

Jeanne Myerson

CEO, The Swig Co.

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Spencer Brown

Background: Myerson is completing her 10th year as CEO of the **Swig Co.** Before heading the San Francisco-based real estate company, she was president and CEO of private REIT Bailard Biehl & Kaiser Real Estate Investment Trust, which she quadrupled in assets during her tenure. Prior to joining BB&K, Myerson was worldwide director of facilities and real estate for NeXT Computer Inc. in Redwood City. Myerson joined NeXT from Metropolitan Life Real Estate Investments.

What was your first job: Other than a lemonade stand or baby-sitting, it was at a kids' drama and art camp in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where my family lives.

Education: Grinnell College, master's degree in city and regional planning from Harvard University.

Residence: San Francisco.

Business philosophy

Essential business philosophy: I hire great people, challenge them intellectually and provide room for them to grow in a supportive environment.

Best way to keep competitive edge: Stay in touch with what's going on in market, think ahead about what is really important for the company strategically. If you have good reputation as being smart, competent and fair, you get a shot at a lot of things you might not otherwise get.

Guiding principle: Keep your eye on where you want to go, and be flexible on how you're going to get there.

Yardstick of success: A growing, profitable, high-level of service company with motivated employees, satisfied owners, partners and tenants.

Goal yet to be achieved: Getting into the Washington, D.C., market

Judgment calls

Best business decision: We have bought well in a number of the acquisitions that we have made recently, including 501 Second St., Mountain Bay Plaza in Mountain View, the Kaiser Center in Oakland, 115 Sansome St., and 180 Montgomery St.

Toughest business decision: I haven't made it ... yet.

Biggest missed opportunity: We had the chance about three or four years ago to buy in downtown Silver Spring, Md. At the time, we thought it was way overpriced, but looking back we would have done very well.

Mentor: Former Oakland Athletics President and Swig board member Roy Eisenhardt. A renaissance man and one of the most amazingly thoughtful individuals. He has been a wonderful guidepost in recent years.

Word that best describes you: There is no one word ... persistent, determined and balanced give a sense.

True confessions

Like best about job: No two challenges are alike, and we've got a great bunch of people .

Like least about job: As I hire more people, I get further away from real estate activity.

Pet peeve: People who are dogmatic and inflexible and jump to conclusions.

Most important lesson learned: You have to keep growing -- times change and you have to be flexible and reach out to make opportunities happen.

Person most interested in meeting: Ten years ago, I said Gandhi. It would also be interesting to meet Kofi Anan, Madeline Albright and Bonnie Raitt.

Most respected competitor: TMG is smart and nimble; Shorenstein has done a great job with funds; RREEF just keeps buying; and Tom Sullivan's group (Wilson Meany Sullivan) is doing wonderfully creative projects.

Three greatest passions: Family, the outdoors, travel.

First choice for a new career: Running a big gardening/landscape business while being a backpacking guide, with horseback riding in there, too.

Predilections

Most influential book: Non-fiction: 'The Mayflower,' by Nathaniel Philbrick; fiction: 'Suite Francaise,' by Irene Nemirovsky.

Favorite cause: Homeless Prenatal Program.

Favorite status symbol: Taking my daughter to school.

Favorite movie: Most-watched recent movie: My Daughter's favorite: "Mary Poppins." Most engrossing recent movie: "Seeing in the Dark," by Tim Ferris, co-produced with Carolyn Zecca Ferris.

Favorite restaurant: Osa Moelle and Atelier de Joel Robuchon in Paris, Gary Danko and my house in San Francisco with my husband's cooking.

Favorite vacation spot: France, anywhere in the western U.S. mountains and Nantucket.

Favorite way to spend free time: Outdoors with the family.

Automobile: Audi Quattro station wagon.

-- *J.K. Dineen*