

Speaker 0 00:00:05 Welcome

Speaker 1 00:00:05 Welcome to the Clear Impact Podcast brought to you by PGTI University. Thanks for joining us today. My name is Sherri Connor, and I am your host.

Speaker 1 00:00:19 Being a project manager, working on job sites, running crews was not the easiest thing for women

Today we are chatting with the lovely Melissa Stone, one of our sales directors. She oversees our builder partnerships and our national account sales. Melissa shares why relationships are the main focus of her role and how relationships help everyone to be more successful. You're going to love today's episode.

Good morning. We are here on the Clear Impact Podcast today with Melissa Stone. Hi Melissa. Hi, thank you for having me. Melissa is one of our sales directors and, um, Melissa, tell us a little bit about your role here and a little bit about maybe how you got started in this space.

Sure. So I, as you mentioned, I'm a sales director. I am over two business segments in the company. I have the builder space and then I also head up the national accounts.

Speaker 1 00:01:16 So national accounts are the larger, obviously national companies like 84 lumber, ABC supply, things like that. That's my space. I have two teams, a builder team and a national account team. And you know, our job is to go out there and, and obviously grow sales, but promote the product to both segments.

So how many people are on your team?

Um, I have a total of seven people on my team, more on the builder side. Um, and I only have one national account manager at this time running all four national accounts. So, but he's doing a fabulous job and we're looking probably to expand that soon. Wonderful.

So tell me a little bit about you. I am from originally from the Chicago area. So grew up just outside of Chicago, went to Western Illinois University and that's where I met my husband. I actually was a zoology major and my husband was a parks and rec major.

Speaker 1 00:02:16 So it's kind of interesting because we're both in the building material industry now. So I was going to say that's a little bit of a stretch. You went from zoology to building supplies, working with animals versus, you know, construction people, construction people. So there's some parallels, there's some parallels there. No. Um, but my husband and I moved right after college, he had to do an internship. So we came down here and he worked at Disney for a while and I started just getting into the industry by, by installing wire shelving and hardware in apartment complexes. And then I was hired as a punch person. So I don't know if you know what that is. I think it's somebody who goes through and usually when you do a walkthrough, you move in or before you move out, and you make a list of all the things that need to be fixed.

Speaker 1 00:03:03 That's exactly what it is. Right. So I would just walk units, make sure that everything was wrapped up, get with the appropriate crews who had to fix a few things, completely ruined me for my own home. I mean, I see every mistake now. Um, but that's how I got started. And then I, um, quickly moved into managing projects. So I would run crews on jobs for a millwork and door company, did that for several years. And then with the same company became both an operations

manager for a while and then also a sales manager. And then I did that for about five years. And then I worked for Therma-Tru doors, uh, started out as a sales rep with them, moved on to a builder manager. I was with Therma-Tru for 13 years and about three years ago, decided to make the switch and come on over to PGT and windows.

Speaker 1 00:03:53 So it's, it's been a long career of non zoology related work, but, uh, it's been very rewarding. That's wonderful. And so I grew up in the same latitude as Chicago, same region. I grew up in Eastern Iowa. So very parallel in terms of weather, in terms of culture. I think, you know, Midwest solid people. Yep. Great family values. Um, but terrible weather, terrible weather. I'll never forget when I found out that there were places like Florida, I just went up to my parents and I said, what are we doing? Why do we live here? So it was always stuck in my head that I was going to be in a, in a warmer climate. And do you miss winter? No, not at all. Yeah. No. It's pretty to look at from here from here. Exactly. Do not miss it at all. Nice. I sort of set the margin between November 1st and May 1st.

Speaker 1 00:04:46 I don't travel north. Oh yeah, absolutely. But the chance of a blizzard is likely even up until early May, I've seen it snow. And even into early November, October, I remember trick or treating in the snow. I was just gonna say that exact same thing. You put all this time and effort into your costume and then you have to wear boots and a jacket over your... so disappointing. Yep. I remember those days right now, we just sweat all the time. Exactly. It's great for our skin though. It is nice. Yes.

Well, I love hearing that we have some things in common, but so walk us through what a typical day looks like for you as a sales director. You manage seven people, you have the entire state of Florida or parts of Florida. Tell me what, what does it look like to have a day in the life, in the work-life of Melissa?

Speaker 1 00:05:31 Sure. So yes and no, I have the entire state of Florida. We, we also obviously have national accounts outside of Florida. They are run locally by our outside team. Okay. But I do deal with the folks at corporate. So, you know, going up to Wisconsin to see ABC or Pennsylvania, to see 84 Lumber, that's not outside of my realm before. COVID obviously I was doing a lot more travel than I am now, but a lot of what I do is planning, reporting, working with my team, making sure that they're in seeing the customers, building those relationships, making sure that they're forecasting properly, things like that. So it's a lot less one-on-one with the customers than it used to be as a rep or a manager. Um, and a lot more one-on-one with my team, making sure they're building those relationships and making sure that they are growing the business basically.

Speaker 1 00:06:20 And probably putting out some fires, always handling conflict, always, always all those great management skills come into play. Absolutely, absolutely. Which, you know, being in this industry so long, it is expected. And I think it's a great skill to have, to be able to diffuse a situation. And I think, I think I'm pretty good at it. And I think my team's pretty good at it. And, uh, it's par for the course. Right. What is your favorite thing about your role? My favorite thing is probably my team watching the team grow, watching them develop their skills,

Speaker 2 00:06:56 Be sure to tune in for upcoming episodes to help you understand the fenestration industry, what you need to know when buying windows and doors and other related topics, you can find out more about us at [pgtiuniversity.com](http://pgtiuniversity.com). You can also find us on Facebook and LinkedIn. It's great to

Speaker 1 00:07:16 It's great to be in an environment where you're winning, right? You're going out there and you're making the wins. You're making relationships, but we're in an environment now coming off of COVID that it's not as, it's not as easy, right? There's some difficulties. There's definitely some concessions that have to be made for production and supply chain. And watching my team go from being pretty content and happy with the wins, to now struggling and watching them manage how to keep the relationships, how to make everyone feel safe in this environment. It's extremely rewarding to watch them just grow. You know, it's easy to, it's easy to be in a managerial position or a rep position when everything's going great, but it's, it's so much more rewarding to watch them thrive when things are difficult. So I would have to say that's probably the thing I like the most about this role.

