



## Communicate, Inspire, Empower

Chester County's up-and-coming business talents weigh in on what makes a great leader

**S**prawling Chester County is one of the fastest-growing, most affluent counties in the United States. Business leaders Doug Palmer, Katie LaDow and Jeff Robzen say it's the county's growth and diversity that makes it such a good place to do business. The county is also a great place for leaders to emerge.

Palmer advises on qualified retirement plans for The Conestoga Group, which has worked with area businesses on group benefits and retirement plans since the 1980s. The Conestoga Group is also involved in personal wealth management. Palmer, who has been with Conestoga since 2015, likes to lead by example.

"Leaders need to first understand their own strengths and weaknesses as well as what excites them. True leaders need to understand what they believe in and align

their daily goals with these core values, even if it means passing up opportunities that may sound great on the surface," Palmer said. He added that good leaders build a rapport with their teams and inspire them to work toward common core values and goals.

LaDow is an associate in the litigation department at Lamb McErlane PC, a 32-attorney law firm based in West Chester with a diverse concentration of legal areas, including litigation, business law, municipal law, banking and municipal finance, real estate, criminal defense and personal injury law. LaDow focuses her practice on civil litigation, family law and health law.

For LaDow, the most important aspect of being a leader is bringing out the full potential in others. "Whether through constructive criticism or acknowledgement,

Katie LaDow



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*“True leaders need to understand what they believe in and align their daily goals with these core values.”*

— Doug Palmer

Jeff Robzen



a leader must inspire, empower and instill confidence in those he or she leads. A good leader should be a good listener. A leader should also be a role model — not only in the workplace, but also in the community,” she said.

Jeff Robzen is a business banking officer with Meridian Bank, a locally owned and managed commercial bank serving the region since 2004. In addition to a broad-based commercial lending portfolio, Meridian’s specialties include commercial and consumer real-estate financing, investment and wealth management services and merchant card processing. The growing bank is expanding into surrounding counties.

Robzen says a good leader must be a good communicator and be able to listen to the ideas of others. “Leaders coach and

inspire people to accomplish goals and tasks. Leaders are typically quality critical thinkers and exhibit immense character. They are also open-minded and value life experiences.”

Chester County is fertile ground for the business leaders of tomorrow. With the Route 202 Tech Corridor and large resident companies, such as Exelon, QVC and Vanguard, there are scores of people ready to emerge as the next stewards of local business. The tight-knit county’s highly regarded schools, business organizations and diverse population and workforce are pipelines for the thought leaders of tomorrow. ♦

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