21 health centers in Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties. As an essential work force in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, we remain committed to care for our 100,000 patients in visits topping 650,000 this year with very comprehensive primary medical care, as well as numerous specialty care services and ancillary services including pharmacy, imaging, lab and free patient transportation.

As I lead, I keep in mind that I have always strived to be the best I can be and in making a positive difference in whatever it is that I do. I attribute this attitude to the influence of my mother, who helped me envision a career path at an early age and realize the best way for a woman to “make it” was with a college education.

I knew this was not going to be an easy path for me because at the time my family was considered a low income household, which meant we had a home, but not always enough money for adequate food or clothes. My mother reminded me that some college scholarships are for athletics, but in the 1960s very few, if any, scholarships went to girls. Therefore, mother’s advice was that I must get a scholarship with my intelligence. I thank her still today for building my confidence because life comes with some key decisions you must face in your path, like marriage, children and a career. I did marry young but remained determined to get a college education and have a career.

Ten years after high school and with my husband’s support, I went to college and decided on becoming a CPA. The field fit my natural skill at being very analytical. I graduated with high honors from CSU, Fullerton. My life’s work came about as I decided to go into health care. I greatly respect caregivers — the talented people who care for other people’s most personal needs.

When I began my career at UHC, first as CFO, and later becoming the CEO, I made my agenda transparent and simple; i.e., the patient’s best interest will always come first. I believe that the future successful leaders are the ones that recognize the importance of the human experience.

In this electronic driven world of computerization and social media, human interaction will remain an important component of the electronic world. The leaders that devote their attention to this for their customers will be successful in whatever business they lead.

“ As I lead, I keep in mind that I have always strived to be the best I can be and in making a positive difference in whatever it is that I do. ”





United Health Centers *of the San Joaquin Valley*

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at 21 health centers in the Central Valley with
**medical, dental, optometry, behavioral health,
pediatrics, women's health plus specialty care
and ancillary services.**



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Associate Publisher's Note



Pacific Publishing Group, the parent company of The Business Journal, goes all the way back to 1886. It was 1888 when my great-great grandfather M.S. Webster purchased the paper, starting a four-generation line of publishers. One thing they all had in common? They were men.

As associate publisher, I represent the fifth generation and the first woman in line to lead this storied Central Valley media organization. That makes me even prouder to present to our readers the inaugural issue of "How She Leads," a magazine dedicated to spotlighting the premier female business executives in our market.

Establishing a new magazine is always a challenge, but it also represents change and opportunity. In that spirit, "How She Leads" was born with a mission to examine the unique ways women approach their leadership roles. I look up to so many great women leaders in the Central Valley who have made me who I am today. They each bring great passion to their roles, which is a sure sign of a great leader.

I've also learned from many powerful community leaders, including the publishers in my family who were men. Their example ignited in me a focus on service to the community with organizations such as the Rotary Club of Fresno, PINC (Philanthropy Inspired by the Needs of the Community), the Downtown Fresno Partnership, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Central Valley Ambassador program.

The people and companies we cover, partner with and serve in the Central Valley mean everything to me. It's the reason I wake up every morning excited to come to work. It's truly a pleasure to build on my family's legacy that began more than 130 years ago, and I am so proud to continue that.

With that said, I hope you enjoy our inaugural issue of "How She Leads."

Sincerely,

Ashley Webster Rudolph

Associate Publisher

The Business Journal

Publisher: Gordon M. Webster, Jr.

Project Editor: Gabriel Dillard

Sales and Marketing Team: Abner Garcia and Brandie Carpenter

Graphic Designer: Jessica Surrett

Women-Owned Businesses

In the Central San Joaquin Valley—ranked by number of full-time employees; if tied by number of part-time employees & then by number of offices.

