

October 2007



**WFAA**.com  
DALLAS-FORT WORTH | CHANNEL 3

## Business

### Women's businesses take the stage

Winner will get help taking her company to the next level

09:59 PM CDT on Thursday, October 4, 2007

By ANGELA SHAH / The Dallas Morning News  
ashah@dallasnews.com

It's billed as *American Idol* meets *The Apprentice*, though no one is expected to show up with exceptionally bad manners or bad hair.

For June Pillay, it's just a chance to gain expertise crucial to growing her boutique jewelry business.

Since founding her Carrollton-based company, June Bijou, in 2002, she's managed to get her jewelry into high-end stores on the West Coast while also selling directly to customers through her Web site.

"I've had doors open for me," she said. "But if I'm going to take my business to the next level, I could benefit from mentoring. I'm a very creative person, but I have no business sense."

In today's "Make Mine a Million" contest in Austin, Ms. Pillay will be competing against nine other Texas businesswomen. The event is designed to help boost more women-owned firms above the \$1 million revenue mark.

Each contestant will have three minutes to make her "elevator speech" in front of an audience, which will then vote on a winner.

The top vote-getter will receive a prize package worth about \$100,000, including a \$50,000 line of credit, professional coaching and other business services.

Nell Merlino, president and founder of a New York consulting firm, decided to launch Make Mine a Million two years ago after discovering that only 3 percent of female-owned businesses were hitting \$1 million in revenue, compared to 6 percent of male-owned firms.

"Women and men sort of own businesses equally these days," said Ms. Merlino, who also founded Take Your Daughter to Work Day. "What is it that women need to move from this place ... this place of being stuck?"

Qualifying businesses must be at least two years old and have hit \$200,000 in annual revenue.



TROY OXFORD/DMN