



Tips for Paving Your Own Way in a New Role

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Two years ago, Sarah Weiss assumed the role of CEO and President of Elite Roofing Supply after seven years of building the company as a founding partner. As a young child, Sarah watched her grandparents and father work in contracting and supply distribution but wasn't sure she saw where she fit into the industry. She eventually went on to emphasize in Distribution Management at the University of Southern California, knowing she may want to enter the family business one day.

Today, Sarah is a results-oriented visionary, focused on leading the most dedicated team of local experts in the industry and is responsible for integrating strategic direction into the organization. Paving your own way in a new role is full of triumphs and struggles, so we recently asked Sarah to expand on the lessons she's learned thus far since becoming CEO and President of Elite Roofing Supply. Here's what she had to say:

- 1) No one is fully prepared for a new role they take on. You grow into the role by doing, not by anticipating or worrying about what you're going to do.
- 2) My husband and I have three children, and both have intense jobs, so we work very hard to be intentional about the evenings when we're both home, as well as our time on the weekends. When I walk into my home at night, I take off my CEO hat and put on my Mom's hat. Whether I had my best day or the worst day at work, I aim to bring very little of that into my home. One thing we've found that works for us is looking at our calendars regularly and asking the question, "Do our calendars reflect what is truly important to us?" We aren't perfect, we get off course. Some months, I travel 10 nights and it's messier than we'd like, but at the end of the day, our kids are watching us do jobs that we love and they know we are always there for them.
- 3) If you're taking over a company from a family member, it's important to acknowledge right out of the gate that you're going to lead the company differently because you're an entirely different person. You can never completely fill someone else's shoes so instead you must build your own shoes and carve your own path. I've learned over the years that I'm the best leader when I show up as myself.
- 4) Being underestimated can be a great strength if you choose to look at it that way. When you're different than what people expect in a role (i.e., age, gender, race), it gives you the opportunity to sit back and gain credibility in your own time and way.
- 5) The hardest days or moments are the times you gain the most strength as a leader. There's massive amounts of resilience and grit to be gained from making the hard decisions and going through extremely challenging times.
- 6) Always trust your gut instincts, even if others try to persuade you otherwise. Don't assume that someone with greater experience has the better approach or insight. Fresh perspectives often bring great strengths.



- 7) When building a team, it's more important to focus on who someone is and how they play with others, not the skills they have today. Skills can be acquired over time, whereas a person's character is often set in stone.
- 8) This is a relationship industry and relationships are often formed on the golf course, a fishing trip, a shooting event, at the bar, at a trade show, etc. Make sure you are showing up where the decisions are being made and relationships are being formed.
- 9) Form a tribe of people who are supportive of you, lift you up and inspire you to be better. Let go of the friends or associates who at some point stop adding positive value to your life. Life is too short to keep people in your life who aren't encouraging you to be the best version of yourself.
- 10) One of my favorite quotes is Mario Andretti's, "If everything seems under control, you're just not going fast enough." I used to seek calmness and wanted everything to be under control at work and at home. Now, I accept that I'm not wired that way, and that success feels out of control at times. It's important to remember that you're either growing or dying as a business...there's nothing in between. Andretti's quote is something I now live and breathe by and helps me stay grounded and focused on the road ahead.

With Sarah Weiss at the helm, Elite Roofing Supply has grown from two branches in California to over twenty branches in nine states and 400+ employees. The future looks bright for Sarah and Elite, so stay tuned for our Andretti-like growth trajectory in 2022.