

# ***“Selling Comfort to Confident Women” Lea Holder, Owner, Key Largo Underwear***

*Written by Lea Holder*

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Dear Women in Trucking,

If you are reading this, thank you because it's my story on how I got here and why I became a Corporate Member of Women in Trucking.



*Lea is third from the left with her three sisters in the 1960s.*

I'm the third of four daughters born in Georgia and raised in North Carolina. My mother is from Mississippi and my dad is from Alabama so I'm real (two syllables in the southern pronunciation of real) southern. I'm getting ready to turn the big 50! After I graduated from high school, I spent most of my time in male dominated environments. I worked as a sales clerk until I was old enough to work swing shift at the local polyester factory and make some serious money. I gladly worked on Christmas day and pocketed the 2 1/2 times overtime pay. I went to the State Agriculture and Engineering School which at the time was predominately male. I got my degree in Textile Chemistry which was also a predominately male field.

My first job and all other work positions were in the manufacturing or supply chain operations of textile and apparel companies where I was usually the only female direct report on staff. I spent most of my apparel experience in ladies panty hose and lingerie probably rolling my eyes too much at the arrogance of



*Lea Holder, Owner, Key Largo Underwear*

some of the male marketers. These two categories are famously known in the business as “selling sex appeal” and that's the spin on most of the advertising. Sex appeal is okay and I get it.

However, what the marketers don't understand is that we women have different needs depending on what we do for a living. There are times that we need to feel comfortable and times we want to be sexy. I know this first hand because I spent the last 15 years of my job travelling around the world and spending days on the road in countries such as India, Bangladesh, China, Turkmenistan and others. I have scoliosis or curvature of the spine and spent my high school and early college years in a Milwaukee back brace (so not attractive). On long trips, my back hurts and the last thing I want on my underwear is lace and other materials that would scratch and aggravate the heat for long hours of sitting during these journeys. And don't get me started on wedgies. I just wanted to wear comfortable underwear and clothes!

Based on my experience, when I was down sized by Corporate America a few years ago, I decided to start my own business by designing an underwear product that would meet the needs of women that travel a lot. I thought a great market niche would be to sell comfort to confident women that preferred comfort over sex appeal, at least while they are working.

That's how Key Largo Underwear was born. I chose this brand name because Key Largo is one the most comfortable and relaxing places in the Florida Keys. I have approached some retailers for distribution but they still want another lacy thong and do not believe selling comfort is in their best interest. So, that's why I'm here!

I can understand the underwear needs of the Women in Trucking because for many years, I experienced the good and not so good of long travels. I believe that the cushioned crotch of my garment and covered waist and leg bands will provide the comfort needed during long sitting hours. As a bonus, the garment is extra durable for a longer life. Therefore, my first priority is to let the membership know of the product and have considered some of the following ideas.

1. I'm trying to come up with games and product gifts to generate brand awareness and hopefully positive word of mouth advertising. I'd love to read your ideas on different games that would generate interest.

2. My ultimate goal would be to distribute to truck stop chains.
3. For starters, I would like to give away a pair to three members every week for a couple of months.
  - You can participate by sending me an email address or contact info at [Lea@KeyLargoUnderwear.com](mailto:Lea@KeyLargoUnderwear.com). I'll draw 3 names every Monday and contact the winners directly.
  - To protect your privacy, I will not disclose the winners' names. If your name is drawn, I'll notify you by email so you can log on to my website [www.KeyLargoUnderwear.com](http://www.KeyLargoUnderwear.com) to give me the information about your product selection and where to ship.
4. Please participate! I've been on the web for a while and sometimes it's lonely like the big black expanding universe. There's no risk to you. Of course, I'd like for you to love the product and share great reviews with your friends and at some point, yes, I would like sales.

And to end on a personal note, I'm married with two almost grown children and still exercise to my Jane Fonda tape almost everyday (really).

I also have a blog about the Apparel Supply Chain and I've met some really nice people through it. <http://theunderwearmaven.blogspot.com/>