

# Cityscape: SEATTLE



"Seattle is a very open city, without a strong social hierarchy. As a woman, I have never felt any lack of opportunity here. There are plenty of avenues for support for working mothers, and this is a key component to balancing family and a career."

## **Taeya C. Lauer**

VICE PRESIDENT & FINANCIAL  
CONSULTANT AT D. A. DAVIDSON & CO

**Industry:** Finance/Wealth Management

**Years in Industry:** 18

**Education:** BA in Finance and Decision-Making Sciences

**What do you like most about your job?** "I really enjoy this job of new challenges, learning experiences, unlimited potential, and the ability to truly help people."

**Other Interests/Activities:** "Gardening, reading, home remodeling. My regular activities include running (and racing), yoga, swimming, snowboarding, and travelling. I believe in fitness and a mind-body connection. I believe new adventures make you a richer person and provide you the opportunity to give more to others."



## **Vanessa Volkman**

OWNER & DIRECTOR OF BLUE  
RIBBON COOKING, LLC

**Industry:** Cooking Education  
and Catering

**Years in the Industry:** 10

**Education:** Associates of Arts

**What do you like most about your job?** "I throw parties for a living—could you imagine anything better?"

**Other Interests/Activities:** "I also run an all-inclusive wedding venue and a special-event and rental-décor company called Inspired: Party Rental and Event Design. I like dining in local restaurants, learning the culinary-styles of the world through travel, and working out at the gym."

"Seattle is a very unique city where consumers really appreciate a handmade touch or local-art feel. This city craves anything gourmet and organic. Local consumers will spend the extra money for something special. Seattle residents are very supportive of small businesses and seek a business owner-to-client relationship."



## **Maria Ross**

FOUNDER AND CHIEF BRAND STRATEGIST FOR RED SLICE, LLC

**Industry:** Consulting/Marketing

**Years in the Industry:** 16

**Education:** BS in Marketing, Minor in Spanish; Indiana University-Bloomington

**What do you like most about your job?**

"I love helping businesses big and small clarify their brand, tell their story, and delight customers."

**Other Interests/Activities:** "Wine and lifestyle writing; acting; film; theater; dining out; walking my amazing Black Lab mix, Eddie; volunteering pro-bono marketing services to nonprofits through Taproot Foundation; and giving back to animal shelters and abuse-prevention organizations."

"Seattle has an amazingly vibrant women's entrepreneurial community. As a corporate refugee, I launched a successful business after only living here for three months because of the supportive and collaborative networking opportunities targeted to women with organizations such as CRAVE, Ladies Who Launch, Northwest Entrepreneur Network, and others."

"Seattle is a thriving business community that offers women many diverse opportunities. With organizations, including Women Business Owners and Executive Women International, there are many opportunities for women to build a vast network with other business professionals."



## **Colleen Moffitt and Jennifer Gehrt**

FOUNDING PARTNERS OF COMMUNIQUE PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Industry:** Public Relations

**Years in the Industry:** 40 (combined)

**Education:** Colleen Moffitt has a Bachelor's in Psychology, Minor in Business Administration from the University of Puget Sound with a minor in Business Administration; Jennifer Gehrt has a Bachelor's in Business Administration from the University of Oregon

**What do you like most about your job?** "Our greatest reward comes from helping companies build their brands, shape critical perceptions, and define and flourish in their industry category, segment or market."

**Other Interests/Activities:** "We have participated as keynote speakers or panelists for several industry events. We also co-authored a book on PR."



## **Robin Shapiro**

PRESIDENT OF HEALTH ADVOCACY STRATEGIES, LLC

**Industry:** Healthcare Communications

**Years in the Industry:** 20

**Education:** BA in Journalism (with a focus on news and editorial writing), BA in Political Science; University of Missouri-Columbia

**Other Interests/Activities:** "I co-founded a new company, Allied Health Advocates LLC, which provides an advocate (typically a nurse) to patients and their families who are navigating the healthcare system. I also like kickboxing and spending time with my family, including our Goldendoodle puppy, Lucky."



“Seattle is a city of innovation—not just in business, but in culture. Rewriting the rules is in its DNA. Seattle is a place where you can let go of tradition and swing for the fences.”

***Britt Peterson***

PARTNER & DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AT COLE & WEBER UNITED

**Industry:** Advertising & Marketing

**Years in Industry:** 12

**Education:**

BA in Journalism; University of Missouri

**What do you like most about your job?** “I get to be creative and curious!”

**Other Interests/Activities:**

“I’ve worked in airlines (yep, during 9/11), tourism, coffee, wireless technology, and entertainment. It’s amazing how many lessons can be shared between all of them. I also love to travel and cook. I’m a pop-culture addict, including TV—it’s not only important for my job, but it’s really at the center of culture overall.”

***April Zangl***

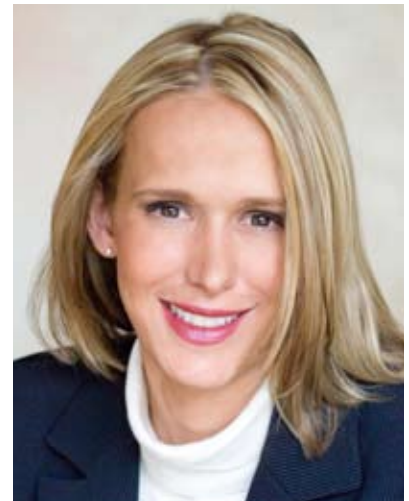
CEO OF HYDROPEPTIDE

**Industry:** Beauty/Skin Care

**Years in Industry:** 6

**Education:** BA in Health and Wellness; Brigham Young University

**Other Interests/Activities:** “In my spare time, I teach fitness classes for fun.”



“Seattle is a great city for women in business. The culture and lifestyle of Seattle affords women many opportunities not available in other regions. Women here have powerful positions in politics as well as Fortune 500 companies.”



***Melissa Benaroya***

PARENTING CONSULTANT, PARENT EDUCATOR, COUNSELOR & COFOUNDER OF MOMMY MATTERS ([mommymattersseattle.com](http://mommymattersseattle.com))

**Industry:** Social Work, Counseling, and Education

**Years in Industry:** 10

**Education:** Master’s in Social Work, license in clinical social work, and certification as a Gottman Educator

**Other Interests/Activities:** “Raising my own children; I’m the CEO of the Benaroya household. I also like running and working out at Northwest Crossfit.”

“Seattle is entrepreneurial by reputation. There are many professional organizations in the city that support and encourage this entrepreneurial spirit, such as Northwest Enterprising Moms and The Entrepreneur Organization (EO). What really makes Seattle different from other ‘metropolitan’ cities is that the city actually feels like one big community both personally and professionally.”