

Observer sales manager says 'thanks' to customers, colleagues

Peg Knoespel will end a successful career in sales at the Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers next Wednesday and she leaves with the same passion and enthusiasm for selling as when she began in 1977.

Knoespel joined the O&E as a part-time sales secretary based in Livonia. She will retire next week as full sales manager of the seven Observer Newspapers. She leaves behind many satisfied customers, an admiring and successful sales staff and some very big shoes to fill, according to her colleagues and friends at the O&E.

"I have a passion for my work and absolutely love what I am doing and have fun doing it," said Knoespel, who lives in Northville Township.

"I had a boss who said: 'If work was so much fun they wouldn't call it work,' but I think work is supposed to be fun and challenging and with that combination magical things happen and they call it success," she said.

Knoespel holds an associate degree in marketing management and fashion merchandising from Gateway Technical Insti-



Peg Knoespel

tute. She is also a graduate of the American Press Institute.

Changes

She has seen many changes in Observer communities and businesses and newspaper advertising over the last 25 years.

"It used to be sort of a mail-route approach. You would stop and see people and ask: 'What do you have for me today?'"

"But today it's all about ideas. We don't sell space, we sell ideas. We sell readership. We

sell results. Today, it's relationship selling. You have to listen to your customers and help them succeed."

Knoespel started out calling on the "dads in the family business."

"There's a lot of family in this business with our customers. I called on a lot of the dads including Hank Konat of Classic Interiors, and Ed Buzenberg of Walker Buzenberg, Jeff Jones at Plymouth Nursery was just out of college and his dad was still working at the nursery when I called on them."

Today, Eric and Dave Buzenberg manage Walker Buzenberg, a furniture store in downtown Plymouth and Kevin Konat leads Classic Interiors, a furniture and design store, in Livonia. Jeff Jones runs Plymouth Nursery.

Recipe for success

Knoespel will be remembered for her keen sales acumen, her creative ideas, absolute attention to customer service and her often zany sales meetings.

In an effort to spur on or reward a great holiday selling season, Knoespel would appear

as Mrs. Claus with advice and/or gifts for the sales staff. Knoespel's unseen character, "Miss Marguerite" would leave funny and encouraging voice mail messages in an effort to motivate or reward the sales staff. (Marguerite is Knoespel's birth name.)

Knoespel likens the role of sales manager to that of a coach and she believes that sales meetings are a place to share ideas, plan strategy, celebrate success and have fun.

"Creative sales meetings set the tone for success. I like to have fun and want people who work with me to have fun too," she added, recalling sales meetings at Mary Dennings Cakes Shoppe to help launch the holiday selling season, Plymouth Nursery to kick off sales for the home and garden special sections and picnics in the park as a thank you for a job well done.

Knoespel thanks her customers - Gary Pratt of Brose Electric, Julie Sprout at St. Mary Mercy Hospital, Andrea Nodge and Madonna University and many, many more for their success and ultimately her success.

She offered a special thank you to Frank Kenny, former O&E research manager, who lives in Farmington Hills.

"Frank was a mentor. He taught me to use research. He showed me just how strong we are compared to the competition. He gave me the confidence through research that we have a good product to offer our customers," said Knoespel.

Winding down

After 25 years in sales, Knoespel plans to take the summer off to rest, relax and enjoy family time. She also plans to work on her golf game and "get acquainted with her digital camera."

In the fall she will volunteer her time either at a library or a local school reading to children and do some part-time sales consulting.

"My new job is to take good care of myself and my husband so that we can enjoy the years ahead."

Her family includes husband, Jerry, and son, Steve and his fiancée, Vicki Bennett.

The Knoespel family moved to Livonia 26 years ago from

Kenosha, Wisconsin because of Jerry's job transfer from what was then American Motors. Jerry Knoespel currently works in the engineering division at Daimler Chrysler. Steve was 7 at the time is now 33 and lives in Canton Township. He is operations manager at ASW in Belleville.

The Knoespel family called Livonia home for more than 18 years. A few years ago, Peg and Jerry moved to Northville Township. They plan to relocate again in a couple of years. This time to Florida and a house on a golf course.

When Knoespel moved from Wisconsin to Livonia years ago she told her husband, "I can get a job, there's a newspaper down the street."

Some 25 years later, what may have started out as simply "a job" culminates in a successful sales career.

Knoespel celebrated her success and the beginning of her new retirement adventure with a new Dream Cruise edition PT Cruiser. The license plate appropriately says: "Peg's PT."

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