



Lighting the Path to Success

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PHILIPS LIGHTING AMERICAS

Originally a pre-dentistry student at John Carroll University, Rebecca A. Bompiedi soon found she was more interested in engineering. In the early 1980s, after spending a day touring the campus and college with Cleveland State University College of Engineering Dean George Coulman, her mind was set. "I was sold by the end of the day," said Bompiedi, who earned her Bachelor's Degree in Chemical Engineering from Cleveland State in 1984.

Bompiedi says Cleveland State University provided her with the knowledge of real-life engineering applications. "I came into my first job with academic experience that was both innovative and practical, and was able to start solving problems immediately, which helped build my professional credibility," Bompiedi said. At the time, Bompiedi was the only woman in the plant outside of the shipping department.

MOVING WITH THE TIMES AND TECHNOLOGY

Bompiedi held various positions in engineering and technology, ranging from research and development to manufacturing capacity management and quality control. As the manufacturing industry began moving from quality control and assurance to quality management systems, Bompiedi returned to Cleveland State to pursue her Master's Degree in Industrial Engineering. "Dr. Andrew Liou was inspirational about quality control and what it took to drive change," said Bompiedi, who completed her advanced degree in 1990.

By the mid-90s, Bompiedi was involved with new product development for GE Lighting, as well as leading their Six Sigma corporate quality initiative that GE's CEO Jack Welch had advocated. The program called for long-term production controls that identified and eliminated root problems to increase overall efficiency, thus impacting the company's bottom line.

In 1998, Bompiedi moved into a global technology leadership role, managing 13 GE plants worldwide. As a lighting transformation/strategic initiatives leader, she led a \$500 million restructuring to phase out incandescent and linear fluorescent lighting. From 2007 to 2009, she was based in Europe, until she was called back stateside to help reshape GE Lighting, helping to make them a competitor in the digital lighting arena.

By 2013, she was on the move again. As senior vice president of business transformation at Philips Lighting Americas, Bompiedi is now in charge of Philips Accelerate Initiative, overseeing new operational management strategies. Keeping up with technology and innovation changes in digital lighting makes product development and production a challenge. "New technology is coming out every six to nine months, not unlike cell phone technology that continues to upgrade features and functionality," said Bompiedi. Analog technology is disappearing, as LED technology offers greater efficiency. "Twenty percent of our energy costs today revolve around lighting, so reducing total consumption allows us to offset other demands," Bompiedi said. End user needs range from pleasure to safety. New lights can respond automatically to changes in room light levels, while advances in roadway and community lighting provide greater security. Even hospitals are changing lighting systems to address the emotional aspects of treatment and recovery, making MRI environments less fearful for children, and resulting in quicker recovery times for patients.

ALUMNI COMMITMENT AND RECOGNITION

As a member of the Washkewicz College's Visiting Committee since 2011, Bompiedi is eager to be part of the new direction the committee

is taking under the guidance of Dean Anette Karlsson. The focus is to drive engagement with alumni and develop more co-ops with regional businesses. "I think the co-op program is a hallmark of Cleveland State," Bompiedi said.

"I'm really honored to be an Engineering Distinguished Alumni Award recipient and am thrilled to see the growth at Cleveland State. I believe the College of Engineering has a real opportunity to be a monumental influence in Cleveland. Through the co-op program, and the engagement of alumni and the business community, there is a lot of opportunity for growth here," said Bompiedi.

In January 2014, Bompiedi established an endowed scholarship fund to help engineering students with on-campus living expenses. "I think students benefit more from the overall student experience, if they are fully immersed in campus life," Bompiedi said.

While there is little time in her busy career for hobbies, she does enjoy biking and travel. While working in Germany for two years, Bompiedi, her husband and two daughters gained a greater sense of appreciation for Europe, and frequently return for vacations. As for future family engineers, their 16-year-old daughter recently studied robotics and given her interest in science, may follow her mother's career path. ■