

Lindsay Gifford

Gifford's Ice Cream



www.foodindustrywomen.com

Years with company: My dad jokes that I declared shortly after my birth that I would someday run the company, but I've only been allowed to work here for the past 11 years. I acted as an office "girl Friday" during the summers of my four years in high school and then moved into a position as assistant to the controller while attending college. My full-time status began the day after my graduation from Bryant University.

Current position: VP of Sales & Marketing

What positions have you had with this company?

Assistant to the Controller
Sales Management
Business Office Management

Brief job description:

As in any small business, Gifford's Ice Cream requires that every employee wear many hats (including hair-nets) just to move through our daily operations. My main focus is to grow our sales and I work closely with our team of sales reps to set goals, and provide support for success. Other projects on my list are pretty varied: managing the freshening of the Gifford's brand; meeting with distributors and potential distributors; setting up sales promotions; sitting for interviews regarding the latest awards earned by our company; attending trade shows and industry conventions; and even scooping ice cream for charitable events on occasion!

Degrees:

B.S. in Business Administration, Bryant University, Smithfield, RI

Professional/volunteer affiliations:

I served as board secretary on the Skowhegan Chamber of Commerce and am currently a member of the Maine Family Business Board. I've also enjoyed working with kids as a coach for youth organizations in both track and soccer.

Mentors and how have they assisted you in your career?

My father, John Gifford, and uncle, Roger Gifford, the owners of Gifford's Ice Cream, have been and continue to be my mentors. They have always said that my last name "just gets me in the door" and from there I have to decide what I want to do with the opportunity in front of me. They have been great at guiding my career while still letting me make my own mistakes along the way in order to learn from them.

Who is your most immediate supervisor?

John and Roger Gifford

What are you most proud about in your career achievements?

I had been in an apprentice-type role since joining the company full-time after college. In the last year that has changed and I've taken the lead role in planning the future for the family business. I am actively redirecting the sales team to achieve the company's short- and long-term goals.

Most rewarding part of your job:

Working with my family. My last name is on every package that leaves the plant, which represents both a great source of pride and a huge responsibility. Every move that I make is planned with the final goal in mind of transitioning this family business into the 3rd generation, my generation, and

beyond. I strive to be a good steward of the company so that it is in good shape when my nephew or my cousin or my own (as yet unborn) child is ready to take the reins.

Most challenging part of job:

Working with my family. Besides myself, there are eight other family members currently actively involved in the daily operation of Gifford's Ice Cream and my grandparents, in their 80s, still stay informed and weigh-in on a regular basis. So much interaction can be great or not-so-great. We all share the same dream and so we work to keep the company's best interest in mind while dealing with any, thankfully infrequent, family issues.

Thoughts on issues and opportunities in retail food industry today:

Competing at the retail level requires a compelling competitive proposition. Gifford's Ice Cream is well positioned in this regard, and in fact, is a huge opportunity. Too many consumers approach the glut of sameness in the ice cream section with apprehension; after all, most competitors are working with the same basic 10 percent formula and the same ingredient cost structure. Gifford's offers a true point of differentiation, premium ice cream at 14% butterfat with homemade, premium ingredients. As a four time winner of the World's Best Ice Cream title, Gifford's Ice Cream has proven that different is GOOD when you're talking about ice cream.

We are just a regional player mixing it up with much larger dairies, but the competition makes us better, smarter and tougher, every day. We love the challenge and embrace the burden it puts on us to continuously tweak our approach to getting Gif-

ford's ice cream on the tables of families throughout New England.

Hobbies:

Although my fiancé would say that work is my hobby, I really do enjoy time away from the job. We can't wait for winter and SNOW! The calendar says that winter starts on Dec. 21 and ends on March 20 – the calendar wasn't created by anyone who lives in Maine. We both grew up here, love the outdoors and spend as much time as possible on the snowmobile trails all over the state. After a day outside, a good book is my favorite form of relaxation and I often swap reading material with my family and friends. 📖



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