



CENTRAL Upstate Mfg.

WINTER / SPRING 2016

Leadership

3 CNY women who are taking a strong position in manufacturing.

COMPANY PROFILE

The Fulton Companies

Pulaski, NY is headquarters for an American multinational.

Diversity Pays

Banish unintentional bias to achieve a competitive edge.

Advocacy Update

Resource Guide



The Women-in-Manufacturing **ROUNDTABLE**

An off-the-cuff discussion about the benefits and challenges facing women in manufacturing, and what can be done to attract more women to the field.

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Utilizing the Potential of Women in Manufacturing

Smart organizations know that to succeed tomorrow, they need to develop the right talent today. Many of our member organizations are struggling to attract the talent and skills necessary to be successful. Many of them realize that maintaining their competitive advantage will depend on building a bigger pool of top female talent.

In my own experience, I have noticed that women offer an important and uniquely different approach to life and leadership. At home, I have had the privilege of living with four women. My wife, Denise, is a pediatrician running a small medical practice. I also have three daughters,

two of whom have chosen to seek careers in manufacturing. One is an industrial designer who recently went to work for a U.S. consumer products company and the other is a mechanical engineer. At work I interface with a balanced-gender staff. Our female team members are integral to our success. Their approaches to work and leadership are somewhat different than mine and it has been both instructive and rewarding to be in such company.

I have noticed, to speak in generalities, that women tend to emphasize certain values as they work and lead. Compared to men, they seem to multitask better; be more ready to nurture relationships; seek to be inclusive; and more often maintain a long-term view. All of these are valuable attributes that we utilize here at MACNY. My observations seem consistent with what research is showing us about gender differences – and the opportunities they present.

Since the 1950s, hundreds of studies have confirmed that there are small, noticeable differences in leadership style between male and female managers. In a 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article, Harvard University professor Boris Groysberg compared definitions of personal and professional “success” by gender, based on interviews with almost 4,000 executives worldwide. He found that, relative to men, women attributed more meaning to individual achievement (46% vs. 24%, respectively); obtained more respect from others (25% vs. 7%); had more passion for work activities (21% vs. 5%); and made more of a difference (33% vs. 21%).

Research by Professor Alice Eagly at Northwestern University supports the observation that, on average, female leaders are more participative, collaborative, transformational, democratic, and use fewer transactional, authoritative, and “command-control” styles. Furthermore, a 2014 Gallup study found that, on average,

employees who work for a female manager are more engaged than those who work for a male manager. Women who reported to female managers had the highest level of engagement, at 35%; men who reported to other men reported the lowest, at 25%.

There is Still More Work to be Done

Countless books and articles have been written on what makes a great leader. Today, the role of gender in leadership may be under even heavier scrutiny. Even though more women are entering the workforce and advancing up the organizational ladder, they are still under-represented as leaders.

A 2014 Harvard Business School survey of MBA graduates found, for instance, that women were significantly less likely than men to have direct reports, to hold positions in senior management, and to have opportunities for career growth and professional development.

For example, according to a CNNMoney analysis, only 14.2% of the top five leadership positions at the companies in the S&P 500 are held by women. It’s even worse if you just consider the very top. Out of 500 companies, there are only 24 female CEOs. Simply put, the people in positions of power don’t match the world we live in. By most accounts, we do not have enough female leaders in our organizations and at the top of our manufacturers and businesses.

Another area where we need to increase women’s participation is in STEM careers – and specifically in computer science and engineering. When we look at the NSF statistics regarding the percentage of STEM bachelor’s degrees awarded to female students over the last two decades, we find that there is no gender difference in the biosciences, the social sciences, or mathematics, and not much of a difference in the physical sciences. The only STEM fields in which men genuinely outnumber women are computer science and engineering, where women comprise only 26% of the workforce.

With these realities in mind, we offer these profiles of women manufacturing leaders. We seek to educate our members about their success and to encourage members to tap into the wealth of opportunities available to them in hiring and promoting women within their organizations.

