

For entrants and judges alike, the *ColoradoBiz* Top Company competition is a rigorous journey. Entrants undergo an examination of their financial performance by sponsor Deloitte, and seven judges made up of business and community leaders assess each company's community involvement and one or more operational aspect of the entrants' choice.

The field of several dozen entrants is whittled down to 30 finalists in 10 industries before, finally, the 10 winners are tabbed.

The process sheds light not only on companies' business triumphs and how they got there, but on the thoughtful and often innovative ways in which winning companies have reached back to improve communities and empower employees.

A few examples: Chipotle Mexican Grill's mission to support humane animal-raising practices and promote sustainability with its "Food with Integrity" initiative; McClain Finlon Advertising's pro bono work for local nonprofits; and Statera's bonus program that requires employees to perform community service.

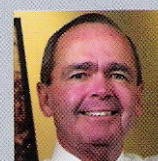
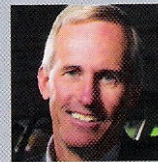
Finalists and winners were honored at an awards luncheon Sept. 12 at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. >>

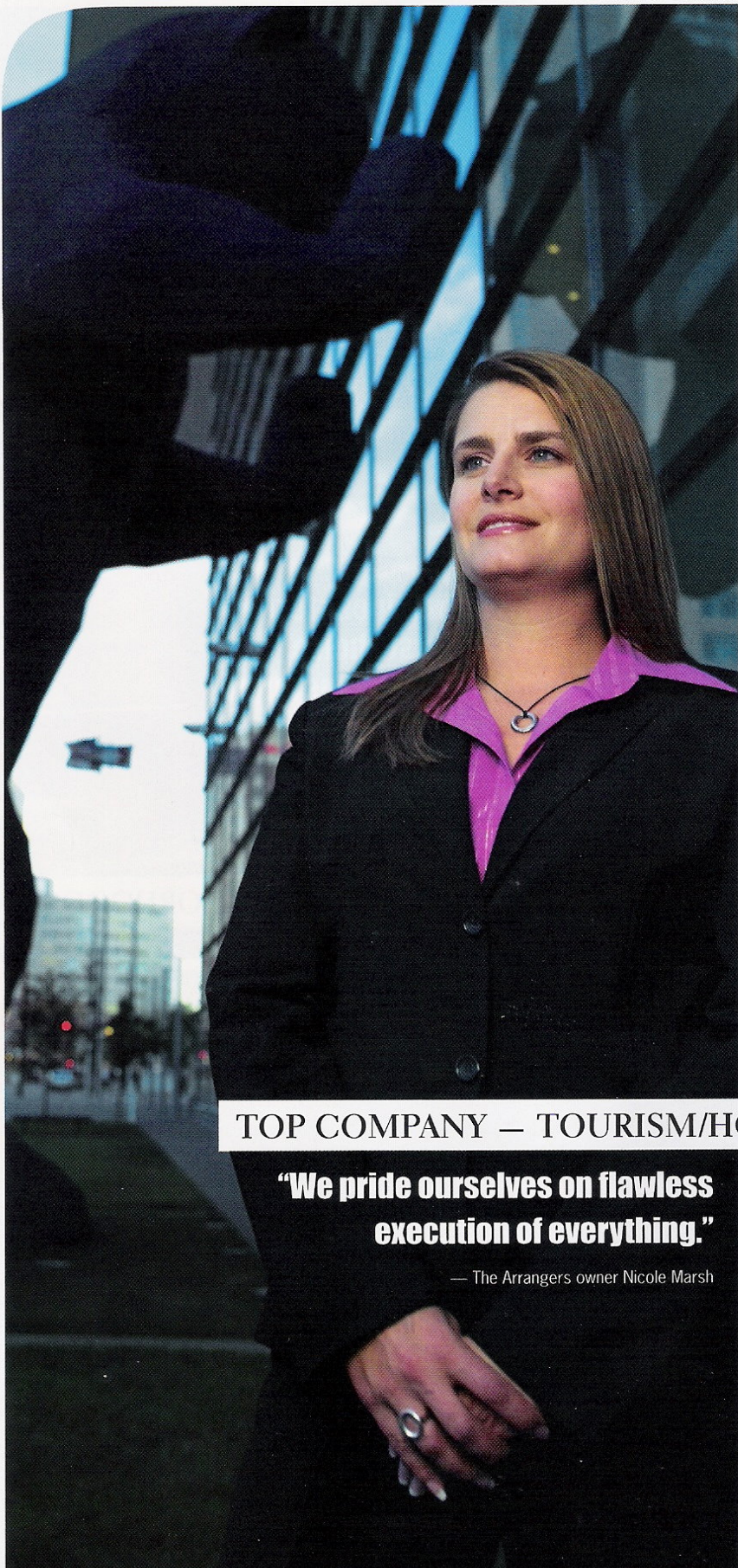
# BEST IN THE BUSINESS

Winners follow paths of passion, determination to Top Company summit



PHOTOGRAPHY BY PHIL MUMFORD





**TOP COMPANY – TOURISM/HOSPITALITY THE ARRANGERS**

**“We pride ourselves on flawless execution of everything.”**

— The Arrangers owner Nicole Marsh

