

# Grow Sales by Focusing on the Customer

Phyllis Cochran grew up on a farm in Iowa. Her family owned International Harvester agricultural equipment and an International truck they used to haul livestock. When the opportunity was offered to Cochran to work for International – the company that made the products that were so important to her family’s farm – she jumped at the chance.

Today, Cochran is a senior vice president at Navistar International Corporation, one of the world’s leading truck and engine manufacturers, and the general manager of Navistar Parts, leading an organization of 1,500 people with annual sales of more than \$1.5 billion.

Growing up on a farm taught Cochran about more than just tractors and trucks. “It taught me the value of hard work and how to persevere,” Cochran says. “You just have to keep trying, and eventually you are able to harvest what you plant.”

Upon graduating from Iowa State University in the mid-1970s, Cochran moved to Chicago to work for Arthur Andersen, LLP as a senior and staff auditor. She worked at Arthur Andersen for five years and then joined International Harvester (Navistar) in 1979 working in the corporate finance department.

Since joining Navistar, she’s worked in three of the four biggest divisions of the

company, in the Truck Group, Navistar Financial, as well as the Parts Group, which she now leads.



*Navistar Parts Leader  
Phyllis Cochran*

It wasn’t always an easy road to hoe, says Cochran. “You need to look for your opportunities. You shouldn’t be afraid to take a job that might not be a perfect fit. It will challenge your thinking and broaden your capabilities and skills.

“Regardless of your position, I encourage you to do anything and everything you can to learn every aspect of your business,” Cochran says.

Having grown up on a farm, it is no coincidence that growth is what she’s all about now. Today, she’s

growing the parts business at Navistar.

“The potential for growth in our business is enormous,” Cochran says. “We recently were awarded nearly \$300 million in business to supply parts for the military’s MRAP vehicles, and we’re continuing to grow in North America while expanding our sales overseas. We expect our parts sales to grow substantially over the next few years.

“We’re in this game to serve Navistar’s customers, to keep their trucks up and running, and to provide a customer experience that is second to none,” Cochran says.