

Michelle DeFronzo

3rd Party Logistics/ Cargo
Transportation Provider
President, IMEX Cargo
East Boston, MA



A business savvy, people person Michelle DeFronzo is the President of leading transportation company, IMEX Cargo. With an extensive background as a 3rd Party Logistics Manager, Michelle is a visionary trailblazer in the traditionally male-dominated field. She oversees all operations and guides her expert staff in providing customers and partners with the tools and support they need to maximize their success in the New England cargo industry and ship products and materials locally, nationally and internationally.

IMEX Cargo is a highly regarded General Sales and Services Agent (GSSA) located near one of the world's busiest airports, Logan International. Serving a diverse customer base for more than 25 years, IMEX Cargo is an independent business considered by colleagues and competitors alike to be an expert of the New England cargo industry. Through Michelle's leadership, IMEX Cargo has earned a reputation for trust, integrity and expertise, which is critical in building sales and developing long-term relationships. As one of the only woman-owned, local, independent GSSA's, IMEX can also provide benefits from state and federal agencies for contracting to woman-owned businesses that few other GSSA's can offer.

"I love what I do. There isn't a day that goes by where my day-to-day tasks feel the same. I love the challenge and thinking about logistic solutions to help my clients compete globally and get their goods into and out of the country. I enjoy thinking outside the box to make projects something happen seamlessly and I really like to meet new people."



Dedicated to the advancement of her industry, Michelle has served as President of the Air Cargo Club of New England (ACCNE) since 2011. ACCNE is a non-profit organization committed to serving the air cargo logistics community and includes members in airlines/ aviation, freight forwarders, truckers, customs brokers, warehouse operators and ground handlers. Established in 1965, ACCNE was previously known as an "old school boys club." Michelle is 4th female President of the ACCNE and has contributed significantly to the organization. During her tenure, she initiated a scholarship program, which is now in its 6th anniversary.

Michelle encourages fellow women not to be intimidated by entering into a traditionally male-dominated industry.

"Women shouldn't be afraid to step outside the normal career choices because they think they may not be accepted or they think it's not a job for a women. I think that women go unrecognized and under appreciated for their role in the work place and in business. I would like other women to know that they are much stronger than sometimes we get credit for and understand the value we bring to business."

Born and raised in East Boston Michelle is proud of her heritage. She is first generation born in the U.S. to a hard working family, which migrated from Sicily 53 years ago. Raised by a single mom, Michelle is the eldest of 4 siblings and was the first to attend college. True to her roots, Michelle is an avid supporter the local East Boston community where she grew up. She is involved with the local Chamber of Commerce as well as several ethnic organizations, including the Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce (HACC) and the Caribbean American Carnival Association of Boston (CACAB).

Q&A

Q: Why do you feel that your business is relevant in today's world?

A: I can't think of a more relevant business in today's world as we become increasingly dependent on global trade. You always have to be thinking about how to get product to its user quicker, faster, greener, more efficiently all while keeping ever-changing industry regulations in mind. The rules are constantly changing due to heightened security measures and continuous threats of terror attack. You have to keep your finger on the pulse.

We have many outside elements to consider such as: Domestic and Foreign currency, foreign trade and trade relations, the price of gas and oil, war and terrorism

Every aspect of a global economy affects our business. We have some of the most relevant experience in today's world.

People often see trucks on the road and believe them to be a nuisance. I see the truck on the road and wonder what it's carrying, where is it from, where is the cargo going. I often tell people we are the folks that good food to your table, furniture in your homes and clothes on your back. The global trade business is 24/7/365 and it does not sleep. Our economies from around the world rely on professionals in the logistics/ transportation business to help them not just compete globally and remain sustainable but it's all about consumption.

Q: What has been the most effective way of raising awareness of your business and getting new customers?

A: At the end of the day it's a small world and by doing a good job and being trustworthy and transparent. People in my industry always say that my reputation globally speaks volume about me.

Q: What advice would you give to other entrepreneurs?

A: Love what you do. There are a lot of sacrifices to be made when you run your own business. You have to work many hours and wear many hats, but if you love what you do it never feels like work. Also, surround yourself with like-minded professionals who can provide support and a good networking system. Build your team and empower them! And, remain diligent and positive.

Q: What have been your biggest challenges so far with running your business?

A: Being a woman in a global business you face many challenges and outside influences that impact your business. Not everyone is open to doing business with a woman in some international markets. They are not seen as a relevant partner. Not only do women have to work harder to prove themselves and most often they are also paid less money.

Some of the biggest challenges are all the global challenges that come with this business like: Currency, Dollar value, Terrorism, Security, Sanctions, Trade Agreements the price of gas and oil

Access to capital can be challenging but there are some new current programs that are helping to change that where government/ banks and industry are making a more concerted effort to lend to women as we are beginning to get recognized as helping our local community/ businesses and are employing more people at a faster rate than some big corporations. It's taking time to get recognized as our roles in society are continuing to change. Sometimes woman are not afforded the same opportunities as men in this business as the industry has been dominated by males for so very long that I often times think that were are not looked at as just as capable and we tend to get paid less almost every time and often times not being invited to the table for meetings you clearly have had an impact on the subject development.

Q: How did you overcome these challenges?

A: I push forward with my goals in mind. I try to think of the opportunities that are available in every challenging situation even if it is a lesson learned. Once I put my mind to something there's nothing that can stop me from achieving the results I want.



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