



SOCIETY

# Latina STEM leaders spotlight: Meet software trailblazer Rosalba Reynoso

In the first installment of our new series profiling Latinas taking the lead in the STEM sector, LABS talks with Rosalba Reynoso, the co-founder and CEO of Blue Trail Software. Her story is as unconventional as it is inspiring. And her commitment to empowering her global workforce – and training and mentoring more women for STEM careers – shows tremendous results.

**COLLECTION** LATINA STEM LEADERS' SPOTLIGHT

Women pioneering the world of technology in LatAm

[Read all articles](#)**LAUREN SIMONDS**

31.DEC.2021 09:11 BRT

UPDATED 14.JAN.2022 16:00 BRT

[Ler em português](#)[Leer en español](#)**W**

omen in leadership roles in Latin America face many challenges — that's also true in the U.S. It's just one reason why we continue to spotlight the stories of Latinas taking on those challenges and succeeding.

Even though women make up almost half of the U.S. workforce, they account for only about 27% of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) professionals and workers, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And despite Hispanic or Latina women making up almost 7% of the workforce, they represent just under 2% of all STEM workers nationwide.

The journey to leadership, especially in STEM, is often as varied as the women who take it, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a path as unusual as the one that led **Rosalba Reynoso** to become the co-founder and CEO of



Rosalba Reynoso, CEO and co-founder of Blue Trail Software. Photo: Courtesy.

---

A software development company headquartered in San Francisco, Calif., Blue Trail launched in 2014. The company maintains offices and a total of 178 employees across **Argentina**, Bolivia, **Mexico**, Peru, Spain, Uruguay, and the U.S.

Reynoso's leadership style — one that emphasizes providing opportunities and empowers employees to succeed — is a direct reflection of her early-life experiences. She grew up in rural **Mexico**, one of eight daughters of a conservative father and the only one in her family to attend nine years of school.

### **READ ALSO: Google teams up with IDB to accelerate women-led startups in Latin America and the Caribbean**

After emigrating to the U.S. at the age of 18 as a young wife and mother who spoke little English, Reynoso looked for work to support her family during the winter months when construction — her husband's line of work — dried up.

She found work cleaning houses by walking through high-end neighborhoods in San Francisco and knocking on doors. Reynoso credits her first client for taking a chance, and then recognizing her ability and empowering her to succeed.

“She had a hard time explaining what she wanted me to do in the house. So, she offered to teach me English,” said Reynoso. “Every Tuesday morning, she'd make coffee and spend an hour teaching me the basics like vacuum, empty the dishwasher, clean the oven — whatever I needed to make my job easier.”

Her business began growing through word-of-mouth, as clients kept referring her to their friends. Reynoso tapped her own network of women friends, who were also trying to support their families, to help with her growing client roster.

Reynoso. “After that, I gave them a client per day and helped them create their own businesses.”

“I said yes to any opportunity,” said Reynoso. “The other women in my company were single moms or in a situation similar to mine, and the business brought in good money for us all.”

## The transition to launching Blue Trail

Reynoso bootstrapped a successful service-industry business. But how did she pivot to become the CEO of a software development company — without a fancy degree or a lick of tech experience?

Enter **Remi Vespa**, the CEO of a struggling software company, whom Reynosa met, and eventually married, five years after her divorce. In 2009, Reynoso lost her home in the real-estate crash during the Great Recession. With both of them facing serious financial challenges, the two decided to live together.

One evening Vespa invited his main clients to dinner to discuss the business. Determined to learn everything about her future husband’s work, Reynoso made sure she was at the table.



I learned about QA engineers, about front-end and back-end developing – the whole system. I also learned that to be an outstanding software developer doesn’t require a computer science degree. Their history and the kinds of clients they’ve worked with is what matters most.”

**ROSALBA REYNOSO, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO AT BLUE TRAIL SOFTWARE.**

A self-described big dreamer, Reynoso believed that she could take what she learned from building her housekeeping business and apply it to software development on a larger scale.

Reynoso and Vespa decided to run the company together, and they co-founded Blue Trail Software in 2014. She spent the first five years focused on building teams in **Latin America** and attracting and retaining talent. He focused on building the company’s vision, business and finances.

“Initially, my role was more that of a COO. I focused on the employees and our management strategy,” said Reynoso. “The time I spent with our people helped me refine our company vision, and the eventual transition to CEO evolved naturally.”

That may be true, but it doesn’t mean that assuming a leadership role in the company was easy — or accepted by



Imagine a housekeeper becoming a tech CEO. It was hard, but once they saw me in action, it didn't take long to convince them that I could lead the company."

