



News Release

VIPAR Heavy Duty Spotlights Inspiring Women on International Women's Day

HOFFMAN ESTATES, Ill. (March 6, 2025) – In honor of the 114th International Women's Day on March 8, VIPAR Heavy Duty recognizes and celebrates the significant contributions women make to the trucking industry. While trucking has historically been male-dominated, women are increasingly taking on diverse roles, from drivers to executives, and shaping the industry's future.

According to The Women in Trucking Association's 2024-2025 Index report, women make up 9.5% of all professional drivers. The survey also found that in leadership roles, approximately 28% in C-Suite/executive positions are women, and 34.5% are in supervisory leadership roles.

VIPAR Heavy Duty values this global movement recognizing the contributions of women, having first-hand knowledge of the impact women make within its own organization and the heavy duty truck parts aftermarket. Fifty-one percent of VIPAR Heavy Duty's staff is women, five of whom serve in supervisory leadership roles.

When VIPAR Heavy Duty President & CEO Chris Baer took on the top leadership position in 2017, he introduced a management structure consisting of new leadership roles to help the organization achieve its aggressive growth goals.

"We flattened out the leadership team and distributed responsibility. That action created opportunities for a new group of leaders to step into key roles, where they continue to drive success. To achieve success with efficiency, accountability, and integrity, it's important to put a variety of voices at the table. The more experiences and perspectives you include in the conversation, the more well-rounded your solutions will be. Within our organization, women contribute to all areas including finance, technology, marketing, business development, and sales, and our business is thriving due to their contributions," said Baer.

To promote the inclusion of women in the heavy duty workforce and the path they forged to get there, the women of VIPAR Heavy Duty were asked who influenced, mentored, or inspired them. Read on for their meaningful responses:

Wendi Frederick, M.B.A.

Director of Business Resources & Rebate Administration

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2005



*For me, several women provide inspiration as women of strength, courage, and unconditional support. On this day, I honor my daughters-in-law, my sorority sisters, my high school friends, friends in our community, and female colleagues throughout my 40-year career. A quote that resonates with me, from Anne Frank in *The Diary of a Young Girl*, is “Where there is hope, there is courage.”*

Cinthy Rivera

Director of Business Development – Mexico & Latin America

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2024



Many women inspire me—my mom, sisters, friends, and colleagues. Each of them carries a unique strength that I admire. The woman who is my guiding light, strength, love, happiness, and ethics is my mother. She has shown me that dreams with determination, we can achieve anything we set our minds to. She is not just my inspiration; she will always be my motivation in life.

Beth San Filippo, CPA

Director of Finance

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2011



Two women who have inspired and supported me through life and my career are Megan Ballentine and Tricia Schlee. They have been not only my friends over the past 25 years, but also mentors. Both are the breadwinners of their families and an example for me when it was my turn to support my family with my career.

Jennifer Kron

Marketing Manager

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2013



I celebrate the visionary Juliette Gordon Low, whose legacy continues to empower young girls around the world. As the founder of the Girl Scouts of the USA, she created a platform for girls to develop leadership skills, self-confidence, and a sense of community. Her work has inspired young women to advocate for themselves and others, embrace their unique strengths, and pursue their dreams. Her legacy continues to shape generations of women who go on to lead, serve, and inspire.

Andrea Lily

Content Services Manager

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2022



Raised in a courageous and strong family, I was expected to maintain positive thinking and find creative solutions to problems. Creating artworks and a love of history led me to embrace the artworks of Cassatt, Kollwitz, Kahlo, and Chicago, and the groundbreaking activism group, the Guerrilla Girls. These life experiences make me look at problems with a curious, open-minded belief in lifelong learning. I work with others in a highly organized and collaborative manner, knowing a cheerful and determined mindset will achieve amazing results.

Kirstin Finneran

Communications & Media Relations Specialist

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2024



The most influential woman in my life has been my mother, Sharon Wolkowicz. She raised my sister and me to believe that women are important and that women should always have a seat at the table. She exemplifies feminism in how she lives her life with confidence, a strong work ethic, and compassion.

Jenna Karczewski

Marketing & Events Planner/Executive Assistant

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2011



The most influential woman in my life has been my mother, Donna McGrath. She demonstrated resilience, kindness to her loved ones. She taught me the importance of advocating for yourself and being someone people can rely on. Even though my mother passed away when I was in my early twenties, I am very fortunate to have had such a positive female role model.

Debbie Lynk

Rebate & Accounting Administration

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2019



My Grandma Katie owned a tavern. She was a bartender and a businesswoman. We saw strength through her words and a willingness to listen. We watched her grow a successful business through her drive and determination. She taught us to be generous, and give back. Grandma lived life to the fullest and inspired us to dream.

Joy Nickoloff, M.B.A

Program Manager

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2024



My mother is my greatest mentor and business inspiration. She single-handedly raised two kids, built a thriving business, and taught me the importance of hard work and perseverance. She raised me to lead with empathy, tackle challenges head-on, and commit to excellence in everything I do. Her resilience and ability to lead with integrity truly embodies the spirit of a self-made woman.

Liz Smith

National Accounts Manager

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 1999



Without a doubt, the most influential woman in my life has been my paternal grandmother, Margaret. She was a woman full of grace and kindness. She taught me many things: patience, independence, resilience, kindness and respect for others, to be self-reliant, and a variety of valuable hands-on skills. But most importantly, she taught me love.

Kristina Vonesh

Content Services Specialist

Joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2019



My biggest inspiration is my daughter! She motivates me every day to be better than I was the day before. Her love of humor, and curiosity open my eyes to the world around me and encourage me to engage more meaningfully with everyone. I want to instill in her the same strength and love my mom gave to me – so she knows her voice and ideas are valued.

For more information on VIPAR Heavy Duty, visit www.vipar.com or email info@vipar.com.
For more information on Power Heavy Duty, visit www.powerheavyduty.net or email info@powerheavyduty.net.
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With more than 1,000 locations, the VIPAR Heavy Duty Family of Companies is North America's leading network of independent truck parts distributors and service providers serving the commercial vehicle industry's full range of aftermarket needs. It provides its VIPAR Heavy Duty and Power Heavy Duty distributors and its supplier partners with value-added, channel-specific tools to best deliver world-class products, services and satisfaction to customers throughout the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. The VIPAR Heavy Duty Family of Companies includes VIPAR Heavy Duty, which was founded in 1989 and is headquartered in Hoffman Estates, Ill., and two wholly owned subsidiaries, Power Heavy Duty LLC, founded in 1994 and acquired by VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2014, and Global Parts Network LLC, a leading manufacturer of brake-related products and parts distribution center of heavy duty truck parts. VIPAR Heavy Duty is a proud member of NEXUS North America and NEXUS Automotive International, a worldwide group of parts distributors committed to bringing a global approach to the automotive and commercial vehicle aftermarket industries.

For more information about VIPAR Heavy Duty, visit www.vipar.com.

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