Speaker 1 00:08:10 Hm. Well, we never grow when things are easy or comfortable. That's right. You know, there's no growth in the comfort zone. Yep. I think that's been proven over and over again, and we're designed and wired to have challenges and that's we like overcoming things. That's why people run marathons and climb mountains and things like that. Right. So we're, we're doing a little bit of that on a different level here. That's pretty much it. Yes. Climbing a mountain. Right, right. Nice.

So tell us a little bit about what would be helpful to our dealer audience, our builder audience. What is something that you would like to just take a minute or two to talk about that would be helpful for them? What would be something really valuable that would be like, oh, I'm so glad I listened to that podcast with Melissa Stone today. Sure. So when it comes to the builder program, I think that every dealer out there should know what we do and what we're focusing on when it comes to the builders.

Speaker 1 00:09:00 We have builders that range from, you know, builders that do 30 homes a year to builders that do tens of thousands. You know, we work with the big national guys and the custom guys. And what we do is we forge that relationship so we can get them the partnership loyalty programs. They're, they're really big on that. Builders want to have a brand name. They want to have a loyalty to certain manufacturers. It's great for them to be able to showcase, you know, you go on any builders website and you'll see Train or you'll see Schlage or you'll see, you know, Therma-Tru or you'll see PGT. And they want that brand. And I think the builders really appreciate that PGT is here in the state of Florida we are the innovators of the impact window. So forging that partnership with the builders is key, but where the dealers come into play is obviously we can't do this without the dealers, right?

Speaker 1 00:09:55 So it's key to be able to connect those builders and dealers. And now the dealer knows that we've got this loyalty program with the builder. They don't have to worry about the builders switching to, you know, the guy down the road and next week, all their inventory, all of a sudden goes out the window and now they've got to buy somebody new. So it's a really strong program for both the builders and the dealers. The dealers do really appreciate everything that we do as far as support. And we make sure that, you know, when we're dealing with the builders, all we do is promote the PGT products and what we can do for them marketing wise. And it's really up to the dealers to do everything else and keep those relationships. We don't cross the line there. And that's something that the dealers should all know that this is a very, very positive program.

Speaker 1 00:10:41 Hmm. Is, is that applied to our other brands as well? Absolutely. Okay. So across all of the family of brands for PGT Innovations, we maintain those same kinds of boundaries. Yep. Absolutely. That's wonderful.

Both of your territories kind of overlap because you're dealing with builders and building supply. Absolutely. So that's exciting. It is exciting. Well, this has been helpful. Is there anything else that you would like to add to that?

Just if there are any dealers out there that have any questions, feel free to reach out to myself or my team and we're happy to come in and talk more about the programs. That's awesome. Well, I have a question and we've been asking everyone this question on the Introduction Series, who is a person or what is an event that has had a major impact in your life.

Speaker 1 00:11:26 So I'd have to say I'm going to have to go with two people. So I would say personally, my husband is probably the biggest factor in who I am today. We got married, relatively young, you know, somewhat out of college. We were both students, but uh, relatively young and we have been just such good partners. We've remodeled several houses. And when I say remodel, I mean, we're doing the work ourselves. So it's a, if anybody knows anything about that, that's a, that's a pretty stressful thing to go through with partner. Um, but he's, he's just taught me so much and more than anything, he's taught me how to grow personally and professionally, as far as taking things, you know, with a grain of salt, and how to, how to just be calm because he's in this industry as well. And, uh, he's just, he's my rock, he's everything. And I would not be where I'm at today without him.

Speaker 1 00:12:16 Professionally, I would say when I first started becoming a project manager, I had a boss who was more of a mentor. And it was, this was back late nineties early, and I'm dating myself here, early two thousands, and being a project manager, working on job sites, running crews was not the easiest thing for women. So he was just key in keeping me grounded and keeping me focused when things could get a little bit difficult out there. And I will just, I'll never forget his, his words of wisdom. I'll never forget what he did for me. And I don't think I'd be where I am professionally without him. So. And what was his name? Robert Andrews. He's, he's still in the industry, but he has moved to Texas. So yeah. Well, you'll have to send him a copy of this so he can get some props. I will.

Speaker 1 00:12:59 Absolutely. That's awesome. That's been a common theme. There've been several in the introduction series that have referred back to mentoring. Shawn Harlacher talked a little bit about that. Brian Covey talks about that and some others, so yeah, it's what I aspire to be. I hope one day one of my people are sitting here, you know, doing a podcast and talking about how I changed their lives. Well, I am excited that we were able to connect today. I know you were away and busy and I know you are traveling. And so I'm grateful for our time today. Thank you. Thank you so much.

Speaker 2 00:13:31 Thanks Melissa. Take care.

PGTI University is the customer education team for an entire family of brands. We began with the original Eze-breeze porch enclosure line, then became PGT, America's leading brand of impact resistant windows and doors. We then added CGI, CGIC, WinDoor, Western Windows, New South Windows, and Eco Windows and Doors. We create products built to withstand major storms, keeping people safe, secure, and prepared. Our exceptional brands give you the protection you need without compromising design or functionality. PGTI University is here to educate you, our listener, so that you can be a more informed consumer of window and door products.