INTRODUCING

LESLIE BLODGETT

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF
BARE ESCENTUALS,
CREATOR OF BAREMINERALS
A visionary recognized by Inc. Magazine as one of the “Top Entrepreneurs of the Decade: 2000-2009,” Leslie Blodgett has single-handedly turned the beauty industry on its head by catapulting mineral makeup into the public eye, forever changing the conversation around beauty.

Joining Bare Escentuals as CEO in 1994, Leslie’s aptitude and discerning leadership style helped transform what was a local bath and body retailer into one of the leading prestige cosmetic companies in the United States with the launch of bareMinerals, an award-winning line of mineral-based products, including bareMinerals SPF 15 Foundation.

Blodgett’s solid background in product development, including positions at Neutrogena and Max Factor, coupled with her predisposition to intuit what women want while foreseeing trends are key factors that continue to propel her success and ever-growing popularity. This instinctual drive led her to QVC in 1997 with the simple purpose to educate women about bareMinerals and our untraditional approach to bare-skin beauty. Undaunted by the obstacle of selling foundation on TV, Blodgett’s passionate approach and authenticity resonated immediately with women nationwide that were looking for healthy makeup alternatives.

Thus, a makeup revolution was born and as word of mouth spread, so did Blodgett’s appeal. A renowned beauty expert sought-out by media sources on a global scale for her trademark style, Blodgett embodies a new level of influence. Blodgett “shuns the button-down, corporate approach of many of her peers, and speaks honestly—having long-ago checked her ego and pretense at the door.” – *Women’s Wear Daily*

Genuine to the core, Blodgett has been an advocate for community long before the advent of social media—personally responding to letters, emails and making house calls have been rituals from the beginning—and can be credited with spearheading a community-enabled approach; putting stock in the value of genuine, personal relationships and ultimately allowing women to have a much broader brand experience that is as much about a peer-to-peer community as it is about bareMinerals products.

In 2006, Blodgett took Bare Escentuals public in one of the largest cosmetic IPO’s in the last decade. Bare Escentuals is currently available in 29 countries with over 6,500 points of distribution, including more than 200 company-owned boutiques.

In 2012, Blodgett addressed Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) graduates, her alma mater, and was awarded an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. In 2011, Blodgett joined the board of directors at Stella & Dot, the San Bruno-based accessories company that ranked 67 on the Inc. 500 list of fastest growing companies in 2010. Blodgett also serves on the board of Cosmetic Executive Women (CEW) and was the first recipient of the organization’s Achiever Award in 2006 for her contributions to the industry.

A true testament to Blodgett’s influence on the cosmetic industry at large, in 2010, Bare Escentuals was acquired by Shiseido, the Japan-based leading global cosmetics company, for $1.8 billion making it one of the largest cosmetics mergers in history. Now, more than ever, Blodgett in her role of Executive Chairman is in position to fulfill her mission of bringing the company’s mineral-based products to even more women worldwide.

*For press inquiries, contact:*

Alison Reid
areid@BareEscentuals.com
415.489.5124
1994 – Hello gorgeous. Leslie Blodgett joins bare escentuals as president and CEO.


1997 – It’s showtime. Leslie makes her first appearance on QVC in the United States to introduce bareminerals, which sells out in 6 minutes.

2000 – The be addicts online forum is created.

2002 – First bareminerals infomercial debuts making Leslie a regular presence in households across the United States.

2004 – Leslie takes to the sea with bare escentuals first customer cruise.

2006 – Leslie takes bare escentuals public in one of the largest cosmetic IPO’s in the last decade.

2007 – Leslie hits the road with bare escentuals inaugural bus tour across the United States.

2009 – Leslie is named one of the “Top entrepreneurs of the decade: 2000-2009” by Inc. magazine.

2009 – She does it again: bareminerals matte SPF 15 foundation launches and women everywhere fall in love with matte.

2009 – Leslie joins Facebook.

2010 – Leslie is named executive chairman, bare escentuals. This same year bare escentuals becomes a part of Shiseido.
**Toddlng Past Gender Lines**

By JAN HOFFMAN

A 3-year-old named Harry was playing at home in Los Angeles recently when his father walked in with a Target shopping bag. Inside was a special gift for the little boy: a sparkly princess Barbie doll.

"You could hear the gasp of excitement," recounted Harry's mother, Lisa. "It just made his whole world.

A year ago, Harry found Barbies abandoned by his two older sisters. The boys made sure they were properly outfitted and reshuffled regularly. The girls cast-off dress-up clothes have become his go-to outfit. And when he arrives at preschool each morning, he selects a dress from the costume bin and wears it through recess, even as he screams on the Jungle Gym.

At first, Harry's father had a hard time watching his son twirl around in princess wear. But his gift of the Barbie symbolized acceptance, Harry's joyous gape indicated that the little boy intuitively understood. "We Continued on Page 8"

**Twitter's Secret Handshake**

By ASHLEY PARKER

CHARLIE SHEEN'S meltdown took many forms: a cocaine-fueled rampage in a New York hotel room, an intern's raucous, a vulgar one-man comedy tour. But his biggest contribution to current culture may have been more subtle.

With a simple Twitter phrase, #winning, named for the purview of social media as a hashtag, Mr. Sheen underscored one of the newest ways technology has changed how we communicate. Hashtags, words or phrases preceded by the symbol #, have been popularized on Twitter as a way for users to organize and search messages. So, for instance, people tweeting about Representative Anthony Weiner might add the hashtag #Weinergate to their messages, and those curious about the latest developments in the scandal could simply search for #Weinergate. Or Justin Bieber fans might use #Bieber to Continued on Page 6

**Move Over, Estée Lauder**

With her company's mineral-based products, Leslie Blodgett has changed how some women approach makeup, and has inspired a dedicated following in the process.

By MARTHA SHERBIL

LESLEY BLODGETT'S color-splashed corner office on the 23rd floor overlooks the financial district, the cement-beige Ferry Building at the rim of the Embarcadero and, in the distance, the golden spires of the San Francisco Bay. The soaring panorama beats the high pressures of Bare Escentuals, a line of chemical-free mineral powders that have revolutionized the way millions of American women — particularly those under 40 — think about makeup.

Ms. Blodgett, a familiar face on QVC, has been compared to Max Factor, whose invention of pancake foundation swelled on with a wet sponge in the 1920s transformed the cosmetics industry. Wonder about the vanity aisle of any drugstore and Ms. Blodgett's influence is apparent, as giants like Revlon and L'Oreal have been compelled to come out with their own mineral lines.

In her funky brown Gucci suit, straight Gap jeans, dappled-green scarf and blue jacket from Anthropologie, Ms. Blodgett, 48, hardly sounds the regal calm of an industry leader — or even the Zen-centeredness of her adopted Bay Area home: "I don't go out of the house," she said, wriggling in her seat like a child. At work, she is known for crazy marketing schemes and whimsy — she did the splits stage at the beginning of an all-company meeting in April, and led a group dance to Whitney Houston's "I'm Every Woman" — but laid-back cool.

And perfectly groomed, creamy-smooth sensors are too much to ask. "I have trouble just talking," Ms. Blodgett said, with her slight, odd bout beguiling, speech impediment. "My vocabulary isn't large. I just keep saying "astonishing" and "awesome".

An unlikely QVC star, she communicates in other ways, with her ex-Continued on Page 8
Move Over, Estée Lauder

From First Styles Page

pressive face and brown giant-orb eyes, which were surely created by a makeup god for liner and shadow. Her arms are always gesturing.
But let’s see on the hands, the way the QVC camera does when she peddles the miracle minerals. Her manneque hands are so well sculpted, so polished, so finge-rag-able. The ring: an epic diamond surrounded by sapphires and emeralds, which, as Ms. Blodgett’s social media followers know it is (in the other way she comes across, the woman is somewhat of a descendant of a famous New York financier). She went to Tiffany’s in New York in October. “Actually, we went into the store just to replace my wedding band,” she adds, “but it was just a stop-in, but Leslie came out with that.”

On QVC, Ms. Blodgett’s appearances have the trappings of a Diorian ritual, as she applies foundation to her bared face. In the Bare Escentuals world, this is called a “make-under.” The minerals are light, almost like a whisper, and potentially the answer to your skin-care prayers. Ms. Blodgett gently sweeps the brush across the woman’s face in Bare Escentuals terminology, this is known as “buffing.”

Not since Estée Lauder dabbled Youth Dew behind the ears of thousands has a lone woman so influenced the beauty industry.

Last summer, in Lady Gaga’s tour bus, Ms. Blodgett roasted across the East Coast on a tiny tour, having minutes and meeting thousands of fans and self-described “BE aficionados” who tops Ms. Blodgett’s infomercials and confess on social networking sites that they are facing financial ruin from compulsive brush collecting. Women come with tearful testimonials (the product was originally marketed to those with acne and acne scars), and they are hungry for more tips.

Nothing is obvious, or easy, when transitioning to minerals. The conversions process is painful. “You have to explain this product almost the way you have to explain a person,” Ms. Blodgett says at selling, really. “I am not an explorer, an award-winning writer. I took my mother a couple years to try it. She wasn’t going to force it on her.”

Ms. Blodgett’s brush comes up a lot. She is like an all-caps television guest presence on QVC, Ms. Blodgett’s father-in-law, 12 years ago, was a science teacher with his own community television show, and the inspiration behind her own success on TV, but Ms. Blodgett said it was her mother, Sylvia Trowbridge, a housewife and home-economics teacher on Long Island, who first introduced her to the brush. “She spread the word,” which Ms. Blodgett attended — who raged her to success.

Their mother-daughter problems came later, when Ms. Blodgett chose to study modern dance at the State University of Oswego, N.Y. (“I wasn’t too happy about that.” Ms. Blodgett said.) and dropped out after two years. In 1987, she was living in Plantation, Fla., and working as a waitress at a Panera breadhouse, where her mother persisted that she apply to a cosmetic marketing program at Frostburg Institute of Technology taught by Hazel Bishup, the inventor of a sneeze-proof lipstick.

Ms. Blodgett unbuttoned the letter she received from her mother at that time. “Dear Leslie,”

Consider what you will do if FIT doesn’t work out for you. What is the next best thing you can do? You might want to go to bars where you work. How about that? What’s all for now, Leslie.

Love,
Mom

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Bare Minerals carried only five natural ingredients, it was far less likely to cause skin irritations or breakouts, and didn’t contain the questionable chemicals commonly found in most makeup. “Here we are,” she said, “spending time growing organic vegetables or going to the farmer’s market, but otherwise expecting our skin to look like bad stuff.”

Ms. Blodgett huffed with the formula, tensed the colors and spread them on four fingers. "(There are 49 now.) She named the makeup line bareMinerals: “It wasn’t a Cinderella story,” she said, “it wasn’t overnight.” An expensive New York debut in 1996 generated only one article, in W. Wasn’t so bad that Ms. Blodgett started shuttering boutiques.

But the hours she clocked on a desperate minimum paid off. In the middle of the night, she watched QVC, and thought, “I could do that." A year after she approached the shipping channel, she went on wearing a white suit and a fake 2-carat diamond. The minerals were natural, but thehippiness that had limited appeal.

I would never have known the stuff if it weren’t for my part of the job,” said Lisa Robertson, a former Miss Tennessee and Loretta Young lookalike who is Ms. Blodgett’s on-air partner on QVC. "I wore not-one-hard-core Boxpad foundation, like everybody else, my whole life, I thought: Minerals? What? Don’t even go there. The first time I tried it, I didn’t think it was working. I wondered, ‘Emperor’s New Clothes?’"

