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## Bay area businesswomen tally finalist honors for global awards

### Tampa Bay Business Journal

Tampa Bay area businesswomen took four of 10 Florida finalist honors in the 2008 Stevie Awards, an annual global competition focused on recognizing the achievements women in business.

The Stevie Awards were created to honor and generate public recognition of the achievements and positive contributions of organizations and businesspeople worldwide. Stevie is taken from the name Stephen, which is derived from the Greek word for "crowned."

Beginning with the American Business Awards in 2002, the International Business Awards in 2003, the Stevie Awards for Women in Business in 2004 and the Stevie Awards for Sales & Customer Service in 2006, the Stevie Awards organization said its mission is to "raise the profile of exemplary organizations and individuals among the press, the business community, and the general public."

In 50 categories, there are more than 200 finalists and more than 100 other companies, products, campaigns and services honored.

Tampa Bay area finalists include:

- Suzanne Kelley, executive vice president of [Proggex Inc.](#) in Clearwater, is one of eight finalists for the category "Best Executive — Service Businesses — up to 100 Employees — All Other Industries"
- Debra Curtiss, vice president and general manager at Peak 10 in Tampa, is one of five finalists for the category "Best Executive — Service Businesses — up to 2,500 Employees — Computer Software & Services."
- Melissa Fisher, senior vice president of marketing and communications at [Valpak Direct Marketing Services Inc.](#) in Largo, was named as one of 15 finalists for the category "Best Executive — Service Businesses — up to 2,500 Employees — All Other Industries"
- [Digital Hands](#) in Tampa was one of 10 finalists for the category "Best Overall Company of the Year — Service Businesses — up to 100 Employees — All Other Industries." Its chief executive officer is Charlotte Baker.

The Stevie Awards for Women in Business, based in Fairfax Va., is governed by a [board of judges and advisers](#).

The Stevie award is about 16 inches tall and is hand-cast and finished in 24-karat gold, the organization said. The crystal pyramid held aloft by Stevie represents the hierarchy of human needs, a system often represented as a pyramid that was developed in the 1960s by psychologist Abraham Maslow, who observed that after their basic needs are met, human beings seek the esteem of their peers.

Winners will be announced at an awards dinner in New York on Nov. 14.