

# Jennifer Schultz

*John. L. Schultz Ltd.  
Manager of Customer  
Service*



## How did you get your start in the Plumbing & Heating industry?

I knew the name CIPH from early childhood. I've known the plumbing industry all my life. My dad was in it from the get-go; my grandpa worked at Crane. He got my dad his first job at 14 in the plumbing industry. Because Dad was a rep for Moldex, I always had funky, interesting toilets seats growing up, (with coins moulded in or cats on them). We all got jobs in the plumbing industry. I remember at around 10, I went in to help assemble a shipment of pop-up plugs we had just received, and when I was 16 we went on a fantastic trip to Jasper, for a CIPH convention. We still use the CIPH calendar and have the CIPH member sticker on our front door.

I started working for an affiliate company of my fathers that imported cast iron fittings. John L Schultz was next door and was growing like crazy. My brother John took over running it and they needed help doing invoicing, so I went in at the end of the day to help out. When the woman in Customer Service quit, I worked for 6 months, working 13 hours a day, learning what she had in her head. I prepared, worked hard and then took over her job. We kept growing, moved into bigger premises and then I became the Customer Service Manager.

## What is your current job and what do you love about it/why have you stayed?

I am the manager of Customer Service at John L Schultz. My title hasn't changed over the years, but the job has. There is always plenty to learn and plenty of growth to be had.

When I started I was on my own and happy to invoice \$20,000.00 a day. Now we are a team of 8 and sometimes invoice for \$500,000.00 in a day! We still have some smaller wholesale customers but also big corporate clients that require a huge amount of hands on management and my e-mail address is THE CONTACT point.

I love developing a rapport with the customers; to make friends with them. That's the thing about the plumbing industry; they are mostly really nice people. I love finding the answers to things. Even after all these years I am asked lots of things I don't know. It is ok to say "I don't know, but hold on, and I'll get back to you."

I get asked new questions every day – but I've found a way to find the answers. That is the challenge. It is fun to learn something new every day. I discover answers to things that apply to everyone; I solve problems that help people in their everyday lives. I like that.

## What is the best career advice you ever received?

Write notes. Write things down. My dad taught me that. I'd get frustrated when I'd forget things when speaking to someone. Don't wait for the question. Make notes right from the start. Write down who they are and their company and that way you don't have to go back and repeat things or ask them to repeat things.

If you have notes you also have the information to follow up. You think that you can remember all the details, but chances are, you won't. Always keep a notebook handy. It even helps you sleep. Instead of letting ideas keep you awake, keep a notebook beside your bed so you can jot things down and let them go.

### **If you could go back in time and give your younger self career advice, what would it be?**

Have confidence in yourself. I'm sure that it has something to do with my faults and addictions; I didn't believe in myself. Also, I'm in a family business, which comes with the good and the bad. I developed confidence with experience, and when I started taking myself seriously, those around me also started taking me seriously. When you start to know the answers, or where to find them, you can be more confident and trust yourself.

Also, keep up with technology. Learn new skills. I wish sometimes that I knew more about plumbing, so that I could help more people.

### **What do you look forward to professionally/where do you see yourself going?**

At this stage, I actually hope to slow down. I don't want more responsibility. Because I can't really take long holidays, I started taking Fridays off. I have a lot to do and a lot of responsibility in my personal life, and I am looking for a better work/life balance. What I'm starting to do is share my knowledge with the next generation. I'm self-taught; nobody trained me. I love teaching and showing others how to find the answers.

### **What energizes you outside of work?**

My husband Tony and my family. Also cooking, hiking, biking and travelling.

### **Do you have personal goals/dreams that you're working towards?**

I am always working to be healthier. I know what to do but I don't always act on it. My focus has been on my family and long workdays, especially the last couple of years. It has been insanity at work, which sometimes stops you from doing what you know you should do.

### **What is the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome?**

Addictions. It's made me a much stronger person. It's remarkable, but I am so much stronger because I had to fight against addictions. Also, poor taste in men which completely changed when I started focusing on myself. My husband and I now bring out the best in each other; that had never been the case before. We make each other stronger.

### **What is your "superpower"/what are you really good at?**

Multitasking! I do 70 things at once at work. I also I listen to everything going on around me. I hear all conversations at once and can correct errors as they are happening. That way, I save us a lot of time and trouble. I am also good at training. I like to teach people why things are the way that they are. If you teach them why you are doing something rather than just what to do, it helps to make the information stick with them. They learn to do things not simply by rote, but by intuition. Every situation is a bit different, so you have to be able to interpret and apply concepts to new situations. As people grow older, they are often afraid to learn new things. I am always learning! I took a course on Excel and now Excel is also one of my superpowers!

### **How do you challenge & inspire yourself to grow?**

Sports. I go out and ride, hike or x-country ski to push myself, (because I have to make it back home).

I also really challenge myself to improve my patience as this is not one of my strong points!

I focus on gratitude. We have so much. We are so very lucky and we sometimes lose sight of that. We have it made here. It puts your feet back on the ground when you think about it. When you are spinning like a top, working so hard and doing so much, just stop and remember to be thankful, especially now.

### **How would you/what would you say to attract other women to join our industry?**

This is a great industry! It is recession proof. If new construction isn't booming, we are still busy with renovations. You always have to take care of your plumbing. We are an essential service. We worked all the way through the pandemic. It is a strong and stable industry.

There is nothing stopping you from succeeding in the plumbing industry, this industry is like any other industry, except men tend to be in charge. But why? It's an industry. It doesn't matter if you are selling apples, oranges, or ballcocks! You can succeed in this industry as well as any other. (If you think about it, we are already a part of it – there are male and female fittings!) I would love to see more women in the industry! I love seeing women plumbers. Break with tradition.

### **Are you willing to have readers connect with you?**

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