



OCT/NOV/DEC 2013



## Linda Goodspeed

Senior Vice President & CIO |  
**ServiceMaster**

By Matt Alderton

Linda Goodspeed is the ultimate multitasker. A look at her career and how an early wake-up call helps keep everything together.

» **I learned after a few years in private practice that the legal service business more or less just moves money around,** or complies with any rules that are out there. Nothing is being created.

» **I come from a line of engineers.** I wanted to be different, so I went to college to become a veterinarian. It was either that or a brain surgeon. Unfortunately, I spent a summer working in a veterinarian clinic and passed out during operations. So I ended up becoming a mechanical engineer after all. No matter how much you try to fight your background, genetics take over.

» **I'm a type-A personality.** I have endless amounts of energy and interests. I got an MBA because I wanted to learn about business. Even today I'm seeking a doctorate because I want to learn more. When I was really into working out—which I still am—I became a personal trainer concurrently while working. Now I'm serving on three public boards and a nonprofit board, and I have a business with my brother as an investment adviser.

» **They say multitasking is impossible, but I try to do it anyway.** I wake up around 4:15 in the morning and try to get a workout in while I'm reading my homework. I do my best to fit everything into my life.

» **My philosophy at the moment is "Seek what you love to do."** If you follow this mentality, good things will happen just at the point in your life when you need it.

» **When I finished my MBA I went to work for Nissan.** At the time, the Japanese automotive manufacturers were coming into the United States and establishing new engineering facilities. It felt like working for a start-up company, only with the security and backing of a global corporation. I enjoyed working there and moved progressively within the organization through various engineering and business roles. Then GE called.

» **When you get the GE call, you take the GE call.** It's an amazing management-training experience. I moved to Louisville and worked in GE appliances. The thing I learned there was to not be afraid to take the next difficult role. I became addicted to doing larger and larger assignments and to stretching myself.



» **ServiceMaster is a really amazing company because it has such strong brands, including Terminix, TruGreen, ServiceMaster Clean, and Merry Maids.** I came here because technology is critically important to ServiceMaster's success.

» **Our biggest asset is our people.** They see our customers every day, and if they don't have information immediately at their fingertips about that customer, about their preferences, about the latest status on their billing, about what kind of services they might want, etc., it makes their job a lot more difficult. Arming our employees with the tools they need to succeed is a passion of mine.

» **I'm happiest when I'm close to the customer.** This role is a great fit for me because I can use my business skills to bring technology to ServiceMaster employees so we can better serve our customers.

» **Take mobility for example.** We rolled out iPads and mobile devices to our sales teams and technicians in the field, and they are thrilled to have so much information at their fingertips.

» **The only reason anybody should be at a company is to serve the customer.** If you don't take time out to go and visit the customer and see what they need, what they want, and what's not going right, then you really can't solve their problems.

» **When we launch new systems or products** for any of our seven brands, my team goes out into the field to work and spend time with our sales teams, customer representatives, and technicians.

» **For example, when my team and I visit Terminix and TruGreen,** we start the day in the office and see how the technicians load the trucks and how they use our system to get routing and scheduling on their handheld devices. Then we drive their routes with them and work alongside them. I wouldn't know what enhancements they need to see in the system if I didn't ride along and spend time brainstorming about how their job could be improved, and I would also miss the chance to see the bond they have with our customers.

» **I learned how important firsthand experience is early in my career in automotive manufacturing.** You could sit in your office and study drawings all day long, trying to explain why things should fit together, but it was so much easier to go out to the assembly line and look at what people were actually doing.

» **Sometimes the solution is obvious if you just observe.**

» **I've always been a wannabe doctor.** I couldn't be a medical doctor, so I'm getting my doctorate in business administration. I will be the first doctor in my family.

» **I want to inspire my children to continuously learn.** I want to show them that no matter how old you are, you can always go back and learn more.

» **I couldn't be as busy as I am without a supportive family.** My family is very patient with me. I don't think I could be with people who would not allow me to grow. You need to grow with the people you love and give them the freedom to develop themselves.

EXPERTISE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Share This Story | [f](#) [t](#) [e](#) [p](#) [+](#) 0

### QUICK LINKS

[Download Media Kit](#)

**For Editorial Consideration and Advertising:**

E-mail Philip Taylor  
(312) 447-2386



### SOCIAL LINKS



### FIND US ON FACEBOOK

