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Enterprise zone: Jamey Wozniak of Joes Hitch, Truck and Trailer

Calling a tow

Premium content from Dallas Business Journal - by Jaimie Siegle, Staff Writer

Date: Friday, February 11, 2011, 5:00am CST

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The Toyota Tundra parked in front of Joes Hitch, Truck and Trailer Accessories is jet black with a license plate that reads "HITCHN." Above it is a bedazzled hitch reminiscent of a disco ball.

The truck belongs to **Jamey Wozniak**, the petite, cowboy boot-clad owner of the auto



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"When (my husband) Matt and I bought the business, I was driving a mama van," Wozniak, 47, said. "Now look at my badass hitch ball!"

Matt Wozniak said he drives a [Volkswagen](#) , so he uses his wife's truck if anything needs heavy duty pulling or towing.

Her office also reflects her character: leopard print carpet, black walls and a large colorful print on the wall.

A mother of two and an interior decorator, Wozniak lives in Flower Mound and commutes to Joes in East Dallas each day, talking on the phone with clients. She and her husband bought the business three and a half years ago from Brad and **Bruce Mullen**, whose family bought the company from the original "Joe" in 1966.


But Wozniak describes Joes as her baby.

Joes has increased sales between 10 percent and 15 percent every year since Wozniak took over, and she sees endless business opportunities.

"We've decreased business in certain areas, like from auto dealers, so we've had to come up with ways to get new business and then keep that business," she said. She has added a car rental and sales company and a repair company to the Joes campus.

Wozniak and her husband acquired the two businesses, along with a towing business, last March.

"I came up with a cool slogan for it," she said. "Hitch it, tow it, rent it, repair it!"

IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT:  r of Joes Hitch, Truck and Trailer, said business from auto dealerships has decreased, but expanding with new rental, repair and towing divisions have added diversity — and revenue — to the longtime Dallas company.

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A Michigan native, Wozniak attended [Northwood University](#) outside of Detroit to study marketing and advertising. She said she's always loved the auto industry, but never thought she'd be working in it. To learn the ins and outs of the business, she read vendor catalogs and jumped onto the sales floor.

Matt Wozniak agreed that he, too, has always been an "auto guy" but had no industry experience before buying Joes.

But his interest in the industry and experience in sales combined with Wozniak's creativity have worked well at Joes. With the onsite rental, repair and nonconsent towing companies, everything has clicked.

"We had no idea the synergies among the four companies until we bought them and hit the ground running," **Jamey Wozniak** said. "From a marketing perspective, they all come together."

She added that the Joes client base is practically endless, from campers and fishers and hunters who need hitches to landscaping and demolition companies that need custom work done on fleets of trucks. Joes also provides custom suspension or detailing for individuals who want to ride in style.

She counts the women who need oil changes or brake work done as valuable customers. She understands that some women are wary of body shops for fear of being taken advantage of.

"As a woman, you want to know if the guys are blowing smoke, and we always feel we need a second opinion," she said. "We try to make the environment welcoming and comfortable."

A former human resources executive, Wozniak enjoys keeping employees content with pizza parties and a fun working environment. She's brought in toys and games for customers with young children, and repainted the purple walls in the sales room.

"She's added her own personal touch to it," said **Lorie Brown**, owner of [LB Construction](#) and Moving. Also a woman business owner, Brown met Wozniak about a year ago, and they've been

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doing business together ever since. LB Construction helps rid Joes of surplus inventory or scraps.

"She wants to be involved, she wants to know what's going on, and she's herself all the time," Brown said.

Joes' backyard is home to old car parts and empty warehouses. Wozniak said cleanup is an ongoing process, but that's where her creativity kicks in.

"It could be a loft, a paint booth, or more storage. Or a pool hall while you're waiting for your hitch!" she said. "I'm a designer at heart."

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