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Allison Evanow: Changing the Spirits Business
One Cocktail at a Time

When Allison Evanow talks to bar chefs about Square One® Organic Vodka, a single grain ultra-premium certified organic vodka made from 100% organic American rye, it's not as sales rep to drink professional. It's as bartender to bartender. While Evanow was getting her MBA at Thunderbird's Garvin School of International Management, she worked on the business side of the bar and learned what it takes to please an ever-changing mix of first-time visitors and long-time regulars. And while her successful career in wine and spirits marketing may have taken her out from behind the bar, she still creates her own cocktail recipes at home.

Evanow knows the luxury beverage business from the ground up—literally. When she was marketing super-premium tequilas in North America for brand leader José Cuervo during the boom years of the 1990s, she led trade tours that began in the agave fields and ended in the distillery. When she was vice president of marketing at one of Napa Valley's best-known producers, sparkling winery Domaine Chandon, she regularly checked flavor nuances of the grapes with vineyard managers and tasted countless wines in barrel and bottle with the winemakers.

Today she's the founder and CEO of Square One® Organic Spirits, and determined to show how the luxury beverage category can bring a social conscience to having fun socially. Square One® Organic Vodka is a single grain vodka made from 100% organically grown American rye and produced with an exclusive proprietary certified organic fermentation process. The resulting spirit is richer and smoother than any vodka on the market—even as it proves that high-end products don't have to be made with lowest-common-denominator processes.

Evanow is quick to credit her investors, advisors and business partners with helping her get Square One® off the ground. Yet it's clear that she has given them the best kind of business challenge: to create a product that succeeds on all levels simultaneously. Evanow wants her new company to become the U.S. market leader in organic spirits, while also demonstrating the success of female ownership, the effectiveness of work-life balance for all employees, and the ability to donate a portion of after-tax profits to nonpartisan environmental causes.

These are challenging, high-minded goals, but sitting with Evanow over a glass of something is pure pleasure. With her warm personality, sharp wit and genuine interest

in others, she hardly comes off as the market-tested brand strategist and sophisticated business communicator that she unquestionably is. A drink with Allison Evanow turns out to be a lot like having your favorite bartender all to yourself for a happy half hour, before the evening rush begins.