2020 2019	Name of company Address	Phone Fax	Full-time employees	Part-time employees	No. of local offices	Primary business	Notable clients	Yr founded locally	Headquarters	Top local executive(s) Owner(s) or partner(s)
1 (1)	National Raisin Company P.O. Box 219 Fowler, CA	834-5981 834-1055	283	WND	3	Supplier of dried fruits, fruit pastes, purees and concentrates	WND	1969	Fowler	LindaKay Abdulian, president/CEO
2 (3)	GAR Bennett LLC(1) 8246 S. Crawford Ave Reedley, CA	638-6311 638-6314	260	24	7	Crop protection, nutrition, regulatory, irrigation, pump advice, products and services.	WND	1929	Reedley	Greg Musson, Tyler Bennett Karen Musson, Linda Salwasser, Maxine Bennett
3 (NR)	Sebastian 7600 N. Palm Ave. Fresno, CA	432-5800 432-5858	215	WND	2	Full-service electrical and underground construction contractor with a fully integrated commercial security and low voltage dicvition.	FUSD, SCCCC, Costco Wholesale, CVMD, City of Fresno, Harris Ranch, CUSD, Fresno State, Tachi Palace	1946	Fresno	William Barcus, CEO Ruth Barcus, Susan Moran, co-owners
4 (2)	La Tapatia Tortilleria, Inc. 104 E. Belmont Ave. Fresno, CA	441-1030 441-1712	140	WND	1	Mexican food manufacturer, tortillas, chips, and wraps	Food Maxx, Save Mart, Winco, Food4Less, Wal-Mart and more	1969	Fresno	Helen Hansen, president/CEO
5 (4)	Payroll People Inc. 2152 E Copper Ave, Ste 105 Fresno, CA	251-9060 251-1431	89(2)	WND	1	Cloud-based Workforce Mgt System for Time, HRIS, Benefits, Payroll, and TAX	WND	1981	Fresno	Bettye L. Smith, president/CEO
6 (7)	Selma Pallet Inc. 1651 Pacific St. Selma, CA	896-7171 896-7784	84	WND	1	New and used shipping pallets. Manufactured and repaired pallets. Export shipping pallets, commercial cardboard recycling.	WND	1980	Selma	Lupe Romero, Vera Romero, Lynette R. Wilson, Louis V. Wilson, Jr.
7 (5)	Delray Tire and Retreading Inc. 2544 S. Cherry Ave. Fresno, CA	485-1761 485-7848	75	WND	6	Commercial tire sales, service, retread manufacturer, farm & retail tire and related products	WND	1993	Fresno	Mary Mastriano, Michael Lewis, Ralph Mastriano Tena Lewis, Erin Mastriano, Matthew Mastriano
8 (6)	Fresno Equipment Company 4288 S. Bagley Ave. Fresno, CA	486-8020 444-1700	74	4	2	John Deere agricultural and turf equipment dealership	WND	1961	Fresno	Marsha Vucovich, owner, president/CEO, Reid Pinion, CFO & Operations mgr.
9 (NR)	Employer Driven Insurance Services, Inc. 5429 Avenida de los Robles, Ste. A Visalia, CA	888-886-7973 635-6527	70	2	2	Third-party administrator for group health, dental, vision and life insurance.	WND	2016	Visalia	Stacy Morris, president/CEO
10 (NR)	Financial Credit Network, Inc. 1300 W. Main St. Visalia, CA	800-540-9011 888-326-4329	48	7	2	Third Party Debt Collection	WND	1954	Visalia	Kris Davisson, VP Alicia Sundstrom, owner/pres
11 (8)	Dumont Printing 1333 G St. Fresno, CA	485-6311 485-6357	47	WND	2	Printing, variable data, large format, banners, trade show displays, promo items, mailing	WND	1950	Fresno	Susan Moore, president
12 (NR)	Andal In-Home Care 318 S. M St. Tulare, CA	686-6611 686-6622	46	25	2	Provider of personal in-home care for seniors	WND	2000	Tulare	Deanne Martin-Soares, CEO, Charles Mack, president
13 (10)	United Western Industries, Inc. 3515 N. Hazel Ave. Fresno, CA	226-7236 226-3557	38	WND	1	Manufacturing heavy-duty truck parts, tool and dye, laser, prototypes	Peterbilt Trucks, Kenworth Trucks, Paccar Parts	1971	Fresno	Rudy Neufeld, Bruce Ketch, Angela Pena Gale Pirtle
14 (10)	Snowflake Designs, Inc. 2893 Larkin Ave. Clovis, CA	291-6234 291-6096	36	WND	1	Manufacturing leotards	University of Kentucky, United States Special Olympic team	1985	Clovis	LaDonna D. Snow, president, Kindra Snow Walker, VP Richard Snow
15 (18)	MGS Construction Services, Inc. 1500 Enterprise Dr., Ste. 308 Lemoore, CA	772-1852 380-2701	35	3	1	Government, commercial and residential construction	Department of the Navy and Army, Naval Post Graduate School, Kings County Department of Interior	2006	Lemoore	Diane E. Sanders, president
16 (13)	Alert-O-Lite, Inc. 2436 Foundry Park Ave Fresno, CA	486-4570 866-827-1270	32	4	1	Construction equipment, industrial supplies, signs & traffic control service, True Value Hardware	General contractors, hospitals, municipalities, school districts, private & public businesses	1971	Fresno	Debbie L Hunsaker, president Ray Manzanedo II, general manager
17 (9)	ATMF, Inc, dba Ano-Tech Metal Finishing 807 Lincoln Ave. Clovis, CA	299-6836 N/A	31	WND	1	Anodizing of aluminum products, passivation, chemical conversion, electropolish, hydrographics	Malibu Boats, Really Right Stuff, Total Concept, PNM, Adaptive Aerospace	1981	Clovis	Kelly Downs-Tuman, president Carol Downs, Kendra Downs-Hunter, owners
18 (12)	JP Marketing 7589 N. Wilson Ave., Ste. 103 Fresno, CA	438-2180 438-2186	30	1	1	Advertising, marketing, PR, branding, creative production and design firm	WND	1994	Fresno	Jane Olvera, president Jeanna Antonino, director of Operations
19 (15)	Valley Lahvosh Baking Co., Inc. 502 M St. Fresno, CA	485-2700 485-0173	27	WND	1	Lahvosh cracker bread and peda bread manufacturer	WND	1922	Fresno	Agnes Saghatelian, president/owner
20 (14)	California Business Machines, Inc 4260 N. Fresno St. Fresno, CA	225-5570 225-5827	26	WND	2	Office technology, printers, copier/MFP's, scanners, fax, ID badges, time clocks and more	Fresno and Tulare counties, City of Clovis, Fresno State Athletics, Superior Courts	1953	Fresno	Teri McNally-Brymer, president