Kathy Alaimo, President, Syracuse Label & Surround Printing



How did you find yourself in a career in manufacturing?

I was fortunate to have tremendous opportunities while working in a small business. Syracuse Label had 16 employees when I started there as a billing clerk after college. Back in the early days we all had to wear many hats. As a result, I learned every aspect of printing while working my way up through the ranks.

Syracuse Label was founded by Roscoe Towne, in 1967, in a small garage in North Syracuse. It was primarily a printer of pressure sensitive labels. In 1987 the company was sold to Peter Rhodes and Dan Herrmann. Peter became the sole owner in 2000. Through succession planning, I became President in January, 2007. The company was sold to the employees in November 2007 through a 100% leveraged ESOP.

We have been 100% employee-owned for about eight years. Today we have 82 employees and state-of-the-art equipment to produce products for a host of industries. Currently, our company manufactures and supplies pressure sensitive labels, shrink sleeves, cartons, hang tags, roll-fed wrap labels, flexible packaging, and other printed products that surround our customers' products.

What do you find most fulfilling about operating a manufacturing business?

I enjoy watching the finished product come together. There is a lot that goes on behind the scenes to produce a quality printed

product. It's very satisfying to see our labels and packaging on a finished product out in the market.

What challenges do you find in being a woman in manufacturing?

I think the biggest challenge in manufacturing, whether you are a woman or a man, is keeping up with the constant change in our industry. Having the ability to embrace change is the key to success. My strength is in surrounding myself with industry professionals so that together we can produce a great product and satisfy the expectations of our customers.

What reasons would you give to a young woman to consider a career in manufacturing?

It's very fast-paced with plenty of opportunity. The sky is the limit for professional and personal growth. I think manufacturing is especially rewarding because, at the end of the day, you have created something that can be seen or used throughout the country.

What is one of the biggest challenges you have encountered at your company?

Our greatest challenge also became one of our greatest successes. There was a time in our history when we needed to make a drastic change in our company or we could have easily become a statistic. We had too many people and were not as efficient as our competition. We implemented lean manufacturing, which required moving each piece of equipment in our facility. We learned to work smarter, not harder, and with fewer people. We accomplished all this and reduced costs. Lean is a major part of our culture and our success today.

Was there someone who had a significant impact on you as a leader?

I've learned from many business associates that I have worked with throughout my business career. But the person that has most influenced my leadership style is Peter Rhodes. We have worked together for over 27 years. He shared his expertise in business and finance and, most importantly, in how to work with people in all areas of business, which, primarily, is to have integrity when working with employees, customers and vendors. Treating all your business partners honestly and fairly is the key to success.

What is the biggest challenge you see facing women leaders today?

Juggling family life and a busy career especially when the children are small is challenging but doable. Where there's a will... there's a way!



Anita Dungey, President, Auburn Leathercrafters



How did you find yourself in a career in manufacturing?

Although I have always worked in manufacturing, my current position as President of Auburn Leathercrafters came about when my husband's brother stepped out of the family business and my husband and I stepped in as owners and managers.

Auburn Leathercrafters is a third generation manufacturer of leather products to the pet industry. It was once Agway's full-service pet department supplier. In the years since, we've manufactured for various and diverse industries and manufactured and marketed our own line of dog collars and leashes.

What do you find most fulfilling about operating a manufacturing business?

Operating a manufacturing business, particularly one in the pet industry, allows me to use both my creative and analytic sides. From design to implementation to marketing, and from costing to analyzing cash flow, manufacturing is a sector that encompasses all aspects of business.

What challenges do you find in being a woman in manufacturing?

One of the biggest challenges is a challenge faced by women

in business in general: both men and women tend to look to men to make or negotiate a sale or purchase, as the case may be. However, I believe in my case, not getting sidetracked by negotiating has allowed me to manage a group of people who are experts in their positions rather than having to focus on some of the day-to-day conversations. It has allowed me to focus on the bigger picture.

