

# Alpha Drilling & Blasting

## President - Lori Florian Britton

**Success Magazine:** How do you define success?

Lori Florian Britton: Success, for me, is defined by a healthy balance of hard work and quality family time. In business it's the ability to build ongoing relationships with our customers that continue to grow from year to year. It's the feeling of pride that comes from knowing you provided quality services with integrity and respect. In my personal life it's about spending time with family and friends. Success is feeling good about yourself and the way you treat others. It's a great feeling each night to put your head on the pillow and know you gave your best.

**SM:** How did you become interested in the explosives industry?

LFB: Upon graduating from college, I met and started dating a guy who was working as a truck driver and laborer for an explosives company in Connecticut. We later married and moved to Queensbury where we eventually began an explosives company.

**SM:** How did your past work experience help prepare you for success with Alpha Drilling & Blasting?

LFB: Having been part owner of an explosives company for more than 25 years, I was well prepared for the transition. I am extremely comfortable in this industry. I know it very well.

**SM:** What prompted your decision to go out on your own in 2007?

LFB: Survival! I was suddenly single and knew I had to work to survive. After exploring many possibilities, I kept coming back to the explosives industry. I knew that I had the knowledge and the experience to make a go of it. I asked one of our guys, Terry Hayes, Vice President of Alpha if he would be interested in going into this venture with me and luckily he was. He was ready for a change and a new challenge. I took the plunge and have never looked back.

**SM:** What was the biggest challenge you faced during your start-up phase?

LFB: Getting the funding. When I made the decision to begin Alpha Drilling & Blasting, I went to several area banks for funding. The banks told

me they were unable to lend me any money now, but I should come back when I would no longer need it!

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**SM:** How were you able to get the funding needed to start the company?

LFB: I calculated the minimum start-up costs and what I would need to get the ball rolling. I began by selling my vehicle to buy a pickup truck. I begged suppliers to extend me credit and I was able to secure some equipment loans. For the remaining capital, I was lucky enough to get some private funding.

**SM:** Did you have a business plan?

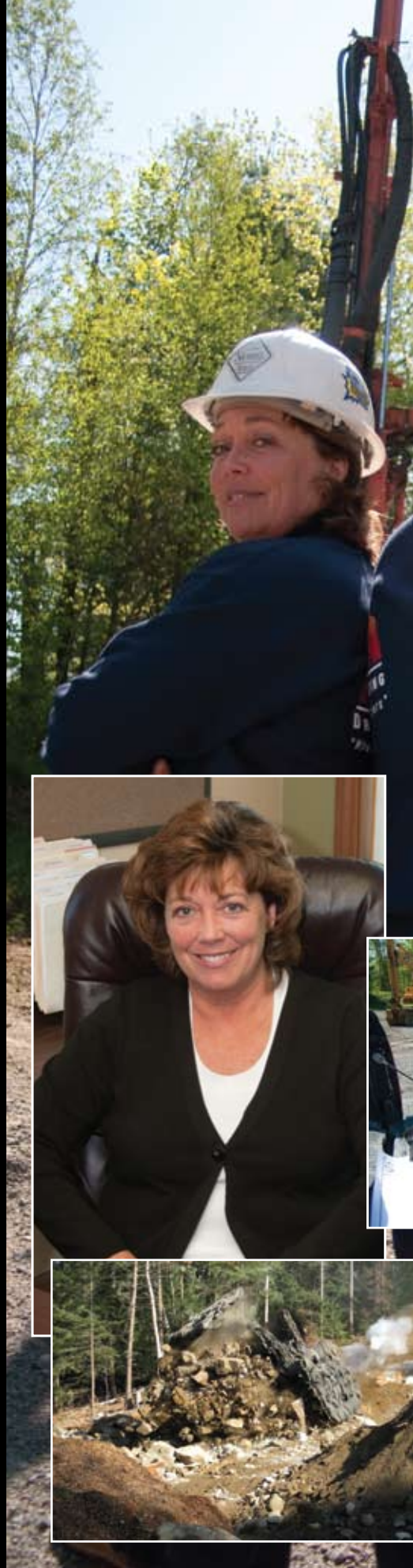
LFB: Yes, I wrote a business plan before I started the company. It was quite ambitious at the time, but I was determined to succeed. I keep that plan close by so that every now and then I can read what I set for goals and see if I am on track! I am happy to say that all is going according to that plan.

