

CRAIN'S LIST LARGEST WOMEN-OWNED FIRMS

Ranked by 2005 revenues

	Company/address/phone/Web address	Top executive	Revenues (in millions) 2005	Revenues (in millions) 2004	% change from 2004	No. of full-time employees in Chicago area ¹	Year founded	No. of years of majority woman ownership	% of woman ownership	Type of business
1	CHAS. LEVY CO. LLC 1930 George St., Unit 1, Melrose Park 60160 (708) 356-3600; www.chaslevy.com	Barbara Levy Kipper Chairman, CEO	\$530.0	\$825.0	-35.8%	500	1893	20	90%	Book distributor
Largest decrease in revenue: sold magazine division										
2	DSC LOGISTICS INC. 1750 S. Wolf Road, Des Plaines 60018 (847) 390-6800; www.dsclogistics.com	Ann M. Drake CEO	\$307.8	\$285.0	8.0%	400	1960	16	100%	Third-party logistics and supply chain management
3	HARPO INC. 110 N. Carpenter St., Chicago 60607 (312) 633-1000; www.oprah.com	Oprah G. Winfrey Chairman	\$290.0	\$275.0	5.5%	320	1986	20	100%	Television and film production, publishing and online media
4	FLYING FOOD GROUP LLC 212 N. Sangamon St., Suite 1A, Chicago 60607 (312) 243-2122; www.flyingfood.com	Sue Ling Gin Chairman, CEO	\$200.0	\$170.0	17.6%	478	1983	23	100%	Airline catering, home meal solutions
5	MARKETING INNOVATORS INTERNATIONAL INC. 9701 W. Higgins Road, Rosemont 60018 (847) 696-1111; www.marketinginnovators.com	Lois M. LeMenager Chairman, CEO	\$140.0	\$111.5	25.6%	62	1978	24	100%	Reward and incentive programs
6	HOLLY HUNT LTD. 801 W. Adams St., Suite 700, Chicago 60607 (312) 329-5999; www.hollyhunt.com	Holly A. Hunt CEO	\$125.4	\$110.0	14.0%	129	1984	26	100%	Designer and manufacturer of interior furnishings
7	TURTLE WAX INC. 5655 W. 73rd St., Chicago 60638 (708) 563-3600; www.turtlex.com	Sondra A. Healy Co-chairman	\$117.7	\$100.0	17.7%	250	1941	40	100%	Manufacturer of chemical and household products, car wash operator
8	H2O PLUS 845 W. Madison St., Chicago 60607 (312) 850-9283; www.h2oplus.com	Cindy Melk Founder	\$115.0	\$100.0	15.0%	100	1989	17	100%	Skin care products and cosmetics

10 MORE WOMEN YOU SHOULD KNOW

Many of the women on our list run companies that move stuff, make stuff and recycle—not your traditional female industries. We talked to a few of them to find out why. Stories by Meredith Landry

Toner time

In 1979, Billy Joel's "Just the Way You Are" dominated the radio airwaves and minimum wage was \$2.90 an hour. It was also the year that Time Inc. offered Terry Burton \$5 an hour and a fancy title.



TERRY BURTON, 45
\$29 million in revenue in '05

Ms. Burton had never planned to work in printing, (she'd wanted to be a stewardess), but two years out of high school, being a "data center manager" sounded impressive. She spent 10 years in Time's data center in

Chicago, where they scanned back issues to put on microfiche and processed invoices. But in 1989, Time moved the office to Tampa, Fla., and Ms. Burton stayed behind to create her own company in her parent's basement.

"I read an article in an entrepreneur magazine about businesses that manufacture toner cartridges," she says. "I knew a little bit about it and figured I should give it a try."

She started Toner Time Inc., which recycles ink cartridges, with \$1,000 in capital. In 1999, she started selling new and used parts for Hewlett-Packard Co. laser printers, becoming the company's largest distributor. Because her clients then included companies in Asia, Australia and Mexico, she changed the company name to **TTI International Inc.**

"When I first started out, there were 5,000 other businesses like mine," Ms. Burton says. "But now there are only 2,500."

