

Theresa Majchrzak

All Safe Elevator Inspections

Principal

Taking calculated risks to elevate

By Jimmy DeButts | staff | jdebutts@bizjournals.com

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Background: Theresa Majchrzak followed the sun before beginning down the path of owning an elevator-inspection business. After earning a business degree from the University of Maryland, College Park, Majchrzak turned down an offer from an elevator company to spend time with friends in California and Florida.

When she returned to Baltimore, she worked for Morgan Stanley before taking a job with the elevator firm she initially rejected. That gave her the experience, contacts and expertise she leaned on when launching her own company. Majchrzak doesn't perform inspections; she hires inspectors and handles day-to-day operations. She learned the industry from the ground up while working on construction sites during the building of the Baltimore Hilton and Silo Point.

When and why did you open your business? July 2009. There was a law change in April 2009 that made it necessary for building owners to hire third-party elevator inspectors since the state would no longer conduct inspections. I got into elevator maintenance, which goes hand-in-hand with elevator inspections. The stars aligned. I knew the right people and the industry and who would be my customer base.

What sparked your entrepreneurial spirit? I was either going to start my MBA or begin my own business. My goal of getting my MBA was to start my own business. My grandfather owned a real estate company in the 1960s and 1970s. I come from a long line of entrepreneurs.

What is the biggest obstacle to starting a business?

The pace at which this started. The law was quickly implemented. It was explaining to building owners the necessity and helping customers through the transition since it was no longer state-run.

How do you get past male chauvinism?

I'm very fortunate that I know my business. I'm very confident in what I know. Having great people around me and asking the right questions have given me the credibility factor. Age has been more of a factor. People see me as a young blonde but my past experience has given me credibility.

What's the best advice you ever received?

My grandfather wrote me a card for my graduation from Notre Dame Preparatory that I keep on my desk. He wrote, "Conceive — think about what you want to do or become. Believe in and be happy with what you conceive. Achieve — do what you conceived and believe. Whatever you do — do it with ENTHUSIASM."

What's the secret to your success?

Just go for it. Take risks but be calculated when doing so and do it with a smile.

What drives you? Knowing we provide the best service in the industry. Our intention is to do things only the right way and do it fairly for people. We don't want to work with them just for this year but year after year.

What is your business motto?

Treat a customer the way you would want to be treated.

I knew I made it when... I learned from the Maryland Department of Labor,

Licensing and Regulations that we were one of the companies that was inspecting the most buildings in Maryland.

When I hear the word 'no,' I... smile. No is an invitation to more discussion.

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