



FOR: Team Blonde Jewelry

FROM: Falk Associates
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DESIGNING WOMEN: CONSULTANTS BY DAY,
JEWELRY DESIGNERS FOR LIFE**

Forest Park, IL- Two single women, with nothing to live on but their own perseverance, have created not one, but two businesses: one for their livelihood and one for their passion.

The dynamic duo started their career path having earned a law degree and a CPA/MBA degree, respectively, and then joining the Chicago office of Watson Wyatt Worldwide, a global consulting firm. After a short time there, Jayne Ertel and Heidi Vance began to draw attention to themselves within the company by their success. They enjoyed that success but didn't enjoy the 12-hour days and debilitating office politics.

"We made a lot of money for the company," Ertel said. "And the thought crossed our minds that we might be able to do the same for ourselves one day."

After several years in professional consulting, they decided to take a leap of faith and open up their own consulting firm: Quercus Consulting Group LLC. Quercus is the scientific name for oak tree and the women live by the motto of Quercus: "From little acorns, mighty oaks grow."

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TEAM BLONDE/Add One

"We are in the administrative consulting business. We focus on seemingly small changes that can yield huge organizational and bottom line results for the client," Ertel said. The business took off partly due to the fact that they served an underdeveloped niche. "We save companies more money than we cost," adds Ertel. With Quercus, Ertel and Vance grant clients the same Fortune 500 experience they provided at Watson Wyatt at one-third the cost and with infinitely more personal attention.

"The very first project we ever did on our own, we felt so much more responsible to that client to do a great job and stay under budget," Vance said. "The rewards were amazing: an extremely happy client."

Quercus opened in 1999 and in that time handled such clients as the General Board of Pensions and Health Benefits of the United Methodist Church, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois and Elgin School District U-46. Seeing what they could do in their profession, they started to wonder what they could do with their passion: making jewelry.

"No matter how much time we spent with our clients at Quercus, in our down time we'd relax by making jewelry," Vance said. "We would make jewelry to accessorize our standard business attire. It was just a matter of time before we looked at each other and said, 'Should we try launching a jewelry design business?'"



People started to notice the custom jewelry they were wearing and the responses they received from friends and colleagues inspired them to start their second business in 2000. The name of the second business depicts exactly what they have proven to be: Team Blonde.

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TEAM BLONDE/Add Two

“With the majority of our time spent on Quercus, we took a simple approach to Team Blonde with just a catalog and a Web site,” Ertel said. “More and more customers started coming back and ordering more, and soon the word spread.”

Quercus and Team Blonde operate out of the same space and even lend to each other’s practices. Ertel, trained in identifying patterns, translates her CPA work into jewelry design. Vance’s persuasive verbal skills make her an ideal saleswoman.

The two sides of their professional life blend seamlessly. “A lot of our consulting clients wear our jewelry!” Vance said.

“The two businesses fill the voids of each other. The consulting, although interesting and lucrative, is very much a thinking kind of work - the right brain. The jewelry gives the left-brained creative side some exercise too,” explains Ertel.

Vance and Ertel do not have outside influences dictating their goals. They just continue to plant more acorns; nurturing their two businesses. No more corporate ladders – these women have greater heights to reach. Who knows, maybe a third company



some day. After all, trees continue to grow.

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To schedule an interview with Heidi Vance & Jayne Ertel or for more information on Team Blonde, please contact Falk Associates at 847.675.2580.