Key: WND=Would Not Disclose. NR=Not Ranked.

(1) Gar Tootelian Inc. and Bennett Water Systems merged in 2019.

(2) Based on 2019 data. All data has been provided by representatives of the businesses listed and Business Journal research. Not all sources surveyed responded to inquiries.

Research: Edward Smith

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E-mail: edward@thebusinessjournal.com

Leading by Encouragement, Mentoring and Inclusion



Dorothy M. Thomas
Senior Vice President, SBA
Department Manager
CENTRAL VALLEY COMMUNITY BANK

In a way, I've been preparing for my current leadership role at Central Valley Community Bank for my whole life — by watching my mother.

Irene Keels — my mom — started in the restaurant industry in an entry-level position and excelled to become a top chef in our community. She exemplified working hard to become the best. Without a doubt, Mom has been my biggest influencer and supporter.

Today, I'm blessed to be in a position of support for my amazing team at the Bank. As Senior Vice President and SBA Department Manager, my leadership style is driven by encouragement, mentoring and inclusion.

Every day, I try to find ways to help my team focus on their strengths and improve weaknesses. I also take advantage of teaching moments (they're everywhere when you really look for them). But perhaps most importantly, I want all of my team members to know that their voices are heard and valued.

Rising through the ranks in the banking industry hasn't been without its challenges. I've often struggled to balance work and home life, which is common for women as we tend to take on multiple tasks to simply get the job done.

Overcoming those challenges gracefully and getting the job done through collaboration, inclusion and care for the good of the team — that's what defines good leadership, and what I hope will one day be said of mine.

Setting an Example, Earning Trust and Doing the Right Thing

Leading by example comes naturally to me. I saw it daily in my mother, whether she was serving our household with six children or serving school district superintendents over her 37-year career. She worked alongside me ensuring my goals were met, never asking me to do something she wouldn't do herself. Through Mom's example, she shaped me into the businesswoman I am today.

Now I have the honor of leading by example in my role as Senior Vice President, Private Business Banking Manager with Central Valley Community Bank. Here, I spend time mentoring each team member to help them reach their full potential, while emphasizing teamwide trust and accountability.

