

## 1. What motivated you to write *Leading from the Front*?

Courtney:

Writing *Leading from the Front* was an amazing experience. We were motivated to write it because we saw the need for women to develop their leadership skills in order to improve their performance in all areas of their life—not just at work.

Angie and I began our careers in the private sector after our service in the Marines. I worked in software sales, and Angie was in pharmaceutical sales. In our new jobs, we both relied heavily on what we had learned about leadership as Marines, and we quickly distinguished ourselves from our peers, particularly our female peers. We were both promoted quickly in our new roles, in some cases above people who had been in their jobs far longer than we had.

We met many women at our employers who were well-educated, had strong communication skills, and had the benefit of great technical training on the job but were still frustrated with the lack of professional progress they were making.

Angie and I knew that these talented women would achieve their goals if they became stronger leaders. We wanted to share our leadership insights with them, and we started by writing our book and then creating our company, Lead Star. Many women don't spend time learning and developing leadership skills, yet leadership skills are the missing link for many trying to make their hopes, dreams, and ambitions a reality.

## 2. What leaders have most inspired you?

Angie:

I've been blessed to know many great leaders—but the ones who've made the greatest impact on my life are the ones close by, like my husband, my family, and my friends. I love that my dad never told me, "Girls don't do that," when I was growing up. My mom also never put limits on my dreams. My parents positioned me for success.

On a larger scale, I'm also inspired by Maya Angelou for her integrity and Gloria Steinem for being a risk taker—especially when her ideas weren't always the most popular. Leaders can be controversial.

Courtney:

Everyday leaders like my parents, my friends' parents, and my closest friends provide me with a wealth of inspiration. Paula Zahn and Senator Elizabeth Dole are two well-known women who have inspired me, because they are authentic leaders who are focused on serving others.

I also admire my husband Patrick's leadership abilities. Patrick is one of those amazing people who has the ability to make everyone feel at ease, appreciated, and valued. His patience is amazing, and his work ethic is phenomenal. He is a man of integrity who inspires me daily.

### 3. What is the best advice you've ever been given?

Angie:

I was once told that you can spend countless hours of wasted energy trying to be better than everyone around you ... but that is a futile goal. You can never be better than anyone else. You can only be better than yourself.

Courtney:

The best advice I've received is similar to Angie's: I have to focus on being the best version of myself that I can be, instead of trying to be like everyone else. It's easy to get caught up with what everyone else has or is doing. Competition is great, but if your competitive spirit is motivated by envy or jealousy, then you're wasting valuable emotions and energy. You have to focus on being the best that you can be.

### 4. Why do you believe leadership skills are so important?

Angie:

Leadership skills allow you to rise above the drama of life and let you focus on what matters. To me, leadership skills allow me to discover passion and find fulfillment.

When I work to improve my leadership skills, I realize that I'm at greater peace with life around me. I can't always control my environment, but I can control my response to it. This allows me to focus my energies and efforts into things I can directly influence.

### 5. You are both mothers. How do you juggle the demands of owning your own business and motherhood?

Angie:

I'm not too proud to ask for help!! Seriously, I need a lot of support, especially when Courtney and I are at client events. I depend on my family and friends. They've graciously provided me with a wonderful support network. I've come to realize that while I love my son, others can love him, too. He is surrounded by an abundance of affection, which allows me to embrace my roles of mom and business owner with confidence.

Courtney:

I juggle the demands of the many roles I fill by always working to be proactive. I work ahead of deadlines, knowing last-minute problems will always arise. Plus, I cheer for myself instead of letting emotions like guilt and frustration take over. I am proud of my abilities as a mother and as a professional. When I make mistakes or make a poor choice, I accept responsibility for the problem and work to bring about resolution. I don't waste time beating myself up for mistakes or my choices. Instead, I focus on doing better each day and giving my best as often as I can.

## Questions & Answers



### 6. What would people be surprised to find out about you?

Angie:

I've always been athletic. I bring my running shoes wherever I go. However, my family and friends think that I love running. They'd be surprised to know that I don't love running—I love food, especially desserts. Therefore, I run.

Courtney:

People would be surprised to find out that I live in jeans and solid-colored t-shirts. That is the extent of my wardrobe when I'm not working. I have little fashion sense! I also love reading *People* magazine. Every Friday evening, my routine is to sit back, relax, and read *People*.

### 7. You are business partners, friends and you share similar training. There are obvious similarities, but how are the two of you different?

Angie:

Courtney and I have so much in common ... but, yes, we are very different people. Courtney is so much more of an extrovert than I am. She can strike up a conversation with anyone, and before you know it, she'll have a new best friend. It's amazing to witness how she can connect with people so quickly. Don't believe me? Sit next to her on an airplane!! You two will be exchanging emails for the rest of your lives! Unlike Courtney, I grew up shy. It's challenging for me to put my personality out there.

Courtney:

I used to think I had a ton of energy, until I met Angie. I always joke that she is "Go, Go Angie" and I am "Keep, Keep Up Courtney." When we are on the road, I feel lucky to be traveling with a best friend, because our personalities are compatible. But there are a few differences ... beyond the obvious of she's short and I'm tall. She reads great literature; I tend to favor contemporary fiction. Her mind works best with envisioning the big picture; I am the details girl here at Lead Star.

## Questions & Answers



### **8. What do you enjoy most about sharing your message with audiences around the country?**

**Angie:**

I enjoy meeting men and women and learning about their lives, especially why they do what they do. I also love hearing about their decisions to pursue their specific careers, and I love knowing about their family situations. I'm in a constant quest to gain best practices on how people find balance in their lives.

**Courtney:**

I love the fact that we help people have “ah-ha” moments. Moments where they realize that what has been holding them back is something about their behavior or attitude that they can control. Our leadership message is not about personality tests or fancy statistical studies—it's about leadership fundamentals that work. When you live your life as a leader, you will have a better future. Sharing our message with audiences around the country is an amazing opportunity to help others improve their performance and achieve their version of success.

### **9. What is the subject of your next book and when will it be available?**

**Courtney:**

Our next book is very much a work in progress! We are focusing on how leadership skills make the difference between success and failure. When you are a leader, success (no matter how you define it) is achievable. Our next book focuses on specific leadership practices men and women can use to achieve their goals during times of challenge and change. We are choosing to focus on leadership practices to achieve success because we want to share how simple, specific, actionable ideas can produce positive change in both your professional and personal lives.

We are spending a lot of time listening, learning, and reflecting in order to write this book. We expect it will hit shelves in 2010.