



She Coaches Winning Teams

STORY BY JUDY HORAN

PHOTO BY BILL SITZMANN

Verlyn L'Heureux knew that his company's growth depended on getting his team pulling together when he decided seven years ago to refocus and expand his sales presence in emerging markets. L'Heureux is president of LaRue Distributing Inc.

He turned to a business coach for help.

That business coach was Rose Mary Hefley, who founded Achievement Unlimited Inc. in 1997. Hefley said it was important that LaRue's employees understood the company's mission in order to create teamwork and empowerment.

"We developed a mission statement, a vision of what we wanted to do with the company and where we wanted to take it," adds L'Heureux.

Understanding how people vary in their

drive to perform and which people should be in what positions were other elements they learned were key in building the team, says Bob Egenberger, LaRue's operations manager.

"We didn't know what we didn't know," he remembers.

Employees now work as a team as they move the company in the right direction.

"We've grown into some of our emerging markets," says Egenberger.

Case: Owner Can't Let Go

When Hefley was asked by another Omaha company to help develop a sales team, she uncovered problems the owner wasn't aware he had. He was trying to retire, but couldn't let go of the reins. He

told employees to still come directly to him for answers, circumventing the general manager.

Not surprisingly, he had a turnover of general managers. Hefley set up a communication process between the general manager and owner that solved the problem of micromanaging the staff.

The general manager also felt the company should be a \$20 million company, but it was a \$2 million company.

Hefley helped the leadership team put together a plan of action, getting the right people in the right places doing the right things. "We surveyed the employees, did profiling and communicated to them that this company could be a high performance organization."