Trust is also the cornerstone of my client relationships. As a solution-oriented leader, I know I must earn a client's trust before I can effectively solve their problems and serve their needs. There are no shortcuts to trust. It's fostered by treating others with humility, kindness and respect.

If you're a woman with leadership goals, your journey won't always be smooth sailing. But weathering the storms while continuing to build your skill set is a sure route to new leadership opportunities — just hang in there! Embrace today's success as a step toward tomorrow's achievements. And abide by my mother's wisdom that I have always tried to live by: "Do the right thing — always."



Cathy "Coz" Chatoian
Senior Vice President, Private
Business Banking Manager
CENTRAL VALLEY COMMUNITY BANK



Powerful Things Happen When Women Lead

We salute the vision and leadership of women who strengthen our team, our business community, our economy, our world.

When women lead, great things follow: Creativity. Opportunity. Motivation. Success.

As trusted financial advocates, Central Valley Community Bank works with women-led businesses every day and we see firsthand the unmistakable impact of their leadership on our region and around the world. We honor those who are a force for positive change in our industries and communities – women who lead by example, who inspire, mentor and drive business success.

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Key Factors that Define my Personal Leadership Style



Joanna Odabashian
Co-Owner/Team Leader-CEO

KELLER WILLIAMS FRESNO

My leadership style is that of a consultant. My purpose daily is to give KW associates access to the technology, training, systems and tools they need to build businesses worth owning. Prior to being a Realtor and Co-Owner/CEO of Keller Williams Fresno, I was an Elementary and High School teacher. These factors have influenced my leadership style.

Playing All In

By far this has defined my style of leadership the most. My mother, Jennifer Martin (below) is the majority owner in our company. When we made the decision to become a Keller Williams Franchise in 2009, we committed to playing all in. It was almost a threat from her, "We play all in, or we don't join at all." What this means is that we have bought in, we practice and implement the models and systems 100% of the time. We attend local, regional, and national meetings. We are a top performing market center in the Northern California Hawaii Region of Keller Williams. There are 35 market centers (what we call offices) and over 5,000 agents in our region. We teach agents to run businesses the way Keller Williams Realty International has taught us to grow our company. It's the exact same model! What this has done for my leadership is hard to put into words. It's actually been more valuable than my college education. Partnering with the No. 1 real

estate franchise in the world, who has also been recognized by "Training Magazine" several years in a row as the best training company, is truly something I am grateful for. Playing all in means leading by example. We do this well.

Agent-Centric

Being part of an organization that puts the agent first has also influenced how I lead. One thing that sets our company apart is that we put the agent first. We believe buyers and sellers choose the agents and that the agent chooses the company. There is actually NAR (National Association of Realtors) data that supports this. This means my leadership team exists to support the agents that choose Keller Williams. We do this by consulting and listening to what the agent needs to be the best they can for the consumer. Examples are our weekly Contract Strategy class, Business Productivity Coaching, training on the Command Platform, and helping our associates understand their own business trends. We work with agents to create profit and loss statements so they understand the numbers that drive their businesses. We believe in leverage. We are the only company I know of that teaches agents how to create teams when their business is ready. We have a whole program called Career Visioning that teaches the process.

The Importance of Culture

I have learned that the culture of an organization is key. We have a caring culture at Keller Williams Fresno. We are surrounded with happy, nice people. While we are all here to work, from the moment you walk through the doors, you can feel the love in our environment. Cheesy, maybe, and it works! We have an International Day of Service called RED DAY and local and national charitable organizations that support our associates in times of hardship. In May we did something amazing! We increased the associate compensation packages so they keep more of their commission! We did this in the middle of the pandemic! Creating a win-win culture that allows associates to accumulate wealth is part of who we are. I am proud to say that our ownership group has contributed over \$1.3 million dollars to the Keller Williams Realty International Profit Sharing System. Keller Williams Fresno is 187 associates strong. In 2019, KW Fresno agents sold 1,732 homes. We are looking forward to increased growth!



Jennifer Martin
Co-Owner, Operating Principal, Broker

KELLER WILLIAMS FRESNO

Without a doubt, Covid-19 is one of the most important eras of my leadership career. Keeping all of our agents working has been a Herculean effort.

