SANDRA GLUCKSMANN
Senior Vice President of Research and Business Operation
Cerulean Pharma Inc.

Sandra Glucksmann wears plenty of hats: She’s a mother, a wife, and a senior vice president at a local biotech, a role that has multiple subordinate jobs, such as overseeing finance, human resources and strategy.

The fact that she’s succeeding at all these various tasks is her greatest accomplishment, she said. “I’ve been happily married for 26 years, I’ve got two great kids, and a profession.” The secret: “Learning how to prioritize things,” Glucksman, 50, said. You can have it all, she claims, but don’t think it can all be had at once.

Glucksmann is Senior Vice President of Research and Business Operations at Cerulean Pharma Inc., a Cambridge-based biopharmaceutical company founded in 2006. Prior to that, she worked 13 years at Millennium Pharmaceuticals Inc., holding a variety of posts, including that of vice president of all platform technology groups. As one of its first scientists, she helped the company evolve from being a genomics-research firm to becoming a fully integrated pharmaceuticals company. Her division played a key role in collaborations with large pharmaceuticals.

Originally from Argentina, she said that her hero was her own mother. Her mother had aspired to be a chemist, but regrettably never took a degree in it or practiced it. It was different with Glucksmann. “I was very supported by my parents,” she said. “I never felt any limitation to what I could accomplish.”

Her career choice sprang from her personality. “My love of nature and the outside and the impact we had on it led me to be very interested in science. And I always wanted to help people. Basic science is a way to contribute to mankind.” In the same vein as her love of nature, her favorite hobby is gardening. “It’s menial work, but doing it creates something beautiful.”

She does try act as a role model for other women. Glucksmann, for example, is chair of the board for Women Entrepreneurs in Science and Technology.

“As a senior woman in your profession, you realize people are watching you.” And she has a piece of advice for other women looking to rise in the field: Create a network. “Women don’t do as well as men in creating a strong network. Reach out to others.”
Her effect is clear in her current company. “Sandra is an invaluable leader at Cerulean, whom I admire immensely,” said Cissy Young, director of strategy and business development at the company.

And feelings of loyalty aren’t just inspired by her female colleagues. “I worked for Sandra previously, when we were both at Millennium, and the fact that I would work for her again speaks to my great respect and admiration for her as a boss, mentor and colleague,” said Scott Eliasof, senior director of research at Cerulean. “She cares deeply about the success of each of her employees and strives continually to ensure everyone’s personal development and that everyone is pushing themselves as hard as they can.”