Much has been made of the success that followed. Ms. Blodgett’s first appearance wiped out her supply. In her second appearance, she sold $180,000 of foundation in 10 minutes. Before long, she was selling $1.4 million an hour.

QVC notified her that she was being talked about all over the message boards. "We know we really had something," said Ms. Blodgett, who logged onto the forum and wrote to customers directly.

I am not good at selling, really.
I am just an explainer.

Women who were confused or disappointed got even more attention. "After we’d do a show, she would stay up late for hours on the computer,” Ms. Robertson said. "Before Facebook or MySpace, using social media, it was pretty intense."

Detractions may worry what the big deal is, why they don’t stop and see the revolu-
tion Ms. Blodgett created, the multi-
 billion-dollar industry or the percent-
eage of women who have grown up with
loose powder, are not likely to switch over to powdered products. The reason is clear. The copying has been amazing."

"Bound to happen,” Ms. Blodgett said. "When I was a little girl — my family, my brother — started some complexion company to come up with a line, and there were hundreds, ‘Hey, you did see this,’ that’s when it got interesting.

Nobody but Bare Essentials has Ms. Blodgett, who sometimes model even looks up when the company was acquired for $1.7 billion by Estée Lauder. "I’ve taken on some takeovers in cosmetic industry history, one of the conditions was that Ms. Blodgett be kept intact, not just as ‘chair-
man,’ as she calls herself, but actively involved as the face of the brand."

She honed her sales skills in Asia and Brazil, as an entrepreneur, and Bare Essentials extends a skin care line, made with something called Active Soil, which seems meant to trigger jokes about how you look your face with dirt, how do you sell a character like Ms. Blodgett?"

"It was my every hope to sell the stuff all over the world,” said Simon Cowl, who is in charge of global marketing and communications (not the stripping judge). "So how do we work it? We want to infuse Leslie’s spirit into the brand, her sense of humor, and the theorem: ‘Even more approachable.’"

Recently on QVC, Ms. Blodgett appeared at white pima and a tropical print unique for a setting blite of Faux Tan, her newest tanning minerals. Lying on a white-shag carpet, she and Ms. Robertson applied tanning powder to a model’s bare legs. Application, as usual, required a specially brush so big it looks like something you would a horn with, or was it a rug.

"No sneakerkin, no streaking.” Ms. Robertson called out from the run. "Never wears a shirt.

Swirling, tapping, and the rhythmic turning of the mirror was used until Ms. Blodgett and Ms. Rob-
covenius to participate in a poker game, and then re-

blushy, brushy-fantastic. After five minutes, more than 1,200 tickets were on the $100 prize.

Whether or not Ms. Blodgett had a private lavatory backed up to her worship, and the mirror was covered with hundreds of letters and caricatures from customers, friends and followers probably to keep memories of a bad hair day.

"Until I was 13, I was driven to see Leslie,” Ms. Blodgett said. "And I guess I am still in a way. There is more to worry about than the mirror."

I have an image in my head of the people who use Bare Essentials,” she said. "It’s like a club, everyone’s in and I don’t think anyone has to work to do them happy. That’s how it feels.”
Commander in Heels - About the Special

Commander in Heels takes viewers inside the lives of two top female executives who are leaders in the cosmetic and confectionary industries for a 360 degree view of how these high-powered women balance their personal and professional lives. The special features Dylan Lauren, the daughter of fashion icon Ralph Lauren, who made a name for herself as the CEO of the candy company and megastore, Dylan’s Candy Bar and Leslie Blodgett, the Executive Chairman of one of the world’s top cosmetic companies, Bare Escentuals.

Click on the images below to watch clips and previews from Commander in Heels.

*Beauty Shots and Bunnies Watch Now.*

*Extended Preview Watch now.*
Wizards of home shopping TV

Bare Escentuals

Leslie Blodgett, former CEO of Bare Escentuals.

Big win: Sold over 254,000 makeup kits in one day on QVC
Website: www.bareescentuals.com

Swirl, tap and buff.

When Leslie Blodgett first debuted that technique for applying loose mineral makeup foundation before a live audience on QVC in 1997, she remembers "freaking out."

But Blodgett sold $45,000 worth of mineral foundation in six minutes that day.

"I was jumping up and down. It was a huge hit for me," she said. Four years later, bareMinerals makeup became a No. 1 selling brand on QVC.

Blodgett developed bareMinerals, a line of 100% natural loose mineral makeup, at Bare Escentuals. She joined Bare Escentuals in 1994 when it was a small San Francisco-based retailer with seven regional stores selling bath and body products. Blodgett transformed the company into a maker of mineral makeup. She is widely credited with pioneering the mineral makeup trend in the United States.

Under Blodgett, Bare Escentuals went public and in 2010 was acquired by Japanese cosmetics company Shiseido for over $1.8 billion.

Today Blodgett is executive chairman at Bare Escentuals. "I'm still definitely the face of the company," she said. And she's still teaching the swirl, tap, buff technique on QVC.
100+ STRATEGIES TO GET WHAT YOU WANT
- SAY THE RIGHT THING
- NETWORK LIKE A PRO
- ALWAYS BE PREPARED

SMALL CHANGES, MAJOR IMPACT
EASY WAYS TO WOW YOUR BOSS

EXCLUSIVE
CHELSEA HANDLER
LIVING HER DREAM — RICH, FUNNY, POWERFUL
(and she's got great hair!)

THINK BIG!
Three women on having it all: the job, the relationship, the choices

BEAUTY WORKIPEDIA
TIME-SAVING, GAME-CHANGING PRODUCTS AND TIPS

MOGUL MAINTENANCE
How top execs look (and feel) their best

FASTER
SMARTER
STRONGER

DRESS THE PART!
> OUTFITS TO IMPRESS
> SHOES TO GET YOU NOTICED
> GO-ANYWHERE BAGS & MORE
run Common Sense Media. Shifting to the non-profit world was a decidedly different career move for a woman used to advising high-stakes deals and powerful figures—never mind the pay cut. "Clearly I'm not in it for the money," she says, laughing. "It's a fabulous challenge to grow this organization's impact and get a lot more people knowing about it. I mean, I'm working harder now than I did at McKinsey."

Shankman manages the group's family-minded reviews of video games, apps, and movies; an education group that oversees curricula in more than 30,000 grade schools; and advocacy and research. The job was a natural evolution of her interest in the Internet, only this time, she says, it's become a mission. "I'm a huge believer in the power of technology, but kids' lives intersect with it very differently than adults," she says, noting her own 7-year-old daughter, Madeline. "Instead of building a business and turning a profit, I'm focused on raising a generation of healthy kids," she says. —Roberta Bernstein

Leslie Blodgett Executive chairman, Bare Escentuals

THOUGH LESLIE BLODGETT has delivered countless speeches over the past 15 years, she was too nervous to eat before addressing Manhattan's Fashion Institute of Technology graduating class last year. As she approached the lectern, she took a deep breath, mastered all her mojo, and spoke slowly and emphatically. "I don't know anyone who has stopped being afraid," she told them. "If you're taking the easy way out, the boring way out, boy, you might as well be asleep. If you're really putting yourself on the line, you're going to be scared—and that's when you push through things—and that's when you feel most triumphant."

Baldgett, 50, is proof that swallowing those fears and plowing ahead can pay off in spades. In 1994, she was a fledgling cosmetics exec desperately trying to save Bare Escentuals, a money-losing, mineral-based makeup company. If she could just reach her customers, she thought, she knew she could sell them on the benefits of her powder-based product line, an antidote to pancake makeup and made from all-natural ingredients. At the time, QVC was a retail backwater catering to the out-of-work and sleep-deprived, but Baldgett had a hunch. So she donned a crisp white Bebe suit and a fake 5-carat diamond ring, and—cameras rolling—pitched her heart out.

QVC viewers lapped up her frank approach. In just six minutes, she sold 1,900 brush and foundation kits. Soon, she was moving $1.4 million worth of merchandise an hour. Within five years, the company she once could barely keep afloat was generating $65 million in revenue, thanks in large measure to Baldgett's girlfriend relatability and winning spire. "Everyone told me I was crazy for doing home shopping," she recalls. "There are so many people out there who want to tell you not to do something. If you think they're right, it's going to steer you wrong."

Raised by a single mother on Long Island, New York—"She wanted me to not have to be dependent on a man to get what I wanted"—Blodgett got her start in cosmetics at the Ultima II counter at Macy's. She saw firsthand the transformative effect of makeup. "It's not just about the perfect shade of red lipstick," Blodgett says. "It's about that woman feeling good enough to ask for a raise, or to go on a job interview, or ask that guy out on a date." From there, she landed an internship at Revlon, then eventually an entry-level product development gig at Max Factor, followed by a stint at Neutrogena. Along the way, she married Keith Blodgett, a commercial producer, and had a son, Trent, now 19.

When she was approached by a Bare Escentuals investor asking if she'd help revive the company, which was teetering on the verge of bankruptcy, Blodgett jumped at the chance, relocating her family from Los Angeles to the Bay Area. Those early days were rife with difficult compromises: Blodgett's husband quit his job to raise Trent while she put in long hours building up the business. She missed so many of Trent's high school lacrosse games that she hired a videographer to document them. ("I've never reviewed them," she confesses sheepishly. "Balance is incredibly hard," Blodgett admits wistfully. "I'm still feeling guilty about it.

Then, the moment every entrepreneur dreams of: the buyout offer. Two years ago, Shiseido snapped up Bare Escentuals for $1.7 billion. (Blodgett won't comment on how much she made off the sale.) She recently scaled back her day-to-day involvement and is now exploring a life beyond the brand. "I will have another big act," she says, her eyes widening. "I know that there are seeds inside of me that want to grow. I could become a painter. You don't know until you try. Not that I'm going to be famous, but I'm going to do something that is revolutionary—for me." —Diana Kapp
“It’s not just about the perfect shade of lipstick. It’s about feeling good enough to ask for a raise or that guy out on a date.”
He cooks, cleans—and lets his wife climb the corporate ladder. Inside the sacrifices, resentments, and sometime-bliss of the modern marriage p.54
The rise of the CEO mom has created a new kind of trophy husband
By Carol Hymowitz
Photography by Jake Stangel

Bare Escentuals Chairman Leslie Bridgitt with son Trent and husband Keith in their Tiburon (Calif.) home
mong the 80 or so customers crammed into Bare Essentials, it's easy to spot Leslie Blodgett. It's not merely her six-inch platform heels and bright magenta and blue dress that set her apart in the Thousand Oaks (Calif.) mall boutique, but her confidence. To those who concerned she's too old for this kind of thing, she demonstrates a new shade of bluish on another customer's cheek. And when she isn't helping anyone, she sits in her large admirers gazing about her dress, made by the breakneck designer Elden.

Blodgett, 49, has spent the past 10 years nurturing Bare Essentials from a startup into a global cosmetics empire. She sold the company for $2 billion to Shiseido in March 2010 and still pitches products in stores around the world and online, always with customers online. Scores of fans post daily messages on Blodgett's Facebook page, confessing details about their personal lives and offering opinions on her addictive lip gloss.

She only wishes her 19-year-old son, Trent, were in touch with her as frequently as he is with his husband, Keith. In 1995, at 36, Keith quit making television commercials to raise Trent, freeing up Leslie to build her business. She'd do it all again, but she's jealous of her husband's relationship with her son, Trent, a college sophomore, to the point that every day he goes to a week without texting her.