Ms. Burton attributes her staying power to her research and development department—three engineers who continually test parts to make sure they will work in newer models.

And she has one request to help her business: "Never throw away your empty cartridges. We'll recycle them."



STEPHEN J. SERIO

And then there was one

The license plate on Barbara Levy Kipper's car says "Reader."

And it's a good thing there's more than one. They're the reason **Chas. Levy Co. LLC** is the largest mass market distributor of paperback, hardcover and audio books in the U.S.

The list of Chas. Levy's 20 retail customers—with more than 13,000 store locations—includes Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Target Corp. and Best Buy Co. Inc. And while Ms. Levy Kipper is familiar with her company's best-selling authors—John Grisham, Nora Roberts, Dan Brown and J.K. Rowling—she prefers lesser-known scribes from foreign lands.

"I read a lot of women writers from the Indian subcontinent," she says.

When Ms. Levy Kipper took over the family business after her father died in 1986, Chas. Levy was much larger. Founded in 1893 by her grandfather, it started out as a local newspaper and magazine distributor. But over the years, it grew to five subsidiaries.

In Ms. Levy Kipper's tenure alone, Chas. Levy bought 15

BARBARA LEVY KIPPER, 63
\$530 million in revenue in '05

smaller distributors of videotapes, cassettes, CDs, computer software and books. That level of growth is why the firm has topped *Crain's* list of the Largest Women-Owned Firms eight out of the 11 years that *Crain's* has done the ranking, including this year.

But in the past 15 years, Chas. Levy has been doing more selling than buying. It sold off its video division in 1991, followed by its music division in 1994. And it shut down its flagship newspaper distribution plant in 1999.

The selling spree culminated in its sale last May of its magazine distribution division to Bonita Springs, Fla.-based Source Interlink Cos. for \$29.7 million—leading to a 36% drop in last year's revenues. Now only one subsidiary remains.

"We introduced many different entities over the years to keep up with our retailers' changes," Ms. Levy Kipper says. "But today we're strictly a book distribution company."

Happy treats

Lois LeMenager has some advice for new business owners: Get to know your bank president.

"You're never too small to build that relationship," she says. "If they know you, they'll be more likely to help you. And you never know when you'll need fast funds."

As CEO of **Marketing Innovators International Inc.**, Ms. LeMenager has learned that lesson. Five years ago, when she needed a quick \$8 million to buy J. C. Penney Co. gift cards for clients, U.S. Bank gave her the loan within 72 hours. Why? She's friends with the president of her branch.

Building loyalty is what Marketing Innovators does. Founded in 1978, it develops incentive programs for companies like T-Mobile, Hewlett-Packard Co. and MasterCard International Inc.

Marketing Innovators buys \$25 gift certificates at a 10% to 20% discount from more than 350

retailers including Blockbuster Inc., Target Corp., Red Lobster and Home Depot Inc., then sells them to clients, who use them to

LOIS LEMENAGER, 72
\$140 million in revenue in '05

congratulate employees on an anniversary or thank customers for business. It also organizes programs like cruises to the Bahamas for sales teams that reach their quotas.

Last year, Marketing Innovators' revenues increased 26% from 2004, a jump Ms. LeMenager largely attributes to one of her biggest clients acquiring a new company, which doubled its demand for incentives.

Reward programs have grown to a \$28-billion industry in the U.S.

"The idea is simple: Rewarding someone makes them happy," says Karen Renk, executive director of the Incentive Marketing Assn. in Naperville. "It's a natural human response. There isn't anybody who doesn't like a gift."

Green is good

When Kayhan Hellriegel was passed over for a promotion after 12 years with a local shipping company, she decided that was it.

"They brought in a man from outside and wanted me to train him," says Ms. Hellriegel, who won an \$80,000 settlement in a class-action sex-discrimination lawsuit against the company.

It was enough to inspire her to launch her own business, **Kayhan International Ltd.**, in 1982. Based in Schaumburg, Kayhan is an office furniture supplier for more than 500 clients, including Motorola Inc., Rotary International and Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. It's one of 150 preferred distributors of Haworth furniture, which specializes in ergonomic,



KAYHAN HELLRIEGEL, 58
\$19 million in revenue in '05

environmentally friendly office interiors.

