Influential Women Features Jen Elena Romano: Connects Business Growth With Social Impact Through Innovation And Purpose

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A Two-Time Founder and Award-Winning Strategist, Jen Elena Romano is Creating New Pathways to Career Opportunity, Equity, and Meaningful Change



San Jose, California – Jen Elena Romano has built her career around a question that continues to shape her work as an entrepreneur, strategist, and advocate: how can business and technology be used to create greater opportunity for people who have historically had less access to it?

A two-time founder, former chief marketing officer, keynote speaker, and award-winning strategist, Romano has spent more than two decades working at the intersection of business growth and social impact. As a first-generation Latina entrepreneur based in San Jose, California, she has helped organizations including Google, Wells Fargo, JPMorgan Chase, and Crisis Text Line develop initiatives focused on expanding access, strengthening communities, and addressing disparities in wealth and health outcomes.

Her approach combines data-driven strategy with authentic storytelling, allowing her to work across business, technology, education, and social impact while keeping people at the center of the conversation. For Romano, meaningful results are not simply about growth. They are about creating opportunities, understanding the people behind the numbers, and developing solutions that can improve outcomes for underserved communities.

That philosophy has become particularly visible through her entrepreneurial work. In 2024, Romano founded Cura, an AI-powered career readiness and workforce development platform created to help bridge the gap between education and employment.

Creating More Accessible Pathways Into The Workforce

Romano recognized that many early-career professionals enter the workforce without access to the networks, guidance, and practical preparation that can make a meaningful difference in their careers. First-generation and underrepresented talent can face additional barriers when navigating professional environments, often without the benefit of family networks or established pathways into opportunity.

Cura was created in response to that gap.

The platform provides accessible career resources and professional development while establishing partnerships with employers. Its goal is to help emerging professionals develop confidence and career skills while also helping organizations identify and develop talent that might otherwise remain overlooked.

The need for that kind of connection is becoming increasingly relevant as workplaces evolve alongside artificial intelligence. Romano sees technology as both a significant opportunity and a responsibility. She believes AI has the potential to improve lives and change outcomes, particularly when it is intentionally applied to social impact challenges.

At the same time, she recognizes the risks that accompany the technology. AI systems are trained on existing information, including information that can contain bias. Without thoughtful guardrails and responsible development, technology can potentially reinforce or expand existing gaps rather than close them.

For Romano, this creates an important responsibility for entrepreneurs.

She believes there is a significant opportunity to leverage AI in ways that benefit people, but that doing so requires entrepreneurs to take control of how these systems are developed and used. Ethical considerations, she argues, must remain part of the process rather than becoming an afterthought.

A Career Shaped By Perseverance And Curiosity

Romano attributes much of her success to her immigrant parents, as well as patience, perseverance, grit, and resilience. Watching her parents navigate their own journey taught her the value of endurance, the necessity of hard work, and the importance of remaining grounded when facing obstacles.

Those lessons became a foundational blueprint for her own career.

Yet Romano's professional philosophy is not centered solely on persistence. She also emphasizes curiosity and humility, particularly when it comes to relationships.

The best career advice she has received, she says, is to be interested rather than interesting.

For Romano, that means remaining genuinely curious about everyone. She believes people can learn from individuals at every level of an organization and in every role, rather than assuming that the person with the largest title necessarily has the most valuable insight.

Her own career offers a memorable example.

When Romano was in her twenties, she cold-called Wells Fargo in an effort to secure a meeting. Rather than focusing only on reaching the executive she wanted to speak with, she took the time to build a relationship with his assistant. During the conversation, she learned that the assistant was from El Salvador, as Romano's family also was. She used that connection naturally, promising to bring pupusas if she could get a meeting.

Her persistence ultimately led to the meeting, and the relationship continued well beyond that initial interaction.

The experience reinforced something Romano continues to emphasize: professional opportunities are often created through genuine human relationships rather than through rigid formulas.

She believes people sometimes develop an artificial idea of how professional success is supposed to work based on school, movies, or polished portrayals of business. In reality, she says, navigating a career is fundamentally about people. It is about being open enough and curious enough to talk to everyone.

Encouraging Young Women To Define What They Want To Solve
Romano carries that perspective into her advice for young women entering the workforce.

Rather than becoming overly focused on statistics, trends, or the jobs currently considered desirable, she encourages young women to spend more time engaging in critical thinking and deep reflection about what they actually want to do.