"Once I knew my role was providing for the family, I took that very seriously. But there was a point I knew I wasn't there for our son during the day," says Blodgett. "Keith does everything at home—the cooking, repairs, finances, vacation planning—and I would work long hours and travel a lot, knowing he took such good care of Trent. I love my work, but I would have liked to have a little more balance or even understand what that means."

Blodgett's mother is becoming more familiar as a generation of fame, businesswomen look back on the sacrifices—some little, some profound—for their careers. grandmother and women can advance," says Stephanie Coontz, a family-studies professor at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., and author of "Marriage: A History." And yet the trend underscores something else: When her career or one partner is aiming high, a two-career partnership is next to impossible.

"Top power jobs are so time-consuming and difficult, you can't have two spouses doing them and maintain a marriage and family," says Coontz. This explains why, even as women make up more of the workforce, they're still a small minority (14 percent, according to New York-based Catalyst) in senior executive jobs. When they reach the top, they become all-consuming executive level, "it's still women who more often put family ahead of their careers," says Ken Matos, a senior director at Families and Work Institute in New York. It may explain, too, why bookstores and e-book catalogs are jammed with self-help books for ambitious women, of which "I'd Rather be in Charge," by former Ogilvy Media Worldwide CEO Charlotte Beers, is merely the latest. Sometimes, such as Hirsch's top-selling "Guer Guitars," recommend that women "marry down." And husbands who won't mind staying at home or ved older men who are ready to retire as their careers take off. What's impossible is that couples increasingly are negotiating whose career will take precedence before they start a family.

"Your wife's career is about to soar, and you need to get out of her way. That's what Ken says," says his boss told him shortly before his wife, Dawn Lepore, was named the first female CEO at Charles Schwab in 1994. He was a vice-president at Schwab in computer systems. Lepore's promotion came after she'd become his boss. "I married above my station," Gladstones jokes.

Gladstone moved to a job at Visa. When their son, Andrew, was born four years later in 1960, Gladstone quit working altogether. He and Lepore had tried for years to have a child and didn't want him raised by a nanny. Being a full-time dad wasn't the biggest adjustment Gladstone made for Lepore's career. That came later, when Seattle-based drugstore.com recruited Lepore to become its CEO in 2004.

Gladstone lived in the San Francisco Bay Area for 25 years and wasn't keen to move to a city where it rains a lot and he didn't know anyone. He rejected Lepore's suggestion that he commute between Seattle and San Francisco, and after some long discussions he agreed to relocate—on the condition that they keep their Bay Area home. They still return for holidays and some vacations. "To do what I'm doing, you've got to be able to say 'my wife's the breadwinner, the more powerful one,' and be O.K. with that. But you also need your own interests," says Gladstone, who has used his computing skills to launch a home-based business developing software for schools.

The couple's five-bedroom Seattle home overlooks Lake Washington. Gladstone, 65, is chief administrator of it and their children, who now are 9 and 13. While they're in school, he works on his software, from his home office, between 3 p.m. and bedtime, he car- pools to and from sports and music lessons, warms up dinner prepared by a part-time housekeeper, and supervises homework. Lepore, 57, is often out of town. She oversaw the sale of drugstore.com to Walgreens last year, for
$429 million. As CEO, she was rarely home before 8 or 9 p.m. and traveled several days a week. Now, as a consultant to several startups and a director at a small firm, she still travels frequently. If Gladwin envisions anything, it's the ease with which his wife can walk into a room filled with well-known executives like Gill Gaud and "go right up to them and start talking. I don't feel like I can participate," she says. Lepore wishes her "biggest supporter" would get more recognition for everything she does as she runs an executive search recently held a "having an at-home husband makes it easy for you to be a CEO," she responded, "to not have to do it possible." Lepore advises younger women to "choose your spouse carefully. If you want a top job, you need a husband who isn't self-involved and who will support your success," even if you go further than them. Thanh Hoang, she warns, "I've worked so much with my kids-school, sports, recitals, just seeing them every day." For Lepore and Gladwin, the role reversal paid off, and, as one of the few codes willing to go public about their domestic arrangements, they're a rare source of inspiration for those who are still figuring it out. Like Gladwin, Matt Schneider, 36, is an at-home dad. A former technology company manager and then a lawyer, he now cares for his son Max and Sarah, 6 and 3, while his wife, Priya Lepore, also 36, puts in 10-hour days as an attorney at a Manhattan real estate management startup. He feels "privileged," he says, to be with his son full-time and see them change every day, and that the extra time spent with his children and housework can be rewarding. He uses every minute of the 25 hours each weekday, he says, to build his 3-year-old son the-NYCDADS Group he co-founded, 450 members strong. Members meet to blog and share what they've learned. He says, "There's no reason to think this is women's work." Schneider and his wife, who met at an un-dated seminar at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, decided before they wed that she'd have the big career and he'd be the primary parent. They paid for the pig's meat and won the pig itself in a raffle for $10,000. "We've never been that way," says Schneider, who's never felt discriminated against as a gay dad or a stay-at-home dad. "No one has ever said to me, 'Why are you staying home with the kids?''' Lepore says they've never been that way when we pay taxes. We don't qualify for the marriage deduction," he says. "Lepore has three children, two of whom are 6 and 4, and four of whom are 2 and 1. He says, "if he has a routine about being at home, it's the lack of adult conversation and stimulation. I work in a very high-intensity atmosphere with very intelligent and hard-working people, and that's nice, but I don't want to say, 'hey, you missed my birthday' or 'you haven't even noticed what happened with the kids,'" he says. Mulhern says his decision to hire his wife to do the work's 95 percent of the time he'd have together talking about her work. He missed the attention she used to give him but felt humiliated asking for it. He gradually changed his expectations. He stopped waiting for Grannholm to call him in the middle of the day to share what had happened at meetings he'd spent talking about the prior evening. And he realized he couldn't recreate for her all the memorable or awkward moments he had with their children—like the time he found his daughter watching him in the outdoor shower, "extremely with their clothes on. I had to call all the parents and tell them, as a courtesy, 'I want you to know about this at your son's tennis coach.'" he says. "While my wife was battling the Republican front of the State Senate, I had a teenage daughter who was a formidable opponent."

When Grannholm left office and was asked "what's next?" she says, "it's Dar's turn." As a former governor, though, she's one with more obvious opportunities. Later this month, Grannholm will become a daily political commentary show on Current TV. She's also teaching at the University of California at Berkeley, where Dan has a part-time gig thanks to his wife. "The employment opportunities that come my way—and my salary potential—are what my wife's for, says Mulhern. He plans to continue to travel, write, and do some consulting, while also taking care of their 14-year-old son. "Someone has to be focused on him every day," he says. The experienced got a fresh taste of powerful women and their at-home husbands could lead to changes at work so that neither women nor men have to sacrifice their careers or family time. They could feel more confident about achieving great success, but there should be a way for success to include professional and personal happiness for everyone," says Lepore. "I'm not sure," says Hirschman. "If you have to kill yourself at work, that's bad for everyone." Kathleen Christensen agrees. As program director at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, she has focused on work and life balance for the past 15 years. "Only instead of Jane at home, it's John. But it's still one person doing 100 percent of the work outside the house for one 80 percent" to 120 percent. At Harvard, the Feminist Mollusk in the 19th century found that frustrated housewives, Christensen predicts, "we may see the Massive Mollusk in 2023." The children who have reversed roles know the stakes better than anyone. One morning last week, when Lepore was packing for a business trip to New York, her daughter said, "I don't want to travel so much." Elizabeth, her mother, Lepore hugged her, called her school, and said her daughter would be staying home that morning. Then she rescheduled her flight until much later that day. There have been times when Elizabeth wants most a mom who stays home and bakes cookies, she says. Lepore is sometimes concerned that her children won't be ambitious because they've been asked to "don't worry" about how exhausted she is after work. But they're much closer to their mother now. "She's a lot less work, I don't have to work as much, and they have a different perspective about men and women's potential. When a friend of her daughter's said that fathers go to offices every day, Lepore replied, "Don't be silly, dads are at home".
WOMEN’S WEAR DAILY
BEAUTY INC.

DECEMBER 2011
THE VISIONARY AWARD

Sir Lindsay Owen-Jones,
A Legacy of Leadership

REMEMBERING
EVELYN LAUDER
corner office

"I used to love the word authentic and I don’t anymore because it’s become so watered down. Everyone’s using it, and people and things that aren’t authentic claim to be.”

MASTER CLASS

The Future Vision of Leslie Blodgett

By combining a penchant for risk-taking on the business side with a shrewd understanding of how real women approach beauty, Leslie Blodgett built Bare Escentuals into an industry powerhouse. BY RACHEL BROWN PHOTOGRAPHED BY BONNIE SCHIFFMAN

Since joining Bare Escentuals as chief executive officer in 1994, Leslie Blodgett has become synonymous with the company, transforming it from a bath and body retailer with six stores into a mineral makeup authority. Not afraid to take risks, she forged a new distribution path—one that included QVC, infomercials and retail—and the rewards were handshakes, indeed. Blodgett took the company public in 2006, coming off a fiscal year when Bare Escentuals generated nearly $200 million in revenues. Four years later, with its sales topping $559 million, Bare Escentuals was bought by Shiseido for 81.7 billion with the goal of building a global megabrand that crosses regional and cultural barriers. After introducing skin care in the U.S. in February, Bare Escentuals is reshaping its line in Asia. Blodgett remains deeply involved in marketing, product development and customer relations, but she has left the numbers up to Myles McCormick, who was named chief executive officer in January, when Blodgett became executive chairman.

What’s your assessment of the current state of the beauty industry? It feels good. In 2009, when the financial crisis hit, everyone got a little scared and there was very short-term decision making, lots of discounting. As in all situations like that, when they look really dirty, a lot of good ideas surface. People took a deep pause, and now we’ve seen some cool innovation in retailing and product. The industry’s doing really well right now, consumers are out there, and beauty is a good place to be.

Why is beauty doing well while so many other sectors are still suffering from the strain of the recession? There’s a lot of good product and great choices. There’s a lot of interaction on the Web. Women are intrigued with what’s happening. As an industry, we’re doing a good job of getting women interested, and it’s an easier purchase than some of the really high-ticket items.

What do you think the beauty industry needs to pay attention to in the year ahead? I have a Facebook page, and I asked the people on my page a couple of these questions. One was, "What do you think the beauty industry needs to pay attention to?"
to in the year ahead?" The other one was, "How have you changed as a beauty consumer in the last 12 months?" The year ahead isn't that different from what we've seen. Financially, they are tighter with their expenses. They're looking for products that are dependable. The older women are staying more branded loyal and not trying many new things. The younger women are looking for more avant-garde products, but with value. It's not so much the price of the product, but what kind of value am I getting from the brands I trust.

What does it mean to be a beauty consumer today?

Women expect a more realistic look at what beauty really is from the marketing side. There's a lot of that "Come on!" rolling your eyes kind of thing. "Stop hiring these gorgeous models and then doing something to them to make them look even better than they are." When we went into our "Force of Beauty" campaign, we could have easily fallen into that trap, but we agree with the people who say, "Give us something more realistic."

How was "Force of Beauty" different? Did you use fake eyelashes or retouching?