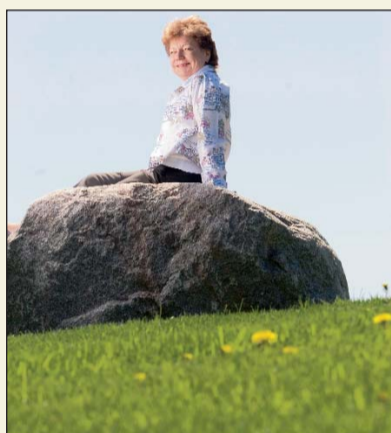
"Typical office furniture used to be a desk, a filing cabinet and some chairs," says Barbara Rieske, Kayhan's marketing director. "It's much more strategic now."

That means moveable walls, raised floors to conceal electrical cords and non-glare lighting. Kayhan has installed these products in more than 20 million square feet of office space.

Last year, its revenues nearly doubled. And with more and more companies "going green," Ms. Hellriegel expects sales to keep growing.

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9	NATIONAL VAN LINES INC. 2800 W. Roosevelt Road, Broadview 60155 (708) 450-2900; www.nationalvanlines.com	Maureen Beal CEO	\$90.8	\$73.6	23.4%	101	1929	17	100%	Moving and storage services
10	UNITED SCRAP METAL INC. 1545 S. Cicero Ave., Cicero 60804 (708) 780-6800; www.unitedscrap.com	Marsha Serlin CEO	\$78.8	\$71.5	10.2%	135	1978	28	91%	Metal buyer and recycler
11	NEW WORLD VAN LINES INC. 5875 N. Rogers Ave., Chicago 60646 (800) 422-3900; www.newworldvanlines.com	Shirley Marx Chairwoman	\$76.5	\$74.3	2.9%	146	1919	11	60%	Moving and storage services
12	CORPORATE CONCEPTS INC. 325 Eisenhower Lane North, Lombard 60148 (630) 691-8800; www.corpconc.com	Victoria Hansel President, CEO	\$60.0	\$55.0	9.1%	52	1983	23	78%	Contract furniture dealership
13	OEC BUSINESS INTERIORS INC. 900 N. Church Road, Elmhurst 60126 (630) 589-5500; www.oecbusinessinteriors.com	Frances Riha Chairman, CEO	\$57.6	\$44.6	29.0%	126	1955	16	51%	Contract furniture business
14	MARILYN MIGLIN L. P. 1230 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago 60607 (312) 266-4600; www.marilynmiglin.com	Marilyn J. Miglin President, CEO	\$54.0	\$52.0	3.8%	50	1963	43	100%	Fragrances, cosmetics, skin-care products
15	SPECTRA MERCHANDISING INTERNATIONAL INC. 4230 Normandy Ave., Chicago 60634 (773) 202-8408; www.spectraintl.com	Patricia Schoenberg President	\$50.0	\$50.0	NC	60	1981	25	100%	Consumer electronics manufacturer
16	SIGNATURE HOMESTYLES 500 Wall St., Glendale Heights 60139 (630) 980-5452; www.signaturehomestyles.com	Madolyn Johnson Founder, president	\$40.0	\$37.0	8.1%	74	1971	35	100%	Marketer of home accessories



ERIK UNGER

Hello, kitty

In an industry dominated by giants like Sony Corp., Panasonic Corp. and General Electric Co., independently owned electronics companies often have a hard time staying in business. But with the help of a small white kitten, **Spectra Merchandising International Inc.** does.

PATRICIA SCHOENBERG, 62
\$50 million in revenue in '05

Founded in 1981, Spectra makes more than 200 consumer electronics—clock radios, calculators, cordless phones and karaoke systems—some of which are decorated with characters like Hello Kitty and Strawberry Shortcake.

"I don't live for volume," President Patricia Schoenberg says of competing with the big guys. "Bigger is not always better."

Headquartered in Chicago, Spectra's products are manufactured in the company's factories in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea and sold to more than 100 retailers worldwide.

