

Melody Warren
President and CEO
**Transportation Logistics
Systems Inc.**
Kansas City



WARREN

Transportation Logistics Systems Inc. has taken Melody Warren a long way.

Warren, who founded the freight brokerage and freight forwarding company in 1992 with one other employee, saw the company do more than \$2 million in revenue in 2001. Business is up 35 percent from that so far this year, she said.

The company also has new digs. After six years on the Country Club Plaza, Transportation Logistics moved into a rehabilitated building on 85th Street, west of Prospect Avenue, in May 2001.

Warren credits much of the company's



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growth to word-of-mouth advertising and relationships. If you prove you can take care of a customer, that customer will come back to you, she said.

A good example is Transportation Logistics' work with the Lincoln Blackwood, a luxury pickup built at Ford Motor Co.'s Claycomo plant.

The company handles transportation for all the materials that make up the Blackwood's bed. Warren said she hopes to leverage that relationship into more business from the parts suppliers with whom she works.

Another key to Warren's success is her participation in the Helzberg Entrepreneurial Mentoring Program. Through the program, she worked with Dick Benner, who taught her lessons about handling employees, diversifying accounts and thinking like a businesswoman.

"She's got a lot of street smarts and good common sense," Benner said.

Whether it's street smarts or just desire,

Warren has made a name for herself in an industry she said she "fell into."

Actually, she was persuaded to join her first trucking company when she was just 20 at the urging of a friend, who was about to start at the firm and didn't want to be the only woman.

What she found was that being a woman in a male-dominated industry has its perks. For example, she learned that truckers enjoyed work-

ing with her, often calling just to get things off

their chests.

Certain drivers were notorious for their gift of gab.

"You could literally be on the phone for two and a half hours," she said.

Being a woman was one of the things that persuaded her to stay in the industry.

"I think I saw the ability to go places," Warren said. "And one of the reasons I saw it was being a female in a male-dominated industry."

Warren gives a lot of credit to her employees for the company's success. The six people who work at Transportation Logistics are the ones responsible for treating the customers right. When all goes well, the employees and the service they deliver help persuade customers to move more freight with Transportation Logistics.

"They are what makes your business stay or go away," Warren said.

— Brian Cookson

TRANSPORTATION



**LOGISTICS
SYSTEMS, INC.**