



Shawn Marken, BDI, to Receive the 2022 Wendy B. McDonald Woman of the Year Award

Opportunities often present themselves in unlikely ways, as evidenced through Shawn Marken's career journey. She entered the PT/MC business in a time when women were not given many opportunities for advancement, beginning her career at Bearing Service Co., Inc. as an administrative assistant creating customer invoices. Thus began a passion for working with manufacturer part numbers. "I loved learning how the prefix and suffix of the manufacturing part number can tell you a lot about an item. I loved it so much in fact, that I stayed in this industry."

Now 48 years later, Shawn has advanced into various leadership and management positions—from personnel supervisor to insurance administrator, to database editor and many more. She gained knowledge and respect along the way, helping other women advance and building a team that contributes to the success of BDI's business and the industry. "During each stage of her career, Shawn always taught and mentored those around her and had a mindset for continuous improvement and automation," says Bill Shepard, vice president, BDI.

Shawn is the manager of BDI's Priority Accounts Data Support Team. She and her team manage large customer files ranging from 500 to 40,000+ lines, performing sales analysis, organizing contract quotes and loading customer info into the BDI system. "There are not any significant priority account relationships that Shawn hasn't played an integral role in winning, implementing and optimizing," says Shepard.

As a woman in the industry, Shawn believes it's key to advocate for oneself. "Ask questions and always be looking for opportunities to advance your skills. Don't be afraid to try new things. Recognize and feel good about your own accomplishments, and do not expect or depend on kudos from anyone else."

Shawn leads a small team of men and women and makes it a point to celebrate everyone's achievements, paying forward the support and guidance she received early in her career. "Everyone needs a good working environment where they feel they are contributing," says Shawn. "All managers need an open mind and to do the necessary reading or training on what motivates the next generation."

Her business acumen as well as her desire to grow the knowledge and experience of her team makes Shawn a sought-out colleague. As one co-worker described Shawn in a letter to BDI's U.S. president: "Shawn is not a manager. She is a leader. She has shown an abundance of patience, kindness and understanding. She is constantly busy with her work, but always makes time to not only answer questions our team has (and we have a lot), but she makes it a point to TEACH us the answers. Shawn is an incredible asset, and I am very fortunate to be able to learn from her daily."

"Shawn has built a foundation of excellence in data management and process automation that has been taught to many others within our company," says Shepard. "She is one of the primary resources that has enabled BDI to grow the priority accounts' business over the past 15-20 years—one of our largest and fastest growing segments." Shawn led and participated in the successful implementation of complex product information management systems (PIM), data cleansing and

manipulation tools, ERP systems, inventory control systems and many other applications that are the foundation of how BDI does business today.

“I’ve always believed that if you like what you do, you’ll never work a day in your life, and that’s how I feel about my career in this industry for many years,” says Marken.