Ms. Schoenberg added the Hello Kitty line to her product list in January 2003, when she formed a business alliance with Marino Andriani, a former division president at Emerson Radio Corp. in Parsippany, N.J., who owns the license for Hello Kitty, Strawberry Shortcake and Studebaker electronic and home products.

Her biggest sellers? The Jensen Universal Docking system for iPod and the Hello Kitty Tea Cup Clock Radio with night light, which retails for \$14.99.

Road trips for MDs

Back when Sheila Liberman started her company in 1980, the concept of temp workers in white coats was relatively new.

Sure, there were staffing agencies for nurses, but pharmacists?

Today, **RPh On the Go USA Inc.** is one of the nation's largest staffing agencies that places part- and full-time pharmacists in retail chains, hospitals, long-term care facilities and federal prisons throughout the U.S., Guam and the Virgin Islands.

"The number of prescriptions has tripled over the last 10 years," says Ms. Liberman, who has 44,000 pharmacists under contract. "Chain stores have grown and graduates are opting for specialized careers in hospitals instead of retail locations."

Hospitals often have clinical residencies that place new pharmacists in different areas of the hospital to work exclusively with certain illnesses. There's also greater earning potential.

Last July, the National Assn. of Chain Drug Stores reported 6,000 full- and part-time openings in its 37,000 member stores. More often, those positions are being filled by temps like Merrill Davidson, 60, who signed on with RPh two years ago after retiring in 2002.

"I don't do it for the money," says Mr. Davidson, who owned a pharmacy called Big C Drugs in



SHEILA LIBERMAN, 64
\$29 million in revenue in '05

Mobile, Ala., for 25 years before his retirement. "I do it because if I don't, then some sick people won't get their medicine that day."

He also does it for gas money.

"I like to travel in my motor home," he says. "They found a job for me at the Grand Canyon, one in South Carolina, and a bunch all over Alabama."

But RPh offers more than travel expenses. Pharmacists placed in full-time positions get health and life insurance, a 401(k), holiday bonuses and a salary nearing \$100,000. Part-time workers get paid by the hour. Job assignments range from filling in for a day at a retail chain to working at a health facility on an Indian reservation for a year.

Ms. Liberman didn't expect to become an entrepreneur when she graduated from the University of Illinois Pharmacy School in 1978. But as a new graduate with two young children, she wanted a flexible schedule. "I'm glad I didn't know about business back then," she says. "I probably wouldn't have done it."

As Mr. Davidson prepares for his next road trip to Montgomery, Ala., he's thankful she did.



STEPHEN J. SERIO

Gas money

During the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Metra kept its trains running for 48 hours for residents and tourists who feared Chicago would be the next city hit.

Who provided the 113,000 gallons of gas? **West Fuels Inc.**

"People wanted to get out of the city as quickly as possible," says CEO Deborah Stange. "We had 48 emergency deliveries to Metra and the city of Chicago" for its police and fire trucks.

Ms. Stange has come through in more than one crisis. Her company provides emergency fuel for O'Hare International Airport's backup generators during power outages. And if trains are unable to

DEBORAH STANGE, 48
\$15.4 million in revenue in '05

make it back to the service yard during a snowstorm, West Fuels brings the gas to them—wherever they are.

West Fuels also provides diesel, gasoline, heating oil, lubricants and antifreeze to clients such as Midway Airport, Navy Pier, McCormick Place, school bus companies, car rental agencies and waste haulers.

Last year, the company's revenues jumped 55%, driven largely by the rise in crude oil prices after Hurricane Katrina.

It delivered 18 million gallons of fuel in 2005, including diesel for generators that kept refrigerators and lighting running during the Taste of Chicago.

Far from librarian

Linda Bi took over as CEO of **Central Equipex Inc.** after her husband died suddenly in 2000. Equipex, which started out as an axle components and ball bearings supplier for mobile home manufacturers, has since doubled its annual revenues to \$17 million.

"Never in a million years did I think I'd be where I am today," says Ms. Bi, who emigrated from

China with her husband in 1988, a year before he founded the company. "In school, my dream was to become a librarian. Needless to say, I had no factory experience, nor did I know how American businesses ran."