“We’re a very small company that does very big things,” says Nicole Marsh, owner of The Arrangers, an event management company. Partnering with bus companies, caterers, venues, décor companies, rental companies and florists, The Arrangers manage every aspect of their clients’ events, from business parties to conventions.

“We pride ourselves on flawless execution of everything,” Marsh says. That’s a task of immeasurable weight, considering The Arrangers coordinates out-of-town groups of up to 5,000 people, transporting them to and from attractions all over the state, planning meals, meetings, receptions and booking hotels.

In 2000, Marsh bought the company from its creator and her boss, Linda Rankin. This year, The Arrangers is on target to beat last year’s high of 400 events, almost twice the number from when she took over. Under Marsh’s leadership, the team of 11 employees has won nearly 35 awards in the last seven years, including the Association of Destination Management Executives 2007 Best Tour Program from Lionel Collector’s Club of America and ADME’s 2006 Best Innovative Event under \$25,000.

Clients pay from \$5,000 to three quarters of a million dollars for custom planned events. Their biggest client this year was an incentives trip in Vail from South Africa for 200 people costing nearly \$750,000.

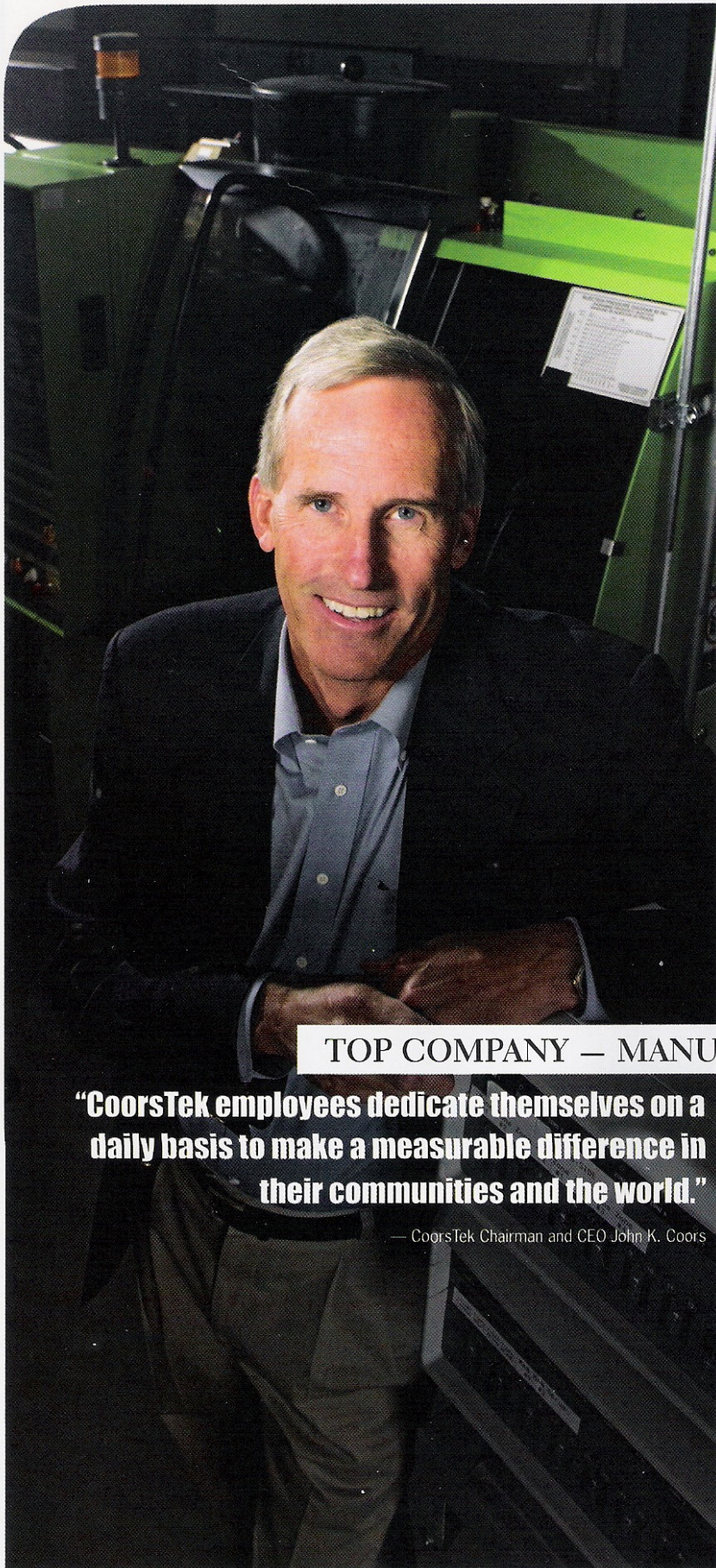
“We know our destination,” Marsh says. “I know the most reputable bus companies, best caterers, best décor company.” This benefits the meeting planner who comes to Colorado even once a year or once every 10 years.

