

FSB
FORTUNE SMALL BUSINESS



These Women Mean Business

With the support of corporations like Office Depot, industrious females are launching entrepreneurial ventures in record numbers.

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commit- ting constant addresses the needs of small-business owners. Its catalogs, website, and stores are all designed for maximum efficiency and minimum hassles.

Terry Neese of WIPP appreciates the depth of knowledge of Office Depot's sales force. "I'm not a techie kind of person, so when I go into the stores I really depend on them for help," she says. "The salespeople don't simply point me to a product. They ask what the problem is and help me find a solution." Bernadette Clayborne, co-publisher of the *Broward Times*, a chain of newspapers in Florida that cater to the African-American and Caribbean communities, simply likes the personal service. "I'm in my local Office Depot every other day buying toner and printer cartridges, whatever office supplies we need," she says. "I love that when I go in the salespeople all know me by name."

Nancy Michaels, president of her own marketing firm called

Translating a Concept into Dollars

Annette Taddeo launched Language Speak—a Miami-based company that translates materials for multinational companies that do business in Latin America—in 1995. Talk about being in the right place at the right time. "When the 2000 U.S. census came out," says Taddeo, "corporate America woke up to the fact that Hispanics have money and the capacity to be a growth market for major corporations." Her business took off like a rocket.

Within a short time, Taddeo was working with FORTUNE 500 companies and translating documents and signage into 40 different languages. Her business with Office Depot involved translations into 14 languages, thus accommodating the company's global presence—but she had a hunch that, working together, they could do more. "I saw how many small businesses were getting started just in Miami," she says. "Office Depot is the natural place for them to go, so I approached the company about translating its existing website into Spanish." As it turned out, Office Depot was engaged in a parallel effort of developing multi-channel initiatives to the Hispanic market. One core initiative included the launch of a Hispanic version of its very successful officedepot.com website.

Office Depot liked Taddeo's idea but wondered if her small company was up to the challenge. After testing several other companies, it was convinced Language Speak would do the best, most accurate job. "The Spanish we use is neutral," explains Taddeo. "The Hispanic market is very diverse, which means the site can't seem to be too Cuban, too Mexican, or too Puerto Rican."

As an entrepreneur herself, Taddeo appreciates Office Depot's commitment to small-business owners. "Office Depot makes you feel like you've got a partner," she says.

Impression Impact in Concord, Mass. (see "Webcasts for Corporate Small Fry"), says women juggle so many tasks at once, anything that's done to make their lives easier instills great loyalty. "Like any other woman who owns her own company, I'm always running," she says. "I completely appreciate that in the front of Office Depot stores there is a smaller section that has all the things I run out of most frequently like Post-Its, pads, and computer disks." Michaels says it may seem like a small benefit, but it says big things to her as a business owner. "Office Depot doesn't just talk about supporting women. It figures out how—and then goes out and does it." —by Susan Caminiti

