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LATINAS OF EXCELLENCE

Deborah Wainstein

**This Latina Found Her Niche By Change—
Then Ran With It**

By Bridget McCrea

Deborah Wainstein has a knack for blending with many different types of people, cultures and personalities. Perhaps it's her Colombian-Russian heritage, or maybe it's just because she's a people person. Regardless, the trait has served her well in her position as president and CEO of New York-based Priority Staffing Solutions, Inc.

“Whether I’m acquiring clients or looking for job applicants to fill positions for those clients, I’m a real chameleon,” acknowledges Wainstein, 30. “It translates into business success.”

Whether clients need French-speaking secretaries, Korean interpreters or salespeople who are fluent in Russian, Wainstein’s company can fill the need, and has been doing so since it was founded in 1999. The company specializes in temporary and permanent placement, helping companies staff up for peak periods and special projects. With 18 employees and \$3.8 million in sales last year, the firm operates from two locations in New York and an industrial staffing division in Indiana.

A graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology, Wainstein was working in the garment industry when she was offered a job by a family friend that owned an employment agency. “I had no idea what to do, and she tossed me a pamphlet and said, ‘Here’s what we do here,’” recalls Wainstein. “I started the following Monday and fell in love with the industry.”

It wasn’t long before Wainstein felt the entrepreneurial itch and decided to start her own firm. “I wanted to drive my company in a way that I wanted, and not to be the one who was being driven,” Wainstein says of her decision to start her own business, whose nationwide client roster boasts such names as Revlon and RCN Corp., a telecom service provider.

Wainstein, who is fluent in both English and Spanish, was recently recognized by Crain’s “40 Under 40” special issue of rising stars. She credits an early awareness of the need for bilingual employees with helping to drive her firm’s success over the last five years.



“Whether it’s bilingual Creole, French, Spanish or any other language, it’s really our big area of expertise,” says Wainstein.

“Deborah is a very impressive woman,” says Barry Zone, a partner with Gersten, Savage, Kaplowitz, Wolf & Marcus, whose firm has used Priority Staffing for three years. “She’s really found her niche, but she doesn’t rest on her laurels: She’s [always] expanding, finding new [opportunities].”