



Denver Business Journal's 2022 Outstanding Women in Business Awards
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Aug 19, 2022 Updated Aug 19, 2022, 8:32am MDT

Honoring the accomplished and impressive women that make the Mile High business community thrive is one of the Denver Business Journal's strongest traditions.

In our 24th year of our Outstanding Women in Business event, we are honoring 31 of these leaders along with a Lifetime Achievement Award winner and, for the first time, a Future Outstanding Woman in Business chosen in partnership with the Girl Scouts of Colorado.

To be named an Outstanding Woman in Business is no fluke. The DBJ received over 200 nominations that all passed through a judging panel made up of past winners and community leaders. Each was reviewed by at least two judges and received an overall score that narrowed the list to the individuals honored in this special edition of our paper. Our winners also took the stage at a sold-out dinner on Aug. 18 at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, our first full, in-person celebration of the honorees since 2019.

In our [print edition](#) and in extended online profiles, you will learn from these winners about the risks they have taken, wins they have achieved and what they see as the hurdles that remain for women aiming to become business leaders — as well as their ideas for making those hurdles fall.



Denver Business Journal's Aug. 19, 2022, print edition cover.
SETH MCCONNELL | DBJ PHOTO ILLUSTRATION

Each year, the DBJ aims to introduce our readers to a diverse group of women who are leading change across a wide range of industries. While some of our winners are CEOs and presidents of their companies, many others have made an impact at other levels of their organizations and communities through their creativity, determination and glass-shattering accomplishments.

It is clear that when groups like this gather, great ideas are shared. In a recent roundtable for this year's winners, topics of conversation included overcoming imposter syndrome, balancing expectations many women are faced with from child care to elder care and how leading with heart helps gain trust.

This class is packed with mentors and teachers who will surely have a ripple effect throughout Denver for years to come.

[>Click here to read about this year's winners.](#)



Leah Garcia is a winner in the 2022 Outstanding Women in Business awards.

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Title: Founder & CEO
Organization: Nulastin

Industry: Cosmetic and Personal Care

Location: Boulder

What accomplishment from the past year are you most proud of? Scaling the internal team, amplifying the brand voice and prioritizing our high-value customers.

What do you hope to achieve as a business leader during the next year, and how do you plan to achieve it? As a business leader, my goal is to empower our team to keep reaching new heights. Efficiency and fierceness are how we operate. I am in awe of what we accomplish! We are small, but mighty. A family of inspired individuals, each with specialized skills, able to step into multiple roles, and drive toward a mutual goal. The synergy of our business success is such that when we deliver exceptional product, satisfy customers, create a culture of loyalty, manage a profitable business, and protect our intellectual property, we triumph. Reaching new heights does have specific metrics. We have short term and long-term goals. In the next year, we want to diversify into new channels, reach more customers, make elastin replenishment part of everyone's lives, double revenue, increase profits and expand our product portfolio.

How would you describe your leadership style, and how has your leadership style changed over time? My leadership is two-fold. I'm a visionary. I'm progress and success focused. I employ a mix of enthusiastic, ingratiating, motivation — I lead by example. I'm also a pacesetter. From here, I operate with a sense of urgency and set a high bar. As the founder of Nulastin, I worked solo for the first five years and did virtually everything soup to nuts to run the business. Guided by gut and common sense, I made a lot of on-the-fly decisions to scale, and my style was aggressive. What evolved once I

started hiring an internal team, was that my leadership needed more structure and communication – more role definition, more KPIs, and more compassion.

What was the biggest risk you've taken in your professional life, and what motivated you to take it? Quitting a career in the hospitality industry at 28 years old, buying a one-way ticket and moving to Spain (with no plan other than learning the language) should be viewed as the biggest risk I've taken, but bootstrapping my own business surpasses that leap of faith. Nulastin is the second time I self-funded a start-up. I took out a mortgage, cashed in savings, lived in an Airstream to make ends meet while Airbnb'ing the house and gave up luxuries like eating out and clothes shopping. My theory is something's got to give. You can't have everything if you want something specific. What motivates me is "The Why." A motivational speaker once said, "If the why is big enough, the how to will come." I took that to heart and with Nulastin, for example, providing a product that delivers on the promise, that is backed by science and so much goodness. The empowerment that our brand offers truly fires me up.

What do you see as the biggest hurdle facing women who are working to advance into leadership positions in business? That I am even having to answer this is annoying. The biggest hurdle facing women who are working to advance into leadership positions in business is dealing with old-fashioned, entrenched mindsets around gender roles and personality characteristics/stereotypes. Starting at an early age, men and women are sent different messages about success, leadership, decisiveness, emotions, expectations, ownership. Don't get me wrong, that's changing (Hallelujah), but it's still a thing and it's still something that women deal with constantly.

What needs to change to make that hurdle fall? A reset across the globe. Women supporting and helping other women. A majority of Nulastin leadership is women supporting each other. If we hire women into leadership positions, we create opportunities for each other in the future to step into roles and reset entrenched culture and dynamics.

What is your number one piece of advice for emerging women business leaders? Never ever, ever weaken. There will be so many moving parts and so many things that will deflate you and make you want to throw in the towel. Stay the course and show up for yourself every day. Believe in abundance.

How do you relax and recharge? I'm a former professional athlete, so mountain biking, trail running, hiking or anything adventurous is the best way for me to recharge. When it comes to relaxing, that's where red wine and a good movie come in.

What else should our readers know? I'm a ranch girl and grew up on the rodeo circuit, which means, yes, I can twirl a rope and catch moving targets.