



# THE FRANKLIN REPORT

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## SPECIAL REPORT SMALL BUSINESS

### TELLING TALES

By LISA GOFF

## A vendor guide worth writing home about

**W**HAT HAPPENS TO THE FIRST woman ever to make partner at investment bank James D. Wolfensohn Inc. after she leaves to spend more time with her kids? Five years later, she publishes a consumer guide that flies off the shelves; then she debuts an on-line home services empire that Martha Stewart must be cursing herself for not having thought of first.

*The Franklin Report: New York City 2001, The Insider's Guide to Home Service Providers* is Elizabeth Franklin's 400-page critique of the best, the worst and the everything-in-between of the most exclusive vendors in 27 home service industries. From architects to window washers, the *Report* dishes the dirt and passes out the praise.

Ms. Franklin had hoped to sell 5,000 copies of the \$22.50 paperback in its first year. Buoyed by Christmas sales, she sold 7,500 copies in six weeks. She also planned to target 35 real estate firms for corporate giftgiving this year; several have already found her, ordering hundreds of copies. Later this year, **The Franklin Report** will expand to Chicago and Atlanta, and it is slated to debut in five more metro areas next year.

*The Franklin Report* grew out of Ms. Franklin's frustrating encounters with home contractors. She and her eight researchers interviewed hundreds of New Yorkers, who ranked vendors on a scale of 1 to 5 for quality, cost and value.

Ms. Franklin recently launched a Web site featuring portfolios from 40 companies rated in her book. She plans to begin featuring home services classified ads later this month.

Ultimately, she hopes to make [www.franklinreport.com](http://www.franklinreport.com) a fullfledged marketplace.