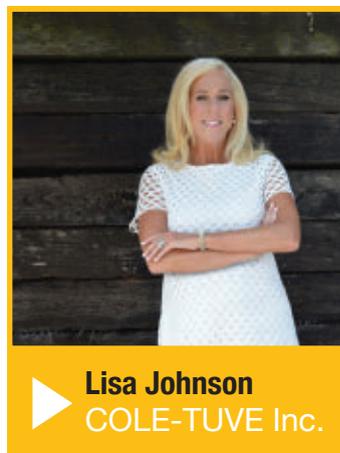


## FMA Industry Profile:



### ► Trailblazer in the metal fabricating industry

#### Metal fabricating technology is a male-dominated field, but that is slowly changing

**Start a detailed conversation about fabricating technology and machine capabilities, design, and specifications, and odds are you are talking to a man. Of course, that's not always true. Lisa Busko Johnson has never had a problem holding her own on these topics.**

Born in Pittsburgh, Johnson was ranked as the No. 1 female tennis player in Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic states from age 12 through 18, and one of the top 10 tennis prospects in the U.S. By age 14, Johnson had won several prestigious events, including the Easter Bowl in New York, the Western Open in Middletown, Ohio, and the Orange Bowl in Miami. She played on the Junior International Tournament Circuit, earning victories over such future greats as Tracy Austin and Pam Shriver. Johnson earned a tennis scholarship to the University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla., where she graduated with a degree in mass communications.

So, it really shouldn't come as a surprise that Johnson registered another outstanding achievement when she co-founded COLE-TUVE Inc. with one of her many tennis students at the Baltimore Country Club, Irv Lazinsky, more than 22 years ago.

As a partner in the company, Johnson is responsible for fabricating machinery sales, service and marketing. Based in the Baltimore area, the company distributes Sahinler sheet and plate bending rolls, angle and shape bending rolls, flanging machines, press brakes and presses.

► Today Johnson feels perfectly at home in metal fabricating. If you ask her, she'll tell you that she loves her career in the industry.

**"There's a lot of variety, which makes every day different. It's interesting work. It's relevant to what's going on in the world, so my job is always evolving,"** she said. "It's also challenging. Every customer's situation is different, and I need to learn as much as I can about their requirements so we can make the proper recommendations."

"I like to ask questions, so it's perfect for me," she added. **"I find it very gratifying to develop a marketing campaign and receive inquiries that start with a quotation and result in a sale. I especially enjoy developing relationships with customers and suppliers, and it's rewarding to know that one of our machines is going to be used to make a better product or improve a company's productivity and, in turn, their bottom line. How cool is it to know that the stadium signs, the barbecue grills, or the movie props were made with a machine that we sold!"**

#### A Female Perspective

Johnson said that while she is a woman in a historically male-dominated industry, she has never really felt that being a woman in the world of industrial manufacturing is an issue.

"There are times that a new customer is surprised when I tell them I'm one of the company owners. And there have been plenty of times that a customer who visits COLE-TUVE's tradeshow booth just assumes that I'm there in a different capacity. They'll come in and walk directly over to one of the guys," she said. "I'm not offended by these things. It's actually a little amusing to hear someone trying to politely backtrack once they realize that I know the business."

Regarding manufacturing industry career possibilities for women, Johnson said a woman who is professional, knowledgeable, and has good communication skills can be an asset in the metal fabricating business.

**"We're different, and that can be a difference-maker,"** she said.

**"As with any job, it's important to be able to relate to and get along with all types of people. We deal with folks who know an awful lot about engineering, but not so much about how it applies to metal fabrication, which is very much an art,"** Johnson said. **"On the other hand, we deal with actual artists and other innovators who don't understand the mechanics of fabricating machinery."**

"Interacting with customers who have job titles big and small, and personalities to match, is all part of the fun. I find it's best to go with the flow, and I always try to remember that—within reason—the customer is always right!"

**Interested in meeting other leaders and important players in the metal fabricating industry?** Check out the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association's website at [fmanet.org](http://fmanet.org). Also consider attending *The FABRICATOR*'s Leadership Summit, March 8-10, 2017, in New Orleans, where metal fabricating company owners, executive team members and budding leaders come together to discuss management concerns and to learn about the latest fabricating technology advancements.