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Reilly International *'We Make It Easier for You'*

How do you relocate an entire factory – all the bulky equipment, all the heavy machinery – from Doha, Qatar, to a small city in Ohio? On time and within budget, and with minimal inconvenience to the client?

“We moved Polymera, a manufacturer of sustainable polymer material used in deck boards, the way we do everything – carefully, efficiently and with close attention to the smallest detail,” says Vickie Reilly, president of Reilly International. “We were especially proud of this job because it’s expected to create about 25 American jobs by the end of the year.”

An international freight forwarder in Wood Dale, Ill., Reilly International primarily serves Midwest-based importers, exporters, manufacturers and distributors of everything from medical devices to mining equipment. “We are to international freight what a travel agent is to a traveler,” Reilly explains.

While the company takes on some “easy” jobs, such as moving containers and air freight to and from Europe and Asia, it especially enjoys those that are “interesting and challenging,” Reilly says. “The equipment we’re moving may be too large to fit into containers, for example, or the country it’s going to or coming from is a challenging place like Mongolia or Zambia or Brazil.”

Freight forwarding is a tough industry, and Reilly International has some 450 competitors in the Chicago area, including some of the largest companies in the world.

So how has this small business managed to grow and thrive for 27 years? By being really good at what it does. By operating efficiently and pricing its services competitively. By constantly asking itself: “Are we making it easier for our clients and business partners?”

“At some companies,” Reilly says, “there’s a disconnect between what the

We have an incredible team of loyal, dedicated, hard-working people. At Reilly International, we really do make it easier for you.”

Passion Fuels Success

Raising her son and daughter, running a business, working to prevent child sexual abuse. Whatever Vickie Reilly does, she does it with passion, which may explain why she’s been so successful at nearly everything she’s tried.

Reilly entered the business world while still a teenager. A posting on her high school bulletin board led to a job at a customs brokerage firm. At 21, she became the youngest individual ever to receive a U.S. Customs broker’s license. She founded Reilly International a year later with \$1,500 to her name and a dining room table for an office.

That was in 1984. Today, Reilly International has its own 42,000-square-foot facility, 21 employees and a growing clientele. And Reilly’s children are young adults. In fact, in the hope that one of them will someday join the business, she recently joined the UIC Family Business Council to learn from the experiences of a wide variety of family businesses; though both her daughter and son are still in school, she feels the organization has already contributed to the success of her business.

“I’ve raised two really great kids, I have a thriving business, and I have charitable work that’s extremely important to me. If that isn’t success, I don’t know what is.”



Vickie Reilly

leader says is important and what actually happens in the trenches every day. But we really are committed to running a client-friendly, cost-effective business.

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