What reasons would you give a young woman to consider a career in manufacturing?

It has been my experience that manufacturing allows a person daily opportunities to work in all levels of the production process — design, manufacturing, accounting, and marketing — because they are all interdependent.

What is one of the biggest challenges you have encountered at your company?

One of the biggest challenges I faced, particularly at the beginning, was finding my voice as a leader. Because I was stepping into an established family business with decades of habits and decision-making processes, leading them on their own turf, and dealing with customers and suppliers that they knew much better than I did, I often felt a little like an outsider. Time and a lot of listening before speaking and/or drawing any conclusions have made overcoming these challenges much easier. I've learned that it's important to listen to the experts and to not be afraid to make mistakes — because you will. Instead, learn from them, but don't dwell on them when you do.

Was there someone who had a significant impact on you as a leader?

Two people come to mind: My boss at MTR who taught me, in only a few simple words, to never assume anything. And my father, who taught me how to listen.

What is the biggest challenge you see facing women leaders today?

Finding one's own leadership style and deciding on the timing of launching a career are serious challenges. I received an invaluable insight many years ago as I was stepping into this leadership position: Someone observed that I was "old enough to have enough life experience and young enough to be able to make it happen."



Tina Hess, Founder and Chief Creative Officer, Corso's Cookies



How did you find yourself in a career in manufacturing?

It was never my dream to be a manufacturer, just the opposite. It was my dream to own a small bakery, decorating cookies for small custom orders. However, in 2006, fate would change that dream when we received a call from a national retailer with a request for more than 200,000 cookies. We saw that call as providing an opportunity to fill a void in the marketplace if we could figure out how to mass produce decorated cookies, something no other U.S. bakery had been able to do.

As a real estate agent, I would often make cookies for open-house events. Baking and decorating cookies eventually became a part-time business for me to make extra money. Once I had a website, the business quickly outgrew my home kitchen and forced me to make the decision to open my first bakery. My husband, who had a background in sales and marketing, became my business partner and together we grew the business to nearly one million in annual sales within the first three years of business.

What do you find most fulfilling about operating a manufacturing business?

Nothing is more fulfilling than watching an idea we developed from scratch go from the drawing board to the finished product

available on the shelves of some of the country's largest retailers and knowing that we've created something good enough to be enjoyed by people all over the country.

What challenges do you find in being a woman in manufacturing?

I don't know that I've ever felt like I faced any challenges specific to being a woman in manufacturing. I've always surrounded myself with great employees who have believed in our product and in me. They are the backbone of our business and as we've grown they have proved to be the most important ingredient in our success.

What reasons would you give a young woman to consider a career in manufacturing?

Manufacturing is the combination of so many different fields of study and talents that anyone can find a career path in manufacturing; whether you enjoy operations, accounting, sales, customer service, etc., it's got it all. It's a rewarding career because you are producing something, which brings a great feeling of accomplishment.

What is one of the biggest challenges you have encountered at your company?

The biggest challenge I face everyday is balancing work with family and raising three girls. Just as I've had the support and encouragement of our staff in building our company, I've also been blessed with the support of my parents in building our family. Without their help, we would not be where we are today.

Was there someone who had a significant impact on you as a leader?

My husband and business partner, Pete, has had an enormous impact on our company and on me as a leader. He was the one who encouraged me to turn my hobby into a business and who believed in me enough to risk his own career in building our company. His determination to grow our business has fueled my determination to build an operation that could support the sales he has been able to achieve.

What is the biggest challenge you see facing women leaders today?

I think the biggest challenge is finding the balance between work and home and letting go of the guilt that you're not giving enough attention to either. As a mother, it is imperative to me that I give my children the support they need to succeed. That sometimes gets in the way of living up to other people's expectations of what a great leader looks like or works like. But that is okay, and remember that is a challenge, as women, we have to overcome, because our children, are the future.

