



**Valerie Manning**  
President & CEO

## President's Letter

### From Passion to Profits

From passion to profits...what does that really mean? In my view, it's the definition of a successful entrepreneur. An entrepreneur doesn't just come up with a new idea, but is a person with incredible personal energy and passion for turning the idea into profit!

The truth is that every successful entrepreneur is extremely passionate, to the point that they will mortgage their house, sell their car, and even spend their child's education fund. Now that's passion.

As the head of the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, I have the privilege of not only observing entrepreneurs but knowing them, feeling and sharing in their passion and watching them succeed. Phoenix is "the place to be" for entrepreneurs to take an idea, create a value-added product or service and make a profit.

*Entrepreneur* magazine's October edition named Arizona as the #1 state to start a business and ranked Phoenix as the #1 city for entrepreneurs, citing that "The Phoenix area dominated on the strength of robust growth in new businesses; its 12,350 start-ups represented a larger percentage of its total number of companies than any other U.S. city." The following are examples of

entrepreneurship at work in Greater Phoenix:

When I first met Susan Haugland, who owns a company called BestBill® with her husband Dan, they were finalists for our annual Small Business Awards. Susan and Dan are energetic and passionate people, and I wanted to learn more about them. I went on a tour of their North Phoenix facility and meet their employees. I saw a lot of energy and was impressed by their level of commitment. BestBill is an out-source company for tasks that no business likes to do, but has to do, which is to create and send out invoices to their customers. The goal was to develop technology that provides greater efficiency, better payment results and savings to the customer's bottom line. The result: loyal customers that credit BestBill's technology and exceptional service for helping them get paid faster. They currently produce more than 25 million documents per year. Their combination of technical savvy and passion has made BestBill successful.

And then there is Eileen Proctor who loves animals, particularly dogs...a lot! Another of the Chamber's Small Business Award finalists, her passion was to create a business that improves the quality of life for dogs and the people who love them. So what did she do? She created a service

company for dogs. "It's A Ruff Life" Dog Day Care and Activity Center is the place to bring your dog during the day, and even at night, and take them home happy and tired. Dogs at "It's A Ruff Life" attend birthday parties, watch dog-themed movies, romp around playgrounds and generally have a "good ol' time." Now with two Phoenix locations, "It's A Ruff Life" is a huge success with a growing number of dogs who can't stop wagging their tails! I'd say Eileen took her passion to profits!

I could use all the space in the *Today* newspaper to feature the passionate, creative and talented entrepreneurs I have had the privilege to know over the last 16 years. Here at the Chamber, all of our collective passion, between the staff and board of directors, is focused on how to offer the very best products and services that will help as many start-up, emerging and experienced entrepreneurs as possible. We educate them on a myriad of business practices, link them with other successful business executives, expose them to new opportunities, find them money and cheer them on each and every day. It's really not about the profit for us; it's only about the passion!

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