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THIS YEAR'S  
**TOP  
10**  
WOMEN  
IN BUSINESS

Dr. Homaira Akbari, CEO of SkyBitz



NOVAEXEC'S 2011  
**TOP 10  
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**T**he word "passion" is thrown around a lot in business. Almost all successful CEOs, entrepreneurs or managers continue to excel in their fields because they genuinely love what they do. Yet, there is exclusivity in passion.

When it was decided NOVAEXEC's Fall edition would be dedicated to women in business – the bevy of worthy executives was endless. Those who made the list are at once frontrunners in their success and accompanied in their achievements; none of their industries nor their products align, yet the underlying dedication to their careers and endearment for their communities mirror one another perfectly.

One woman safeguards American soldiers and citizens from cyberattacks while another teaches young children to cook. Both attribute their success to blind faith – taking risks and making tough decisions in spite of the unknown. All of the women have heart, either through making charitable donations on behalf of their corporation or lending an ear to a grieving client. Two of the women opened their doors on Valentine's Day.

The featured women were vetted by a compilation of NOVAEXEC editorial staff who considered the health and direction of the business, the span of her career in the past and her future trajectory as well as how the Northern Virginia economy and society benefit from her business.

NOVAEXEC is proud to honor these women who are trailblazers in their industries, mentors in their professions and givers to their communities. NVE

**Dr. Homaira Akbari is right at home in her offices at SkyBitz, Inc., which is headquartered in Sterling.**

Photo by Beverly Denny

# The International Tracker

*Dr. Homaira Akbari Keeps Track of the World's Most Precious Possessions*

**Name:** Dr. Homaira Akbari  
**Title:** President & CEO  
**Company:** SkyBitz, Inc.  
**Location:** Sterling

Ever feel like somebody's watching you? If you're a tractor-trailer driver, a member of the SkyBitz team probably does have his or her eye on you, as the Sterling-based company specializes in remote asset tracking by providing its customers with real-time, decision-making tools for companies and government agencies that deploy fleets across the nation and the world.

At the driver's seat of SkyBitz is President and CEO, Dr. Homaira Akbari.

Akbari says her passion for education and technology started with her insatiable curiosity for how things work, her desire to innovate and her current love of solving business's biggest challenges. Before joining SkyBitz in October 2007, Akbari funneled her passion for innovation into higher learning. She holds an MBA with distinction from Carnegie Mellon University and a Ph.D. with honors in particle physics from Tufts University. She is the author of more than 50 scientific articles in international journals, serves as a judge of the \$100K Business Plan Competition at MIT, is a member of the Advisory Council of the Johns Hopkins Department of Physics and Astronomy and serves on the Loudoun County CEO Cabinet.

She has previously held numerous senior management positions within TruePosition, a subsidiary of Liberty Media Corporation, Microsoft, Thales and Cambridge Strategic Management Group and has more than 18 years of strategic, sales and marketing, product development and operational experience across many critical high-technology industries including software applications, IT services, security systems for homeland defense, telematics and location-based services, and telecom.

To this day, it is clear the Iranian-born CEO is empowered by challenges.

"What makes me very excited is how you apply technology to human problems or problems in general," she says.

As a solution finder, Akbari and SkyBitz help enterprises receive full visibility of their assets at all times. The company's services are ideal for commercial and government organizations with requirements to track and man-

**"What makes me very excited is how you apply technology to human problems or problems in general."**

age assets and cargo with continuous visibility and high security. Some of its largest customers, including J.B. Hunt and Landstar, have seen their fleets better utilized, thereby decreasing their own costs, Akbari says. Akbari was particularly pleased with a solution SkyBitz found for one of its customers that was able to retire 1,000 trailers in its fleet and decrease its operating expenses after implementing SkyBitz technology.

SkyBitz's technology was especially useful during recent years when freight shipping across all modes of transportation decreased by 50 percent, Akbari says. Despite this, SkyBitz is still profitable, growing 7 percent in 2009.

Under her direction, SkyBitz is primed to go international with plans to launch its Galaxy series solution, a tracker that knows world geography and has tracking capabilities across the globe, in the near future. SkyBitz announced its plans to go international in 2010 and it has taken a year to firm up the details, Akbari says. In September 2011, SkyBitz entered into a partnership agreement with Star Asia Technologies, a Singapore-based entity leading the development of advanced mobile communications services in Southeast Asia. SkyBitz's Global Locating System technology can track, monitor and manage assets such as transportation assets, shipping containers and cargo, and military equipment and assets.

Not all aspects of Akbari's life are remote, however. She frequently sends out afternoon email requests for her employees to take a walk with her in an effort to facilitate relationships and loyalty. She also occasionally brings in homemade lasagna and hosts ice cream socials for her employees.

Even with her laundry list of accolades, Akbari credits her achievements to her successful partnerships with her employees, shareholders and customers, a construction of which she endearingly calls "a thriving ecosystem."

– Hannah Hager



**30**

The age by which Dr. Homaira Akbari had published 50 scientific articles in numerous journals

**700+**

The number of public, private, military and public safety clients SkyBitz serves daily

**2007**

The year SkyBitz was listed among Deloitte's 50 fastest growing technology companies in Virginia (also in 2008)

**2008**

The year Frost & Sullivan awarded SkyBitz the Product Innovation Award in the North American regional fleet telematics market.

Source: SkyBitz