This was a huge issue for us. We did a photo shoot, and we had blind casting. We signed on the models without even knowing what they looked like. When we got the pictures back, they were retouched, and they weren't the people who we hired. We hired them because of who they were, and all of a sudden they didn't look like who they were. We made a decision right there to do extremely minimal retouching. It's a fine line, though, because if women say they don't want [retouching], but maybe they really do want it. No matter what women want, we have to do it this way, because if it doesn't feel like us, we could never live with ourselves. So, you'll see it in the ads, for example, [the lashes] sticking together a little bit because normally they do.

You're famous for your renegade approach to marketing. What are women looking for in the ways that brands communicate to them?

I used to love the word authentic, and I don't like, and it's not any more because it's become so watered down. Everyone's using it, and people and things that aren't authentic claim to be. Now the customer is going to have to decide what is real and what isn't real. They're going to decide between authentic marketing and just authentic. I love to come up with a word that describes what the real authentic is.

You were a pioneer on QVC. How have you seen the channel change?

They have really upped their programming, and they've made it entertaining, more like regular TV programming. For us, it's been a great launching pad for new products before we even go into retail stores. We did that with the skin care. It's just great to see instantly what people are getting.

Were you nervous the first time you went on QVC?

Oh my God! I remember it totally. The night before, I was in my hotel room at the Starcom, and it was my birthday. I was alone, and I didn't sleep a wink. I didn't want to tell anybody I was doing this in case it failed. I only had 10 minutes anyway, so if it bombed, no one would even know. The first time was very scary, but we sold out.

What are some key emerging channels of distribution?

Those retail outlets that are combining editorial content with online retailing, where they give you a lot more information about how to use things and why. There's also a company that I've been talking to that is truly social networking, and the psychology of how your friends in the social scene online works and then you take that to a shopping level. With your best buddies, you see what they're interested in. They don't necessarily have to buy, but it's about what the most popular kids are buying. Those kinds of concepts are very interesting.

Why do you think that you were successful in infomercials where so many companies have failed?

We know going in that one in 20 succeed, and we weren't this powerful, highly profitable company at the time, so it made it even more scary and risky, but we had an extremely unique, innovative product and passionate people telling the story. We had 24 minutes. That's a long time to be able to talk to people about what's unique about this product. Luckily, we didn't listen 100 percent to the people we were working with, who were the real infomercial people. That's what made the show more believable and less gimmicky. We still do the infomercial for many reasons. It can't just be a slick story to people who have never tried the product before. Back in the early days, people would ask us they would watch it for six months before buying, and that's still the case.

In the last year, you've gone deeper into traditional department store distribution. What are the key lessons?

People who shop are loyal to those stores. They have very strong beauty businesses, and if we want to reach that customer, we have to be there. They are unique customers. I was just shopping at Macy's, and our store is two doors down. Customers come in, shop at Macy's and leave. They don't even know we have a boutique in that mall. Department stores have great loyalty programs, and they know how to keep their customer in the destination. By the end of the year, we're going to have 14 Dillard's stores, 102 Macy's and 54 Nordstroms.

Same recent launches from bareMinerals.

How has your role changed from CEO to executive chairman?

I'm not running the company. So, I'm coming in in a different place, but it's been very fun for me. I'm more entrenched in it now. I'm going to South America, Asia more, learning about cultures. For me, it's important that I go into people's homes and not just do short tours.

You're like a beauty anthropologist.

Totally! I could do it all over again, I would be an anthropologist. I love, love, love it. I was in China this year. I've heard that they buy a lot of stuff, but in their homes, there's nothing there. I was looking under the bed, literally.

When I went into the bathroom to look at their makeup, it was just a couple of things, but they're really into their skin. It was surprising for me. It's going to be interesting how much actually they're going to buy. The women I meet have very simple beauty routines.

How would you describe your management style?

I prefer people not being on their best behavior. In fact, when I go into a meeting, I like to see some frownting going on, so I will maybe cause trouble. If it's too normal, then please don't even go there.

What are some pieces of advice that you have for somebody who wishes to follow in your footsteps?

Well, I wouldn't follow my footsteps. It was too much stress. I didn't have boundaries. It became one with my family, and they sometimes resented that a little bit, that I would bring my work home so much. I wanted them to feel like they were a part of this too, but what ended up happening was that they didn't see the line drawn, and I often chose work over home, thinking it was for the good of the family. I don't know if I would advise that. I don't know how to have work and then have home. I've never learned how to do that; maybe some people do, but I don't know if I would have been successful if I had been able to have a clear definition on both sides.

What do you do for fun?

I spend a lot of time in Napa Valley wine country. We just got involved with the Napa Valley Film Festival. I also work out. I have this new thing called The Dusky Method that I do. I love it and hate it. The holidays are coming, and every year my mom comes. She used to be a home ec teacher, and she reminds me how to knit and crochet and we make Christmas cookies. That's what I love doing in December.
THE MOST
INFLUENTIAL WOMEN
IN BAY AREA BUSINESS

LESLEY BLODGETT
BRINGS COLOR TO BARE ESSENTIALS

The dynamo behind one of the country's most successful beauty companies talks about her leadership style. Page 6

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Financial advisers
More women, like Jane Williams, are moving into wealth management. Page 8

The CFO role
Robin Washington of Gilead and other CFOs talk about their jobs. Pages 10-14

List of Influential Women
Williams-Sonoma's Laura Alber is among 150 women profiled. Page 16

SPONSORED BY:
The accidental saleswoman
Bare Escentuals executive chairman learned to sell her product on the fly

BY BRIDGET RILEY
San Francisco Business Times

Leslie Blodgett didn't tell her friends or family when she made her first appearance on the shopping channel QVC. She wasn't sure she would succeed as a salesperson — the quality she is most lauded for now.

"I didn't want to fail in public," Blodgett said. It was 1997, and she was the CEO of San Francisco-based makeup company Bare Escentuals Inc. "I would have hired someone to do it if we had money."

That morning in 1997, Blodgett sold out the company's inventory. She spoke to the customer as an equal, launching Bare Escentuals from a small-time Bay Area company to a beauty empire that was sold to Japanese beauty giant Shiseido for $1.7 billion in 2010.

Bare products are currently in 4,500 stores worldwide, 170 of which are company-owned. Revenue in 2000 — before the merger — was $557.5 million. Her "swirl, tap, buff" makeup application mantra — repeated in hundreds of subsequent QVC infomercials and in-store appearances — made the once-fringe mineral makeup concept approachable, and inspired imitations from major brands like L'Oréal.

Within a few years of Blodgett's first QVC appearance, Bare was topping $100 million sales. Blodgett remained not only the face of the company, but also a very hands-on CEO. Blodgett admits she can push employees she sees potential in a little too hard, but always sends the flowers the next day at work.

Though she has passed the reins of CEO to Myles McCormick, she continues as the driving marketing force of the company, diligently answering the letters, emails and Facebook messages that stream in from customers.

"It's not marketing to her. It's just how she operates as an individual," said McCormick.

Blodgett, who is now executive chairman, remains passionate and emotional, drawing in talent like McCormick the same way she captivated customers.

McCormick, who first came to the company as CFO before becoming CEO, said he wasn't looking to change jobs when he first met with Blodgett for coffee. She arrived late, ordered off the menu and launched into how Bare was changing the face of makeup. McCormick left his job at Gymboree and jumped on board to help the company go public in 2006.

Senior Vice President and Corporate Counsel Deanna Chechile also first got to know the company as it went public.

"I was amazed at how unconventional a CEO she was," Chechile said. During a recent meeting, Blodgett blasted some dance music to get the executive team on their feet. "I realized she was somebody you want to be around and you wanted to be part of the success she was creating."

Chechile got her chance when she helped negotiate the Shiseido acquisition. The talks, conducted through translators, were tedious and time-intensive, but Chechile said Blodgett's personality shone through regardless.

"No doubt they (Shiseido) were just as charmed as the rest of us were. She has a quality you can't replicate," Chechile said.

Makeup junkie
A lifelong "girly girl," Blodgett has played with color and makeup since age 12 and will still push a new shade to her followers on Facebook. When she first worked behind a cosmetics counter, "it clicked," she said. "I love the concept of encouraging women to use makeup. We do look better (with makeup) when it's applied right. That can mean a lot for every part of our life."

But if the sale didn't feel right, she wouldn't push it, even when she was working on commission.

"I wanted (the customer) to go home and feel good about it," Blodgett said. "Several weeks, I didn't do so great. I had a lot of popcorn for dinner." (Employees at Bare Escentuals' 170 retail stores never work on commission.)

After growing up on Long Island, Blodgett attended a state college, but left after two years. She then headed to a new cosmetics marketing program at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York at her mother's suggestion and went on to jobs at top cosmetic companies, including Neutrogena and Estee Lauder. While working in product development, Blodgett got a boost of confidence from a co-worker who pointed out her flair for color.

"When you have someone who believes in you, you go home and you believe it, too," Blodgett said.

With her newfound confidence, she knew she needed a fresh company where she could express her developing point of view in cosmetics: a brand that presented a friendly, chemical-free product.

She left her comfortable job at Neutrogena in 1994 to move to San Francisco — a city she'd only visited twice before — after being recruited to head the unknown and unprofitable company, which was founded in 1976. To top it off, she was both a new mother and the breadwinner for her young family. Her boss at Neutrogena even tried to talk her out of it. But she knew that she wasn't going to rise the corporate ladder of cosmetics on her current track.

She was a big-picture thinker. Bare Escentuals gave her the opportunity to test out that ability.

"It was so small that if I made a bunch of mistakes, no one would have known about it."

Reluctant marketer
Blodgett says she fought the idea of herself as a salesperson for many years, especially during her cosmetic counter days in her 20s, but once at Bare, she held control over what she was selling.

She re-formulated and re-packaged the Bare Escentuals foundation. And now she could offer her own pitch, teaching women how to build the fine powder of mineral makeup with a brush over the TV. Whatever she was doing, it worked. She radiated on screen — the relatable best friend.

Blodgett developed a fiercely loyal fan base. At in-store appearances, devout customers would line up on the street to meet the woman behind the makeup. These fans call in during infomercials and give feedback on new products — from the Bare army, of sorts, spreading the brand through word of mouth.

Eventually Blodgett grew into the role of marketer.

"I don't think I'm selling," she said. "I think I'm educating."

Looking to growth in China
The Shiseido deal has allowed Bare to leverage Shiseido's strong work in skin care and Asian markets. Bare has its eye on launching in China in 2013.

Blodgett recently returned from a trip to China where she stayed with Chinese women, hoping to get better insight into their beauty routines and attitudes. Translating the brand to other countries and languages has been a challenge, but Blodgett has worked to boil down the essence of the brand, outside of the U.S. and beyond even her.

"I can see that it's not just me. It's becoming how the brand thinks — it's bigger than a person," Blodgett said.

by legy@bizjournals.com (415) 288-4966

"I don't think I'm selling. I think I'm educating."
Leslie Blodgett
The Bay Area's Most Influential Women

Lorraine P. Auerbach
President and CEO, Seton Medical Center.
Residence: Redwood City.
Education: B.S., biology, Queen's College, City University of New York; M.A., Hospital Administration, Post College, Long Island University; FACHE ( Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives).
Community involvement: Health Plan of San Mateo chairperson, San Mateo Section of Hospital Council of Central and Northern California commissioner; San Mateo Healthcare Authority commissioner.
First job: Medical research associate in world-renowned research lab — Einstein College of Medicine.
Business hero: Bill Gates — for his ingenuity, perseverance, willingness to take risks, and above all, his generous philanthropy. He strongly believes in giving back to the community.
Proudest achievement: Created a world-class hospital with a new health care delivery model emphasizing excellence in service and quality from the ground up.
Biggest workplace challenge: Adapting to the constantly changing health care environment, including health care reform, while continuously improving quality of care and patient satisfaction.
Something that would surprise others: I became a hospital CEO 'n my early 30s.
Five-year goal: To create and build a new medical center of the future that will ensure viability and sustainability for our community.

