

# Vanessa Lucido: Excellent Business Sense

Growing up, Vanessa Lucido remembers two distinct sounds: The sound of hooves in the dirt from horses running wild in the pasture, and the growl of engines in drill rigs turning augers into the earth. These days, her world still revolves around horses and horsepower.

At age 26, Lucido became the CEO of ROC Equipment, a multi-million dollar foundation equipment company. She grew up learning every aspect of the industry while working at Becho Inc., her family's drilling contracting company. After Becho was sold in 2011, she transitioned to ROC. In 2012, Lucido became CEO, but it came at a high price. At age 59, her father died in an industry-related accident and she was catapulted to the top position.

Lucido's parents purchased a ranch when she was 4 years old and her life became a mix of horses and drill rigs. A few years ago, she came across a blog entry at Freedom Woods, a hunter jumper stable, titled *10 Lessons I Learned from Horses*. She believes these lessons relate to her role in the drilling industry.

**1. Confidence** – *With horses, confidence comes from managing and training an animal of that size and ability.* To Lucido, confidence is having the knowledge to speak eloquently about a topic. When she assumed the CEO role, many industry members were surprised. As a young woman, she was an anomaly in the industry. Frank Prosser of Legacy Foundations says, "She has done an excellent job dealing with being a rare woman executive in a predominantly male industry. She doesn't let it bother her." Growing up, she thought it was natural for women to do anything. Her mother was the only woman on the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic committee, and her aunt owned and operated her own blasting company. Witnessing strong women and having the unending support of her father and brothers fostered her confidence.

**2. Responsibility** – *You have to come out and care for a horse every day, even when you are sick or lazy.* They depend on you. When Lucido's father died, she saw the huge hole he had left. While she coped with her immeasurable sadness, Prosser saw her determination to make ROC work to provide for her family and the ROC employees. Jim Close, another industry colleague, also commented on her great sense of responsibility. "She is the mother of a 6-year-old girl and she recently got her MBA, all while running successful companies."

**3. The value of hard work** – *Horses take hours, weeks and months to train.* You may spend hours and hours thinking you will never get it. Drilling is not easy, and it takes hard work. Lucido has two brothers who are also very successful in the drilling industry. When they were children, Lucido's father was adamant that they all should be treated the same, regardless of gender. At Becho, Lucido worked right alongside her brothers. It was also known in the Lucido family that the first sibling to graduate from college would take over the company. She crossed the line first when she received a B.A. in humanities and business, and then continued to obtain her MBA.

**4. Nothing works ALL the time** – *Riding a horse is about balance and feel, you can't ask for the same thing all the time.* Drilling equipment breaks! Lucido remembers being anxious the first time this happened, but soon realized "this is life, and, more importantly, this is drilling." Due to many variables and unknowns, equipment can be stressed and break, no matter the quality or how experienced the operator. This is a life lesson that Lucido tries to remember at ROC, where she thinks equipment can always be improved by focusing on making it stronger, safer and more efficient. During meetings at BUMA Equipment, for whom ROC is the North American distributor, she uses her



safety training and contractor field experience to help design improvements to their equipment.

**5. Patience** – *You have to be patient when working with an over-sized animal.* First, your horse needs to understand what you expect, then they need to be agreeable to it. If you jump the gun and get aggressive or upset, they react. Lucido strives to be patient in all aspects of her life. She understands that nothing comes without hard work, focus and perseverance. By clearly detailing her long-term goals for the company, she has been able to set a course for obtaining those goals.

**6. To be aware** – *When working on the ground or on the horse, there are always exterior factors.* Something may happen that spooks the horse. Over time you start to develop a feel for it coming and how to react. This was a lesson Lucido learned when her father died unexpectedly, but it taught her to be strong, strategic and perceptive. She displays these qualities by trying to fully understand her clients' current and future needs, while keeping a close eye on what the market is doing. Being in tune and aware of the industry is key to the success of ROC, Lucido says.

**7. To control emotions and actions** – *For every action you make, your horse has a reaction.* Being a CEO, Lucido recognizes that her emotions can impact her employees and directly affect the company. Dawn Walters, COO of ROC, describes her boss as someone who “can multitask on a grand scale, and can do it with style.” Walters says Lucido is a quick learner,

direct, and people like her. “It would be hard to find anyone in the industry who doesn't have good things to say about her,” says Walters.

**8. Bravery** – *Horses can be 10 times our size, at times when they jump, we want to jump.* Older brother Rusty says that his sister “does not know how to fail.” She is an over-achiever with a magnetic personality. She makes projects succeed in part because “she won't let anyone fail, hell or high water.” According to Rusty, she is a superwoman and burns the midnight oil every night. Somehow, she fits running Ragnar relay races and volunteering into her busy schedule. In addition to running ROC, she started a successful children's toy company from the bottom up. She has an amazing business sense and drive, says Rusty.

**9. To be driven** – *To learn how to ride a horse takes years.* Lucido says she will never know everything about riding and horses, but she wants to know as much as possible.

Walters says Lucido is very hands on and participates in all aspects of the company, whether big or small. Her participation in industry events and organizations is also notable. She's a member of and an exhibitor at events for ASCE, DFI and ADSC. She is a member of the DFI's Women in Deep Foundations Committee, and is active on the ADSC/NCCCO Drill Rig Task Force.

**10. To be humble** – *With horses, no matter how much you know, or how often you have ridden, every now again you still take the plunge.* According to Close, Lucido has integrity and he is “humbled by this dynamic young woman.” Her word is her bond, and she gives back to the industry. She knows how to work hard and is thankful for all the success and opportunity that comes to her and her companies.

Lucido takes these lessons to heart in her daily personal and business life, and looks toward the future of ROC Equipment.



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