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Special Report by Jordan Vitick

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### **Marcia Coulson**

President,  
Eldon James Corp.

As president of Fort Collins, Colo.-based Eldon James Corp., Marcia Coulson compares her responsibilities to that of a symphony conductor and makes certain that everyone is working together efficiently.

With nearly 40 years in business, Eldon James is a woman-owned manufacturer and supplier of more than 6,000 proprietary and customized tubing and fluid handling solutions. Its catalog offers a

range of products for the transportation, automotive, food and beverage, chemical and general industrial sectors.

Coulson's career highlight happened in April this year, when the company revealed its new sterile connector to the pharmaceutical market and "received enormous excitement for this product," which took five years to develop.

Her first plastics job was "picking parts," the process of removing the runner from the finished parts. Her parents built a plastics business, and she and her siblings would simultaneously watch television and separate plastic parts. "I have picked millions of parts in my life," she added.

Coulson also works with her husband, William, who joined Eldon James nearly 20 years ago. "It's unusual to be able to work with your spouse and both thrive from the experience," she said.

Her current challenge is finding new employees with a strong work ethic.

The best advice she has received is that there is no overnight success: "It's the little things you do right every day that add up to the big things that lead to success."

Coulson advises others to learn something new every day since "there is a lot to learn," volunteer to become an internal auditor for your company, put yourself in a position to ask questions and learn, and cross-train whenever possible.

"I have a new list of things to do nearly every day. I make sure I listen to what our salespeople are hearing from our customers [and] what do our customers need, want, dislike, suggest for improvement, etc. If you make the customers happy, you can build a great company," Coulson said.

"I truly love our business, our employees and our customers," she added. "I've enjoyed most every day for the last 37 years."



**Andrea Collins**

Director of System Operations and Marketing,  
Eldon James Corp.

For the last three decades, Andrea Collins has worked in the printing, marketing and graphic design fields.

She graduated from Colorado State University with a bachelor's degree in graphics communications as well as an associate degree in German and art history. Her transition to the plastics industry marked a significant change, although it did keep the marketing element intact.

“Eldon James was my first employment in plastics. I was looking to expand my skills and knowledge, and the opportunity presented itself for me to join the Eldon James family. I have been with Eldon James almost 12 years,” said the director of system operations and marketing for the Fort Collins, Colo.-based tubing and components manufacturer.

“When I started at Eldon James, I knew nothing about plastics other than products were commercially marketed as a convenience, lightweight and disposable. Over the years, I have acquired expertise in the molding and extrusion process, as well as an understanding of various raw materials, their advantages, and how they can improve both new and existing products available in the market,” she added.

As the director of system operations, Collins oversees and administers the enterprise resource planning and manufacturing execution system, DelmiaWorks (IQMS). She trains employees on system modules to enhance efficiency, boost productivity and minimize errors, and she facilitates collaboration between IT support and the external support team.

In her marketing role, she crafts strategic plans for both current and new product lines, including market analyses. She designs, creates and maintains all marketing collateral, training guides, trade show graphics, company websites and advertising.

Her biggest professional accomplishment has been contributing to the company's growth by promoting an inclusive culture and team spirit, which has included addressing challenges and seizing opportunities for improvement, teamwork and unity.

“Initially, Eldon James DelmiaWorks (IQMS) was only being used by about 30 percent of its capacity when I joined. Over the years, we've increased its usage to over 85-90 percent, which has led to the elimination of waste, boosted productivity, streamlined processes, enhanced on-time delivery and contributed to increased sales,” Collins said.

A first-generation American from parents who immigrated from Austria, Collins said her parents instilled the fundamental value of humility. “A job was more than just a means of earning a paycheck; it was about the collective success and growth of the company and its employees, which was the measure of our success,” she said.

“The passage of time alters situations, and I am not confined to a predetermined mold,” Collins said. “Instead, I am evolving, adapting and overcoming challenges in the present moment. Progress and growth are not possible if we remain confined within a set pattern.”