Sandy Barbour
Director of athletics, University of California, Berkeley.
Residence: Oakland.
Education: B.S., physical education, Wad Forest University; M.S., sport management, University of Massachusetts, Amherst; M.B.A., Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University.
Community involvement: SPAAT (Student Program for Academic and Athletic Transitioning) board of directors; NAACDA executive board.
First job: Director of Athletic Recruiting Services, Northwestern University in 1982. It was an incredible first job in an athletic administration. It gave me exposure to almost every aspect of the enterprise.
Business hero: Kevin White, Duke University, vice president/director of athletics. He has a clear vision, unchallenged integrity and a great sense of humor.
Proudest achievement: Helping young people access quality education and ignite their passion for a competitive environment.
Biggest workplace challenge: Balancing the educational objectives of intercollegiate athletics with the business/entertainment objectives/imperatives.
Something that would surprise others: I can't live without my pearl's.
Five-year goal: Cal Athletics to be nationally recognized as the preeminent intercollegiate athletics program in the country.

Sharon Black
Senior district president of Northern and Central California, Hawaii, Utah and Nevada operations, Robert Half International.
Residence: Menlo Park.
Education: B.S., political science, San Diego State University.
Community involvement: Development Committee for the local Girl Scouts of America board member; Boys & Girls Club of America toy drive; Dress for Success.
First job: A sales clerk at a local pharmacy.
Business hero: Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO of General Electric.
Proudest achievement: The impact that my work has on the job seekers and employers that keep our local business community thriving.
Biggest Workplace Challenge: Helping position our clients for growth, while retaining top talent, so they are stronger coming out of the recession than they were going in.
Something that would surprise others: I trained in swimming for the U.S. Junior Olympics.
Five-year goal: To position Robert Half as an industry leader by demonstrating our continued commitment to provide superior service and value-added resources to our client and candidate base.

Elizabeth C. Babcock
Chief education and digital strategy officer, Roberts Dean of Education, California Academy of Sciences.
Residence: San Francisco.
Education: B.A., psychology, Northwestern University; B.M., music education, Northwestern University; M.A., Ph.D., cultural anthropology; Indiana University.
Community involvement: Society for Applied Anthropology fellow; Encyclopedia of Life Education and Outreach Committee adviser; 2010 Museum Edition of the New Media Consortium advisory board member.
First job: I ran a very small nonprofit organization called the Legal Clinic for the Homeless in Atlanta. I traveled to homeless shelters, helping people get their government benefits, finding them pro-bono legal counsel, helping them find housing, and serving as their advocate in a whole host of situations.
Business hero: Ms. Shelton, principal of South Loop Elementary, and others like her who continue to accomplish extraordinary things for their students, teachers and families in the face of devastating budget cuts.
Proudest achievement: I have been fortunate enough to teach many subject areas and many ages and grade levels. My proudest achievements are those many instances in which my participation helped my student to grasp a concept that was previously challenging, or to excel in a way that they never imagined.
Biggest workplace challenge: I feel immense pressure to do as much as I can, as quickly as I can, to help improve science education and increase access to high quality educational experiences for students as well as adults.
Something that would surprise others: I once traveled the world for 10 months leading a group of 28 undergraduates on an exploration of sustainable development practices in other cultures and societies.
Five-year goal: To expand access to and the quality of science education around the Bay Area.

Lydia Beebe
Corporate secretary and chief governance officer, Chevron Corp.
Residence: San Francisco.
Education: B.S., journalism; J.D., University of Kansas; M.B.A., taxation, Golden Gate University.
Community involvement: San Francisco Symphony; Olympic Club board of governors; National Association of Corporate Directors of Northern California, board of directors.
First job: A bowling alley snack bar cook.
Business hero: Meg Whitman.
Proudest achievement: My wonderful family.
Biggest workplace challenge: I constantly changing to meet changing requirements.
Something that would surprise others: I was a weekend TV reporter in college.
Five-year goal: Plan "entrepreneur career/life.

Leslie Blodgett
Founder and executive chairman, Bare Escentuals.
Residence: Tiburon.
Education: A.A., Fashion Institute of Technology.
Community involvement: Cosmetic Executive Women.
First job: Selling hair sticks at Bloomingdale's 59th Street in New York.
Business hero: Steve Jobs. He created such loyalty, everyone looks to that brand. He didn't just create a category, they are the category.
Proudest achievement: On our first customer cruise we passed the microphone and women spoke from the heart. Over tears and hugs, I realized this brand brings women together.
Biggest workplace challenge: The responsibility in figuring out how to address everyone's personal concerns as the business continues to grow.
Something that would surprise others: Public speaking makes me anxious. Doesn't matter the size of the audience, big or small.
Five-year goal: Creating a day to celebrate women worldwide.
SHADES OF BEAUTY

Bare Escentuals CEO Leslie Blodgett wants her new cosmetic collection to be about more than making pretty faces. Page 7
Cover Story

THE GRAND FINALE
A duo of the new Bare Minerals eye shadow line of eye shadows are called Standing O (left) and Climax.

THE DREAM SEQUENCE
A puck of Beauty of the Day shadow-coming shadows ( clockwise from left): 500 Thread Count, Romp, Nightcap and Boudoir.

SHOWSTOPPER
This compact is part of the new Bare Minerals eye shadow line premiering this fall.

By Sarah Adler

Cover Story

HIDDEN BEAUTY

Leslie Blodgett, the guiding light of Bare Escentuals, has legions of fans, many of whom have sent her cards, photos and letters that adorn the wall of her San Francisco office.

Blodgett, who was born in Iowa and now lives in the East Village with her husband, Keith, and their dog, Kiko, is a quintessential American woman who has always had a passion for beauty — albeit in an unusual form. She is the first to admit that she never dreamed of becoming a model or a beauty entrepreneur, but she has always been passionate about beauty and how it can change people's lives.

Blodgett was a beauty enthusiast from a young age, and her love for beauty only grew stronger as she became a professional in the industry. She started working in beauty at the age of 16, and by the time she was 20, she had already worked for several major beauty brands, including Estée Lauder.

Blodgett’s career took off when she joined the Bare Escentuals team in 2002. She quickly rose through the ranks, and by 2008, she was named the company’s CEO.

Blodgett’s passion for beauty is evident in everything she does, from the products she creates to the way she interacts with customers. She is known for her honesty and authenticity, and for her ability to connect with people on a personal level.

“Beauty is putting things into perspective,” Blodgett says. “It’s about looking in the mirror, and helping others see themselves as they really are. Beauty is a powerful force, and it can change lives.”

Blodgett has used her platform to advocate for a more inclusive definition of beauty, and to promote self-acceptance and self-love. She has become a role model for women of all ages, and her message of empowerment resonates with millions of people around the world.

“Beauty is about feeling confident in your own skin, and knowing that you are beautiful just as you are,” Blodgett says. “It’s about embracing your unique qualities and celebrating the things that make you who you are.”

Blodgett’s work with Bare Escentuals has been particularly impactful, as the company has always been committed to creating beauty products that are accessible and affordable for all women. With its line of loose mineral eye shadows, the company has been able to offer products that are both high-quality and affordable, while also promoting a more natural look.

The company’s success has been due in large part to Blodgett’s leadership, and her ability to inspire others to embrace their own sense of beauty. She is a true force of nature, and her influence in the beauty industry is undeniable.

Blodgett’s message of beauty and empowerment is one that is needed now more than ever, and her work with Bare Escentuals is a testament to the power of beauty to make a positive difference in the world.

“In a world where we are constantly being told how we should look, it’s important to remember that beauty is a personal journey,” Blodgett says. “It’s about discovering who you are, and embracing that uniqueness.”

Blodgett’s message is one that resonates with women of all ages, and her dedication to promoting beauty and self-acceptance is a shining example of what it means to be a force of beauty.
SPECIAL REPORT

BRING ON THE ENTREPRENEURS!

Our highly practical, eminently doable, totally reasonable plan to revitalize the American dream and create thousands (upon thousands) of new companies and millions of new jobs.
Sitting Pretty
Leslie Blodgett, executive chairman of Bare Escentuals, at home

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Our eminently doable, totally reasonable plan to supercharge the economy—and, perhaps, revitalize the American dream
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Leslie Blodgett knew she loved makeup. What she didn’t yet recognize was her knack for connecting with people on TV. Then, an appearance on QVC launched her company, Bare Escentuals, into orbit.
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LESLEY BLODGETT
BARE ESSENTIALS

A COSMETICS QUEEN
AND HER LOYAL FANS

When Leslie Blodgett became CEO of Bare Escentuals in 1994—the company was then a tiny maker of bath and body products—she saw a huge opportunity selling healthy mineral-based makeup. But she didn't quite realize how many women she could reach until she made a pitch on late-night TV. The company's rapid growth led to a 2006 IPO, followed by the sale of the company this year for $1.7 billion to Shiseido, the Japanese beauty giant. Today, Bare Escentuals, based in San Francisco, has 130 boutiques in the U.S. and one in the U.K., and employs 2,200.

AS TOLD TO LIZ WELCH
PHOTOGRAPH BY JEN SISKA

I've been working since I was 10. My parents got divorced when I was 9, and my mother raised me, my brother, and my sister on a teacher's salary. She was tough. I probably would have been very lazy if she weren't always on my ass.

My first real job was at McDonald's. There was a girl there who taught me how to apply double shades of eye shadow, which I still do today. I always loved makeup, even though my mother didn't approve. She was into the women's lib movement. She never remarried, loved her independence, and always told me to have my own career. Whenever I went out with a guy, I'd always pay for myself. I didn't want men to think that they had anything on me.

I spent my first two years at Oswego State partying. My mom read about a new program in cosmetics marketing at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, but I needed experience to even apply. My first interview was at the Christian Dior counter at Gimbels, on 86th Street, but I wasn't their type. Bloomingdale's wouldn't hire me, either, so I waited outside the buying-office door every day until they gave me a commission job selling hair...
sticks. I made 21 percent of all sales and ate a lot of popcorn and ramen noodles.

By then, I'd been accepted to FIT. I took on part-time jobs, including one at the Ultima II counter at Macy's. That's where I learned about makeup application—and that the makeup counter is a terrible place. The saleswomen were angry and mean. Then I met Keith. He was the first guy who insisted on paying for dinner. We got married very quickly. I think I was looking for a guy who could take care of me emotionally.

I got a job at Max Factor in product development and discovered I had a really good eye for color. I moved quickly from assistant to manager. The company was sold to Revlon, which was then bought by Procter & Gamble. I was surrounded by younger M.B.A.'s who were making more than me and had attitudes. I resented that. As a result, I didn't hire M.B.A.'s for years—I wanted passionate people coming up through the industry. I've since learned that you need balance.

Keith worked in film production, and we agreed that whoever was making more money would keep working when we started a family. Our son, Trent, was 3 months old when I took a job with Neutrogena. Keith has been a stay-at-home dad ever since. He does everything around the house. I don't even know how to turn on the dishwasher.

