

59.85	43%	36%	Interhome	42	+	1/2	+999	103	A	42%	42	80	33	29	13	MarketCorp	13%				
89	23%	27%		14				13			60	80	81	8%	MarketFacts	7%					
6%	5%	37	53	2%	1	A	InterimSystem	1 1/2	+	1	266	A	1 1/2	1	88	53	18%	14 1/2	Marsh	-	14 1/2

Business News & Notes

The New Entrepreneurs

(NAPSA)—When it comes to running businesses, women work. According to the Center for Women’s Business Research, the number of women-owned firms increased at twice the rate of all firms between 1997 and 2002.

In fact, research shows women-owned businesses account for more than one-third of U.S. firms, with their number expected to reach over six million by 2003.

While the largest share of women-owned businesses remains in the service sector (including business services, engineering services and professionals such as doctors, lawyers and accountants) female entrepreneurs are also moving into nontraditional industries. The greatest growth in the number of women-owned businesses have come in the areas of construction, agricultural services, transportation, communications, finance and real estate.

While there are no free lunches for women or men in the business world, there are a number of services geared specifically toward helping women-owned businesses succeed:

- **Contractors and Contracts**—Women who are certified as “female entrepreneurs” can receive preferential treatment from contractors (learn more at the Small Business Administration Web site). In addition, the state Office of Women’s Business Ownership has information women entrepreneurs can use to obtain special



Women entrepreneurs now account for over one third of American business owners.

status when competing for government contracts.

- **Technology**—The Women Business Owners portal provided by IBM (www.ibm.com/smallbusiness/women) provides access to special offers and business resources from the company and other organizations focused on women business owners. The site includes information on business solutions, success stories, advice from women and links to national organizations such as the Women Presidents’ Organization and the Center for Women’s Business Research.

- **Loans**—The Small Business Administration offers guaranteed loans through the Loan Prequalification Program, SBAExpress, the Microloan Program and others. Women can use the programs to invest less of their own money than a bank typically demands.