



## Christina Russell

Executive MBA alumna Christina Russell attributes the College of Business' program to her successful promotion to director of operations for Curves International, Inc., the largest fitness franchise in the world. In her role, she develops operations strategy and oversees roughly 6,500 franchisees in the United States and Canada.

"The Executive MBA program was absolutely critical in helping me make the leap up the corporate ladder," she said. "I started out as the owner of four franchises. While I did have the management skills needed to run my small businesses, I needed to build my confidence for a higher level corporate position. The program helped me improve my business skills and enhanced my strategic abilities. It also helped me gain the respect of Curves International's CEO, who

was impressed with my initiative to return to school to earn an Executive MBA," Russell explained.

Russell was on USF's winning team in the Florida Intercollegiate Case Competition in 2009, a competition where students are given 24 hours to solve a real-life business case. She chose USF because it had a highly regarded Executive MBA program.

"I wanted a program where I could take classes with people like me, who had some management and business experience under their belt. The College of Business' Executive MBA program offered that," Russell said. "I also liked that the program is completed in a cohort. Our class had a diverse group of individuals of all ages and backgrounds, including bankers, engineers, sales people, HR specialists, and even a brain surgeon. The business perspective I gained from both my classmates and professors was outstanding. The Executive MBA program has been instrumental in my career."