

Women In Business

## Investment management pioneer Myrna Rivera

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This month marks the second anniversary of Consultiva Internacional Inc., the local investment management consulting firm founded by Myrna Rivera.

Consultiva Internacional specializes in designing investment plans and portfolios for a range of clients, including individuals, pension funds, foundations, and insurance companies.

Prior to founding the firm, which Rivera is also positioning for a niche in the U.S. Hispanic market, she was director and senior vice president at Salomon Smith Barney. During that period, which spanned the latter 1980s and most of the 1990s, Rivera became recognized in Puerto Rico and throughout the U.S. as a pioneer in institutional and high net worth investing.

In 1999, Rivera became the first woman in the U.S. to be elected to the prestigious "Who's Who of Investment Management Consulting."

For helping to get her started, she credits then Merrill Lynch General Manager Guardo Albani, who in 1981 gave her the opportunity she was looking for as a rookie account executive in Hato Rey. "He saw my passion and drive and he made a bet on me that changed my life," Rivera recalls. She is also quick to credit William Lockwood Benet for his key role in helping her launch Consultiva Internacional.

Rivera says her most important skill is that she's a good teacher, a skill that has been a key element in her success. Her initial professional background as a mathematician and college professor--coupled with her communication skills--has helped her to consistently engage clients and audiences effectively.

When it's time to seek advice or a sounding board for her ideas, in addition to family and close friends, she looks to professional colleagues, both within and outside her staff. William Lockwood Benet, Ramon Cestero, and Jose Sosa are among her confidants. She also regularly consults her clients on strategic decisions. "After all, we belong to our clients," Rivera says.

She says she's been fortunate in having avoided making any big mistakes. And her functionally bicultural skills--the fruit of her combined professional experience both in New York and San Juan--have, over the years, proved to be invaluable.

Her advice to other women in business is to "honor your blessings or, in other words, do what you love to do."

"People want to have confidence that you enjoy what you're doing, that you feel it coming from the pit of your stomach, that you feel it's a calling and you treat it as such," says Rivera.

Additionally, Rivera says that she counsels aspiring businesswomen always to be punctual and prepared when it comes to the professional arena. "Don't improvise, preparation is of critical importance," she says. She also highly recommends choosing a role model and the process of visualization, or learning through imitation.

But more important than imitation, Rivera says, is imagination. "Einstein said imagination is more important than knowledge. One needs to take knowledge and be creative, by building something new with it," Puerto Rico's investment management pioneer emphasizes.

