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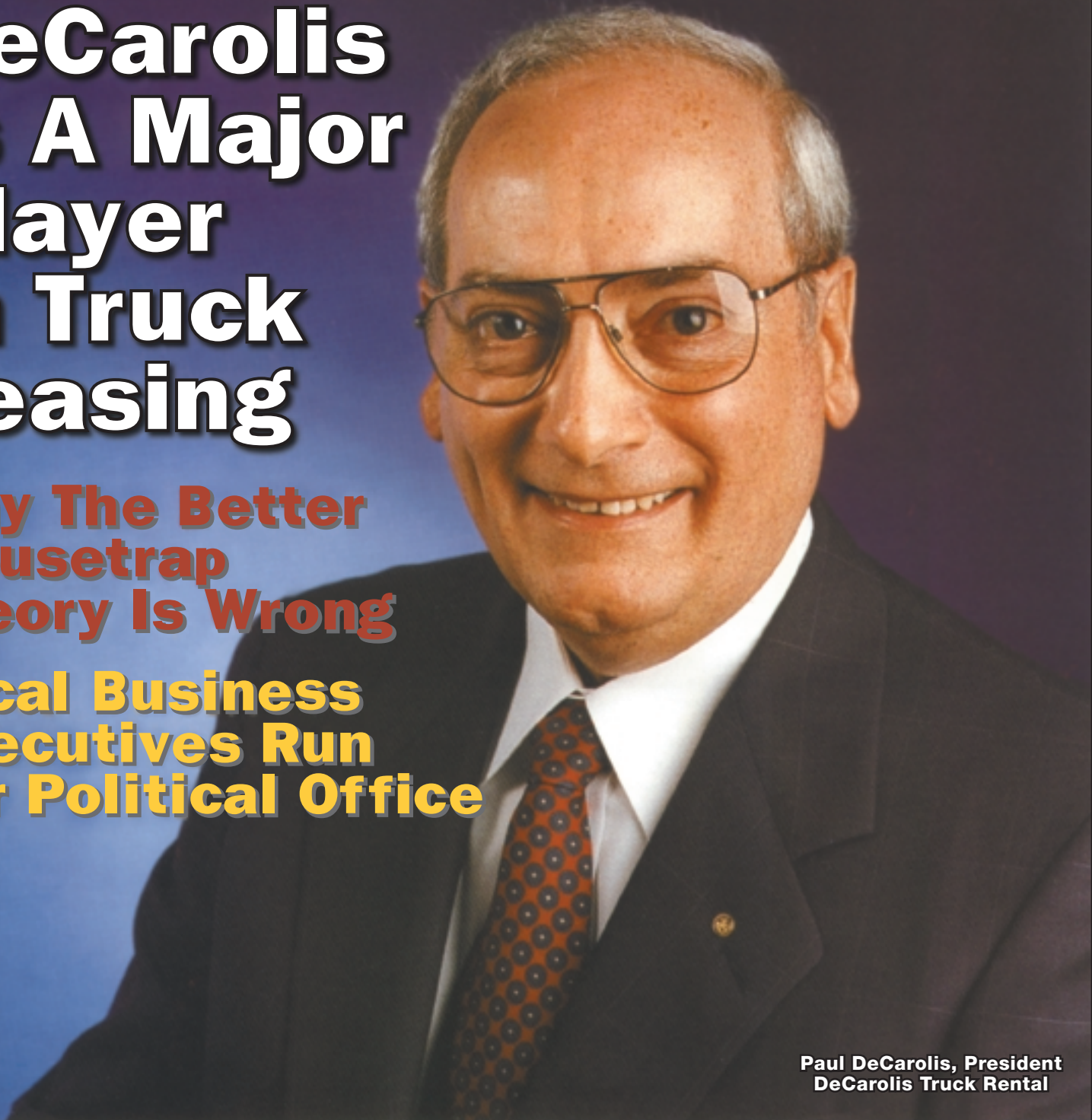
Management Ideas And Techniques For Growing Businesses

OCTOBER 1998

DeCarolis Is A Major Player In Truck Leasing

**Why The Better
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Theory Is Wrong**

**Local Business
Executives Run
For Political Office**



**Paul DeCarolis, President
DeCarolis Truck Rental**

DeCarolis Truck Rental – On The Road For 60 Years

By Betty Adams

It's every little boy's dream...trucks, trucks, trucks!

DeCarolis Truck Rental has more than 3,000 vehicles on the road and more than 2,000 miniature trucks in cabinets in its Rochester facilities and in its branches in Henrietta, Perry, Buffalo, Geneva, Syracuse, and Binghamton. President and CEO, Paul DeCarolis, even has them in his home. With a smile of his own he says, "It's always interesting to see the smiles on people's faces when they see them. I guess we're all kids at heart".



Paul DeCarolis has been working in the family business since he became a teenager.

DeCarolis feels that the success of the company stems from the company's staying flexible and open to change. He says, "Change is the biggest change I see."

