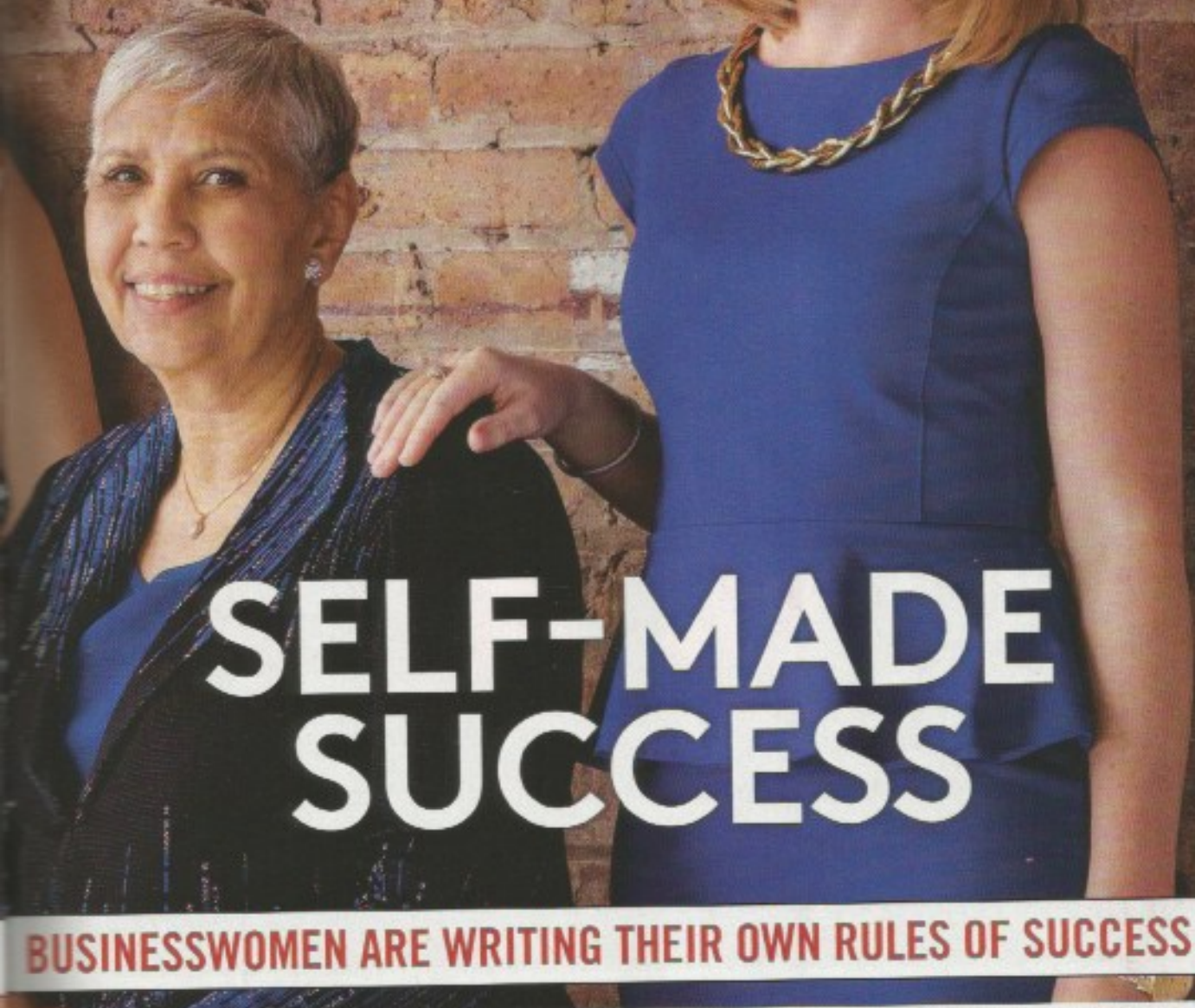


FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR IS CHANGING THE FACE OF AMERICAN BUSINESS

Forbes



SELF-MADE SUCCESS

BUSINESSWOMEN ARE WRITING THEIR OWN RULES OF SUCCESS

It's a Woman's World

How Four Female Entrepreneurs Are Redefining American Business



From left: Emily Lay, Founder, The Skopfield Plavers; Alice Houston, Owner and President, Houston-Johnson, Inc.; Rachel Moxon, Partner, Cumberland Consulting Group; Patricia Stout, Owner and President, Alamo Travel Group

THE DECISION WAS ALREADY MADE.

Patricia Stout was going to be a homemaker. At least that's what everyone kept telling her as she grew up in Mexico City in the 1940s and '50s. She was told she needed to learn how to cook and clean. There was only one problem: Stout didn't want to be a homemaker. "People said, 'She's a little girl, she doesn't need to worry about math,' but I liked those subjects," Stout says.

As a girl, Stout preferred the classroom to the kitchen, and she followed that passion to study business in college. Today she runs the Alamo Travel Group, which was barely breaking

even when she took over the company in 1990. Now it is one of the largest privately held travel agencies in San Antonio, Texas, with a high-powered client list that includes major corporations and governmental agencies like the U.S. Department of Defense.

Stout insists she isn't the sort of woman who would gloat or say 'I told you so,' but she doesn't need to. Having joined the growing ranks of self-made businesswomen across the country, her accomplishments do the talking for her. She isn't alone.

Indeed, when it comes to American entrepreneurship, it's not a man's world

anymore. Women are opening businesses at a rate nearly four times higher than men, according to a recent study conducted by the National Women's Business Council¹, and pioneering businesswomen like Stout have helped pave the way by refusing to accept limitations and succeeding on their own terms.

Alice Houston, who has owned and operated her logistics and warehousing business since 1994, calls the meteoric rise in female entrepreneurship "a sea change," and one of which she is thrilled to be a part. "There are more women at the table," she says, "and