

Biography

With passion, determination, humor and hard work, Jill Blashack Strahan has become a captivating speaker, author and one of the nation's leading female entrepreneurs.

Starting Small & Dreaming Big

Born and raised in rural Minnesota, Jill grew up on her family's farm, where she was deeply influenced by her father's entrepreneurial spirit. "Dad was typically before his time," she says. "He was an ideas man."

Like father, like daughter.

After earning an associate's degree in sales and marketing, Jill co-owned and managed a cafe with her father called "Jill's Grill" and later started her own retail gift basket shop. And then her story took a whole new turn.

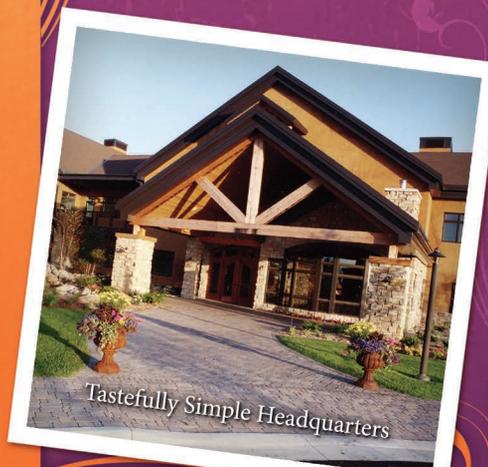
In 1995, she founded Tastefully Simple on what she often calls "a dream and a shoestring." In fact, the company started in a 1,200 square-foot shed with no running water, using a pool table as a packing station.

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A small-town girl
with big dreams.

A brilliant
entrepreneur.

And a woman
who never
looked back.



Finding Strength in Tragedy

Then – just three years into the business – Jill was rocked by tragedy. Her brother was killed in a fall, and only a few months later, her husband died suddenly. Jill was then faced with raising her 5-year-old son alone and managing a skyrocketing business.

The decision to continue was difficult. However, Jill pushed herself and developed a new appreciation for living one day at a time. She says, “You always have a choice. You can get better or get bitter.”

Burning Bright

In 1995, Tastefully Simple became the original national home tasting party company, offering delicious, easy-to-prepare foods and gifts. Within five years, Blashack Strahan grew Tastefully Simple to an \$11.8 million company, and three years later, company sales hit \$100 million. Thanks to her outstanding leadership and spirit, Jill has also been personally recognized with many honors, such as:

- 2014 Direct Selling News Most Influential Women in Direct Sales
- 2013 National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) Hall of Fame for Minnesota
- 2012 *Direct Selling News* Most Influential Women in Direct Sales
- 2010 *Twin Cities Business* “200 Minnesotans You Should Know”
- 2009 Minnesota Business Professionals of America – Outstanding Business Executive of the Year Award
- 2008 Minneapolis/St. Paul Women in Business Industry Leader Honoree
- 2007 Minnesota Entrepreneurs, Inc. Entrepreneur of the Year
- 2006 *Twin Cities Business* Hall of Fame
- 2005 *Inc.* magazine’s list of “Inc. 500” CEO All-Stars
- 2005 *Fast Company* magazine’s 25 Top Women Business Builders
- 2004 Small Business Administration Entrepreneurial Success Award
- 2003 Ernst & Young® Entrepreneur of the Year National Finalist
- 2000 Ernst & Young Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year for Minnesota & the Dakotas

Inspiring Others to Shine

Jill Blashack Strahan is a published author with *Simply Shine: Stories That Stirred the Fire* – a collection of inspirational stories about her life and journey with Tastefully Simple. She shares her powerful and uplifting message with the nation as an inspirational speaker. And in 2012, she launched Inspirada Dreams – an inspirational company providing online members with tools to reflect on where they are in life, imagine new possibilities and create goals and action plans to realize their dreams.

Jill makes her home in Alexandria, Minnesota, with her husband Gary and son Zach.

