

Eight Industry Thought Leaders Open Up on Leadership, Business & Family

In celebration of women in small business, *PalletCentral* is highlighting some of our female industry thought leaders who truly move us. They are women entrepreneurs, business owners and top executives who bring unique traits to a mostly male-dominated space. Here, they offer advice and ideas on business, leadership, and family.

ALLISON GREALIS PRESIDENT WOMEN IN MANUFACTURING

One of my biggest leadership challenges was deciding whether or not to stay in the workforce after having kids. When I had my two kids, workplaces were not as flexible as they are today, and thankfully I had a progressive leader who worked with me to balance work and staying at home with my little ones.

My leadership style is very collaborative, and I like to empower my team to make decisions, to be solution oriented and to take action. Communication is key when leading in a collaborative way, so I am always working to find new ways to improve and enhance team communication. Performance evaluations have been key in helping me become a stronger leader, and more aware of my strengths and weaknesses. My favorite publications are the *Harvard Business Review*, *Inc.* and *Fortune*, which keep me inspired and informed. Along with my iPhone, I can read, work, and stay connected, no matter where I am.





KRISTIN KOPP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
RELOGISTICS SERVICES

I'm lucky enough to chair the Grassroots Committee at Relogistics, which is a group of 6 facility managers and myself. We convene once per quarter to discuss issues, feelings and needs of the employees to efficiently communicate information to our leadership in order to implement

recommendations as developed. My passion for the culture of this company comes from listening to this group of individuals, who have volunteered their time to "be on watch" and to represent our community of employees, letting them know we are here and trying our very best to listen and to respond. I love hearing what the representatives have to say, feeding off of each other when it comes to implementing strategies.

MEGAN SMITH
CEO
SYMBIA LOGISTICS

My leadership style is based on inclusivity, team work and consistency. Being a woman in a male dominated industry has had its share of challenges,



especially when bringing softer leadership styles to the table. I've had a harder time breaking glass ceilings with my own internal executive team than with the associates on the floor because I look at my organization from the ground up, instead of the top down.

There is a leadership book that truly inspired me: *Great by Choice* by Jim Collins and Morten T. Hansen. This book is an awesome comparison of 7 wildly successful companies and how they rose to greatness; beating their industry indexes by a minimum of 10 times over 15 years, in environments characterized by big forces and rapid shifts. By finding similarities and correlations between these 10x companies, Collins and Hansen were able to identify similarities between ALL leadership styles. Some of the best advice I pulled from the book were the theory of the 20 Mile March and also creating an approach with the principles of SMaC (Specific, Methodical, and Consistent) that will last for decades.

I have taught myself to speak Spanish fluently, and this tool has been invaluable in growing my current operations, hiring up teams of dedicated associates and relating to my ground level workforce.

AMY ANGELLOTTI
VICE PRESIDENT
ROSE PALLET

Three words describe my leadership style: confident, decisive and fair. I also ask good questions. The biggest leadership challenge I have faced is in finding and keeping good people. At Rose Pallet we have had sales and management consultants throughout the years. I have also learned from my grandpas, father and uncles as they are all well-established business men. To be a strong leader, one of my best tools are my listening skills, and putting myself in the other person's shoes. It's important to understand all perspectives in any situation.



EMILY JOHNS
PORTFOLIO SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT
PALLET CONSULTANTS

In my experience at Pallet Consultants, I've learned to remember that each individual responds differently to various ways of appreciation or recognition. Always try to keep in mind that everyone is unique. The way that you prefer to be recognized isn't necessarily the same as

those around you. For some it may be social recognition, some it may be increased pay, some it may be gaining more responsibility, more independence, the list goes on. Try to focus on what each individual would like by taking the time to really get to know them.

Recently, Pallet Consultants hosted an internship program for college students and graduates to kick start their career. Each participant wanted to gain something different out of the program but mostly professional advancement. I focused on making them feel valued by providing them with professional portfolio exposure as well as virtual awards on sites such as LinkedIn that showcased their talent. Also, our team is like one big family. In the past we have hosted company cruises, group dinners and other functions to bring everyone closer together and to show that their hard work has not gone unnoticed. Focusing in on how each team member prefers to be recognized is a great way to motivate and encourage them to continue to perform at their highest level.



ANNETTE WALTER
PRESIDENT & CEO
TIMBER INDUSTRIES

My leadership style is collaborative.

Someone once told me “Leadership is getting stuff done through others and

offering others to grow to their best potential.” I believe this. Being a leader is a gift. Giving people the opportunity to grow and show their best potential is important on the path to the company’s success – and that’s how we started.

One of my biggest leadership challenges has been growing and selling a real estate company during the worst economic downturn of the 21st century while starting a family. You quickly learn how to survive, thrive and persevere. What’s best is the opportunities you face once you are through major obstacles.

One of the best leadership books I’ve read that truly plays a part in how I run my business is *Fierce Conversations* by Susan Scott. It is definitely not a beach read, but a book I keep on my bookshelf and reference frequently.

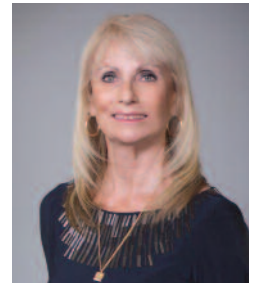
There is a great tool to help me be a strong leader: Core Values Index (CVI). I use this tool with my team and all of the companies

that I coach nationally on the sidelines. It is a powerful, objective tool that plays a part in hiring, team building, sales, growth and strategizing.

In an effort to honor their ability to be successful without corporate involvement, I encourage them to first take the initiative to come up with and formalize solutions and present them to leadership. We are always here to help, but we encourage a sense of ownership and independence for our managers so they can see the fruits of their own ideas and their ability to make change. Before I insert myself, I always ask them “what do you think?” For the most part, they all have the answers. I think encouragement and trust go a very long way with our managers and with our employees. We have a very smart group of people working for us and when they know we believe in their capabilities, it’s impressive to see their solutions come to fruition.

KATHLEEN DIETRICH
OPERATIONS MANAGER
COMMERCIAL LUMBER AND PALLET
COMPANY

At Commercial Lumber, we communicate to our employees the company’s core message: our core value,





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transparency, is a common theme in today's world. As a private family-held company, core values and transparency are absolutely necessary in order to provide equal opportunities, communication, and allowing employees to express their ideas, and maintaining our "family" atmosphere.

We've started a quarterly message directly from our President as a payroll handout. The newsletter speaks volumes to our corporate mindset when it comes to our employees. We provide the newsletter in both English and Spanish. We want every employee at our company to embrace our values, policies and our standards and expectations through an open-door policy. Ideas on how we can be better, more efficient, safer are important, and valued. We are listening because we know it will only make us better and stronger.

I know that our prior and future successes have been, and will be, because of the people within our organization. There is no question that we are "production driven" and feel that if we practice the values mentioned above, that we will continue to have dynamic employees for the long term.



DEBRA BERRY
CEO
BERRY INDUSTRIAL

Prior to being an employer, I was an employee. Before owning my own company, I worked for over a decade in the printing industry. During that time, I worked for several companies and experienced different leadership styles.

When I started my own company, I vowed to treat my employees how I wanted to be treated when I was the employee.

First and foremost, I try to listen. I treat them all with respect. All of my employees are empowered to make decisions and will receive my support. I encourage them to take a broader view of their specific job in relation to the rest of the company. Everyone is trained to do their job as well as someone else's as I feel this develops a deeper understanding of how the different jobs influence each other within the company. Finally, I always say "please" and "thank you" and recognize that the company's success is truly a group effort. **PC**

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