

## Woman Owned and Strong

*This article, written by Catie Dixon, appeared in the April 19, 2012 edition of Real Estate Bisnow.*

Being a woman-owned company in CRE is rare, but has its perks, according to Customized Real Estate Services CEO Connie Rankin. Connie founded her tenant rep company in 2001 and tells us big oil and gas firms like Chevron and Shell (both of which she's worked with) are great about working with small businesses and women-owned companies. She says that being certified as a woman-owned business can get you in the door, but she still has to show value to lock in clients. (Fun fact in honor of Earth Day: Connie was the first CEO of a certified woman-owned business in the U.S. to get LEED accreditation.)

Customized Real Estate Services is also the Houston affiliate of ITRA Global, which Connie loves because 20% of its firms are woman-owned, a huge percentage for the CRE world. She tells us the organization is hosting a big conference on September 12 in London (above, Connie's at its March conference in Pittsburgh).



The purpose: Teaching European companies how to expand their businesses into America. Connie has some experience with that, helping London-based Swift Global find its first US office seven years ago (2,000 SF). It's been steadily expanding since, and Connie just helped it ink a 14k SF lease here. Plus, Connie knows all about expansion: Her company has been named one of the fastest growing women-owned businesses in Houston for three years, most recently as the third-fastest.

Connie Rankin, LEED, AP, CPM, is President and CEO of Customized Real Estate Services, Inc. in Houston, TX. Connie may be contacted at 1.281.931.7775 or by email at [crankin@itraglobal.com](mailto:crankin@itraglobal.com).