

The LEADERSHIP

PERSPECTIVE



ENTREPRENEURIAL CEO WAKES UP THE TROOPS WITH HER BATTLE CHARGE – *“Everyone Reports to the Customer!”*

It's a brutally cold morning in the industrial bay of Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Temperatures hover near zero. Employees from around the borough commute to this hard working factory where many of them have held jobs for decades. And though the workers smile, laugh and plan for a new day, it hasn't always been this light-hearted. These are weathered warriors who endured a late-night explosion on their paint line.

Many have overcome the ravages of Hurricane Sandy. They have survived cancer scares, health challenges and lost spouses. Yet, they eagerly carry on despite the rigors and hazards of their physically demanding jobs.

Today, they warm their hands in the glow of an unquenchable spirit. The red-hot embers of hope and optimism permeate this large

industrial complex. Camaraderie is in the air. Sales and profits are up! Gossip and second-guessing are on the run.



At the head of a well-lit conference room, the CEO, Debbie Tripod serves up her own unique recipe of

entrepreneurial principles. These short, but profound power phrases shape the thoughts and actions of her people. They listen as she passionately delivers a familiar phrase they have heard time and again. “Tear Down the Walls!”

And remember, “We ALL report to the customer!”

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Who would have guessed that this second generation entrepreneur would be at the helm of her father’s company on this wintry morning dishing out rapid fire instructions interspersed with a healthy dose of loving care? After all, Englert, Inc. is in a masculine sounding industry where few women tread. Danger never sleeps. Safety is always a concern.

Yet Debbie has set this company of 400 plus employees on a healthy growth path for even greater success. She makes enhancements daily. And for those who can’t keep up, she helps them by encouraging them to find a more-suited environment where their talents are needed. She and this 52-year-old enterprise are moving fast and gaining speed again!

Her management team is solidly on board at all levels.

So how did Debbie turn this stodgy commercial roofing manufacturer around? It hasn’t been easy and her courage is the central theme in this story. To understand Deb’s accomplishments, you need only look back a few short years. Debbie was unexpectedly handed the reins of Englert, Inc. when her father died suddenly.

Debbie never sought the limelight of CEO, and she never flinched when the pressures came her way.

Herb Englert, Debbie’s father was a man with vision. Herb dreamed of

employing thousands of people by inventing and perfecting high quality metal products that Englert could sell around the world. His time was short, though his products were timely.

Just as Englert’s new LeafGuard business was beginning to catch on, metal prices rose dramatically. Expansion costs staggered the company and profits sank dismally. Then Herb passed away.



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Many thought it was the beginning of the end. Yet somehow, the employee base remained committed and a survival culture began to emerge. To stoke the fires of commitment, Debbie continued employee picnics and get-togethers.

She hosted Christmas parties, birthday notices and demonstrated a genuine

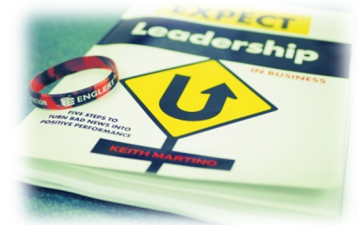


care for every worker. In addition, she made the effort to get to know their names and families even as she struggled to understand the complexities of their jobs. She emphasized employee development. In short, Debbie began to apply a human touch to the rough and tumble nature of the industrial workforce.

Debbie was strong and deliberate. Realizing that she couldn't survive alone, Debbie sought outside counsel. She formed a board of advisors. One of her sharpest moves was to bring in Rob Lowe, a successful home improvement expert. His role was strategically focused to accelerate the growth of their LeafGuard guttering systems. Debbie took a calculated risk and invested in Rob who built a team and system that worked wonders on the bottom line.

This freed up cash flow for Debbie to turn her attention towards building a sustainable and scalable infrastructure. But once again, the headwinds of turmoil swept into Perth Amboy.

Several members of her senior management team isolated themselves from the business. Other key executives implemented their own brand of absentee leadership. It took its toll on morale. Labor issues crept in and functional silos began to form within the organization. These “walls” (mentioned in the headline) were unacceptable to Debbie. Debbie had a choice. She could either toss in the towel or double down once again on her investment in the company. Debbie chose the more difficult path. It has served her company well.



Pulling the Trigger:

Debbie put in place one-on-one coaching for her failing COO. Unfortunately for him, he interpreted this coaching as an admission that he was not an effective leader. When her COO tried to shift the attention of this targeted coaching to his direct reports, Debbie saw an

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opportunity. She sprang into action. Debbie quickly expanded Englert’s relationship with Keith Martino, a leadership development firm out of Dallas, TX. The timing was impeccable.



Together, she and Keith Martino formalized the core principles that Debbie brought to the business.

They jointly conducted a series of bi-weekly leadership development sessions for six months and then adjusted to monthly sessions once the right momentum and culture was starting to jell. It didn’t take that long to turn the morale back around because Debbie was relentless in her pursuit of excellence. Today, the monthly sessions are used as a means of reinforcing the strong culture and integration of new leaders in the company.

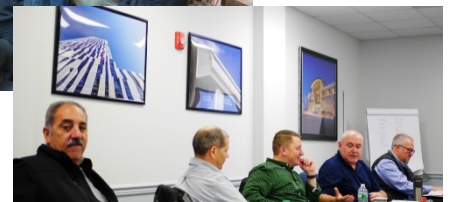
The “Englert Eight Principles” fortify the foundation of Englert’s growth. Debbie continues to warm the hearts of her talented and committed team. And the success of the business is scalable.



Is it possible for an industrial renaissance to take place in our country?

Should a human touch be applied in this era of bits, bytes and electronic blunders?

The answer to both questions is “Yes”.



And the impact on the business climate is profound. The results benefit the people. And stories of CEOs like Debbie remind us that though we will face unnerving hardships in our lives and businesses, the value of living a life based on a set of timeless principles is eternal. Debbie’s courage lights the fire of our imagination and warms our hearts.

*At **Keith Martino**, we salute world-class leaders and organizations that demonstrate courage and customer focus. The executive teams that guide **Englert Inc.** and **LeafGuard** embody the spirit that drives innovation and delivers an outstanding customer experience.*