Keeping our local agents working during the pandemic is important on multiple levels. Real estate is an important economic

engine in Fresno County. Most real estate agents are just one or two escrows away from being on the poverty scale in Fresno County. To be sure, there is a lot of money to be made in real estate. Most sales are made by the top 10% of agents. Many of the rest of agents may be single parents just trying to keep their heads above water. Keeping our agents busy and productive is a challenge I am up for. The average real estate office has about 30% of agents closing one escrow a month. My goal is to reach 80%, which is a big hairy audacious goal! I know I'm going to make it. Right now, in spite of Covid-19 nearly 50% of our agents are productive. This is directly related to our amazing leadership team, our focus of training and support, and the loving culture at our office.

These days have been some of the hardest in my 35+ years in real estate. I've lost sleep and fought for the people I work with and an industry I love. Honestly? I feel proud and humbled by the experience. And I feel competent to face the next one, whatever it may be.

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Joanna Odabashian CEO

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Leading Students to Reach Their Full Potential



Deborah J. Ikeda
California Health Sciences University, Board of Trustees Vice Chair
State Center Community College District, Trustee Area 6 and Board
of Trustees Vice President

CLOVIS COMMUNITY COLLEGE, PRESIDENT EMERITUS

I have spent more than 40 years in higher education, moving from being a psychology instructor and counselor to the founding President of Clovis Community College and now serving on the Board of Trustees for both SCCCDC (State Center Community College District) and CHSU (California Health Sciences University).

When I first started in higher education, there were very few female administrators and even fewer women of color in leadership roles. This has finally begun to change as people in leadership roles gave women opportunities to advance and women realized they could be very effective leaders. Female leaders today still face the dual challenge of child rearing and working in a professional role, however, even that is beginning to change.

I believe education is the key to moving people into successful careers, and I enjoy helping to ensure that everyone has access

“ I believe education is the key to moving people into successful careers, and I enjoy helping to ensure that everyone has access to this gateway. ”

to this gateway. Education can move people as far as their individual abilities and motivation take them. Our job as educational leaders is to do whatever we can to help them achieve their potential.

A good leader will:

- Surround themselves with people smarter than they are and listen to their counsel
- Listen to all the ideas presented, debate them fully with the staff, try to reach consensus as to what the best decision is and once the decision is made, act expeditiously on it
- Admit when an error is made, fix it and move on

Leadership in the future will be influenced more by politics than in the past. If you're interested in making changes in today's world, consider running for office. There's an old saying that if you're not at the table, you may find yourself on the menu. Today, in this day and age, holding office is very important to effecting major changes.

As such, I am running for re-election of the State Center Community College District, District 6, as I believe my experience makes me the best candidate for this job. I have devoted most of my professional life to ensuring all students have access to higher education through the doors of our community colleges. There is work yet to complete.

I am proud to say that CHSU has committed to admitting as many local students as possible to become the health care professionals of the future. We know that if students come from the valley, they are most likely to stay here and help improve the health care of our Central Valley residents. We are committed to providing all CHSU students with the tools they need to become successful health care professionals.

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Leadership is a Lifestyle



Donna Hurley
Administrator

COMPASS POINTE MEMORY CARE

Leadership is a lifestyle not just a job. Life in general continually hurtles curve balls that can be exciting learning opportunities to change the way the world views your organization and the quality of life that those who work with you live.

Being a female leader within the senior living industry provides numerous challenges as our industry never sleeps, we do not close, and holidays are most likely spent within our communities supporting our staff and residents. Over the last 15 years I have been blessed with the opportunity to lead amazing care team members into the 21st century of Dementia Care. Within these 15 years I experienced various events that have left me with feelings of self doubt, but I feel this is how a leader truly grows.

Sheryl Sandberg has been a tremendous professional influence in the development of my leadership skills from the manner in which she took on the male dominated tech industry head on, building an empire of strong, celebrated and specialized staff. Sandberg's ability to charge into a situation where she promotes

her team and identifies new mechanisms to innovate regardless of hurdles placed in her way is best described by her quote within her book "Lean In," "Resilience comes from deep within us and from support outside us. It comes from gratitude for what's good in our lives and from leaning in to the suck. It comes from analyzing how we process grief and from simply accepting that grief. Sometimes we have less control than we think. Other times we have more. I learned that when life pulls you under, you can kick against the bottom, break the surface, and breathe again."