**ROSALBA REYNOSO, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO AT BLUE TRAIL SOFTWARE.**

## Employees come first and foremost

Blue Trail's founding philosophy is as basic as it is radical: the wellbeing of its employees is more important than profit. The premise of that guiding principle is that employees who are trained, mentored, paid fairly and have a voice in the company will be happier and perform better. Better performance increases client satisfaction and that drives revenue.

It's the exact same philosophy Reynoso applied in her housekeeping business for 25 years.

"The secret is to listen to your employees and to make sure that they're doing well. I ask them how we can change, or how we can improve," said Reynoso. "I want the best company, not the biggest. I don't want numbers; I want faces. I don't want a software company; I want a software family."

### **READ ALSO: A third of the 15 newest best-funded fintechs founded by women are in LatAm**

An example of this philosophy working in real life is Blue Trail's *Constitution*. Currently a pilot program in **Mexico** this document outlines, among other things, a process whereby employees elect members of an advisory board called the Titans — inspired by King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table.

"At times the Titans will act as my conscience, at other times as my advisors," said Reynoso. "They will become the executive team charged with making sure everything in the company runs well, and that everybody is treated fairly. If anyone on the management team, myself included, does something wrong, the Titans can identify the problem so we can fix it."

## Creating an opportunity pipeline through geography and paid internships

One of the first strategic bets that Blue Trail placed involved locating its offices in smaller cities throughout **Latin America** — away from the traditional, bigger business hubs. Reynosa believes it makes more sense for companies to locate in small cities that have quality talent but with fewer opportunities.

Latin American families are close-knit but, too often, experienced professionals either relocate to big cities to make more money or take lower-paying jobs outside of their profession so they can stay close to home.

profession, stay with their families and enjoy a better quality of life. The only tool they need is the internet. Especially now with COVID, everyone can work from home."

internship program to provide opportunities and train people who might not otherwise have a shot at getting a job in tech.

The interns receive a full salary that allows them to focus on learning without worrying about paying rent or buying diapers, said Reynoso.

“We produce our own junior developers through the internship program, and we match every junior employee with a company mentor,” said Reynoso. “We provide English teachers, and everybody — me included — must take the classes. Everybody in the company is willing to help, and their enthusiasm for empowering people and changing lives is contagious.”

### **READ ALSO: Brazilian Theia launches app focused on women’s health**

Since implementing the internship program, Blue Trail has trained and mentored seven cohorts. The strategy has paid off in terms of talent retention compared to the typical **churn rate** for developers that ranges between one and three years.

“I am very proud that we have employees who have been with us for more than eight years,” said Reynoso. “We provide a flexible work environment, encourage open communication, and we check salaries every three months to make sure that they’re competitive.”

Again, this strategic leadership is tied to Reynoso’s life experience and commitment to empowering all of her employees. It reflects her passion for creating more opportunities for women in tech.



**We almost never say no to female applicants, because they have not had the same level of support as men. But we can enhance their potential through on-the-job training and mentoring, and it’s an investment that generates big returns.”**

**ROSALBA REYNOSO, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO AT BLUE TRAIL SOFTWARE.**

Examples of women succeeding through Blue Trail’s internship program include an employee who started at the company as a secretarial assistant and became the general manager of the three Blue Trail offices in **Argentina** within five years. Another woman in the Buenos Aires office trained for two years to become a QA engineer. She has her sights set on becoming a project manager.

A third woman — with a college degree in special education — could not find a job in her field. She entered the internship program to become a UX/UI designer. She’s been with the company for eight years and currently leads roles across the company.

- Board members: 40%

- EXECUTIVES: 44%
- Senior employees: 23%
- Semi-senior employees: 12%
- Junior employees (including interns): 47%

Reynoso refers to Blue Trail as her “dream maker.” It’s her vehicle to create opportunities that empower and improve the quality of life for all of her employees. It’s also her way to show women what’s possible.

“Don’t limit yourself from pursuing tech — or any other field — simply because you lack experience. No matter where you come from, you can reach your goal if you work on it.”

