

# CRAIN'S

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**T**HE 18 WOMEN AND 22 MEN on our list of rising New York business stars are making their mark tackling problems big and small. Teaching marketable skills to young people in troubled neighborhoods, easing student debt, making medications more affordable and cutting carbon emissions are just some of the ways they are improving the lives of New Yorkers. To achieve their mission, some launched startups—there are 15 founders in this year's class—while others are working within established systems, if not leading them. Together they present a portrait of a thriving, diverse economy and point to a bright future for the city.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BUCK ENNIS**



## Aneliya S. Crawford

*Partner, Global Shareholder Activism Group*  
**Schulte Roth & Zabel**

**A**neliya S. Crawford just came off a victory in the largest proxy battle in Wall Street history. She represented activist hedge fund Trian Partners against consumer-products giant Procter & Gamble and managed to bend the \$222 billion behemoth to her client's will. Namely, a seat on P&G's board of directors was being sought for Trian founder Nelson Peltz. He had openly blamed P&G's management bureaucracy for the company's languishing stock price.

"At its core, shareholder activism is a fight, and I'm a fighter," Crawford said. "It's a contest: Whose strategy is superior?"

Crawford has been involved in some 200 shareholder-activist campaigns. Corporate boards have become complacent, she said, which "creates an insular culture that doesn't allow for new ideas."

She developed an early distaste for insular bureaucracies while growing up in 1980s Bulgaria. "It was Communist times," she recalled. "Everything was very hierarchical." Crawford studied English and business, and when the country started opening to the West in the early 1990s, she jumped at the opportunity to leave.

After a few years of odd jobs in New York—at a Bulgarian newspaper and a French bank—she applied to law school and never looked back.

"Aneliya didn't follow the conventional path. She wanted more," said Ele Klein, co-chair of the Global Shareholder Activism Group at Schulte Roth & Zabel. "She doesn't care what the conservative, accepted orthodoxy is. Her approach is, 'So what do we have to do to get this done?'"