In 1994, John Hansen, part of an investor group that owned Bare Escentuals, called me. I'd never heard of the company, which made the first mineral-based makeup line and had six stores in Northern California. Back then, everyone used liquid foundation, which seeped into your pores and gave you zits. A powder foundation that was good for your skin made great sense, but the shades Bare Escentuals had created weren't working. They were gross. I knew complexions and how to match skin tones—and I saw a huge opportunity. John hired me, and I became CEO within a few months.

"That day, we sold $45,000 worth of product. My heart was pounding when I walked off the set."

I relaunched the line as bareMinerals, with six eye shadows, six blushes, five foundations, and brushes. There were seven of us in the office just winging it.

By the fourth quarter of 1996, I thought we weren't going to make it. I spent many sleepless nights worrying. There was not much on TV at 2 a.m., so I found myself watching a smiling woman on QVC selling jewelry and thinking, I could do that. I bought a white suit and a $29 fake 5-carat diamond ring and decided to give it my best shot.

I went on air August 30, 1997—the day Princess Diana died. I said things like, "Do you want to make your skin break out even more? Then don't try my product. But if you're interested in something pure that you can actually sleep in, then let's talk." That day, we sold $45,000 worth of product. My heart was pounding when I walked off the set. I started screaming, "You rock!" to the host, Lisa Robertson, who's now my best friend.

Women liked the product but had questions. I went online daily to respond but couldn't keep up. And then I noticed other women were answering for me. That inspired me to start hosting events at our boutiques. I invited people to come share ideas and tips. I started naming new products after loyal fans.

I was scheduled every six weeks on QVC but realized I needed more time to talk about the application process. Infomercials seemed a great way to do that. Suddenly, we had the ability to get our message out daily if we wanted to.

The infomercials were a success, but people couldn't find the product. So I focused on distribution. Sephora was an especially hard sell. I sent a white limo to Sephora's headquarters, which is right down the street, and brought the buyers to our boutique. It worked. A few years later, Nordstrom called.

Big bashs get a lot of notice. So we had a cruise for customers to the Bahamas and then one to Mexico. It was like a giant slumber party: We dressed up and danced and had fun. Then, I took a bus tour of our boutiques and we hosted events. I'd talk about our products as well as my thighs. And my Spanx.

In the mid-2000s, we started growing too fast and couldn't keep up with demand, so there were a lot of lost sales. We hired Myles McCormick as our chief financial officer in 2004: He's an M.B.A., and so I've learned to love M.B.A.'s. He's now the CEO, and I've become executive chairman. Myles has always done the hard math and business analysis. I make decisions from the gut.

I've received thousands of letters. One woman wrote: "Dearest Leslie, I've always been overweight. I've never felt pretty. I lived without cosmetics for 15 years. In 2008, my younger sister convinced me to try bareMinerals. I did—and then I cried. Finally, at 49 years old, I was pretty." She's one of my angels now, part of my volunteer ambassador program. We send these women samples, and they talk about the product to friends, strangers, and colleagues.

Why am I here? Because women want to feel pretty. If I have a bad day, I read these letters before I go to sleep at night. They remind me of what we do. It's powerful. I don't want to be a business. I want to be a community.

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WHAT LINKS KATE MOSS, BANKSY AND SAATCHI?
They can’t get enough of Polly Morgan’s dark art

TRACEY EMIN’S FASHION MASH-UP

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The ART Issue

PLUS
MRS MARK RONSON steps into the limelight...
Meet JOSEPHINE DE LA BAUME
She's been credited with revolutionising the beauty industry with her bareMinerals brand of mineral-based make-up and regularly performs the splits on stage at company conferences so it's pretty hard to believe that executive company chairman, Leslie Blodgett, 50, has ever felt intimidated by anyone. But it hasn't always been thus.

When she started her career in Eighties New York Blodgett failed to get a job on a Christian Dior beauty counter: “I'd worn my best suit, but I don't think I was sophisticated enough for them, at that time.” Even later on, she admits shopping online at Bergdorf Goodman as she was too scared to make it through the door.

Now she has her own in-store stylist who lines up her favourite designers when she's in town – Victoria Beckham, Stella McCartney and Alexander McQueen.

‘My mother really pushed me. She’d say things like “you’re gonna be a waitress for the rest of your life”’

Just as it should be for a woman who singlehandedly took Bare Escentuals, then an ailing bath and body company with a slightly hippie ethos, to grossing around $7m a year in the mid-Nineties, to the powerhouse that went public just over a decade later with a turnover of $550 million. It was snapped up by Shiseido two years ago for $1.7 billion. From the start, she recognised the potential in the mineral-based make-up that the company offered as a sideline and ran with it. “I thought, ‘this is amazing, let me take this and turn this into a brand.’” And so bareMinerals was born.

She attributes much of her drive to her mother who brought up her children (Blodgett is the middle of three) alone following a messy divorce. “She really pushed me. She wanted to make sure that I knew I could be independent of a man, that I had to make my own money and be successful. I was never good enough and I was always trying to please her. She would say horrible things like ‘you’re gonna be a waitress for the rest of your life if you don’t get your shit together!’ But if it weren’t for her doing that I don’t know what I’d be doing now.”

Indeed, in her own household, it’s Blodgett who is the breadwinner. Her husband Keith, a freelance programme maker, stopped working when their son Trent was born some 20 years ago. “We made a deal before I got pregnant,” she explains, “that whoever had the good job was the one that was going to be working.” She does admit to early tensions, though: “Keith didn't feel emasculated in any way, he loved what he was doing. I was always the one causing trouble. I became extremely envious that he got to see Trent every single day. And I would get mad…”
a result of her insomnia watching TV in the middle of the night when she couldn’t sleep with worry: “The only shows that were on were horror movies and QVC and I just thought, ‘let me see if I can get my make-up on the show’. I didn’t have money for advertising.”

Blodgett still professes to be something of an introvert when it comes to addressing an audience. “I was petrified for the first seven years on QVC, I felt sick every time. But that’s why I do dances onstage as I don’t get stage fright then,” she says by way of explanation for her motivational antics.

So what is the secret of her success? Word of mouth and personal engagement from the outset. A lady called QVC customer services with a question which Blodgett answered personally – “I was excited to know one person was actually watching,” she laughed. The lady (who lived in the remote American Midwest) introduced her to the user forum – a precursor to our social media and she was hooked – constantly interacting with, and listening to, her customers. Those customers moved the forum off QVC and developed their own called B Addicts. “I’m telling you,” she says, “this company has evolved solely because of the connection with these women. It’s one thing to have a great product with no one using it, but here was a great product that people were using and were freakin’ ecstatic about.”

bareMinerals READY SPF 20 Foundation launches in the UK on 1 October, exclusively at Selfridges and Selfridges.com
The Entrepreneurs of the Decade: 2000 to 2009

Leslie Blodgett of Bare Escentuals

The award for taking a dead company and breathing new life into it goes to Leslie Blodgett, the CEO of Bare Escentuals. When she took over the mineral-based cosmetics company, it had recently been bought out of foreclosure by a venture capital firm for $160,000. She re-branded the makeup line and added lipsticks and eyeshadow. Then, with no prior TV experience, Blodgett went on QVC and booked $40,000 in sales in just six minutes. "When people ask me what are the best moments of my life, that has to be one of them," she told Inc. in 2008.
Her company, which went public in 2005, is now on track to gross $500 million a year.
Give 'Em Halle

Oscar-winning actress Halle Berry is set to give a big floral arrangement to her fans: Pure Orchid, her second scent, which is due in February. Set to be launched in about 16,000 mass market and midtier doors in the U.S., the limited edition fragrance could do upward of $10 million at retail. For more, see page 7.

A Big Move in Beauty: Shiseido Offers $1.7B To Buy Bare Escentuals

By Pete Born and Molly Prior

IN A BOLD STEP, JAPANESE COSMETICS giant Shiseido Co. Ltd. has launched an estimated $1.7 billion tender offer to acquire Bare Escentuals Inc., one of the hottest brands of recent years.

Under the terms of the tender offer, which is scheduled to start in 10 days, Shiseido plans to buy shares for $18.20 each, a 38.8 percent premium over Bare Escentuals' average stock price during the last three months, and a 39.9 percent premium over the closing price Wednesday. Once the majority of stock is tendered, Shiseido said it would buy the remaining shares for the same price, $18.20, in a second-step merger. The offer was made through Shiseido's U.S. affiliate.

Shiseido said the Bare Escentuals board

See Shiseido, Page 8
Shiseido in Bid to Acquire Bare Escentuals

Continued from page one

will back the offer. Among the shareholders, Berkshire Partners LLC and certain Milken managers who hold about 16 percent of outstanding common stock, have agreed to the deal. In addition, Bare Escentuals chief executive officer Leslie Blodgett, who holds 6 percent of the company, would exchange 40 percent of her stake in exchange for an undisclosed interest in Shiseido.

The acquisition would be operated as a separate division of Shiseido and its business would be managed by the current roster of executives, led by Blodgett, who is expected to report to Tokyo headquarters.

The deal is predicated on combining the strength of Shiseido’s global distribution reach, particularly in Asia, and its prowess in research and development with Bare Escentuals’ dominance in the still-hot mineral makeup trend and its expertise in marketing across all retail channels.

“This acquisition further enables Shiseido to move toward our goal of becoming a global player representing Asia, with its origins in Japan,” said Shizuo Maeda, president and ceo of Shiseido. “We have known and admired Bare Escentuals’ excellent team and their achievements for a long time, and look forward to their contribution to our combined group. The operational fit and future growth prospects make this an excellent transaction for our customers, employees and shareholders.”

Blodgett, who joined Bare Escentuals as ceo in 1994, grew the company’s sales to $556 million by 2008, from about $4 million. A total of 85 percent of the company’s sales are in the U.S.

“I couldn’t be more pleased to be joining forces with the team at Shiseido... Together with Shiseido, we look forward to bringing our mineral-based beauty products to even more women worldwide,” Blodgett said.

Bare Escentuals has been at the forefront of the distribution in the U.S. beauty revolution, combining midmarket specialty store chains such as Sephora and Ulta with a strong TV shopping component and a department store anchor. It also operates its own stand-alone boutiques.

The acquisition is expected to widen Shiseido’s customer base and extend its product reach into mineral cosmetics, giving Shiseido a foothold in Bare Escentuals’ key channels, including TV retailing and the Internet. It is also expected to strengthen Shiseido’s presence in Europe and Asia. In addition, the deal would provide the makeup brand with greater access to Japan, as well as other fast-growing Asian markets, such as China. Bare Escentuals is the number-one makeup brand on QVC U.S. and Japan, according to the company.

Shiseido is likely to offer Bare Escentuals a platform to broaden its product assortment beyond mineral makeup and foundation in a more meaningful way. One of the challenges facing the fast-growing company is the need to move beyond its breakthrough mineral franchise. Blodgett has often been asked by analysts what the company’s next innovation will be after mineral foundations. Recently, she said the company is working on creating new brands. To that end, the company has spun off its Buxom plumping lip gloss into a stand-alone brand.

But a small percentage of the company’s current customers use its lip and eye products: 37 and 22 percent, respectively, according to the company’s investor presentation in November. One of its latest strategic initiatives last year was an aggressive product sampling program to entice customers to try its color cosmetics. The company plans to keep pace with that effort this year.

One of Bare Escentuals’ greatest assets is widely seen as its ceo. Blodgett shuns the button-down, corporate approach of many of her peers. She also drives the creative direction of the company, including its upcoming, irreverent ad campaign “Rethink What Matters.” Her humor resonates throughout the company. Case in point: An opening slide to a recent investor presentation read, “Going Bare: We do not live by the rules. We have our own.”

