

Boston

MAGAZINE

The 100 Most Influential People in Boston

Who really runs this town? These days, influence is found all over.

4/24/2018, 5:45 a.m.



Edited by David S. Bernstein

Who really runs this town? That's the question we asked ourselves—and dozens of insiders—when we sat down to put this delightfully subjective list together. We weren't looking for the richest people in Boston, or even the smartest. Instead, we sought out the businesspeople, tech moguls, politicians, and tastemakers that the rest of us are all watching, the folks who are truly shaping the city. That kind of power—that sticky idea of influence—has always been a hard thing to measure, but these days it's more decentralized,

diversified, and democratized than ever. Flagship institutions such as GE, Harvard, UMass, State Street, and the Boston Foundation have or are welcoming new leadership. The region's well-established top industries are suddenly joined by casino gaming, fantasy sports, and marijuana. Gone are the days when a small cadre of city elites gathered to decide Boston's destiny. Influence is sprinkled all over, which means there's bound to be some spirited debate about who wields the most, or who was left off the list. And that's perfectly fine with us.



Photograph by Toan Trinh

— 8 —

Bob Rivers
Chairman and CEO, Eastern Bank

By Colette Phillips (#74 on the list)

As an advocate for a more-inclusive local business community, I can say that Bob Rivers is my hero, the moral authority of corporate Boston in 2018. He is a disruptor—but he is a constructive disruptor. He's also a diversity game-changer, an ally to women, people of color, and LGBTQ people. He has the courage to push against the grain, the conviction to stand up for making a difference in people's lives, and the commitment to go out and ask those who think like him to join him.

Among his many efforts, Bob engages corporate Boston to make a commitment to spend dollars with minority-owned firms. He moved the governing body of Eastern Bank from 92 percent white men to 50 percent people of color and women. When he realized he was going to become chairman and CEO in 2017, he went out and recruited an African-American man, Quincy Miller, to become his successor. That speaks volumes. His chief marketing officer is a person of color. His executive VP for human resources, Nancy Stager, is a woman. The person who runs Eastern Bank insurance, Hope Aldrich, is a woman. Bob recognized that this is the smart thing to do and is positioning the bank to grow. Eastern Bank had record net revenues in 2017, with \$11 billion in assets. He has seen the future of Boston, and it is diverse.

Colette Phillips is the president and CEO of Colette Phillips Communications.