



Unified Neighbors

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BEHIND THE SCENES OF SERVICE

Local "Tub Lady" is just one of the guys

by Amy Vaerewyck, freelance writer

"My first five years in the business, I got mad a lot," says Marcy DeShong, president of Midwest Luxury Baths in Pendleton. Now, however, just a few months from her business's 10th anniversary, the "Tub Lady" is all smiles.

"Men always had to test me," she relates. However, says DeShong, who self-taught architectural drawing and design and also attended Ball State University's School of Architecture, "Once they work with me, I'm just another one of the guys."

One of the guys or not, DeShong is the only female owner of a Luxury Bath Liners franchise store. She first learned of the Chicago-based company while working as an accountant in Carmel. "I learned I didn't like working for somebody else, so when this opportunity came along, I jumped," she says.

After phone calls, a trip to Chicago, and a tiny ad in an Anderson newspaper, DeShong was in business — though not very much business. "I wasn't earning a dime," she says, remembering her first office, which consisted of a piece of Formica balanced on a filing cabinet.

DeShong stuck with it, though, and now owns the "growing like crazy" shop on State Road 9. Outside, a roadside sign depicts a woman enjoying a luxurious bath. And inside, bathroom displays sport every thematic style from flowers to seashells to leopard skin.

The capability to delegate work to people she trusts is one factor to which DeShong attributes her success. "I can jump in at about any position except the guys out doing the job," she says, but she



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believes a successful business depends on a balanced support network.

Her theory proved true six years ago when she was caught in a tornado. After huddling with her children in a muddy roadside ditch, DeShong says she went into shock. "I couldn't function," she says. "I thought I could handle anything ... but I learned that life can throw curve balls at you." However, when this curve ball took DeShong down, her business remained standing because she had reliable help. "I have to start letting things go," admits DeShong, who now limits her duties to accounting and operations.

No matter who works for Midwest Luxury Baths, DeShong is the one and only "Tub Lady" — and has a namesake license plate to prove it. And where does the "Tub Lady" soak her toes? A double-vanity bathroom designed so she can watch TV from a jet-lined bathtub.

Of course, she stands behind her five-year warranty by personally fielding customer complaints. Why? Because, "The buck stops at the 'Tub Lady.'" ❖