In June, during a Q&A hosted by Cosmetic Executive Women, Blodgett was asked how the fit would succeed in her absence. She said Bare Escentuals’ success in Japan and throughout Europe — where she is not as well known and adored by customers — was evidence that the brand’s heartbeat was not tied strictly to her.

Blodgett’s management style contrasts with the stoic and pragmatic approach of Shiseido, which generated $7.5 billion in 2009, has a strong concentration in skin care, including the main Shiseido brand. Its other brands include Cle de Peau Beaute premium makeup, Carita skin care, the Nars makeup artist brand, Zotos professional hair care and the fragrance subsidiary Beaute Prestige International, which includes fragrances by Issey Miyake, Jean Paul Gaultier and Narciso Rodriguez. There also is the Alpares color cosmetics brand established in China, and the upscale Ippa beauty brand.

Almost 40 percent of Shiseido’s 2009 sales were generated overseas — it is in 70 countries — including in China, where Shiseido counts itself as one of the top three brands there and elsewhere in Asia.

In 2008, Shiseido kicked off a major plan to make it a global player. A tough price war in Japan, where Shiseido positions its product in the midmarket, spelled faltering fortunes. Asia Oceania was the best performer overseas, with sales up 7 percent. In China, Shiseido has a strong showing and anticipates continued growth. It plans to reinforce its makeup lines for department stores there, and expand its specialty store network for cosmetics in China.

BoA Merrill Lynch acted as financial adviser for Shiseido, and Shearman & Sterling LLP and Mori Hamada & Matsumoto served as joint legal advisers. Goldman, Sachs & Co. acted as financial adviser to Bare Escentuals, and Ropes & Gray LLP served as legal adviser.
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DO FOR YOUR
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HOW TO GET
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The Cult of Personality

If you thought Deadheads were die-hard, meet the obsessive fans of Bare Escentuals CEO Leslie Blodgett, who lives as proof that charisma is the real key to power. Rory Evans takes a short, strange trip on the Swirl, Tap, Bus.

Love, actually: What is it that draws hordes of fans to Leslie Blodgett?

The very first woman at the front of the line sets the tone for the entire Texas road-trip weekend: "My husband had both his knees replaced two weeks ago, and they told me I could bring him home either Friday night or Saturday, and I said Saturday because I had to come here because you are like a movie star to me."

The like-a-movie-star is Leslie Blodgett, CEO of Bare Escentuals Cosmetics and frequent pitchwoman on infomercials and QVC. These days, she is also a likely visitor to a mall near you: The new-knees-husband lady has come to see Blodgett at an in-store appearance at Sephora in the Barton Creek Square mall in Austin. Out in the lot sits David Copperfield's former tour bus: Bare Escentuals has leased it for a year, toned down the pleather-banquette disco-mobile vibe with Target bedding and lots of Jonathan Adler needlepoint throw pillows, and hit the road for several multi-city road trips. The vehicle's Mylar wrapping features an enormous headshot of Blodgett—as well as images of makeup and brushes—and has been christened the "Swirl, Tap, Bus" in a nod to "Swirl, Tap, Buff," the basic instructions for using the company's breakout product, bareMinerals, the all-natural powder foundation that represents about 45 percent of its roughly $500 million in annual sales.

Bare Escentuals has actually been around since 1976, when it opened as a boutique in Los Gatos, near San Francisco. Among the brand's earth-priestess bath lotions and potions was an all-natural powder that appealed to women with rosacea, scarring, and other sensitive-skin issues. It was sold by weight—women would scoop it from a barrel, as if they were at Mr. Oleson's Little House mercantile—and made of all-natural ingredients long before the environment was everyting of today's products. When Blodgett took over the company in 1994 (after working in development for mega-brands including Neutrogena, Max Factor, and P&G), she recognized how unique the product was but also that it needed to be reformulated, repackaged, and reimagined.

And how far bareMinerals has come from its hippie-dippy roots! To be certain, it's still superpure: bareMinerals SPF 15 Foundation contains just five ingredients, most with names you'd recognize from seventh-grade earth science, like mica, zinc oxide, and titanium dioxide. In the pot (no more scoops), the powder looks like little more than tinted confectioner's sugar, but on the skin it becomes a scar-erasing, complexion-evening pixie dust.

Blodgett recalls that in the early days, "it was difficult to get people to try the product because it was so different and weird." Then she realized that if she could reach out to women who had really bad complexes, bareMinerals would catch on. "I wanted to talk to the women who wouldn't go out because of their skin," she says. "I knew they'd realize that they could have beautiful skin and they didn't have to stare in a magnifying mirror and be depressed all day." Indeed, her most devoted customers seem to come from the Island of Misfit Cosmetics Shoppers—women with acne scarring or sensitivities who never successfully worn makeup until they found bareMinerals, often in their 40s or later. During the tour, many of them approach Blodgett to recount their fairy-tale-style awakenings, thanks to bareMinerals: "It took my boyfriend a week to figure out I was wearing makeup; he knew something was different but couldn't pinpoint it"; "When my older sister started using it, we all accused her of having work done." Then there's the fan in Austin, a fortysomething cherub of a woman in a mom cardigan and Coach bag, who walks up to Blodgett and says, "I just wanted you to know, this changed my relationship with my face."

In many ways, Blodgett herself is a bigger draw than the makeup, which, after all, is readily available at Sephora and Nordstrom. Women feel like they know her already—and in some sense, they do: Blodgett is on TV all the time. On air in 1997, she sold 1,300 mineral-and-brush kits in six minutes, wiping out the inventory; last year, she appeared for more than 60 hours. Each week, across all cable markets, her infomercials air about 445 times. Blodgett had good reason to think her makeup would sell: She's always been a devoted TV shopper, especially during bouts of insomnia. Knowing the products and pitch style that appealed to her just strengthened her skills on set. On tour, plenty of women admit to TiVo'ing her every time she's on. They tune in for her contagious, girl-friendly demeanor as she swirl, taps, and buffs someone into a make-over, for her self-deprecating humor, and for her impromptu anecdotes about her husband, Keith, her 15-year-old son, Trent, and her dog, Kiko.

But neither the powder's efficacy (skin luminizers and mineral makeup are growing product categories) nor Blodgett's tireless TV presence completely explain the
I don't think I trust myself, so I just listened to other people, and women told me what they wanted. For years, listening was all I did.

People become famous for strange reasons," explains Travis Bradberry, author of The Personality Code (Putnam) and The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book (Simon & Schuster). "Big celebrities are famous because of media coverage. They don't really have to do all that much. When a smaller-time person becomes famous and draws people to her, it has a lot to do with her personality.

So what is it about Blodgett's personality in particular? She poses an unscientific explanation for her appeal: "I'm a huge goof-ball," she confesses. "Or I think it's a normal thing, and I am very normal. People are used to seeing people on a pedestal, and they can only aspire to be like that. There's nothing aspirational about me other than my Gucci dress." What Blodgett calls goofy or normal, psychologists would call charisma. For every little detail her fans want to know about her, she's even more curious about them. This is crucial. Usually, during the first few seconds of conversation, she inquires, "Do you mind if I ask how old you are?" Sure, she's partly asking as a cosmetics CEO, to see how well her products are working (does this woman's skin look like she's 38?). But, more important, she's also forging an instant friendly bond. "I don't even realize when I'm doing it, but I know I do," Blodgett admits. "I also always ask about birthdays. It's a way I relate to people. I think I put myself where I was when I was that age. You're 24? I got married at 24. You're 45? I'm 45! You're a Virgo? I'm a Virgo!"

The fancy psych term for this is "reciprocating self-disclosure." "The clichéd thing is asking a woman her age—that's a very intimate question. If you can pull that off, it's an extreme thing," says Frank Bernieri, PhD, the chair of psychology at Oregon State University, who specializes in the dynamics of face-to-face interaction. "To make the intimacy okay, you share information: I'll show you mine if you show me yours. You'd be surprised by what you can get out of the stranger in line behind you at the bank just by sharing something about yourself."

But you've got to mean it. "In order to have this kind of emotional contagion, you have to connect with your audience," Bradberry says, "and that's hard to do if you're not humble or real." Famous people like Rachael Ray coping to horrible knife skills or Oprah calling out her va-jay-jay on air or, of course, Señor Charisma All Universe himself, William Jefferson Clinton, pronouncing that he feels our pain, turn that page in Hollywood gossip magazines—"Celebrities Are Just Like Us!"—on its head: "That's What We'd Be Like if We Were Celebrities."

If you've seen so much as a nanosecond of Darrell Hammond doing his Bill Clinton, you already know there are some very clear physical components to charisma: eye contact, head-nodding, empathetic nonverbal reactions. What truly elevates the quality of an interaction—however fleeting—is when the listener "can focus with an intensity, look you right in the eye or right into your soul, and make you feel like the only person in a crowded room," Bernieri says. And there's Blodgett. At no point does the line appear to get shorter, but she never seems impatient or distracted. Each time she speaks to a fan, Blodgett leans slightly forward and rubs her
hands together—as if she's hungrily tucking into a holiday meal. When someone seems especially starstruck or self-conscious, she manages to create an invisible bubble of privacy—as she did with one awkward woman who'd driven more than 100 miles to get to the Bare Escentuals boutique in San Antonio. When Blodgett first approached the store, the woman jumped around pumping her fists like a Dallas Cowboys cheerleader. Then, when it was her turn to chat face-to-face, she broke into tears, gripped Blodgett's forearm, and choked out, "You're beautiful." When Blodgett tried to aw-shucks the compliment off, the woman gripped tighter and repeated "No. You. Are. Beautiful. Inside."

Blodgett hears she's beautiful all day long. She insists, though, "When women tell me that, it's not about me or my looks. It's about the fact that I have given them something that they have fallen in love with"—and possibly because that thing also helped them fall in love with themselves a little bit. Blodgett is attractive, but in a relatable way, like an Almodóvar heroine, with dark hair, big eyes, and olive skin (she is equal parts Hungarian, Italian, Russian, and Lebanese). "I started wearing makeup the second I could, like any girl. Or like any girl from Long Island," she says. All her life, she's been fascinated with faces. When her mother learned about a cosmetics marketing degree at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York, which required experience in the beauty industry, Blodgett went to Bloomingdale's every day until they hired her to demo Chinese hair sticks. From there, she worked her way up to spritzing fragrance and working the Ultima II counter. These days, on her many visits to the city, she often stops in at that main floor at Bloomingdale's. "It's still a trip."

It's also a bit trippy that the girl who couldn't get a job at the Estée Lauder counter has made a scene at the Austin Sephora befitting a celebrity—catering minions pass hors d'oeuvres and champagne, a DJ has set up a booth in the back, and about a dozen BE makeup artists are working makeover magic on the eager crowd. For all the times Blodgett has made such appearances, she still seems self-conscious and almost embarrassed in the moments leading up to her big entrance.

First, the DJ purrs into his microphone, "Ladies and gentlemen"—the "gentlemen" part is largely a formality—"please welcome Bare Escentuals CEO Leslie Blodgett!" and cues Fergie's clean version of "G-L-A-M-O-R-U-S..." Every time, Blodgett squeezes her eyes shut, wrinkles, and practically curls into herself like a fiddlehead.

