

Women Managers Q&A series

Monthly Q&As with a woman manager each from Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota.

By: **Staff Report**, Prairie Business Magazine

Vicki Jodsaas — Founder and president, The Competitive Edge (Alexandria, MN, 7 employees), 6 years with the company/all in current position, B.S. degree in business from Minnesota State University Moorhead (MN), MBA from Regis University (Denver).



WHAT IS THE COMPETITIVE EDGE?

The Competitive Edge Inc. creates profitable growth and stability for small and midsized companies by providing expertise, training and tools to dramatically improve their business strategy and performance. We provide solutions in strategic planning, leadership development, marketing strategy, customer service and human resource compliance and effectiveness.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON MISTAKES BUSINESS LEADERS MAKE?

Not creating a clear and compelling vision and rallying people around it. Not developing a business strategy, or developing a strategy but not tenaciously executing that strategy in a clear and compelling manner. Not engaging and developing their talent to drive business growth and stability. Losing focus on managing cash while growing.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU OFFER TO EXECUTIVES ON HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THEIR BUSINESSES?

Create a clear business plan or strategy with a compelling value proposition, a solid strategy for business development, and a clear competitive advantage. Do your homework. Know what your competitors are up to, what is happening in your industry, the markets you serve, and how those things will impact your business. Make clear, timely decisions to position the company for sustainable growth. Choose and develop the right people. Get the right people in the right positions doing the right things and they will drive business success. Ensure that they have strategies, systems and processes supporting what they do.

HAVE YOU NOTICED CHANGES IN YOUR CLIENTS' NEEDS AS A RESULT OF THE ECONOMY?

Some areas have not changed like the constant pursuit of companies to develop leadership. Areas we have seen an increased focus on include strategic planning, market research and plans and human resource updates. There are companies in a holding pattern and companies that are positioning for stability and growth. We have been providing more strategic planning for companies that want to position themselves for long-term success. We are helping to define and redefine their businesses by identifying new business growth strategies, new markets, targeting improvements within their business so they gain a competitive advantage now and for the future.