

# Regina Barr



Regina Barr always knew she wanted to go into business for herself. But the 39-year-old admits she wasn't planning on doing it quite so soon.

"You have to take what comes your way," she said.

Barr launched Red Ladder, which provides organizational and leadership development, in October 2002. The timing, she said, was prompted by the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

**40**  
**UNDER**  
**FORTY**

Three months earlier Barr had left her job with U.S. Bancorp, where she had been vice president and manager of client marketing and communications, for a position as executive vice president of Financial Women International. She had previously served in a variety of volunteer positions for the organization.

But when the nonprofit's funding declined after the terrorist attacks took the wind out of the financial industry, Barr knew her one-year contract wasn't likely to be renewed. She decided it was time to put her business skills to work for herself.

"I always knew I wanted to go out and be an entrepreneur," she said. "So, right now

I'm in overdrive for my business. I'm a single, one-woman shop now. But by the end of next year, I'm hoping to have employees."

Reid Evenson, president of Eagle Crest Capital Bank, Edina, said Barr — who he has known for more than 10 years — was an essential resource to him when he was creating the bank in 2002. "I talked to a number of people, and she was one of the best," he said. "She is a creative thinker."

Her jobs in the financial industry — she has 14 combined years of experience with Dreyfus Service Corp., Chase Manhattan Bank in New York, and Minneapolis-based Norwest Corp. and U.S. Bancorp — helped her decide the direction of her business.

"I found that within an organization, I had a knack for helping people to be successful and for fixing things," she said. "I like to have challenges, succeed and see others be successful."

**COMPANY:** President and owner, Red Ladder Inc.

**YEAR OF BIRTH:** 1965

**FAMILY:** Husband, Kevin; two very independent cats, Riki and Toby; and one fun-loving dog, Samantha

**EDUCATION:** Bachelor's in business administration, MBA in management; Adelphi University; master's in human development (candidate for degree, September 2004), St. Mary's University

**ACCOMPLISHMENT:** Receiving recognition from my peers in the financial services industry. In 2003, I received the Financial Women International North Central District Lifetime Achievement Award for service and dedication to women in financial services. That meant a lot to me.

Barr is a native of New York. But when she and her husband were looking to settle down, she said she knew that the life of four-hour commutes wasn't in her future.

Her husband, Kevin Barr, suggested Minnesota, his birthplace and the place her mother had been raised.

"It was a quality-of-life thing," she said. Her only problem these days, she said, is there isn't enough time in the day to get everything done.

"If I wanted to, I could probably work 24 hours a day right now," she said.

Red Ladder's client list is nearly 20 companies long and includes American Express, Northeast Bank, Aim to Succeed and The Minnesota Bankers Association.

Though her start-up business takes a huge amount of her time, Barr said she is still committed to volunteering. She is actively involved with Business & Professional Women, Financial Women International, the Lyric Theater, Minnesota Women's Political Caucus, the United Way and other organizations.

- Sarah Sturmon Dale, contributing writer

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