

# LOCATOR Upfront

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## Krystyn Roberts

Wows Her Employees  
And Becomes The 2007  
UpFront Boss Of The Year



### Money Out The Window

Auto recyclers that employ delivery personnel without rules about the usage of electronic equipment while driving are at risk for a host of legal problems.

### A Dream Come True

After working outside for 28 years, with a rundown shack for an office, Joe Gricco builds his dream business. He wants to build it "just right."

### Madder Than A Wet Hen

How do you comfort an angry customer and keep him returning to your business? Find how-to scenarios and five simple steps inside this issue.



**Krystyn Roberts, center, with employees Kevin Cowherd, Missy Manning, Sheila Billingsley, Jimmie Pater Jr. and Otis Patterson.**

# BEST BOSS

## Krystyn Roberts Earns Top Honors

**T**he employees at County Line Auto Parts in Missouri share a common opinion. They think their boss, Krystyn Roberts, is as good as it gets. That is why they came out in full force to nominate her for 2007 Locator UpFront Boss of the Year.

“Krystyn is the first person many of us call for advice,” said Office Manager Sheila Billingsley. “She can handle any situation that comes her way with dignity and pride while teaching others and implementing new ideas. Not only do I admire her as a boss but she is the one I look up to in all aspects of life.”

“I feel that if every boss would run their business the way Krystyn does,” added Otis Patterson, “there would be a lot less unemployment claims, less problems at work, and an overall nicer place to work.”

In total, six enthusiastic employees nominated Roberts, who found out she had won while en route to a meeting in St. Louis.

“I was stunned,” she admitted. “I had to call all of them immediately to thank them. And it has honestly meant a great deal. I view it as my employees saying they recognize and appreciate what I do. It’s pretty huge for a woman in this industry.”

Roberts grew up around the largest transmission facility in Iowa. She worked in the automotive industry through college and then returned in 2003 when she and husband Dennis bought County Line Auto Parts with partners Don Morris and Joe Roederer. In leadership roles since graduating college, Roberts has worked hard over the years to be a good boss.

“The secret is to treat people the way you want to be treated,” she said. “That means treating people fairly and with respect. Everyone is your equal and they’re all important to the business.”

Roberts is strong on problem solving but sometimes analyzes problems too much.

“Sometimes if I’m tackling a problem, I have to walk away and come back,” she said. “I gather the facts and try not to make emotional decisions.”

The hardest part about being a boss is firing people, according to Roberts. “I hate it with a passion. But sometimes it has to happen.”

On the flipside, it is her employees who energize her.

“It’s feeling like I made a difference,” she said. “My favorite part is seeing how far my employees have come, whether it’s a new skill or being able to purchase a new car. Their success is my success.”

Motivating employees is a key part of doing business at County Line. The Boss of the Year nominations stressed how Roberts allows them to make mistakes, gives great feedback and rewards good performance.

“We try hard to acknowledge when an employee does well,” she said. “We also show they’re important to us by doing things such as making a big deal about their birthdays. They each get to choose their favorite dessert that day and we treat them to it.”

Employee Jimmie Pater Jr. said, “Krystyn makes you feel that you are a really important part of the company. She inspires you to have a high standard for yourself and the company. You can always say you’re proud she’s your boss.” ❧

**BY FELICIA LOWENSTEIN NIVEN**

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