



EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN'S COACHING

The Tiara Spotlight

Shining our light on inspiring women around the world.



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McKechnie Vehicle Components manufactures products that provide value through vehicle enhancement and personalization.

Who are you?

When I first looked at the question, I thought, "I am a business owner. I am responsible for the well being of 500 employees who expect me to make responsible, well-thought out decisions." When I looked at the question again sitting at my daughter's horse show, I thought, "I am a Mom," without a doubt one of the most rewarding experiences for me. Friday night when I was out to dinner with my husband I thought, "I am a wife." At the end of the day I am all of those things and like most women I juggle a lot of balls. Some days when I crawl in to bed I think, "Girl you've done well today!" and some days when I crawl in to bed the only comforting thought I have is that tomorrow is another opportunity to go again. In a nutshell: wife, mother, and business owner is who I am.

What are you passionate about?

I love being a business owner. I am honored to work with the incredible group of employees at McKechnie Vehicle Components (MVC). I have learned so much and they have helped me grow as a leader and as a woman.

I am super passionate about working with [ClearSpace](#). ClearSpace is working with MVC's senior leadership team on our Best Year Yet plans and identifying the 10 goals for the organization in 2012. ClearSpace is also working with the management team in our Nicholasville, KY plant. The ultimate goal is to cascade the ideas/values/goals throughout the organization. I would like MVC to be a place people want to come to work, where ideas are shared, and where everyone has an opportunity to grow into the person they want to be. I also want our employees to achieve their own personal goals, whether it is to spend more time with their families or to learn to fly. If they are happy personally they will be more likely to be happy professionally. I would like to create an environment where people thrive.

I am also passionate about my daughter. She inspires me in so many ways. I want to live and lead my life in a way that I am an example for her to follow. I don't think you can tell people how to live, I believe you have to live in a way that creates the atmosphere for them to grow and become the people they can be.

Finally, I am passionate about working together with my husband Mike. At times it is difficult, yet we encourage each other to step outside of our comfort zone. I have learned so much from him



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about business, and not being intimidated when I don't know the technical answers and to instead trust my gut. He has taught me when I get that "niggly" feeling to embrace it; if something feels off I should go with it and trust my instincts.

What are you up to in your life right now?

Right now I am working, raising our daughter, and preparing to compete in my first horse show later this summer. I believe you should always try to do one thing that scares you. The thought of competing in a horse show creates total anxiety for me. I also know if I can compete, it will require me to draw on all my strength and stamina to get through it, and I will come out a better person.

What is your strongest calling or strength?

My greatest strength...laughter! At the end of the day, life should be joyful. Some days I want to go home and kick the dog, but after a cup of hot cinnamon spice tea and a moment to regroup, I can usually find my way out of a funk. I am blessed to work with incredible women. Sometimes I just suggest, "How about some chocolate and a cup of tea and let's just have a laugh?" After about 15 minutes it doesn't seem like the world is coming to an end, and we are able to find the humor or bright spot in whatever is going on. God bless the sisterhood!

How do you recharge your batteries or nourish yourself?

Horseback riding...I love it!!! I head to the barn, tack up Graham, and forget about everything. They are such incredible animals. It is like holding up a mirror and getting instant feedback on how you communicate. You are 100% responsible for half of everything that goes on in the relationship. I can't bully Graham because he will win, but he has to respect me or he won't hold up his end of the bargain. He has taught me how I handle stress, how I make decisions, how I communicate, and who I am being when I am interacting. It is a phenomenal experience!

What would you like to acknowledge yourself for?

Juggling being a business owner with my family life. I don't think balance is a reality. Years ago I listened to Suzy Welch speak and she said, "There is no such thing as balance only choices" and that really resonated with me. Sometimes, I have to look at my family and say this is a really important event, project, moment at work and I have to be there. Sometimes, I have to explain at work about a really important event or moment for my daughter/husband and I have to be there. Sometimes, things are tilted more one way or another, but that is just the reality of life. I have tried to let go of the guilt associated with finding perfect balance.

What are you grateful for?

I have so many things to be grateful for: my daughter who is such an incredible young woman, my husband who supports me in everything I do, and the opportunity to get up every day and go to a place I love and work with people I truly enjoy.

As a woman leader what are your unique strengths that help you and your staff succeed?

I think women are compassionate and understand the demands of work and family. Having been a single mother I understand the demands of juggling the two. The men and women I work with are an incredible and dedicated group of people. They give more than 100% every day.



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Whenever the personal choice of family or work comes up, I would like them to choose family as often as possible. At the end of the road, that is the only thing that matters.

The other strength women have is their intuition. When I am interacting at work, my ability to read nonverbals and assess what's going on with someone personally is a strength. When I am in a meeting - either internally or with customers - I rely very much on my ability to "read the room." So much is said nonverbally. I think women are also able to create an environment where dialogue is welcomed. I want to know what the people I work with have to say. We may not always agree, but through conversation we can reach alignment.

What inspires you?

Women I work with...hearing their stories, listening to what they do to support their families, and knowing the energy they bring to work. I work with a phenomenal woman named Annette. She has a son that is severely autistic, nonverbal. When Annette came to work with us her son had just started experiencing severe seizures, if he went through periods when he didn't have seizures then he had/has episodes of rage. After each seizure he had to learn basic skills again. Annette is such an inspiration for me. My worst day is nothing compared to her average day. She comes to work every day, upbeat, hard working, one of those people you can always count on, never says an unkind thing about anyone. She is a phenomenal woman and an absolute inspiration to me.

What's next? What are you committed to?

For MVC...it is time to grow! We have put the pieces in place in our plants and we need to continue to nurture their development, but now we need to think about growing the business. I would like a plant in Detroit, which is where I grew up. I am passionate about being part of the effort to rebuild Michigan and the Detroit area. So 2012-2013 will focus on what that will look like for MVC and how we get there. We will continue to work with ClearSpace to create the kind of organization where people feel passionate about coming to work. My motto is to be a supplier of choice, an employer of choice. We are only as strong as the people that work for us.

I would like to start a foundation, specifically something that brings people and horses together. I would like to begin the search for a farm in Kentucky where I would offer riding for at risk kids or kids who can't afford to ride and therapeutic riding.

So that is my focus for 2012-2013 and, of course, continue to drive my daughter all over God's green earth to support her love of horses and horse showing. As I write this it is 4:30am on a Sunday morning. In about one hour we will be off to the barn to get ready for day 3 of a 3-day show. I wish everyone could experience the early morning peace of a barn full of horses...it will definitely cure what ails you!