But then she shakes it off—and she's out there on the floor; hugging Mrs. New-Knees; fielding questions about Kiko; flashing, upon request, "rocker fingers" while getting her picture taken with a 20-year-old woman. As customers approach, she chatter away, clutching wrists. Some bring their Bare Escentuals makeup cases and ask her to sign those. And, considering Blodgett has grown the brand from a 12-person operation into a company of several hundred, she regards each vintage bag as a long-lost relative: "I can't believe you still have this one!" and "Oh my God, you've been with us since the very beginning, haven't you?"

Blodgett's keen powers of paying attention have benefited her company, of course: "I don't think I trust myself, so I just listened to other people, and women told me what they wanted. For years, listening was all I did." Listening still seems to be the fuel for David Copperfield's former bus as it snakes its way across Texas. "For weeks after I get back from an event, I have so many stories to tell my family," Blodgett says. Maybe she returns home with tales of the big, memorable moments—such as the woman who got started on Bare Escentuals after her husband was deployed to Iraq and she "couldn't sleep and was up all night crying and watching TV, and I saw the infomercial and bought it"; or the woman in the wheelchair who tells her, "It's nice to be natural and pretty and fresh. I'm handicapped, but I'm not sick. I turned 50 this week, and coming to see you is my celebration."

But the smaller moments count for something, too: At the Galleria in Houston, one woman walks up to Blodgett with a simple question: "Can I give you a hug?" Her response is just as simple: "I'd love one." ●
Sexy & Happy at 20, 30, 40
Hair, Skin & Body Secrets for the Age You Are Now

Plus
11 Things Every Guy Wants From a Woman
5 Ways to Spot Breast Cancer
22 Questions You Asked McCain & Obama
The best beauty product is confidence. When a woman shows it, you think she's hot, even if she's not a beauty queen.

The Entrepreneur Next Door
LESLIE BLODGETT
Few people had heard of Bare Minerals' Bare Minerals when CEO Bloedgett took to the QVC airwaves in 1997. After that infomercial broadcast, the mineral-makeup revolution exploded. Ramonely approachable, Bloedgett likes to personally answer customers' emails.

How to fake great skin: "Apply powder highlighter underneath your foundation. It gives an inner glow."

Ever better than lipstick: "Try rose- or wine-colored cyclamen on your lips. Apply balm, then press the shadow on top—voilà, lips!"

Most reliable way to relax: "I blast Seventies funk music and dance."

Key to never success: "Be a sponge! Talk less and take everything in."

The best makeup M.O.: "...Find what you think is really pretty about you and play it up. If you need help, call me. I'm serious."

The Mascara Maven
KAREN FONDU
Maya was born with it. Fondu grew up around her dad's beauty salons in Arizona and New York. A longtime mover for Maybelline, New York (maker of the cult favorite Great Lash mascara) and Garnier, she just became the president of O, The Oprah Magazine.

Very same beauty advice: "You don't always have to look 'done.' I'm high-maintenance during the week, but on the weekends, you'll find me in my sweats."

Her morning routine: "I apply concealer under my eyes and highlighter on my upper cheekbones and above my brows. It makes me look fresh and ready to take on the day."

Most unusual task: "Often when I'm doing store visits or shopping on my own, I hand out Maybelline coupons to customers."

Her bliss secret: "Learn to balance your time. When you're home, be home. And above all, be there for special occasions."

The Legend
IMAN
The daughter of a Somali diplomat, Iman hit the modeling scene in 1973. Two decades later, she helped transform the industry's notion of beauty with TAN Cosmetics, made for women of color. Today, she also heads up the I Am Mifin ad campaign.

What she adores (besides husband David Bowie): "My foundations. I created them when I realized that no self-respecting black model went to a shoot without her own, because makeup artists didn't have the color."

Her look-alike trick: "It's simple—sunglasses and a smile."

Hidden talent: "I cook every night. I make a lot of Thai and Chinese food."

There's no such thing as too many... "Cafes. I have 60 from all over the world. It doesn't matter if you're barbecuing in one—you'll feel like a lady of luxury."

Key to exec success: "Don't be afraid to admit you have no idea what you're doing. It's not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of courage. I ask my mentors [former beauty executive] Robin Rum, for help all the time."
Leslie Blodgett: The Most Popular Woman in the Room

By Molly Prior

LESLEY BLODGETT KNOWS HOW TO WIN OVER A CROWD.

In an era of gloomy recession talk panel discussions, the Bare Essentials chief executive officer had an audience of beauty executives in stitches Wednesday evening during a Q&A hosted by Cosmetic Executive Women, led by WWD Beauty Biz editor Jenny Fint.

"I like having everyone around," said Blodgett, referring to the influx of competing mineral makeup lines. "Then came the zinger: 'Just don't get too close,' warned Blodgett. The unconventional CEO shuns the button-down, corporate approach of many of her peers, and speaks honestly — having long ago checked her ego and pretense at the door. That approach has helped Blodgett court legions of loyal users and build Bare Essentials into a $256 million business, up from about $4 million when she joined the company in 1994. Blodgett's emotional ties to the business are difficult to mask — even in front of Wall Street.

"I don't like earning calls, because they scare me. I have to use language I don't like to use, I want to tell [analysts] how I feel and they just want me to tell them where our inventory stands," Blodgett quipped. "They want to see numbers on a paper." But storytelling, she said, is what built the brand, and what she will continue to rely on to fortify growth, particularly as Bare Essentials rolls out to international markets via Sephora doors and on QVC. Bare Essentials also plans to open a stand-alone boutique in London this fall.

All kidding aside — at least for a moment — Blodgett acknowledged life as a public company has reinforced the need for disciplined growth.

Often asked what her next trick after mineral foundation will be, Blodgett said the company is working on creating new brands. "It won't be just Bare Minerals anymore," she declared. The beauty game-changing Blodgett built her business on QVC — when buying items hawked on the small screen and was still considered taboo by many — and she is now increasingly immersed with another electronic medium: Facebook. She boasts 6,000 friends, the maximum allowed by the social networking site. "The Internet is no longer anonymous. I know their religion, what they ate for lunch, their boyfriend," she said of her Facebook friends, laughing. But connecting with the consumer — whether online, on her bus tours or at the boutiques — is Blodgett's mission.

"This is not a marketing thing. It's not a stunt. This is our life."

Case in point: Last month, Blodgett took out a $64,000 ad in the New York Times, which invited readers to meet her for coffee if they were in San Francisco. "I'm not kidding," she wrote, and included her assistant's phone number.

The ad return on investment? "I didn't care if it worked. I believed in it," said Blodgett, dismissively noting the ad did result in a sales lift. It also drew some 30,000 women to the company's Web site.

The legacy she wants to leave is simple: "We're here to make people happy. I want people who are happy to be ecstatic."

Blodgett also wants the recession to just end already. "I'm shopping at Ross [Dress for Less] right now. It's a terrible experience." The audience roared.
Blodgett’s Community-Based Beauty Boom

By Jenny B. Fine

BARELY A SPANISH SPEECH LEAD TO THE BEAUTY CEO Summit at the WWD Beauty CEO Summit, where a sea of stories by everyday consumers filled the room with laughter.

The personal touch is characteristic of Blodgett, who was a first-name basis with many of her customers and names many of her shade from them. (Country music artists gave her a love song.)

But behind the veil that makes the techniques used by Blodgett’s staff, the audience was taken on a tour of the store and the brand. She pointed out the innovative and eco-friendly products they carry.

Blodgett’s strategy for community-based marketing began in 1996, when Bare Essentials was only a bath and body company that made money in the fourth quarter. But not in the first, second or third. “I’d get up in the middle of the night completely stressed out and turn on the TV,” Blodgett remembered. “I asked myself, ‘Why are the two options horror movies and QVC?’ And I realized...”

About eight months later, Blodgett herself was on the air. She appeared on the channel for the first time in August 1997, selling $45,600 worth of product.

In addition to the sales spike, Blodgett’s appearance on QVC formed the beginning of an ardent customer base for Bare Essentials, which was solidified a year later with Blodgett’s first live show on the network.

After that show, she invited the entire audience back to her hotel room for pizza. Since then, Blodgett has gone on cruises and has tours with customers. “I don’t like water that much, but we did it anyway,” she joked. “Overcoming her aquaphobia was worth it.”

Out of the cruise, four attendees sent Blodgett a letter (which she keeps in a bedside table), writing “These friendships have afforded us some wonderful opportunities for travel and laughter...”

Now, I can’t wait to hear about your story!”

Discover Beauty: A special section featuring an edited assortment of brands pre-selected to bring discerning retail buyers novel ideas and new brands from around the world. See now products from Australia, Canada, Chile, Italy, Japan, Morocco, Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, UK, USA.

Sunday July 13: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Cosmoprof North America Las Vegas Discover Beauty Pavilion

Monday July 14: 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Cosmoprof North America Las Vegas Discover Beauty Pavilion

How Key Retailers Are Embracing Big Business with Niche Brands

Women’s Wear Daily in cooperation with Cosmoprof North America present their second annual conference to give event attendees insight from successful retailers on the growing demand to introduce new niche beauty brands to their existing cosmetic assortments. Featuring Debbie Murtha, Senior Vice President Cosmetics Macy’s; Courtney Baber, General Manager C.O. Bigelow; and Norma Knudsen, Executive Vice President, Merchandising; Chief Operating Officer Regis Corporation / Trade Secret / Pure Beauty

Moderated by WWD’s Andrea Nushtag.

Join us to Discover Beauty.
Pre-register now at www.cosmoprofnorthamerica.com
The advertising experts tell us that people don’t read lots of copy.

I really hope not because this cost a fortune.

MAYBE YOU’VE HEARD OF US. IF YOU HAVE, IT’S MOST LIKELY BECAUSE SOMEONE TOLD YOU ABOUT US. We aren’t the type to swing from chandeliers to get noticed (although we do have a fondness for chandeliers—they appear in every one of our boutiques). You also won’t find us hiring celebrities to speak for us. Don’t get us wrong, we love famous people, but we just don’t feel we need to pay them to talk about our products.

Back to the reason for this letter. WE ARE THE PEOPLE BEHIND bareMinerals. THE GREATEST MAKEUP ON THE PLANET. WOMEN OFTEN TELL US THAT OUR PRODUCTS HAVE CHANGED THEIR LIVES. We love hearing this and believe it based on all the awesome emails we receive.

WE ARE PRETTY MUCH EXPERTS ON THE SUBJECT OF SKIN. OUR FOUNDATION IS THE MOST POPULAR PRODUCT OF THEM ALL. IT HAS WON A GAZILLION AWARDS, AND MILLIONS OF WOMEN USE IT. We’re really proud of our products and how they perform. If you want a foundation that gives you stunning skin and feels like your bare skin—bareMinerals is for you.

We do love our products, but we love our customers more. This note is also a big thank you to all the women that believe in us. It’s all about keeping it real, sharing stories and meeting with women one-on-one at our boutiques, Sephora, Ulta, and some department stores. We think if you try bareMinerals for yourself, you will be amazed at how really incredible it is. If you don’t believe us, ask someone you know. In fact, we’ve found that many dental hygienists use our products. Next time you’re getting your teeth cleaned, just ask her.

Anyway, we just wanted to tell you that we’re here, WE HAVE THE BEST PRODUCTS FOR YOUR SKIN, and we really care about making women happy. Thanks for reading this long thing. My husband was convinced you wouldn’t read this far (and he’s not even an ad exec).

And if you’re ever in San Francisco, maybe we can chat over a cup of coffee. I’m not kidding. Call our main office line at 415-489-5000. Generally Hilda answers the phone.

Lots of Love,

[Signature]

Leslie Blodgett
CEO OF BARE ESSENTUALS