



Profile of Women in O&P Leadership - March

Posted by Karen Edwards | March 21, 2016

This month we continue our **Profile of Women in O&P Leadership** series in which we highlight a woman who is a leader in the O&P profession. This month we highlight **Brooke Artesi**, CPO, LPO and owner of Sunshine P&O of Wayne, NJ



Name and current title: Brooke Artesi, CPO, LPO, Owner Sunshine P&O, Wayne, NJ

Hometown: Kinnelon, NJ

School: Newington O&P School, University of Hartford

Number of years in O&P: 15

Current Leadership Positions:

- Owner, Sunshine P&O
- VP, NJAAOP
- Former OPATH Board Member
- Former NJ State Licensure Board Member

When did you know you wanted to be a CPO? I lost my leg when I was 15. When I finished high school I went to art school, but then didn't know what I wanted to do. So I transferred to Rutgers and got my undergrad and started working at Garden State Orthopedics in Oakland, NJ. I also really liked the artists that worked in the O&P facility that was taking care of my leg. I decided to combine my interests in art and medicine and become a CPO.

What obstacles have you overcome to achieve your success? A big turning point for me was when I got pregnant. I was working in O&P for someone else, and I thought, "Why am I doing this?" I was pregnant in such a male dominated field and here I was with older men. How was I going to balance work and my baby in that situation? So, I decided, while pregnant, to open my own practice. And it has paid off. Amputees love me because I am an amputee, especially my female patients who appreciate being treated by a female practitioner. Even the way my office looks is different and more inviting than male-run practices. Now I arrange my own schedule, and I have the flexibility I need to run my business and take care of my family.

What risks have you taken that have paid off? Starting my own business while pregnant was a huge risk. I started it just hoping I could keep the doors open. Everything about running your own business is a risk – every new hire is risk, every insurance claim is a risk. But it has paid off for me and my family.

How do you define success? I define success as having balance in my life. That means a good work life and a good home life. I've made it because I have that. I can be with my child and not at the office 6am – midnight. I get to create a day that I'm happy with and that makes me happy.

What is the key to your success? I realized success wasn't going to come to me and that I had to create it. I get calls all of the time asking "How do you do it?" People are just scared to take the risk, but if you are going to achieve it, you just have to do it.

What is your perception of being a woman in the O&P field? Women in this field need more power, but that is changing as more women enter the profession. Women are better carers and this field needs more of us.

How have things changed for women in the field during your career? New Jersey is still nearly exclusively male, so not a lot has changed for women in my state. But now when I go to the national meetings, I see the increase in female practitioners which is good.

What advice would you give to a young female practitioner entering the field? Be confident. Don't let anyone say you "can't" do anything. You may feel like a minority, but you aren't. Remember we (men and women) all had the same schooling and took the same tests, so believe in yourself.

How can we get more women in leadership roles within O&P? Leadership education should start in the O&P schools. They should encourage young people to go to industry meetings and to volunteer in the field and to put themselves in a position to work their way to higher levels. Private practices should also encourage their young employees to do the same and not penalize them for taking time to attend these meetings.

ÖWLI Quote of the Month (Brooke's favorite quote): *Everything happens for a reason.* – Anonymous

THANK YOU to Brooke for sharing her insights with us and for being a great example of a leader in our profession! We will be highlighting one female O&P leader each quarter, so **please email us names of women you think we should feature!**

Talk to us!! Your feedback is welcomed and encouraged! Please let us know what you think of our initiative, share your ideas, share your victories, or just say "hi" by emailing us at OWLI@Ossur.com. And follow us on Twitter @OWLIOssur.