The best form of advice I can pass along to those who want to change the world is to hold on to their vision and adapt it only when they feel it should be adapted. Do not feel as if the world will view you as a bad wife, mother or woman but rather someone who stands for what they believe in and didn't take the easy path to get there.

"The staff members as so warm and friendly they make you feel at home."

-Cerde Family



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Eagles Fly With Eagles

Kaysi Curtin
President/Owner

SANDLER TRAINING

In 2011, during my tenure at “The Business Journal,” I was introduced to Sandler Training as a client. I spent the next eight years attending weekly Sales, Management and Leadership Training classes. It wasn’t long before I realized that Sandler wasn’t just sales training. It was a communication model, and “sales” was a Broadway play performed by a psychologist. I was hooked. I saw not only my career flourish by implementing the Sandler methodology, but also the people and companies around me.

Sales is as much mental as anything else. Sandler gave me the tools necessary to truly and effectively lead sales teams and departments in the organization. It wasn’t about becoming just a better salesperson or manager because anyone can be put in a management role. It was about leading people to become better versions of themselves and help them see what they are truly capable of while achieving a bigger goal.

For many years, a Ziglar quote hung on the wall in my office that said, “You don’t build a business, you build people and people build a business.” Fast forward to now, in my role as owner of Sandler Training, Fresno. I have the opportunity to continue to really build better local sales leaders, managers and bottom-line revenue for businesses here in the Central Valley.

Being rooted here in the Valley, I feel an obligation to help our local businesses thrive. This new “virtual selling” world has

opened up doors — in a selling environment — that I wouldn’t have imagined. We are all going through a different era right now, and being able to adapt our businesses to whatever the “new normal” brings us is imperative.

What sets Sandler Training apart is our belief in on-going reinforcement training. Sales is like any other sport. You need to practice. You have to develop the skillset that is repeatable under pressure. It’s being able to create muscle memory with your salespeople to get comfortable acting under pressure. Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods were the best at what they did because they practiced and knew the importance of repetition and behaviors.

Sales is “conceptual,” not “technical or mechanical.” In Sandler, we discuss the Success Triangle, which is premised around Behaviors, Attitude and Technique. Behaviors are the action items you must do to increase results. Your attitude is necessary to reach the highest levels of success and your technique is what’s needed to excel.

A colleague of mine, over 30 years in the business, told me “Eagles fly with Eagles – if you flock with turkeys, you’ll lose your head.” Needless to say, an eagle knows an eagle when they see one. The best advice I’ve ever received is “Never take advice from someone who is not in the same position you want to be in.”

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Women Leadership in Local Law

Ashley N. Emerzian, Esq.
Managing Attorney

EMERZIAN SHANKAR LEGAL, INC.

Emerzian Shankar Legal Inc. doesn't look like your typical law firm. As a local, woman-owned business, we're changing perceptions of what a law firm looks like — and how it operates. We're keenly aware that often people feel that lawyers are naysayers or roadblocks to business. That's why our approach is different: to work alongside our clients as a strategic partner and equip them with the knowledge they need to make empowered business decisions.

Maya Angelou said, "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." This sums up our firm's philosophy. The goal is to provide great legal services, but it's also to

leave people with the feeling that we're on their side, whatever the challenges might be. And this doesn't just extend to clients — we're out in our community offering business workshops on topics like contracts, employment law, and harassment response and prevention.

We listen, develop options, and help weigh risks, solving issues before they become a crisis. Much of how we accomplish that is great communication. We may not look like a typical law firm, but really the biggest difference between us and other firms is we're changing the way law practice is done while providing clients high quality, responsive services and supporting our community.

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Listen, Learn, and Find Your Dream Team

From its inception, Whitney, Thompson & Jeffcoach has been a women-owned firm. Fresno business litigation attorneys Mandy Jeffcoach, Niki Cunningham, Marshall Whitney, and Tim Thompson joined together in 2018 with the intention of building a firm dedicated to the highest quality of legal representation, while still maintaining a culture that encourages teamwork and a healthy work-life balance.