But she learned quickly. Before her husband died, she was the company's bookkeeper. Now she oversees a staff of 12 and a product line that also includes clay pigeon throwers for skeet shooting, porce-

lain insulators for electrical wires and "blanket bags" to keep spectators' legs warm at sporting events.

Knowing Mandarin comes in handy for dealing with Equipex's manufacturers in central China, where all of its products are made.

"I'm the bridge between our Chinese suppliers and American customers," Ms. Bi says. "I communicate with both sides daily."

Her U.S. customers include Axis Products Inc., an Elkhart, Ind.,



LINDA BI, 48
\$17 million in revenue in '05

company that makes trailer axles and Stanrail Corp. in Gary, Ind. In November, Equipex is moving to a new 80,000 square-foot warehouse in Batavia to house their growing inventory of spindles, springs and idler hubs.

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17	RPH ON THE GO USA INC. 5510 Howard St., Skokie 60077 (800) 553-7359; www.rphonthego.com	Sheila Liberman CEO	\$29.0	\$21.0	38.1%	150	1980	26	90%	Pharmacy staffing
17	TTI INTERNATIONAL INC. 4200 W. Diversey Pkwy., Chicago 60639 (773) 481-1219; www.ttiinternational.com	Terry A. Burton President, CEO	\$29.0	\$27.0	7.4%	175	1990	16	75%	Ink cartridge recycling and new and used printer parts sales
19	LEVY SECURITY CORP. ² 8750 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Suite 1200, Chicago 60631 (773) 867-9204; www.levysecurity.com	Deborah G. Levy Chairman, CEO	\$27.0	\$28.6	-5.5%	725	1979	12	100%	Security services
20	CORPORATE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT GROUP 450 E. 22nd St., Lombard 60148 (630) 691-9100; www.corptrav.com	Bonnie Lorefice CEO	\$26.2	24.0	9.2%	105	1976	30	100%	Corporate travel services
21	MNJ TECHNOLOGIES DIRECT INC. 1025 E. Busch Pkwy., Buffalo Grove 60089 (800) 870-4340; www.mnjtech.com	Susan Kozak President	\$24.0	\$21.0	14.3%	36	2002	5	100%	Computer hardware and software reseller
22	DARWILL 11900 W. Roosevelt Road, Hillside 60162 (708) 236-4900; www.darwill.com	Janice Van Dyke-Zeilstra CEO	\$23.1	\$23.0	0.5%	138	1951	12	62%	Commercial sheetfed and digital printing, direct mail and fulfillment
23	GLOBAL CAPITAL LTD. 888 E. Belvidere Road, Unit 309, Grayslake 60030 (847) 223-7820; www.globalcapitaltd.com	Terri E. McNally President	\$23.0	\$23.0	NC	3	1999	7	100%	General equipment leasing and financing; leased asset management

Fewest employees



STEPHEN J. SERIO

Still truckin'

With seven children and 21 grandkids, Shirley Marx is used to packing up a car. But long before mastering the minivan, she knew her way around a moving van.

Ms. Marx took over **New World Van Lines Inc.** after the death of her husband, Edward, in 1995. Since then, the Chicago-based moving and storage service has grown from eight locations to 12, expanding into California, Colorado, Georgia and Mass-

achusetts. Within the \$10-billion moving industry—which excludes self-rentals like U-Haul International Inc.—New World ranks as the 10th-largest among major carriers.

That's a long way from the company's beginnings in 1919, when Ms. Marx's father-in-law started the business with one moving truck. Today, more than 570 New World moving vans traverse the interstates, employing 565 full-time workers. It has contracts to move

employees for 28 of the Fortune 200 companies, including McDonald's Corp. and Abbott Laboratories.

SHIRLEY MARX, 75
\$76.5 million in revenue in '05

“Edward and I wanted a van line that provided true ‘single-crew service’ from start to finish,” says Ms. Marx, who was the company's vice-president before his death.

