Barbara Cassani

Barbara Cassani is an American business woman who created British Airways' no-frills Go airline. From an initial investment of £25m she steered Go through a £110m management buyout (backed by 3i) and remained as CEO until the sale to easyJet for £374m five years later.

A former Veuve Clicquot Businesswoman of the Year, Cassani started out as a management consultant with what was then Coopers & Lybrand working in both Washington and London. She moved to BA and held a variety of strategic, sales, customer service and marketing roles on both sides of the Atlantic. She also served as General Manager in North America, responsible for the alliance with US Airways and a joint venture with American Airlines.

After leaving the airline business Cassani founded and led London's 2012 Olympic bid, before handing over to Lord Coe. She then became chair of the Legacy for London Advisory Group, helping to secure a lasting benefit from the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Cassani has a range of business interests in the travel and leisure sectors. At Jurys Inn, where she was appointed Chairman, she oversaw a group of thirty city-centre hotels in the UK, Ireland and the Czech Republic; and as a director at Air Berlin, she oversaw activities within Germany's second largest airline.