Two years later, the WTJ team has added a new owner, Carl Refuerzo, and grown from four to 15 attorneys who share the same core values from the start. Being a majority-woman-owned business and emphasizing balance and flexibility has remained a priority for the leadership at WTJ, particularly as the community encounters and overcomes unprecedented challenges.

Insights from Mandy Jeffcoach

My partners at WTJ continue to be my most significant professional influence. I have been blessed to work with many of my partners for my entire career. They taught me not only how to



Mandy Jeffcoach
Owner/Partner

WHITNEY, THOMPSON & JEFFCOACH



Niki Cunningham
Owner/Partner

WHITNEY, THOMPSON & JEFFCOACH

be a lawyer, but also how to be a leader. They were always there to answer any question I may have, introduce me to clients and members of the community at events, celebrate my victories, and “brainstorm” my failures so we could make sure they did not happen again. They also showed me the importance of teamwork. Law is organic and always changing, and without a team to bounce ideas off of, I believe there is no growth. That is why our company focuses so much on teamwork — every single member of our team is critical to our clients’ success.

Insights from Niki Cunningham

As a business owner, attorney, and mother, I have learned so much about leadership, and yet I still learn new things every day. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to grow and become an even better leader for my partners at WTJ, our clients, and my family. Leadership is hard work, and you will stumble and make mistakes—but that is part of the process. Some of my greatest learning moments have been in my failures. You are bound to encounter people in life that may make decisions that you disagree with, for a variety of reasons. Even if things ultimately go wrong, having empathy and making it known that mistakes are okay will go a lot further than making someone feel bad. Above all, it is critical to treat people with respect, listen to them, and recognize that different opinions make our community great.

THE WOMEN OF WTJ *Leading the Way in the Central Valley*



MANDY JEFFCOACH
Owner/Partner

Top 50 Women
Super Lawyers



NIKI CUNNINGHAM
Owner/Partner

Super Lawyer
Rising Star



COURTNEY MCKEEVER
Partner

Super Lawyer
Rising Star



KRISTI MARSHALL
Partner

Super Lawyer
Rising Star



DEVON MCTEER
Partner

wtjlaw.com

Leading With a Focus on ‘People Excellence’



Marvell French
Market President III/Executive Vice President

PREMIER VALLEY BANK

Through my years as a leader at Premier Valley Bank, I have been committed to leading with integrity, inspiration, and vision. I've placed importance on always being passionate, confident, and empowering. My focus has been on collaboration and teambuilding in pursuit of excellence and high performance. My goal has been to focus on "people excellence" and being a positive role model through coaching, mentoring and engaging my teams to grow into winning future leaders. As a team, we recognize each other's best skills and work together to achieve our goals.

In my early years of banking 48 years ago, I was blessed with some amazing leaders and role models that believed in me and gave me the opportunity very early on to be in a leadership role. One of the most important things I learned is to be a good listener. Take the time to get to know your team and learn their strengths. This will bring out skills they may not have known they had, and allows you to help them grow personally and professionally. Another lesson I learned early on is to be a good cheerleader. People want to be motivated. Make sure to recognize your team members, compliment them along the way, and give credit where credit is due. Properly motivating people while encouraging them to contribute will drive the team to exceed goals and go the extra mile every time.

The best advice I would give to aspiring leaders is to go above and beyond in everything you do. Get all the training and education you can to increase your knowledge. Surround yourself with great mentors and coaches. Decide what it is you want out of life so you can motivate yourself to go after it. I also encourage getting involved in the community. I have served on several boards including the City of Fresno Retirement Board, cCare Connects Foundation for California, Leukemia and Lymphoma

Society, Fresno Christian School Board and Foundation Board, CBWC, Healing Hearts/Fresno Rescue Mission/Police Chaplaincy Annual Golf tournament, Care Fresno, and others. I've also been honored by several organizations for my philanthropy work and successfully raising over \$1 million dollars a year for local non-profits. When you give back by serving others, God richly gives back ten-fold every time. This commitment is to my business, my community, and my personal life.