#### KEYWORDS

Argentina, Latin America, Mexico, Technology

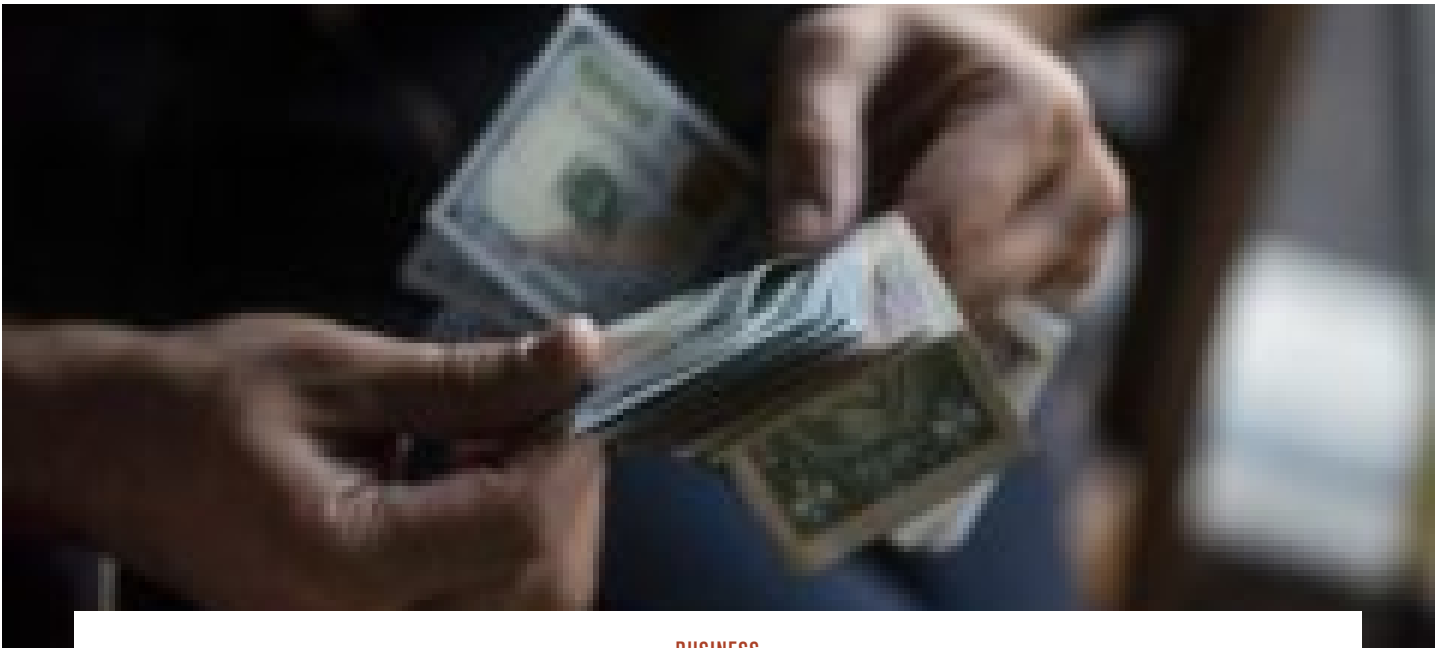


**LAUREN SIMONDS** • U.S. Correspondent for Latin American Business Stories, Simonds is a writer and editor with more than two decades of experience reporting about small business, technology, higher education, and the cannabis industry.



#### BUSINESS

**Brazil’s Lemann, Fellow Billionaires Worth \$123 Billion Buy Stake In Kushner’s Thrive**



**BUSINESS**

**RELATED**

**Colombian Startup KLYM Raises \$27M, Targets Latin America Expansion**

**South Korea's Innospace to launch rocket from Brazil in December**

**Brazil-based developers recruiter Revelo buys two startups in similar fields in Mexico**

**Spotify forms a council to deal with harmful content; Latin American expert is part of it**

**Tencent hires former Garena executive to lead gaming operations in Brazil**

**Blockchain as means to 'democratize' physical art and demystify NFTs: This is Alpha'a Inc's new business**

**COLLECTIONS**

**Beyond  
Borders  
2022/2023**

ALTERNATIVE PAYMENT METHODS TAKE LATIN AMERICA  
AND AFRICA BY STORM

**Beyond  
Borders - Brazil  
Chapter**

LATIN AMERICA WELCOMES THE INSTANT ERA

## Economy

CURRENCIES, CONSUMPTION, ARISING SECTORS & AGREEMENTS

## Business

LATIN AMERICA, A MARKET FULL OF OPPORTUNITIES

## Technology

FROM DATA ANALYSIS TO LATEST NEWS

---

## KEYWORDS

---

## Brazil

BRAZIL NEWS

## Payments

MOBILE PAYMENTS

## Ecommerce



LABS - Latin America Business Stories is a trilingual (English, Brazilian Portuguese, and Spanish) news and analysis outlet dedicated to putting Latin America into the limelight, giving it visibility as a land of business opportunities and creative innovative wealth. Born inside EBANX, the Brazilian global fintech that processes payments for international companies in nine Latin American countries, LABS has an editorial focus on business, economy, technology, and society.

Powered by

[Privacy policy](#)

**BUSINESS**

**ECONOMY**

**TECHNOLOGY**

**SOCIETY**

**ABOUT**

**LABS TEAM**

**CONTACT US**

**NEWSLETTERS**

 [EN](#) | [PT-BR](#) | [ES](#)

The content published in LABS is merely informative. EBANX Group does not provide commercial consultancy nor is responsible for measures that may be adopted by third parties due to the use of the published content. Content generated by third parties in LABS does not represent the opinion of EBANX Group, whose responsibility lies with the author of the message.