



## July 29, 2016 – “A Business Leader’s Journey from Farmlands to All Hands”

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Featuring JANET BARNARD, President of Manheim North America, a division of Cox Automotive and a subsidiary of Cox Enterprises.

Janet Barnard began her remarks referencing this historic time in our country’s history – when in 2016 - a woman could be elected president of the United States. No matter your politics, it’s a “first” in America!

But back to this businesswoman who IS a president already, she informed and inspired the attendees with insights from her past and the present. Her corporate journey within the Cox family of companies is 27 years in the making and she clearly represents them well. “The company is a values-based, 4<sup>th</sup> generation enterprise,” she said, “and during my career, I’ve been a part of developing, acquiring and transforming many brands. For the past 4 years I’ve been part of the leadership team within Cox Automotive, and more recently its newly formed Inventory Solutions Group. Our mission is to transform the way people buy, sell and own cars.”

Some interesting facts Janet shared about the business include:

- Manheim started in 1945 in Pennsylvania Amish country and has grown to over 30,000 employees with a global presence as Cox Automotive;
- Today’s used vehicle market at \$500B;
- The company’s focus is on transformation, transparency, efficiency and always improving the customer experience.
- Technology, complexity and competition are ever increasing.

How does she approach the complex mission of reimagining the auction experience? “I boil things down to their simplest terms.”

Besides talking about the business that she so clearly loves, Janet then shared some of her personal background, growing up on a “working farm” where she was the youngest of 5 children. “My sisters were quite a bit older than me, and left home to pursue their careers, leaving me to learn a lot by myself. My parents taught us that there were no boundaries on what I or my sisters could do, but they also didn’t push any of us,” she explained.

Her sisters went on to successful careers in government, and became Janet’s role models. She too grew up, went to college, majored in accounting, and got married. She and her husband even tried their hand at owning their own farm in the mid-1980s. Timing was poor – thousands of family farms were going under - and when that didn’t work out, Janet knew she needed to do a nationwide search for a company

that would provide a career path. Janet ended up interviewing in Macon, GA for an accounting position with Cox. Thus began her multi-decade, multi-role, and multi-move career - from Communications to Automotive - from field positions to corporate headquarters.



Throughout her many years in leadership and management, Janet has honed her skills and was willing to share some of those key lessons and insights with this audience.

- Moving into new positions – e.g., from the cable business to automotive – she had to earn trust. When you have your team’s trust, you can get buy-in for the transformative changes that need to be made. You can also deal with cost-cutting and force reductions when you’re honest and transparent.
- Big risks can lead to big rewards.
- Understand the financials. (Very important but she also realized that while accounting and the numbers were her major and are critical to any enterprise, she wanted to “run” something and “talk to people!”)
- Paint a picture of the future, communicate progress often.
- Be bold, never quit. Turn skeptics into believers.
- Be authentic yourself and encourage transparent behavior within your team.
- Integrity above all. Actions speak volumes. People watch and listen to you as a leader: never forget this.
- Be vulnerable.
- Set high expectations. Have a higher purpose.
- Decisiveness is key.
- Focus on the whole.
- Culture is key. Relationships matter. Strong employee satisfaction supports strong client satisfaction. (“I learned this lesson from people who did it wrong.”)
- Passion is powerful. Build a diverse team of passionate, hands-on champions. (She recognizes that her industry is not diverse but has improved her team by 40%.)
- Evolve: reinvent yourself, never stop learning, seek stretch assignments, ask for feedback, and innovate every day.

One of the reasons Janet thinks she’s had the career she’s had is because she always said “yes” to opportunities even though moving and relocating her family wasn’t easy.

Q & A:

1. **How did you / do you diversify your team?** Honest conversations, gave people an opportunity, and went external for a couple of key positions.
2. **What have you read lately?** *Boys in the Boat* & likes Sheryl Sandberg’s *Lean In* as well.
3. **Do you plan for failure?** Not always a plan B, but multiple bets. Communication is very important from the get-go.

4. **What do you do outside work?** Golf (business & personal); charitable motorcycle east to west event annually with the Kyle Petty Foundation; and of course family – now has 3 baby grandsons which is really different as she has 2 daughters!

