

## **Top Coach & Female Leadership Expert named in 'Top 200 Women in Business' honoured by Queen**

One of the UK's Top Ten Coaches<sup>1</sup> and expert consultant on Female Leadership<sup>2</sup>, **Samantha Collins of Aspire**, has been honoured at Buckingham Palace by Her Majesty The Queen as one of the Top 200 Women in Business.

### **Royal Seal of Approval for Coaching Profession**

Samantha, 35, attended an exclusive reception for the outstanding 200 Women in UK Business in the presence of HM The Queen at Buckingham Palace on 14 February 2007. All senior female members of the Royal Family, including the Duchess of Cornwall, the Princess Royal and the Countess of Wessex, were also in attendance at the prestigious Valentine's Day women's event.

Samantha Collins takes her place in the Top 200 alongside prominent female leaders from a wide range of business sectors including Linda Bennett of L K Bennett, Anya Hindmarch, Nicky Kinnaird of Space NK, Jo Malone, Sarah Doukas of Storm Model Agency, Elle McPherson, Heather Rabbatts of Millwall Football Club, Jacqueline Gold of Ann Summers and Christine Rucker of The White Company. All were nominated as being the most outstanding in UK business today by a variety of sources, including Government and Professional bodies, and Buckingham Palace itself.

Samantha's achievement demonstrates that Coaching is now firmly established alongside other leading professions. Only a few years ago, no-one had even heard of Coaching. Now, offering Executive and Leadership Coaching to senior employees is the norm for any competitive organisation that takes its commitment to talent development and retention seriously.

### **A First for Aspire**

"It's a first for me, and – by extension – Aspire, the UK's only coaching company for women leaders that I founded seven years ago. No other coach or coaching company has been recognised like this, so it's an exceptional honour," commented Samantha.

### **Flying the Flag for Coaching**

Speaking of her contribution to the coaching profession, Samantha, a former Council member of the Association for Coaching<sup>3</sup>, continued, "What's particularly exciting is that for me this marks the coming of age of the coaching profession, which over the years I have seen spark transformation on so many levels – individual, business and community. Now I really feel I'm flying the flag for coaching – only this time it's a royal one!"

### **Unique: A Female Leadership Expert among Expert Female Leaders**

Samantha is uniquely placed to comment on what it has taken these female leaders to reach the top, given her professional specialism in female leadership. She is an expert on the future world of work for women leaders, currently completing a PhD on the subject. The Aspire 2006 Annual Survey of Executive Women<sup>4</sup> revealed that women are increasingly seeking leadership roles that are in tune with their personal values and where they will be able to make a real difference. "Over 90% of women believe that women and men *do* have different leadership styles," says Samantha. "We've found that the biggest issue for women leaders is to demonstrate authenticity – being true to yourself and establishing credibility instead of getting sucked into being something that you're not. When women do this, they fly high – as this elite gathering has proven."

Samantha has this advice for women wanting to succeed in business: "First and foremost, know yourself – basic, but harder than it sounds! A professional coach can help you dig deeper. We know that only 2 in 5 executive women have ever taken time out to identify what drives them personally – their vision and values. But when women do bother to do this, 90% say it has a significant impact on their success at work. The Top 200 businesswomen know what they're great at, and then make sure they focus on getting even better at it."

### **What will drive the Next Generation Top 200 Businesswomen?**

Does she have a crystal ball? Maybe not, but Samantha Collins' research gives some clues for those wanting to make the Top 200 next time round. "The future world of work is not just about making money, and women are particularly conscious of that," says the woman who has herself undergone the rigorous training required to be part of Save the Children's Global Emergency Response Team. "The future world of work for women is about financial success, certainly, but more than that, it's about work offering personal fulfilment and the opportunity to make a contribution to community and society – a new definition of "triple bottom-line", if you like. The companies that build this into their core strategy today will be the ones that see their women leaders rise to the top tomorrow."



Aspire, the company Samantha Collins founded in 2000, is dedicated to enabling organisations develop and retain their best women leaders. Aspire now has a team of 10 coaches who devise and deliver innovative coaching-based programmes to respected organisations as diverse as JP Morgan, Disney, Lloyds TSB, Save the Children, and the Commission for Racial Equality, and is the only coaching and leadership development company in the UK to specialise in working with women leaders. [ends]

**For more information and photographs, or to arrange an interview with or expert female leadership commentary from Samantha Collins, contact Rebecca Hourston, Aspire Director of Communications:**

**T: 0207 556 1018 • M: 07973 759 478 • [rebecca@aspirecompanies.com](mailto:rebecca@aspirecompanies.com) • [www.aspirecompanies.com](http://www.aspirecompanies.com)  
Aspire, Blackwell House, Guildhall Yard, off Gresham Street, London EC2V 5AE**

<sup>1</sup> Samantha Collins was nominated one of the UK's Top Ten Coaches by the Independent on Sunday, 30 November 2003, alongside Sir John Whitmore, best-selling author of 'Coaching for Performance'

<sup>2</sup> Samantha is currently completing her PhD at London Metropolitan University on "The Future World of Work for Women"

<sup>3</sup> The Association for Coaching ([www.associationforcoaching.com](http://www.associationforcoaching.com)) is one of coaching's lead independent professional bodies

<sup>4</sup> The Aspire Survey of Executive Women has been conducted annually since 2004. The 2006 survey was completed by 500 women, 80% aged 30-49yrs, 32% at CEO/Partner level

## **Notes for Editors:**

### **About Aspire ([www.aspirecompanies.com](http://www.aspirecompanies.com))**

Aspire is a sought-after authority on women and leadership which has addressed audiences on BBC Global Business Report, The Financial Times, The Times and the Independent on Sunday. Aspire's expert coaches are all trained at schools accredited with the International Coach Federation or the Association for Coaching, the leading standards and accreditation bodies for coaches worldwide. Aspire offers **1-1 coaching** and a range of **leadership events** to women leaders and their organisations, ranging from breakfast seminars to leadership networking to 2 day programmes. Responding to in-house research and experience that suggests one of the ways to retain and develop women leaders is to respond to their need to make a difference at work, Aspire has also created **ground-breaking director-level Corporate Social Responsibility projects** pairing executives in blue-chip businesses with their peers in not-for-profit organisations. In what one participant called "the Heineken of leadership courses", such projects have delivered challenging real-life projects whilst developing participants' leadership skills and making a measurable difference to the communities in which their businesses are based. Such programmes are typically mixed gender, given that the future world of work is about women and men working effectively together in high-performing teams. Full details can be found on our website.

Like its coaching programmes, Aspire is goal-driven and results-led with core values of Authenticity, Pioneering, Making a Difference, Passion, Excellence and Connection. The clear focus has won Aspire a loyal client base among FTSE companies and some of the UK's most successful female leaders. Aspire is regularly featured in the media and its research into Executive Women is acknowledged as being at the cutting edge of the female leadership debate.

### **About Coaching with Aspire**

Professional coaching is a series of one to one development sessions that form a partnership between a coach and an individual. Coaching focuses on specific goals as related to the present and the future. It is not counselling or therapy which may focus on past issues. The role of coaching is to work with individuals to achieve better results in their career, work and life: results that they may not achieve without the support, accountability and expertise of a qualified coach. Coaching is a regular, ongoing process normally lasting 6 months with 2 sessions of 1.5 hours each per month. Individuals who engage in a coaching relationship can expect to see appreciable results in the areas of productivity, personal satisfaction with life and work and the achievement of personally relevant goals.