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2022 Ones to Watch: Laura Smulski, CFO at Performance Environmental Services

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What recent project, transaction or accomplishment are you most proud of? First, I am most proud of the team that I have built. When I was first hired, our admin department was myself and our

receptionist. Since then, we've grown to a team of 10 administrators each who demonstrate commitment and contribute energy to our growing business. Secondly, I am proud of helping to bring our company into the 21st century by employing technology in the field. We needed to move information from the field to the home office more quickly to remain competitive and to provide a seamless customer experience. I'm proud of how much our managers can do now from the road. Once again, my team has been integral in rolling out these systems. With their ongoing efforts and insights, we have built a solid yet nimble infrastructure.

What led you to your current profession? At the time of my employment, I was not rooted in a single career path but was wholly ready for a professional challenge. When the owner bought the business a few short years after I was hired, I was lucky enough to be there to help work through all the issues one faces when starting a company. Our favorite analogy for what we were doing was "changing a tire on a moving vehicle". That period was more valuable than my business school education. In retrospect, it showed me who I am. Tenacious, determined and accountable. 17 years later, I am leading the finance team for three companies.

What does it take to succeed in your specific industry? In our industry, the key to our success has been earning the confidence of our customers and employees. We do this in the finance department by processing and delivering information quickly and accurately, both internally and externally. Being responsive to our customers' needs in real time is as critical as making sure our employees in the field know that they are supported by the home office. This philosophy permeates all departments. We pride ourselves on always picking up the phone, never letting an email lapse and meeting all obligations and deadlines.

What are the top 3 items on your bucket list? I don't have a bucket list. I've been fortunate to have had so many adventures in life already. My only goal now is to fully appreciate today and to become more thoughtful and intentional in all that I do.

What are you doing when you aren't working? Time outside of work is spent with my two kids and husband. They are all fun-loving and curious, so adventure is everywhere. A few fan favorites are hiking, playing Uno and going to Watch Hill Beach. With the summer months coming up, we'll be traveling as much as possible. We just applied for their first passport!