

Forbes



Clare O'Connor Forbes Staff

Women entrepreneurs and workplace equality.

ENTREPRENEURS 6/01/2016 @ 7:58AM | 172,373 views

Inside Forbes' Historic \$10 Billion Richest Self-Made Women Cover



Photo: Jamal Toppin with Tim Pannell.

We couldn't decide on just one cover star for Forbes' second annual Richest [Self-Made Women](#) issue, so we went with nine.

For the first cover shoot of its kind, Forbes gathered nine of the most successful women entrepreneurs in the country, ranging in age from 32 to 69.

They include a Silicon Valley CEO, a supermodel-turned-mogul, and a billionaire inventor. Between them, there are as many Harvard MBAs as there are community college dropouts.

Combined, these nine women are worth \$9.7 billion.

On the front panel, the list's richest member, 69-year-old roofing supply tycoon Diane Hendricks, flanks one of its youngest, 32-year-old [Sophia Amoruso, founder of e-commerce fashion company Nasty Gal](#). To their left is Sara Blakely, founder of shapewear empire Spanx and the youngest self-made woman billionaire in the U.S.

Meet all nine, from left to right:

Sara Blakely

Net worth: \$1 billion

Sara Blakely is back running Spanx day-to-day following CEO Jan Singer's exit. The former Nike exec helped expand the brand into athleisure wear but lasted less than two years in the job. The shapewear brand has always been Blakely's baby. A one-time door-to-door fax salesperson, she founded the company at age 29, when she invested her \$5,000 savings to come up with something to wear under white slacks. She still owns 100% of the \$400 million (est. sales) company, which remains private despite persistent IPO rumors. In 2015 she became part-owner of the Atlanta Hawks basketball team.

Sophia Amoruso

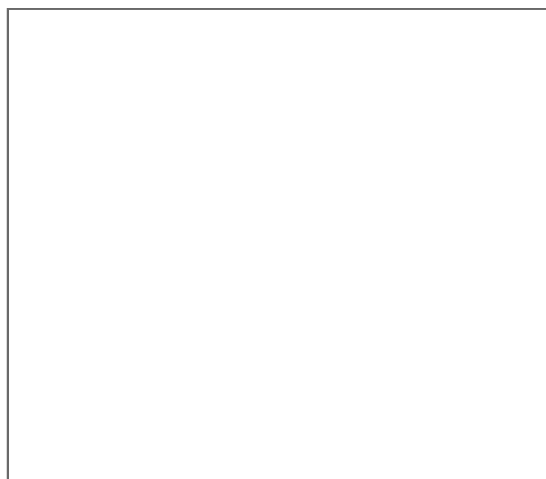
Net worth: \$280 million

The only Millennial newcomer to the list outside the entertainment industry, Sophia Amoruso made her fortune with e-commerce retailer Nasty Gal, the rock 'n' roll fashion company she started at age 22, when it sold mostly vintage gear to a trendy young crowd. A decade in, Nasty Gal competes with the likes of H&M and ASOS; Forbes estimates revenues of \$300 million, up from \$100 million in 2012. She also oversees a growing brand based on her bestselling memoir, #Girlboss, including a new podcast, #Girlboss Radio, and an upcoming autobiographical comedy series on Netflix.

Diane Hendricks

Net worth: \$4.9 billion

"We brought distribution to the nation, to every roofer out there — not just the big guy but the little guy, the guys in between, the girls in between," Hendricks says of ABC Supply, the roofing company she cofounded with her husband, Kenneth, in 1982. The distributor grew rapidly, fueled by a string of acquisitions. When Ken died in 2007, Diane soldiered on and rejected offers of buyouts, weathering the storm of the financial crisis before buying rival Bradco Supply in 2010. Sales more than doubled in the past decade to nearly \$6 billion in 2015.

**Kathy Ireland**

Net worth: \$360 million

Supermodel turned mogul Kathy Ireland built a licensing empire by lending her name, taste and marketing prowess to more than 17,000 products. Recent skills: a line of handbags available at T.J. Maxx, tableware sold on the Home Shopping Network and an array of branded office furniture. Such unglamorous wares sell big — an estimated \$2.6 billion at retail. Ireland, who worked a paper route as her first job, was scouted by Elite modeling agency at age 16. She graced the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue for 13 consecutive years.

Meg Whitman

Net worth: \$2.1 billion

Meg Whitman, the CEO of Hewlett Packard for four years, oversaw its historic split in two in November 2015 and now heads up \$52 billion (sales) Hewlett Packard Enterprise, which sells servers, software and more. A former Hasbro and Walt Disney executive, she is still best known for leading online auction site eBay from \$5 million in revenues in 1998 to \$8 billion at the time of her departure in 2008; eBay is also by far the biggest source of her fortune.

Toni Ko

Net worth: \$260 million

Toni Ko, who moved to the U.S. from Korea at age 13, worked after school for her parents' beauty supply business. In 1999, at age 25, she noticed a gap in the market for department-store-quality makeup at a drugstore price. Armed with

connections in the wholesale industry and seed money from her family, Ko launched NYX Cosmetics, selling colorful, high-end makeup at bargain prices. In her first year Ko did \$4 million in retail sales. Ko sold the venture-backed brand to L'Oréal in 2014 in a transaction valued at \$500 million. In spring 2016 Ko launched Perverse Sunglasses, selling sexy, stylish "sunnies" for between \$40 and \$60 a pair.

Katrina Lake

Net worth: \$120 million

Katrina Lake created Stitch Fix, an online retailer that picks clothes for customers using a cocktail of data science and personal stylists. With \$250 million in sales last year, the San Francisco-based startup has become an easy way for busy women to shop. At age 33, Lake is on Forbes' 'Ones To Watch' list: she didn't make the net worth cut of \$250 million for our top 60 Richest Self-Made Women, but we think she will in years to come.

Dorothy Herman

Net worth: \$270 million

The richest self-made woman in American real estate, Dorothy Herman is co-owner of New York's elite brokerage firm Douglas Elliman, which sells \$22 billion worth of homes a year, netting \$600 million in sales. The firm has over 6,000 agents in 85 offices. She and partner Howard Lorber bought it for \$72 million in 2003. It hasn't been an easy journey for her. A car crash killed her mother, left her father disabled and brought on seizures for then 10-year-old 'Dottie', who was thrown from the car. She became a mom at age 19, and started working as a real estate broker at Merrill Lynch on Long Island in the 1980s. It was soon bought by Prudential Long Island, and in 1990, she bought the majority of that brokerage firm.

Liz Elting

Net worth: \$390 million

Liz Elting is co-CEO of TransPerfect, one of the world's largest translation firms, with \$505 million in revenues and offices in more than 90 cities. She started the company in 1992 with Phil Shawe, her one-time fiancé, in a New York University dorm room. Today the New York City-based firm has 4,000 employees and around 11,000 clients, including AT&T, Google and Wal-

Mart. TransPerfect is among the most profitable firms in the language services industry and has grown revenues an average of 22% a year for a decade. That's despite the fact that the cofounders have spent two years embroiled in a messy corporate divorce. In August 2015, a Delaware judge declared the pair deadlocked and appointed a custodian to sell the company. A ruling on whether the sale will go forward and what form it will take is expected in June 2016.



Follow me on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

RECOMMENDED BY FORBES

[29 Best Father's Day Gifts From Shark Tank](#)

[Chevrolet Pokes Holes - Literally - In Ford F-150's Aluminum Pickup Bed In New...](#)

This article is available online at:

2016 Forbes.com LLC™ All Rights Reserved