Conventions move in four- to 10-year cycles, and many rely on The Arrangers when they come to Colorado. “They rotate cities with Denver as part of the rotation,” Marsh says. “They reach out to us again for something new, something different, something they didn’t do before.”

Some of The Arrangers’ clients allow creativity within given parameters, others leave the theme to Marsh and her team.

“We’re very involved in the industry,” she says. “So we keep up with trade magazines and see what’s hot on either coast, as well as trends in décor and lighting and florals and catering. We’re dying to have the opportunity to use some of these new things we’ve read about and heard about for clients that are willing to give us some flexibility with their themes.”

Whether bringing national entertainment acts to Red Rocks, transporting 3,000 people from 10 international groups in one convention around Colorado, or planning corporate holiday parties, The Arrangers aim to be Colorado’s event planners.



**TOP COMPANY – MANUFACTURING COORSTEK INC.**

**“CoorsTek employees dedicate themselves on a daily basis to make a measurable difference in their communities and the world.”**

— CoorsTek Chairman and CEO John K. Coors

In 1910, Adolph Coors invested in Harold China and Pottery Co., a struggling tenant in a Coors-owned building. Later he bought the company. The blocking of German supplies during World War I propelled the business forward, as U.S. government contracts and customer demand for ceramic scientific labware escalated.

Four generations later, CoorsTek is the largest technical ceramics manufacturer in North America, making critical-duty components for specific customers in more than 30 industries.

Vertically integrated like the brewery, CoorsTek purchased the equipment to make its own powder and create its own molds. The company also engineers its own high-performance polymers and specialty metals. The company still sells labware directly but these days is mostly a third-tier manufacturer, making components for companies around the world such as Colorado's Ball Corp., Sun Microsystems, Raytheon and Lockheed Martin.

“We like to be way down the line, because our expertise is making these ceramics, making these high-purity materials, so they'll work very reliably on these critical-duty things,” said Harrison Hartman, CoorsTek's marketing communications manager.

Peers recognize CoorsTek's excellence. Kavlico, an automotive components supplier, this year named CoorsTek its best supplier for the second year in a row, a feat requiring 98 percent on-time delivery. And in April, the Jefferson County Economic Council honored the company with the Pioneer Award.

CoorsTek employs more than 1,000 people in Colorado, and they're paid on days when they volunteer in the community.

“We've encouraged our employees to improve the communities in which we live through several activities,” Hartman said. Employees served as volunteer firefighters to help subdue a Grand Junction fire; they've been youth mentors; they've collected food and money to help the homeless.

“CoorsTek employees dedicate themselves on a daily basis to make a measurable difference in their communities and the world,” said John K. Coors, the company's chairman and CEO. “Having this effort recognized by some of Colorado's top business leaders is a great honor for all of us.”

— Cassi Clark