Cynthia Carroll

Company: Anglo American PLC  
Position: CEO  
Global 500 Rank: 344

With a master’s degree in geology from the University of Kansas and an MBA from Harvard Business School, Cynthia Carroll has been able to put her education to good use as CEO of Anglo American, a London-based mining company.

Starting as an oil geologist at Amoco, Carroll eventually moved to Alcan in 1988. By 2002, she became president and CEO of Alcan's primary metals group.

In 2007, Carroll became the first female -- and first person from outside the company -- to head Anglo American. Recently, she's shifted the company's focus to diamonds, platinum, and copper, doubling their operating profits from the previous year to $9.8 billion in 2010.