**SM:** What challenges have you faced as a woman in a male dominated industry?

LFB: Actually, I have found that while there have been some challenges, overall the support has been tremendous. I have spent a great deal of time in the field setting the charges and working in the trenches. I have been able to prove my knowledge and experience. I also have a fantastic support team which helps keep everything balanced.

**SM:** What personal characteristic has helped you to achieve success?

LFB: Some would say it's my stubbornness. I like to think of it as determination and perseverance. I am just not willing to take no for an answer from myself. I believe that hard work and a good attitude will take you a long way.





**SM: What is your secret to dealing with adversity?**

LFB: Diplomacy! I try very hard to listen to the issues that are causing the adversity. I realize that there will be differences along the way, but I believe if you are willing to communicate and bend, you can usually find a solution.

**SM: Who has been your role model or mentor throughout this start-up?**

LFB: I have several, but my biggest and most important role model has been my father. He is a successful business man with a wealth of information and knowledge. There are not many situations he hasn't dealt with through his own experiences and his support has been unwavering. Having him for a mentor has been invaluable.

**SM: What have you learned about yourself since opening a business?**

LFB: I can do whatever I set my mind to. Even in these difficult economic times, if you love what you are doing and you believe in yourself, you will be successful.

**SM: What makes Alpha Drilling & Blasting unique in the industry?**

LFB: Alpha Drilling & Blasting prides itself on offering quality services with integrity, reliability, and quality. Drilling and blasting can be a stressful experience for those who do not know what to expect. We take pride in our work and strive to make the blasting experience as positive as possible.

**SM: What is the scope of work that you do?**

LFB: Alpha specializes in residential, commercial, and quarry work. In the residential sector a typical project would be drilling and blasting for a house foundation or possibly utilities such as water, sewer, or electrical trenches. Commercially, it varies such as drilling and blasting for roadways or trench work for towns and counties to site development on major projects. In the quarry sector it can be contract drilling only or the complete drilling and blasting package. We always say, show us the rock and we'll get rid of it. There is not much we can't handle.

**SM: Have you considered applying for WBE (Women Business Enterprise) Certification?**

LFB: Actually, I did successfully apply to New York State for WBE Certification and received it in 2007. Many contractors had expressed to me how difficult it was to find WBE's in the contracting industry and they encouraged me to apply. Since obtaining that certification, I have had many opportunities to bid projects that are government funded. The beauty of this is if my prices are competitive and I am awarded the work, I am able to help the contractor meet some of the requirements of utilizing WBE's. It's a win/win for both myself and the contractor. I am currently in the process of applying for Fed-

eral DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprise) Certification and I look forward to being able to offer this status on federally funded projects as well.

**SM: What project are you most proud of and why?**

LFB: I am most proud of a project I did in the winter of 2008. The project was the Queensbury Armory where we drilled and blasted in excess of 16,000 cubic yards of rock. I am proud of this project because of the difficulties that we overcame. This project had a very difficult contract with strict deadlines. It was the dead of winter and the snow fell almost daily. One week of moving onto this project, my right hand man and project manager, Terry Hayes, was unexpectedly taken to the hospital for a very serious illness. I knew I had to honor the contract and I knew somehow I would. Because of the company's integrity and philosophy, I had many contacts I could call on. I knew I had developed friendships built on trust and fairness. I pulled together a team from anywhere and everywhere—at first I thought I had hired the dirty dozen, but the way these guys came together and stuck through to the end with me is something I will always remember. We finished the project on time and I have to say it was a great experience, one I would never trade. I am quite proud of this particular one!

**SM: How do you ensure that you stay up-to-date on all the latest techniques and technology?**

LFB: There is quite a lot of networking and support in our industry. We share information and knowledge amongst ourselves. Our product and equipment suppliers also contribute to making sure they keep us informed and up-to-date on the latest products and technology. We are also members of the International Society of Explosives Engineers, where we are able to get a wealth of information and consulting from top experts in the field of explosives.

**SM: How have these tough economic times affected your business?**

LFB: There is no doubt these times have affected us. We follow construction, so if they are off, we are off. We have scaled back our overhead and have learned to run leaner. We are confident that we will survive these tough times and look forward to better days.



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