“ My focus has been on collaboration and teambuilding in pursuit of excellence and high performance. ”



STRENGTH IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Premier Valley Bank is a member of the Heartland Financial USA, Inc. (NASDAQ: HTLF) family of community banks. Through this unique operating structure, our California leadership and banking team is backed by the strength, stability, and expertise of a \$15 billion organization. For our business clients, this means local service, broad expertise across many industries, impactful technology platforms and the financial strength to help move your company forward.

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Empowering Women to Steer Their Own Career Path

Jennette Williams
Market President, Fresno and Madera counties

SUNCREST BANK

A focus on placing competent women in leadership roles hasn't always been a thing. In fact, many women have had to find their own way into working in a "man's world."

Jennette Williams, market president at Suncrest Bank in Fresno and Madera counties, knows this firsthand. A veteran of the banking industry for more than 30 years, she has seen the industry evolve and enlighten itself about the unique skills and temperament women bring to the boardroom and bank branches.

She has also fostered an environment of mentorship, caring and collaboration that has helped make Suncrest Bank one of the fastest-growing community banks in the nation.

"I see myself more as a mentor than a manager or anything else. It's my job to make sure that my employees are happy and taken care of," Williams said. "My philosophy is if I take care of them, they will take care of everything else."

Things were different when Williams started her career as a teller at 18. She has worked for many banks in the region, and counts a transition from retail to commercial banking as a key moment in her career, which also included a break in order for Williams to raise a family.

Today, Suncrest Bank gives flexibility and options to working employees with families so they can keep their priorities straight.

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Suncrest Bank was founded in 2008 to support local businesses and farms during the Great Recession. We are proud of our local roots and proud to provide our business clients with the local expertise and sophisticated solutions they need to thrive. We were there in 2008, when our communities needed a strong financial partner and we are still here, investing in people, committed to our communities and proving we can succeed together.

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Three Leadership Lessons

Michele Waldron
Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

VALLEY CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE

There is no "I" in team

Early in my career at Valley Children's Hospital, I learned it is not about what "I" accomplish. I was in my 20s when a member of the executive team pointed out to me my use of "I" versus "we," and it really resonated. When a leader uses "we," team members feel more part of the process and contribute ideas and challenge one another's thinking. The end results are far better.

Accountability is a key component for a successful team

Accountability is not for the faint of heart because it requires that a leader have necessary and crucial conversations that can be uncomfortable at times. When team members know that

everyone is held accountable, not only for their work and technical abilities, but for their attitude and behavior, you achieve real teamwork in a healthy working environment.

A good leader has the courage to take risks

In my late 30s, the opportunity presented for me to apply for the Chief Financial Officer position at Valley Children's. I was confident in my technical abilities, but worried that I might be considered too young by others to take on the role. A little secret—ask those who know you best for honest feedback and do not second guess it. After talking to those closest to me, both personally and professionally, I took a leap of faith and I never looked back.



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“ Anyone out there looking to make their dream come true...simply know you are in the right hands with Access Plus Capital. ”

Alma Wolverton Owner

PUM BUM SOCIETY

Local business owner Alma Wolverton says, “Access Plus Capital has a niche with the dreamers.” You might know Wolverton’s business, Pum Bum Society. Access Plus Capital was able to provide Wolverton with the funding she needed to see her business thrive. While Wolverton had personal funds to start her business, she wanted to pursue additional funding as a safety net. Wolverton said of working with Access Plus Capital, “I was going to find a way to open up my business with or without a lender, but a lender made the process a lot easier.”

Pum Bum Society is a locally owned and operated boutique at the Shops In River Park. Pum Bum Society specializes in modern

and contemporary clothing for women. It also offers a personalized styling service, which includes wardrobe styling for special events, vacations and everyday life; it has been a community luxury. The service will make you stand out from the rest, develop your confidence and offer a convenient shopping experience.

Now, Alma hopes to continue to expand through pop-up shops like “MANTRA,” an athleisure pop-up boutique she opened in 2018. Alma’s advice for new business owners? Be patient. The process takes time. The future of Pum Bum Society is bright. Keep an eye out for more and more great things from Alma Wolverton and Pum Bum Society!

access + capital

Helping Women in Business Thrive



Ana Medina
Director, Business
Development



Kattia Gomez
Technical Assistant
Analyst



Katina Davis
Accountant



Janay E. Conley
Business Development
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Specialist



Ronna Martinez
Loan Processing
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