



## Kusum Kavia

Co-founder & President | Combustion Associates Inc. (CAI)

Born in Kenya and educated in the United Kingdom, Ms. Kusum Kavia is the entrepreneurial spirit behind CAI's success. A dynamic leader, she has been instrumental in building the company from a humble start-up to a model woman-owned, manufacturing business with a stellar reputation. Over the Company's 30+ years' history, Ms. Kavia, and company co-founder Mukund Kavia, have significantly expanded CAI's exports delivering much needed power generation systems and engineering services to major countries including the Sub Saharan Africa region and Asia.

Ms. Kavia leads strategic business development at CAI. Under her guidance, CAI's exports have increased significantly to now account for more than 40 percent of the company's sales. U.S. President Barack Obama himself singled-out Ms. Kavia's and CAI's export contribution to Africa at the U.S.-Africa Business Leaders Summit in 2014. [President Obama's Speech](#). CAI continues to grow even during these challenging times. This month, Ms. Kavia was awarded 2020 Exporter of the Year Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration – Orange County-Inland Empire Region.

### Community Service

Ms. Kavia has dedicated her attention to serving the community and the country as a whole. She has provided apprenticeship through community outreach programs for local college and university students to learn and gain practical engineering and manufacturing experience.

Through the Inland Empire District Export Council, Ms. Kavia provides mentorship to other small businesses who are seeking to export their goods or services. She is dedicated to helping businesses grow and expand their market.

Ms. Kavia is also an active member of the Manufacturer's Council of the Inland Empire – a group dedicated to bring resources to other manufacturers and supply chain in Southern

California. by providing guidance, through experience, in doing businesses internationally and exporting U.S based products.

She just finished a two year term being a member of the U.S. Export Import Bank Sub-Saharan Africa Committee providing guidance on what small businesses need in terms of access to capital, financial programs and risk mitigation products to help them grow and export their goods and services.

Kusum is an active member of Governor Newsom's Entrepreneurship Task Force for the State of California. The Task Force is a historic initiative serving as a bridge between the State of California and the entrepreneurial community, will launch a series of listening sessions throughout the state to better connect government and entrepreneurs.

Issues tackled by the Task Force will include: retaining and advancing California's global competitive edge and leadership, addressing barriers to accessing capital, helping open markets, providing resources and enabling strong networks, and tackling marketplace challenges such as promoting a skilled, globally competitive workforce.