DeCarolis's business is celebrating its 60th year of operation and Paul DeCarolis has been there during every step of the growth of this concern that has many times been voted among Rochester's top 100 companies by the Chamber of Commerce. While other kids may have a collection of toy trucks, DeCarolis was actually very much a part of the trucking business from an early age. "By the time I was nine, I was hanging around the shop. By 12 or 13, I was driving a tractor trailer, and at 19, I was working in the business full time." DeCarolis took over the business in 1966 after his father died and his brother was killed in an airplane accident. He was 25.

It all began in 1938, when his father, Louis E. DeCarolis, bought a truck and used it to pick up workers and deliver them to area farms where they picked fruits and vegetables. At the end of the day, he'd bring them back to the city. Soon Clapp's Baby Food asked him to haul produce to their processing plant as well. DeCarolis says a truck purchase his father made then is interesting in contrast to today's dealings. "He paid \$1100 for the truck and body. After a trade-in and a down payment GMAC arranged for him to pay the \$458 dollar balance in 12 payments of \$38.18 a month!"

The business grew quickly through the '50's and '60's to include a warehouse, a truck stop, a truck dealership, truck refrigeration, warehousing, a Thermo-King franchise, and a leasing company. When DeCarolis took over, he decided to focus on truck rental and leasing with special emphasis on customer service.

Today the company provides truck, tractor and trailer leasing, custom contract maintenance agreements for companies that own their own vehicles, ("We take the trouble out of owning a truck"), heavy duty parts sales and service, storage trailers, daily rentals, driver training and safety programs.

Paul DeCarolis emphasizes to his employees and customers that the company is determined to supply a broad range of exceptionally reliable, high quality vehicle leasing, rental and transportation services that enable customers to reduce their overall distribution costs. As DeCarolis says, "Every customer has a customer, and it's our job to see that our customer can serve his customer with reliability and in a cost efficient manner."

DeCarolis is a charter member of AmtraLease, a nationwide network of independent truck leasing companies that allows DeCarolis group purchasing power for equipment. AmtraLease affiliates also provide fuel, emergency service and replacement vehicles whenever necessary. DeCarolis explains, "If one of our trucks breaks down in Chicago, AmtraLease will provide repairs within a reasonable time to or give us a truck to keep our customer on the road. We're backed by

more than 45,000 approved service and fuel locations across the United States and Canada; we can give our customers local attention coast to coast."

In the 1980's, DeCarolis realized that being in the heavy-duty parts business would keep the company's costs down and would qualify DeCarolis for direct purchasing and national account status. The company's parts division now buys parts and markets them industry-wide as well as to other DeCarolis divisions. That division, with its sale of heavy-duty parts and custom maintenance agreements for companies owning their own vehicles, brings DeCarolis to full service status.

It was in the 1980's, too, that the company expanded to Geneva, Henrietta, Buffalo, and Syracuse. Operations began in Binghamton in 1996 and Buffalo build a new facility that year. The Weedsport parts facility was established in 1997.

The main branch of DeCarolis was located at Emerson and Mt. Read for 30 years, but with the growth of the business, moved in 1975 to new facilities and offices at 333 Colfax Street. With some pride DeCarolis says, "We moved to this 15-acre site with 21 employees. We now have approximately 200 technicians, sales agents and support staff. And our fleet of 3,000 traveled more than 40,000 miles in 1997."

DeCarolis feels that the success of the company stems from the company's staying flexible and open to change. He says "Change is the biggest change I see. As a supplier, you need to adapt, to customize and be more competitive in supplying customers' needs. Com-

panies want to focus on their main business and disengage themselves from any additional manpower, maintenance, regulation problems, and environmental compliance issues. Leasing makes sense for them, freeing them from maintenance and investment concerns, and allowing them to accurately budget their transportation costs. Almost all leasing companies offer the same services, so we feel we must bring more flexibility and options to customers, to be truly full service."

DeCarolis' oldest son, Louis, is helping to make changes that make the company state-of-the-art. He has programmed a management information system that connects all the company's locations to the Rochester office by both voice and data. DeCarolis says, "Our maintenance system is paperless. At any time, you can get in and see the status of any unit, any work that needs to be done, the time involved, anything you need to know. It doesn't matter where the vehicle is domiciled, all the information is at your fingertips. If there is need for a hard copy, it can be printed out immediately. Service mileage and fuel mileage are on the computer and time and mileage figures help plan the work week. An in our heavy duty parts division, all necessary information is gathered at the point of sale for any part. The customer gets a bill, the part is taken off the inventory, and the inventory is adjusted for reorder."

Despite these advances to working smarter, DeCarolis says, "It's not magic. It's making things work and keeping a strong emphasis on quality."

To celebrate the company's 60th year, DeCarolis and senior management did a "road show". They took either breakfast or lunch to each of the branches and shared the company's history and its plans for the future. "We met with all the 200 employees, almost one on one, to share it all, and there will be more to highlight the anniversary at our Christmas party."

What were the goals management talked about? "Look to steady growth, increase profits (...not a dirty word!), increase our market share, and continue to improve working conditions and the quality of life for our employees. We want our employees to share our vision of wanting to be the company of choice for the transportation industry and the lines of business we serve."

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