

LOCKWOOD/MCKINNON SPOTLIGHT SERIES – PRISCILLA CONDE

As I make my way to the home office in Mansfield, I think about the interview ahead. I can't help but smile and feel like I'm going to meet an old friend. With all of the changes over the past year and the air of uncertainty – having a grounded, heart to heart with someone who has been part of the Lockwood/McKinnon family since its beginnings – seems fitting.

I'm a bit early and there are several area meetings happening. It's great to see everyone...the energy is positive and it is apparent people are happy to be meeting face-to-face in the home office.

I settle into Conference room #2 and it's not long before **Priscilla Conde** arrives.

Priscilla is the RGM of the Westshore Road Taco Bell. She has been with Taco Bell -Lockwood/McKinnon since 1994. She started in the Seekonk Taco Bell ... and laughs about her training with the RGM (C.H.) of the store – at the time. Her introduction, to the Seekonk store and her role, was to read the Answer System front to back! She chuckles. (I expect It was a massive undertaking.) After Seekonk ... she moved on to Cranston (then, a mission-style store) where her claim-to-fame, was training a new manager (John B.) from another restaurant



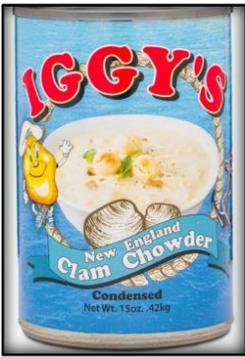
franchise outside of Taco Bell, who became the manager of Cranston for years to come. Cranston Taco Bell was one of the last existing Mission-style stores when she transferred there. She laughs and tells me that scheduling and deployment was a challenge because of how tight the space was inside the store. It was small! So small that people on line making food would bump into other people behind them. Following Cranston, she then moved on to be the RGM of the Warwick Mall; then

Coventry; Woonsocket; Bald Hill and now, Westshore Road. She's seen and lived the evolution of what we know as Taco Bell today.

Bald Hill – a high volume store- was a bit out of Priscilla's comfort zone. She attributes her success in Bald Hill to the support of her, then, Area Coach (Dave C.), Gordon McKinnon and to a great team. (Candace, Cara, Matt M. Juana, and Pat to name a few). Apparently, going out of her comfort zone and having the support she did - was what it took to get store of the year – twice in Bald Hill and once in Woonsocket. She's competitive and admits that she's aiming for another store of the year.

There is a natural flow to the conversation with Priscilla. She is comfortable in her own skin ... she knows who she is; there is nothing forced. We could go in so many different directions with our conversation, but our time is limited today – so we move on.

Priscilla comes from a background of hard workers. Her father was a steel mill operator with Texas Instruments and her mother a textile worker at Worcester Textile in Centerdale, RI. She remembers working with her mother at Worcester Textile at the age of eighteen as a weaver. She weaved the material used for the state trooper uniforms for 7 years. It was hard work. Priscilla is not at stranger to hard work.



Both of her parents moved to Florida after a lucky break that afforded them an early retirement on May 5, 1985. Her father still lives in Florida. Her mother has since passed, but she calls her father (who turns 90 in late July) every Monday, midday. They might talk about the weather or his health, but the conversations mean a lot to Priscilla. She smiles and says, “What do you give someone who is turning 90?” She states, “He loves Iggy’s Clam Chowder from RI and they now have it in cans.” That’s what she is sending him for his birthday.

Priscilla lives with her husband, David, of 34 years. David is a retired Master Plumber. They were married on Father’s Day in 1987. For years they raised Pekinese Pups, a registered breed. Four litters later – they no longer raise the pups. “It was tough giving them up,” She admits.

She was born in Manchester, N.H. One of 7 - Priscilla is a “middle child.” She considers herself the peacekeeper of the family, which I do not find hard to believe. Her sincere and direct communication sets the stage for others to trust that she will



be honest with them and it will be heartfelt. She admits, “I wear my heart on my sleeve.” She recalls times that Dave C. would come into the store and find her doing dishes. He would call it her “dish fix.” This was her way of taking a pause. She shakes her head and says, “I don’t relax easily.” “I’m an ‘A’ personality.” I ask her how she unwinds when she gets home. She shares that she goes out to the garden every morning and each evening to focus her attention on her Peonies, Hydrangeas, Lily’s and other annuals and perennials she has planted. She also tends to the pool. Needless to say – the warmer weather is her preferred climate. When she retires – the plan is to move to Florida. She sets the record straight, “I’m not retiring yet.”



I ask her what she has on her list of things to do – what she would like to do that she has not yet done. In keeping with her Florida theme – Priscilla would like to own a boat (a motor boat to be specific). She would also like to travel out of the country (Canada is not what she is thinking – she is of French-Canadian descent.) She thinks she might like to travel to Rome, see the Vatican.

Her Taco Bell career was not something she planned. As a matter of fact, her family thought she might work in a bank. She started with Taco Bell and ... it just stuck... and here she is today. I ask what changes Priscilla has seen over her years with Taco Bell and Lockwood/McKinnon.

The biggest change at Taco Bell that Priscilla admits was not something she necessarily agreed with in the beginning – was the **simplification of the menu**. (What would they do without the Mexican pizza?) Now, it’s so much easier to train people because there are *not* so many menu items to master.

She shares that in her earlier days with Lockwood/McKinnon there were more support people in the home office. She does not believe that is good or bad, just different.

As a manager – particularly over the past year – you needed to pivot constantly. She lets me know that this past year, “We have been taught how resilient we are and we have supported each other.” I comment on the change in the company topography – that we have many new managers who are bringing their skills to the mix. Priscilla agrees that we are always building new relationships and teaching. She says that she tries to impart Taco Bell standards of structure, routine and planning with

integrity to her team. Priscilla explains how important it is to recognize that there are always eyes on you and you are the leader...you are role modeling even if you don't think anyone is watching. It's important to learn the business, but it's the people who **make** the business. Most of all we need to treat people the way we would want to be treated. Know your people, listen and invest in them ... be there for them and build those relationships with empathy, that is a message she speaks with passion.



I hate to end our conversation, but Priscilla is being pulled back to Westshore Road as there have been several call outs. Her life over the past months have been filled with some ups and downs and her work has been her respite. The routine and the activity – like her gardening- keep her on an even keel. It's been a special conversation and a nice pause to meet up with an old friend.

I encourage you to take a minute or two and think about who creates that space for you.

Lisa Brissette