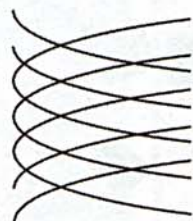
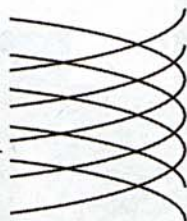


15 years. 2 generations. 1 company.



Family Jennifer Hansen
(formerly Anderson), 35

Business The Anderson Group
(which includes Anderson Seal
and Anderson Resource Manage-
ment), 16555 W. Lincoln Ave.,
New Berlin



Jennifer Hansen was 23 when she got the letter. In her father's handwriting, it read: "Your mother and I request your presence for an interview at 9 o'clock on Saturday."

"Out of curiosity, I came," she said.

It wasn't her first experience with the family business, an industrial rubber company that provides seals and other products for companies such as Harley-Davidson and GE. She worked in the shipping and inspecting departments during summers in college.

Still, she never planned to make a career of it. She graduated with a degree in psychology and was working as a counselor at a local hospital. She was headed to grad school to study social work.

But she decided to humor her father's request. She put on a suit and took a psychology test. And then her dad made his pitch, telling her she was a born saleswoman.

"I said, 'I'll do it for a year.'"

Twelve years later, she's now the one at the helm.

It didn't take her long to get hooked. She loved the challenge and diversity of her job responsibilities, and how easy it was to make an impact.

She eventually became vice president and managed daily operations while her dad focused on sales.

For a while, she was working with both parents and her sister, and it wasn't always easy.

"It's amazing how sometimes you can revert to old roles . . . all of a sudden it's like no one could be adult professionals," she said with a laugh. "It's hard to explain, because do you want to be treated as an employee, or do you want to be treated as a daughter? Well, you need to be treated as both because you are both, but sometimes it's very difficult to maintain those roles."

For about a decade, Hansen participated in sort of a support group for the next generation of family business owners, and she found it vital.

"There are issues that you can't talk to your friends about, that you can't talk to your family about now, and that you can't really talk to your co-workers about," Hansen said.

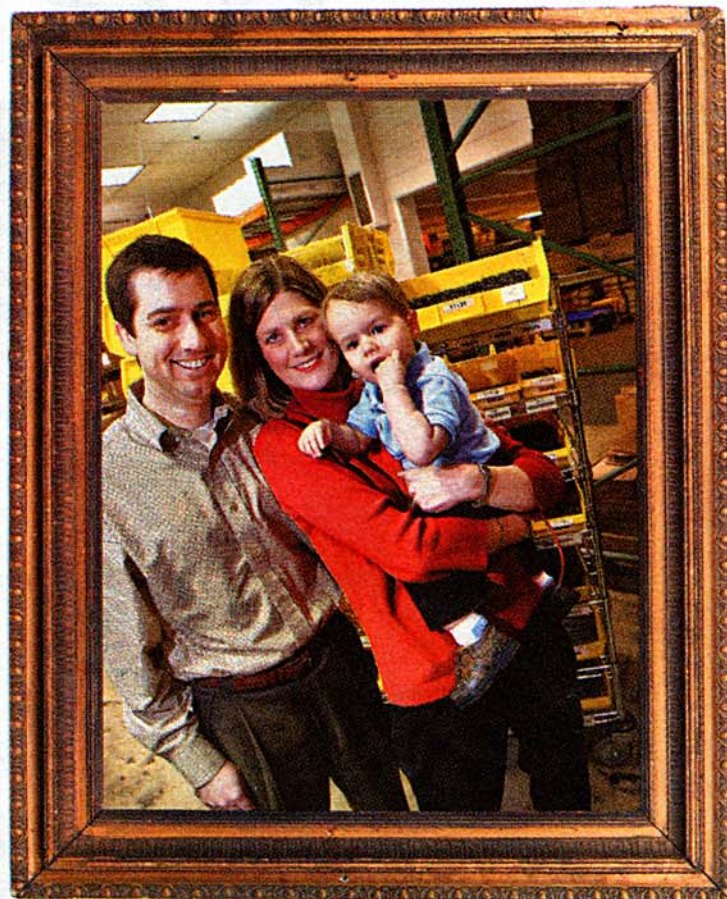
At her father's encouragement, she also went back for her MBA.

After she graduated, her father quietly started to step into the background. "It started being gone just a day a week, then a couple days a week and, before you know it, he was only in the office just a couple days a month," she said.

Two years ago, she bought him out. They had the business evaluated by a professional from Chicago, and then father and daughter sat down at the negotiating table.

"That was the first time in our careers that we had separate interests, because I wanted it cheaper and he wanted it more expensive," she said, laughing.

It's a little different knowing that your business was once your dad's baby. "I think there's more of a personal obligation and passion," Han-



sen said.

But it's a duty she's glad to take on.

"It's my job to make sure that this company is supported for the future, and that's the responsibility that I've always wanted. He built it, and it's because of him that it's here, but it's my job to make sure that it's still here," she said.

And as for her son, 15-month-old Nathan? Maybe she'll send him a letter one day requesting his presence for an interview, but she won't force it.

"If he wanted to go someplace else and get a taste of what life is like, and then showed a real interest and capability, then yeah," Hansen said. "I wouldn't rule it out."

Rising through the ranks: Jennifer Hansen with her 15-month-old son Nathan and her husband, Mike, who works in market development for Paper Machinery Corp. in Milwaukee. Photo by C. Taylor