

PROTECT AND SERVE
Clarkson at her shop on
Newbury Street in Boston



The Skin-Care Expert

Cheryl Clarkson, 54, WELLESLEY HILLS, MASS.

Photograph by Alyson Aliano

EVEN BEFORE she started her current venture, Cheryl Clarkson was no stranger to the health-care industry. She had worked her way up to director of sales for divisions whose revenues totaled \$1.4 billion at medical-supply giant Baxter, and later became COO and interim CEO at Abiodent, a maker of dental devices. Along the way, she earned an MS in business from MIT's Sloan School. Then, about ten years ago, Clarkson's focus shifted: Her only sister died of skin cancer at age 40. "I spent a lot of time flying back and forth to L.A., where she lived, but there was nothing anyone could do for her," she recalls. "After that, I lost interest in doing anything other than trying to help stop this terrible disease." By attending dermatology conferences and talking

to experts, Clarkson turned herself into an authority on prevention and developed a line of skin-care products formulated to block potentially deadly UVA rays. (Many popular SPF sunscreens don't.) Her company, SkinHealth (www.skinhealthcenters.com), started in 1999, sells its wares online, through 18 Boston-area dermatologists' offices, and at four SkinHealth Centers, where clients can also get skin treatments. With 12 employees running day-to-day operations, Clarkson spends much of her time going to conferences and trade shows, meeting physicians, and talking to customers. "I'm still putting in 60-hour weeks," says Clarkson, who donates a portion of sales to fund melanoma research at Massachusetts General. "But this doesn't feel like work." —Anne Fisher