

P³S Corporation president interviewed by leading business periodical

San Antonio business founder talks experience, government, challenges

SAN ANTONIO, Texas – Local federal contracting company P³S Corporation is pleased to have had an interview with its president published on the website of a leading industry periodical Jan. 11.

Mary Ellen Trevino, P³S Corporation president, spoke to Alister & Paine magazine about what role her 12 years as a public servant played in her ability to start her own business and the challenges she overcame to do the same. She also addressed her views on the government's role in private sector regulation and offered some advice to other companies looking to shatter industry growth standards, as P³S had done in 2009.

The article published by Alister & Paine follows (edited for errors in original).

"Mary Ellen Trevino is the founder and president of the Inc. 500 number one Latina and number one woman-led company, P³S Corporation. Prior to founding P³S, she spent 12 years with the federal government, eight of them with the Department of the Treasury, and was chief operating officer and vice president of the FedSource office.

P³S Corporation provides Information Technology, Program Management, Financial Management, and Security Service to the federal government nationwide. Mary Ellen started P³S with \$1,000. In 2008, P³S grew by 5,898.5% and brought in \$13.5 million. One employee in 2004 grew to more than 350 in 2009, many of whom had lost jobs from other failing industries.

Mary Ellen personally challenged the banking industry and raised a \$100,000 line of credit in the middle of a recession. She is also a mother with three children at home. Here's a brief insight into the life of one of the most influential women in the nation.

Alister & Paine: How did working for the U.S. Department of the Treasury lead to where you are today?

Mary Ellen: I was responsible for awarding government contracts, working as a liaison between government agencies and private industries, ensuring that agencies were receiving the services that they had paid for.

I had the opportunity to work with the best of the industry and the not-so-great, if you know what I'm saying. I took the 'best' practices and implemented them into what P³S Corporation is today. There was a need for women-owned businesses that understood the federal state.

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Alister & Paine: What made you leap into starting your own business, after finding the need and niche?

Mary Ellen: I left a very good job to fill that void. By having my own business and continuing to support the federal government, I felt I would be in a much better position to deliver on my promises.

Alister & Paine: How did you raise capital initially?

Mary Ellen: I started the company with \$1,000. I worked with the small business administration and several different banks to obtain a line of credit. It was a challenge. I was asking for \$100,000.

I had to present a corporate capabilities briefing to educate the banks on how government contracting works and have them realize the low risk that it actually is. Part of it was lack of understanding on the banks' part, about the industry that we're in.

Alister & Paine: What was your marketing strategy?

Mary Ellen: Doing what I knew how to do best and targeting government customers and individuals whom I had provided services to in the past and delivered successfully.

Alister & Paine: How competitive is the industry?

Mary Ellen: Very. The beauty of it is that the federal government has designated specific programs that people can apply for that allows them to receive set-aside contracts from the federal government. Not only are we a woman-owned company, we are in the 8(a) business development program, and we are also a "small disadvantaged" business.

Alister & Paine: What's on the horizon for P³S?

Mary Ellen: We're starting to bid on contracts that are outside of the 8(a) business development program because you're only in the program for nine years. We continue to provide opportunities to provide services to the Department of Defense and other agencies. Our plan is to go worldwide within the next 3 years.

Alister & Paine: Did you find any gender barriers when it came to securing capital?

Mary Ellen: I think because I was a female I had to take the extra steps in putting together briefing presentations and requesting to speak with individuals within banks at leadership levels. I don't know if everybody has to go through that, but I certainly did.

Alister & Paine: What was the biggest obstacle for you personally?

Mary Ellen: Maintaining the balance between work and family. It's easy to get lost in the work that you have to do every day. I have three children, three very active boys. Keeping that balance as a priority allows you to do well in both respects.

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Alister & Paine: What part of your background inspired you to work so closely with the U.S. Government?

Mary Ellen: I started working for the federal government right out of college, working with government budgets, and it was always a priority to ensure we were doing everything within our power to save taxpayer dollars.

That's been ingrained in me since my first day of government service and it's still a part of me today. One of the reasons we grew so quickly in just four years is because we have the government's best interests at heart. We provide a great savings to the federal government and in turn save a lot of money in taxpayer dollars.

Alister & Paine: How do you feel about the current government administration?

Mary Ellen: I'd like to see the current administration put programs in place that allow small businesses to actually be successful and flourish, and focus on incentives to help keep small business doors open. The tax liability imposed on small business almost makes it impossible to stay in business.

Small business is the backbone of this economy.

Alister & Paine: If you had a day in the Oval Office, what would you change?

Mary Ellen: Allow private industry to do what it does best and keep the government focused on what it does best, as opposed to crossing over lines that the government has no business crossing. I wouldn't impose government within healthcare – that's not the mission of the federal government.

Alister & Paine: Any words of wisdom or advice for women seeking to be in a position of power similar to yours?

Mary Ellen: Do your homework. Know your industry well. Know your customers well. Know what it is that they need from you.

It's easy to spread yourself too thin – Avoid that. Always be the most prepared person in the room – You will gain respect. Do not carry the 'I'm a woman' chip on your shoulder – that works against you. Just go in there, know your stuff, and do the best that you can do. It's worked for me.

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About P³S Corporation

P³S Corporation started with one employee in 2005 and now employs more than 350 people in 28 states. The company provides Information Technology, Program Management, Financial Management and Security services to the federal government. P³S Corporation recorded revenue of \$13.5 million in 2008 and has a three-year growth rate of 5,898.5 percent, according to *Inc. Magazine*.

San Antonio-based P³S Corporation has had a stellar year, garnering honors at the local, state, regional, and national levels. P³S Corporation recently received the ATHENA[®] Young Professionals' Award for leadership in business from the San Antonio North Chamber, was named the Region VI winner for the U.S. Small Business Administration's top 10 minority-owned small businesses (Region VI includes New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana), and was also named the 17th fast-growing company in America, the top woman-owned small business in America, the top Hispanic-owned small business in America, and the 3rd best small business in America for government services by *Inc. Magazine* in the 2009 Inc. 500|5000.

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