

# Family Business

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THE GUIDE FOR FAMILY COMPANIES

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## Communication and commitment

*The family owners of British Columbia's ABC Recycling took an emotional journey to address tough transitional issues.*

- Hillerich & Bradsby, makers of the Louisville Slugger
- An unusual approach to successor selection
- Cash is king... or is it?

*From left in front row: David Yochlowitz, Helen Alko, Amber Quiring. Back row: Melvyn Yochlowitz, Karen Bichin, Harold Yochlowitz, Mike Yochlowitz.*

## AT THE HELM

## Maureen Beal

*President and CEO, National Van Lines, Broadview, Ill.*

**Generation of family ownership:** That's how my parents met. Third.

**Company revenue for 2008:** \$88.4 million.

**Number of employees:** 115 plus agents and drivers.

**Best thing about this job:** The ability to pull a successful team together and to see them thrive. Working with so many good people has allowed me to achieve my dream for the company.



**Years with the company:** 35, but I left and worked for another company for ten years in between.

**First job at this company:** Switchboard operator.

**At what age?** 19.

**Most memorable thing I learned from my father:** His work ethic. He worked five-and-a-half days a week until he was 90. He stopped only because his health declined.

**Most memorable thing I learned from my mother:** The importance of family unity and practicing a responsible life. She held a family dinner every Wednesday, and you had better be there. She was our first bookkeeper, and she was very proud of that fact.

**One of our greatest successes:** We've received top scores in customer service from the General Services Administration for the last 12 years.

**Best advice I ever got:** Count your successes, not your failures.

**Quote from our company's mission statement:** We used to have a mission statement, but it wasn't memorable. Now we work with one belief: Every policy we have should benefit the customer.

**Artwork on my office wall:** An original watercolor painting of a manatee by Wyland, an environmental artist. He gave it to me years ago.

**My greatest accomplishment:** Achieving financial stability. This is a hard

business. Profit margins are slim. We're comfortable now. I went over the books line by line to see what we could cut. I'm still in charge of cash management. Every day I check revenue coming in and I sign every check that goes out. The head person in a family business has to be a family member. Cash is king. It enables you to reinvest in the company.

**Worst thing about working in a family business:** Initially it was overcoming the perception that I got the job because I was the boss's daughter. I had to prove myself every day. Now it's that it's really tough leaving your work at the door—it's hard not to take it home with you, or to a family event.

**Best thing about working in a family business:** The family culture spreads to the whole organization. You become part of a very large extended family, where you all look out for one another.

**Advice I'd give someone wishing to enter this business:** Be prepared to work hard—long hours and no summer vacations. Most people move in the summer. Don't plan to leave the business, either. You'll love it once you're in it.

**On a day off I like to ...** catch up on the industry periodicals. I don't like to be seen reading magazines at my desk.

**Philanthropic causes our family supports:** We support the American Cancer Society and Aspire, an organization that helps the developmentally disabled. We also contribute to the Humanitarian Project, which supplies food and other necessities to families in need.

**Words I live by:** Treat everyone with respect.

—As told to Patricia Olsen