

## Growing with the Job

By Josh Brown, as printed in The Press-Enterprise (www.pe.com)

**FAMILY BUSINESS:** Valerie Liese now leads the firm her father started. She takes pride in being able to build on what he began. Liese, president of Jack Jones Trucking Inc., may be the founder's daughter, but she got her start with some dirty jobs, scrubbing trucks and changing oil.



Valerie Liese's father gave her \$2.50 for every truck she washed. At 14, it was her first job at Jack Jones Trucking Inc., the company her father founded nearly 40 years ago. After moving on to changing the trucks' oil and eventually helping to run the operation, Liese is now the president of the firm, which has grown to become a full-service logistics operation, specializing in fast delivery for its customers in Southern California. Its Ontario headquarters also has about 100,000 square feet of storage space when time isn't a factor.

"It just gets in your blood," Liese said. "I think I have diesel running through my veins."

**Q:** What is your biggest challenge?

**A:** Right now it's trying to find freight because the economy is so bad. A lot of business was in construction, and it's down 20 percent. It's going to come back, but it's going to be slower.

**Q:** How do you retain good employees?

**A:** We really don't have to advertise for people. Our drivers make commission. Some of them make more than I do. So this keeps them here. We have a lot of second-generation workers here. It's also about being friends with your employees.

**Q:** What is your proudest career accomplishment?

**A:** This is a very male-dominated industry. I've been able to accomplish a lot of things my father wasn't able to, and I'm proud of my work with public officials to fix transportation problems and educate the public about trucking.

**Q:** What advice do you have for other executives?

**A:** Make sure you're diversified, and make sure you treat your employees as good as your customers. There's so much turnover in this industry. It costs a lot to train new workers.

**Q:** What changes do you see coming for your industry?

**A:** Environmentally, a lot of people who have older trucks are going to be forced to buy new trucks. Some of them will move out of state to avoid that. Some will go out of business. So I think this industry will start to thin out a bit.

**Q:** How does being in the Inland Empire affect your business?

**A:** We're more central to many of our customers now. A lot of them are moving from LA and Orange counties out here because of the cheaper land and available space. About 60 percent of our business is from clients in the Inland Empire.

Valerie Liese, President, Jack Jones Trucking Inc.

SALES: \$9.8 million; EMPLOYEES: 92

LOCATION: Ontario, California