Moving services are in particularly high demand in and out of Chicago, according to the American Moving and Storage Assn. (AMSA). “Chicago is the second most active outbound

area behind Washington, D.C., and the third most active inbound area behind Washington, D.C., and Phoenix,” says MaryScott Tuck, director of transportation statistics at the AMSA. “The majority of shipments moving into the Chicago area are from California and Florida.”

Why those areas? Ms. Tuck isn't sure, but moving from California to Illinois isn't cheap. Relocating a three-bedroom household (8,000 pounds) costs an average of \$5,000. Too bad it couldn't fit in the minivan.

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23	NEW AGE TRANSPORTATION DISTRIBUTION & WAREHOUSING INC.; 1881 Rose Road, Lake Zurich 60047; (847) 545-9200; www.newagetransportation.com	Carolyn Gable President, CEO	\$23.0	\$17.0	35.3%	45	1989	16	100%	Third-party logistics for trucking and shipping; warehousing
23	PAIGE PERSONNEL SERVICES³ 5215 Old Orchard Road, Skokie 60077 (847) 966-0111; www.paigepersonnel.com	Karen Rae Horwitz President, CEO	\$23.0	\$22.5	2.2%	45	1964	11	100%	Temporary and permanent office staffing
26	FOOD FOR THOUGHT ENTERPRISES 7001 N. Ridgeway Ave., Lincolnwood 60712 (847) 982-2608; www.foodforthought-chicago.com	Nancy Garcia Sharp CEO	\$22.1	\$16.2	36.6%	215	1983	23	100%	Catering, food service management, contract dining services
27	MATREX EXHIBITS INC. 301 Church St., Addison 60101 (630) 628-2233; www.matrexhibits.com	Jill D. Hebert Founder, CEO	\$20.9	\$14.4	45.2%	58	1987	19	100%	Design, build and assemble custom trade show exhibits
28	KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL LTD. 1475 E. Woodfield Road, Suite 104, Schaumburg 60173 (847) 843-5060; www.kayhan.furnishgroup.com	Kayhan Hellriegel President	\$19.0	\$10.0	90.0%	20	1982	24	61%	Contract office furniture, installation and design
29	CENTRAL EQUIMPEX INC. 1119 Lyon Road, Batavia 60510 (630) 761-9816; www.equimpex.com	Linda Bi President	\$17.0	\$15.0	13.3%	10	1989	6	100%	Manufacturer of axle components and casting products
30	WEST FUELS INC. 7340 W. Harrison St., Forest Park 60130 (708) 488-8880; www.westfuels.com	Deborah L. Stange President	\$15.4	\$9.9	55.1%	6	1991	15	100%	Fuel distributor

Largest increase in revenue

Crain's estimates shown in gray. 1. As of Dec. 31, 2005. 2. Spun off Premier Security in 2004. 3. Paige Temporary Inc. was dissolved in December 2003 into Miss Paige Ltd., which operates as Paige Personnel Services.

| Research by Michelle Evans



On display

Nineteen years ago, Jill Hebert transferred her carpentry skills from the wood shop to the convention center.

That's when she founded **Matrex Exhibits Inc.**, which designs, builds and breaks down hundreds of display booths a year.

"I know my way around a table saw," says Ms. Hebert, a former

custom furniture maker.

She got the idea in 1981 while attending her first trade show for vending machine manufacturers at McCormick Place, where she was struck by the complexity of the exhibits. With a \$200,000 home-equity loan, she started the company at her kitchen table six years later.

Today, she has 58 employees and 60 clients, including Sara Lee Corp., ExxonMobil Corp. and Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. Last year,

Matrex's revenues were up 45%, a jump that Ms. Hebert attributes to landing three new accounts.

**JILL
HEBERT, 50**
\$20.9 million in
revenue in '05

These days, Ms. Hebert doesn't have much use for her proficiency with a miter saw. When bidding on a project, she and her staff present clients with computerized models rather than traditional handmade renderings. Once their

design is selected, it takes Matrex's crew of carpenters, graphic designers and engineers up to six months to build a "preview" exhibit for a client, get approval and ship it to the trade show location.

The company's largest project so far? A 14,400-square-foot exhibit for medical device maker Stryker Corp. at a trade show at McCormick Place in March.

"It took 15 full-size vans to move it," she says.