

faith & finance

what we can learn from area business leaders

In this economic crisis, business leaders struggle to keep businesses afloat and employees working. FAITH talked to Catholic business leaders about their businesses, about how they keep faith a part of their everyday lives and about what you can do to survive financially.

“Coming from a Catholic family, I learned that God puts us all in the position to help others”

Biography

Name: Kellie Dean
Title: President and CEO
Company: Dean Trailways
Type of Business: Transportation
Number of employees: 1,000
Parish: St. Thomas Aquinas, East Lansing

FAITH asks **Kellie Dean**

What does your company do? Though our company is best known for our motor coach service, our main business is providing transportation to public school districts in Michigan, both to regular and special needs students.

What is the reason for your success? If there is a reason for our success, I would say it comes from lots of hard work and from hiring good people. I am proud to have employees who drive safely and show care and concern for the special needs kids they transport. I respect and appreciate the job they do, and they feel as though they contribute to making life better for the kids.

Another important ingredient is to try to do the right thing.

You can't always control the outside circumstances, but you can control how you treat people. I want to treat people with integrity and run the business honestly and provide safe service. Everyone should be treated respectfully and equally, from employees to customers to everyone you meet.

What is your background? I received a degree in special education from Michigan State University. I worked as a teacher and administrator in the field for 12 years before getting into transportation.

How does your faith affect your job? Coming from a Catholic family, I learned that God puts us all in the position to help others. I tell people that the thing we have to offer is wheels, and I try to put them to use for the community. For instance, we provide transportation for MSU students at St. John's Student

Parish when they go on trips to help others during spring break. One of our other projects is helping Dr. John Shinsky, a former classmate and MSU football teammate of mine, build an orphanage in Matamoros, Mexico, by sending buses loaded with desks, chairs, bedding and construction supplies.

We provided 24-hour shuttle service for the building trades and spectators during the recent ABC *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* show in Holt when they built a new house for a family whose father had died.

My goal is to share our resources to assist or better the Michigan communities in which we are involved. We provide transportation for the homeless and for the needy so they can get meals and medical help. We were also able to send buses to New Orleans full of food, clothes, toys, anything to help after Hurricane Katrina. I was the area director of Special Olympics for many years and still help out with transportation

to those events.

All of that isn't to toot my own horn. Many businesses give back to the community. We do it because we are able and because people need help. But it wouldn't be possible without good employees. We have 1,000, and so I have learned what to look for in a good worker. Here is what I would tell people looking for a job these days:

What do people need to do to succeed? You have to be extremely persistent. When you apply, have a presentable physical appearance. Try to be optimistic and make a good impression. Be knowledgeable of the potential employer's business. Be a team player, willing to develop skills that would help you grow in the company. But be willing to start at an entry-level position and work your way up. Show hard work and enthusiasm. >>