

U.S. Rubber employee story: Megan Staggs | September 2022

When Megan Staggs came to work at U.S. Rubber, the career move was like a homecoming. Her uncle founded U.S. Rubber in 1986 to create high-quality, sustainable products while employing a second-chance workforce, though he sold the company before she was born. Today she trains and manages employees, handles accounting tasks and supports the factory leadership team. She is proud to lend her skills to support the company's [Bounce Back!](#) program, a mission with personal significance for her.

When Megan was young, her dad went to prison for two years. When he got out, he faced the same lack of opportunity that many of U.S. Rubber's current Bounce Back! employees experience. Without the second chance U.S. Rubber offered him, Megan's life would have turned out very differently. "I lost my mom when I was young," she says. "This job opportunity was everything to my dad and me. I'm proud to be working here today, helping others access the same second chance that was open to him."

First hired in 2016 as an office assistant and customer service representative, Megan worked hard to prove that she could take on more responsibilities. In March 2020, her efforts paid off and she was promoted to office manager.

The promotion came with the biggest challenge of her career so far and led to one of her greatest successes. "I was promoted really early in the pandemic," Megan says. "No one knew how COVID would impact our lives and the business. We were wrestling with whether to shut down or keep going, and I firmly spoke out in favor of remaining open. I told the team, 'We can get through this.' It was a hurdle to convince them, but it ended up being hugely advantageous. We took precautions, avoided waves of infection and grew the business more than 100 percent over two years while so many others struggled or shuttered.

"Unfortunately for everyone else, I like working," Megan jokes. "I like coming in every day and meeting my goals and getting stuff done." Her positive, can-do attitude and tenacious hard work served her well once again, and in late 2021, she moved up to her current role as operations manager.

The hardest aspect of Megan's day-to-day work, she says, is managing personalities. But she's good at it, and it's her favorite part of the job because she builds relationships with employees throughout the company. She acts as an unofficial mediator between the Bounce Back! employees and the other managers. Megan says even though she has the power to fire people (and has had to in the past), the Bounce Back! employees feel comfortable talking to her. If another manager mentions that one of their direct reports is struggling, Megan is often able to talk to that person and uncover the root of the issue.

Megan's advice to others working with second-chance employees is to take challenges one day at a time and lean on others when needed. "If something is frustrating you, don't bottle it up," she cautions. "Talk to someone. Ask for help." And when it comes to communicating with formerly incarcerated employees, "treat them like they're human. Just because someone is covered in tattoos or used to sell drugs doesn't mean they're a bad person. If you show that you trust them to do a good job, they will try their best."

Megan's next goal is to go back to school and study business so she can build on what she's learned at U.S. Rubber. She hopes earning her bachelor's degree will allow her to gain new perspective in her field and continue to realize her uncle's vision for a company that values environmental sustainability and second chances.