



Laura Markstein, President of Antioch-based Markstein Sales Company and California Family Beer Distributors Board of Directors Member, is the fourth-generation leader of one of the largest woman-owned businesses in the Bay Area. It is also one of the region's most respected and longstanding businesses as Laura leads this 100+ year old company with integrity, hard work, vision and heart. While the beer industry is one of constant change, Laura's commitment to her customers, brands and team members results in long-term partnerships, dedicated employees that stay for decades, and helping her community thrive through sponsoring multiple non-profit organizations.

Meet Laura Markstein

President of Markstein Sales Company



While studying for a career as a forensic pathologist, Laura worked at Markstein Sales Company one summer between college semesters. Although she initially intended to stay on for just those couple months, she enjoyed it so much she switched paths and committed to a career working with her dad in the local family business. Her father's guidance was to learn all facets of the company by working in every area of the business and Laura spent ten years in public relations, merchandising, administrative finance, delivery truck helper, sales and operations manager roles, before being named president in 2001.

As a rare female leader in the beer industry, Laura has helped pave the way for others and there is noted growth in the number of women representing the industry. Laura has been the first female to serve on several industry and regional boards and is a respected leader in helping develop policies and best practices to provide safe work environments for employees, economic security for private businesses and health and wellness opportunities that benefit everyone.



Investing in her employees is a top priority for Laura and she has created a work environment that proves it every day with benefits normally only found at large corporations. This includes an on-site gym, free on-site fitness trainers and boot camp programs, time during work to exercise and be part of walking and hiking clubs, an employee garden, and free massage and chiropractic care weekly. The Markstein Sales Company offices are also dog friendly with an average of 5-6 dogs on site each day. Recognizing the value of each of her employees, Laura sends handwritten cards, celebrates with them, mourns with them and includes their friends and family members in events throughout the year. It's no wonder that, based solely on anonymous employee feedback, the Bay Area News Group named Markstein Sales Company one of the top workplaces in the Bay Area.

Supporting the local community is another priority for Laura and is reflected in the numerous regional non-profits Markstein Sales Company has supported, including Folds of Honor, the Hispanic Community Affairs Council, the Nephrotic Syndrome Foundation, Bay Area Crisis Nursery, and the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano Counties. In addition, Laura serves on the John Muir Hospital Board of Directors where she takes an active role in advancing community health. While Markstein Sales Company's territory has shifted over time, including a recent expansion in Oakland, their commitment to community organizations across the East Bay has been consistent and steadfast for generations.

Engaged in the local community where Laura and her employees live and work, Markstein Sales Company's community partnerships have been responsive to regional needs. For example, Laura was invited as a guest to an event hosted by local non-profit New Day for Children, which works to support child victims of human trafficking. There, she heard a testimonial from one of the rescued individuals that highlighted how human trafficking was happening in their backyard. Following that eye-opening event, Laura decided to use her company's position in the community to take action. When the National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) developed an anti-trafficking campaign several years later, Laura's work was already a shining example of community advocacy, but she could now incorporate the NBWA efforts for an even more far-reaching impact. Now, every Markstein Sales Company truck has signage with the anti-trafficking hotline and New Day for

Children logo to raise awareness and provide resources within the community. Laura received the NBWA's Public Affairs Award in 2021 for her commitment to anti-trafficking advocacy and she is often contacted by distributors around the

country for input on how to better use their trucks and drivers to help stop human trafficking.

Laura's commitment to community support and employee-first mindset was also amplified during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the economy rapidly and unpredictably shifted, Markstein Sales Company retained every employee and offered bonuses to help employees whose spouses were forced out of the workforce. For customers, the company made a shift away from on-premise sales towards to-go orders and off-premise sales. Laura even encouraged employees to visit retailers and support their struggling local on-premise businesses, often on the company dollar.

Saying it is the best job anyone could ever have, Laura enjoys living and working within the same community while advancing a family business that makes such a positive impact to so many people. Her family legacy has carried on to her daughter and son who have both worked at the company previously. Regardless of whether Laura's children decide to jump back into the family business, Laura's leadership has ensured that Markstein Sales Company will continue to be a strong leader in the industry and give back to employees and the local community for generations to come.