That includes understanding their strengths and their story.

Romano believes the future of work will increasingly favor people who can be unapologetically themselves and who have the confidence and agency to pursue a problem or mission that genuinely matters to them.

For her, the more important question is not simply, "What job should I get?" but "What do I want

to solve for in my career?”

Having something meaningful to solve for can provide direction even when the job itself is imperfect. The salary may not always be ideal, and the position may not represent a perfect fit, but a meaningful mission can provide the motivation to continue learning, gathering information, and finding new pathways forward.

Romano believes this perspective is especially important at a time when traditional institutions may not have all the answers about what the future of work will look like. Parents and universities cannot always identify the right path for every young person, particularly as technology and the labor market continue to change.

That places greater responsibility on individuals to understand what motivates them and what they want to pursue.

Romano believes young women who identify a meaningful problem or mission can discover new ways to monetize their skills and create sustainable careers around that purpose.

Turning Noise Into Meaningful Action
Another challenge Romano identifies in today’s professional environment is the sheer volume of noise.

With so many messages, trends, platforms, and competing voices, she believes it can become difficult to distinguish meaningful ideas from those that simply receive the most attention. In some cases, whoever is loudest or spends the most on digital advertising can receive the most credit.

Romano sees cutting through that noise as an important part of modern leadership.

At the same time, she sees enormous opportunity. Technology has created more pathways than ever to address challenges and potentially improve people’s lives.

AI, in particular, represents a major opportunity for social impact.

Romano hopes more entrepreneurs and organizations will explore ways to use AI to address disparities and create better outcomes for communities. She also believes responsible innovation requires people to acknowledge the risks, including the possibility that existing inequalities could become embedded in emerging technologies.

Her position is that entrepreneurs have an important role to play in establishing ethical practices and guardrails that can help ensure technology contributes to closing gaps rather than widening them.

Leading With Humility And Recognizing Strengths

Humility is one of the values Romano considers most important in both her professional and personal life.

However, she defines humility differently from the traditional idea of simply being quiet or staying in the background. For Romano, humility means recognizing that everyone has strengths and weaknesses.

She believes every person has approximately five things they are particularly good at and five things they are not. Rather than becoming consumed by weaknesses, she encourages people to understand and develop their strengths.

Those strengths, she says, are often intrinsic. They can be traced back to who someone was as a child and the interests and abilities that naturally emerged early in life.

Finding those strengths can help people remain motivated because working in alignment with who they are is fundamentally different from constantly working against the grain.

This philosophy also shapes how Romano thinks about teams.

Instead of expecting every individual to excel at everything, she believes humility allows people to recognize where others have complementary abilities. That creates the foundation for teams in which different strengths can work together around a shared mission.

Romano sees these smaller, highly complementary groups as an important part of the future of work: people with very different skill sets collaborating around a common purpose.

Investing In Education And The Next Generation

Romano's commitment to opportunity extends beyond entrepreneurship and into education.

She serves on the board of Sacred Heart Nativity School in San Jose, supporting students from low-income communities throughout their educational journeys and into college. Her involvement reflects the same belief that informs her broader work: access to the right resources, guidance, and relationships can fundamentally influence the opportunities available to individuals.

As a first-generation professional herself, Romano understands the importance of having pathways that make professional and educational opportunities more accessible.

Her work as a mentor, advisor, speaker, board member, and entrepreneur continues to reflect that perspective.

Romano holds a Bachelor of Science in English from James Madison University and a Master of

Science from Marymount University. She is also a graduate of the Stanford Latino Entrepreneurship Program and is associated with organizations including the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the Santa Clara Bronco Accelerator Program, and Sacred Heart Nativity Middle School.

Across each chapter of her career, Romano has remained focused on the relationship between opportunity and action. Whether she is developing an AI-powered platform, advising organizations, speaking to emerging leaders, or supporting students, her work centers on helping people recognize possibilities and pursue meaningful solutions.

For Romano, the future is not simply about adapting to change. It is about understanding what problems are worth solving, identifying the strengths people already possess, and using relationships, technology, and entrepreneurship to create new possibilities.

That combination of purpose and practical action continues to define her work—and her vision for a future in which innovation can become a pathway to greater opportunity and social impact.

Learn More about Jen Elena Romano:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/jen-romano or through Cura, https://cura.us/

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