

# SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

## Women Business Leaders

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## Real-Life Supporting Role

Montage Insurance Solutions Serves Businesses and Their Employees



Together We're Stronger. From left: Jeannene Searce, Susan Dubin, Danone Simpson, Maria Haas and Vanessa Martin.

**Long before she started in the insurance business, Danone Simpson** spent 10 years working for an oil company in Dallas – sort of. Actually, she was an actress on “Dallas,” the mega-popular ’80s TV series. Her character, Kendall Chapman, was the receptionist at Ewing Oil for J.R. and Bobby Ewing.

Being part of that series was a remarkable experience, but her lifelong passion was ignited by something that happened years earlier. At age 18 she was seriously injured in an accident, and her family did not have medical insurance. The difficulty she endured trying to get all the necessary care and treatment was clearly something she wanted to help others avoid.

Fast forward to the present day. Simpson is the CEO of Montage Insurance Solutions, a full-service insurance brokerage. “We offer the total package for the HR director or CFO who is looking to keep costs down on insurance,” she says. “Our focus is on managing wellness and safety for our clients. Since we broker more than 100 different carriers, we can always find the best program for accomplishing that.”

### Not Just Better, More Affordable

The intellectual capital on the Montage staff is substantial and extends from employee benefits and workers’ compensation to commercial property/liability, HR consulting, seminars, event planning and more. The agency regularly better its clients’ insurance policies, generating considerable savings in the process. Montage’s clients represent a wide range of industries, from

manufacturing to advertising agencies, including international church and missionary groups.

Simpson and her team are especially attentive to nonprofit organizations such as the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Los Angeles. “In the past I worked as a nonprofit fundraiser. Now I work as a fund *saver*, helping clients and their employees save on premium costs. This allows us to support their mission and programs.”

Her innovative team prides itself in being one step ahead of the competition, which has earned it recognition in the *Los Angeles Business Journal* as one of Los Angeles’ top 25 brokers.

Montage has earned numerous professional accolades in recent years, including Simpson’s Most Trusted Advisor award from the *San Fernando Valley Business Journal* in 2011. “That award is the most important to me,” she says, “because it’s really about our team and our clients. The relationships we’ve established with our clients and their employees are tremendous. We hold their hands – often literally – when they’re going through tough times, like the loss of a loved one, a battle with cancer or a child in the hospital. I tell my employees, ‘You’re not going to last here if you don’t have a big heart.’”

Simpson is obviously a person who loves her job. “I work with some awesome people,” she says. “There are so many different and interesting things to do here that I never get bored.” She’s even working on an Executive MBA at Pepperdine to help her better serve and advocate for her clients. “I’m having more fun now than when I was working on ‘Dallas,’” she says.

Sounds like the former actress has landed the role of a lifetime.



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