

**ISSUE: WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT** *October 24, 2016*

# Q&A: Serafina Schorer on Running a Company

By Joanne Cleaver

## “The biggest mistake women make today is, they try to be a wannabe man”



Serafina Schorer

Serafina Schorer is CEO of RIM Custom Racks, a Detroit-based, family-owned manufacturer of shipping racks and gear for getting automotive parts to plants. The company’s services and supplies are integral to the supply chain, ensuring that parts arrive intact and on time so that vehicles can be assembled efficiently. She is on the board of the Great Lakes Women’s Business Council. In an interview with SAGE Business Researcher freelance correspondent Joanne Cleaver, she discusses the challenges of overseeing a company and offers advice for female managers.

### **You were thrust into the role of CEO in 2005 when your husband, the company founder, suddenly died. Why did you decide to run the company instead of sell it?**

I was a homemaker and the mother of four adult sons. I had no experience in manufacturing or business. I thought, “I’m going to do this.” And I did. I found that I loved it. I could understand why my husband was so wound up in the business. It’s addictive. There’s nothing more exciting than all the things that go into making an automobile.

### **Shortly after you stepped up to the CEO role, the recession began, and it hit the automotive sector especially hard. How did you get through that?**

Here we were, in 2008, with the markets collapsing and the banks weren’t supportive of automotive companies; you couldn’t get a line of credit, and two of our major customers—GM and Chrysler—declared bankruptcy. It was a very turbulent time. You wear your CEO mask. You say, “We’re going to get through this,” but secretly, you wonder what’s going to happen.

You have your attorneys and your accountants, but there’s nobody there to really mentor you. You’re going it alone. I went to a conference held by the Great Lakes Women’s Business Council and went to a session on how to work with bankrupt customers. I went to that conference very discouraged, but it was a shot in the arm, and I went back to my team and I said, “We’re going to make it.” Suddenly I had a group of professional women to call on, and I did call them.

### **How have you reinvested in other women?**

I got certified as a woman-owned business in 2010 because I thought I could use all the help I could get, and it changed my whole business. At forums with other women business owners, you meet women from all industries. I always come back with new perspectives.

## ALSO IN THIS ISS

### Report:

Women in Management  
2757355/20161024/wo

### Short Articles:

Women Still Lag in Tec  
101083-2757447/20161  
in-tech-fields)

Should Men Advocate f  
Leaders? (/sbr-1775-10  
2757455/20161024/shc  
for-more-female-leade  
Discussion Questions (  
2757462/20161024/dis

### Data:

Women Less Than 5 Pe  
(/sbr-1775-101083-  
2757361/20161024/wo  
percent-of-sp-500-ceos  
White Women Outnum  
Races on Boards (/sbr-  
2757369/20161024/wh  
outnumber-fema  
boards)

Women, Men Agr  
Equality Importa  
2757377/2016102  
workplace-gende  
Gender Pay Gap I  
(/sbr-1775-10108  
2757464/20161024/ger  
across-occupations)  
Google’s Gender Divers  
101083-2757467/20161  
diversity-record)

SAGE Recommends

### Expert Views:

**You had no business experience whatsoever when you took over. What experiences or skills proved to be invaluable, even though you gained them through life experience before becoming CEO?**

Women have a collaborative style and that works perfectly with networking and partnering and forming relationships. When you're running a home and a family and you do a lot in the community, you form skills you don't realize you have. But I think the biggest mistake women make today is, they try to be a wannabe man. Instead, be a really talented woman.

**What's your best advice for a female mid-manager who wants to be a CEO?**

Trust yourself and know that you have a lot to offer. Champion other women and be your own best advocate. Be willing to change direction if need be; look for success in unexpected places.

You have to be able to lead and to inspire. Embrace who you are and be authentic and celebrate your talents and skills. We all have different life experiences and we bring a lot to the table. We can bring a lot to any business if we are who we are.

**Q&A: Serafina Schore Company (/sbr-1775-2757470/20161024/q&on-running-a-compar**

**MOST READ**

Report: Fintech (/sbr-12748617/20160912/fint  
**September 12, 2016**

Report: Women in Top 1645-95535-2666211/2  
top-management)  
**April 27, 2015**

Report: Commercial Dr 98070-2712846/201601  
drones)  
**January 18, 2016**

Report: The Sharing Ec 96738-2690068/201508  
economy)  
**August 3, 2015**

Report: Doing Business 99546-2726283/201604  
cuba)  
**April 11, 2016**

- [ABOUT SAGE \(HTTP://WWW.SAGEPUB.COM/ABOUTCOMPANY.NAV\)](http://www.sagepub.com/aboutcompany.nav)
- [ABOUT SAGE BUSINESS RESOURCES \(HTTP://WWW.SAGEPUB.COM/BUSINESS-MANAGEMENT.SP\)](http://www.sagepub.com/business-management.sp)
- [ABOUT SAGE BUSINESS RESEARCHER \(HTTP://WWW.SAGEPUB.COM/BUSINESS-MANAGEMENT/BUSINESS-RESEARCHER.SP\)](http://www.sagepub.com/business-management/business-researcher.sp)
- [PRIVACY POLICY \(HTTP://WWW.SAGEPUB.COM/PRIVACYPOLICY.NAV\)](http://www.sagepub.com/privacypolicy.nav)
- [TERMS OF USE \(/STATIC/PUBLIC/TERMSOFUSE\)](/static/public/termsfuse)
- [CONTACT US \(HTTP://WWW.SAGEPUB.COM/CUSTOMERCARE.NAV\)](http://www.sagepub.com/customercare.nav)
- [ISSUES \(/ALLISSUES/DATE\)](/allissues/date)
- [CONTENT TYPES \(/SEARCH?ACTION=NEWSEARCH&SORT=FIELD:DOC\\_DATE\\_UPDATE,D\)](/search?action=newsearch&sort=field:doc_date_update,d)
- [FEEDBACK \(/FEEDBACK\)](/feedback)
- [SAGE CONNECTION BLOG \(HTTP://CONNECTION.SAGEPUB.COM/HOME/\)](http://connection.sagepub.com/home/)
- [LIBRARIAN RESOURCES \(/STATIC/PUBLIC/RESOURCES\)](/static/public/resources)
- [FACULTY? SIGN UP FOR A TRIAL \(HTTP://FREETRIALS.SAGEPUB.COM/SAGEBUSINESSRESEARCHER\)](http://freetrials.sagepub.com/sagebusinessresearcher)
- [PERMISSIONS \(/STATIC/PUBLIC/PERMISSIONS\)](/static/public/permissions)

**EXPAND YOUR SE**  
Copyri