

BEAUTY

What's Taking Off in the World of Beauty

# launchpad

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BOOMER  
BEAUTY



# PROFILES

Up close and personal

## Full Steam Ahead

**Wise men profess that patience is a virtue, but Helen of Troy's newest VP, Terri Taricco, disagrees.**

"Look before you leap" isn't a motto that you would find on Terri Taricco's office wall. Her "damn the torpedoes" approach to business, and life in general, recently landed her the vice president of marketing position for the Pro Tools division of Helen of Troy, manufacturer of Hot Tools, Fusion, Wigo, Beauty Skins and more. The corporate gig is a far cry from her upbringing as a Navy brat and early aspirations as—would you believe?—a bomb demolition expert.

"After graduating from high school, I joined the Air Force," she explains. "I thought that diffusing explosives would be an exciting career. What I discovered was that while tangling with bombs was literally a breathtaking experience, I was more of a high heels kind of gal." So what did Taricco do instead? Work in the beauty business, of course!

Despite being a single mother, working as a waitress and receiving government assistance, Taricco graduated from beauty school through a state-funded program, took out a loan and opened a salon. With her charm, wit and street-savvy ways, she found herself on the path to success. But what made her think she could eventually make the leap from behind the chair to behind the desk? "I was probably too naive to know better," she laughs.

Throughout her career, Taricco has seized

new opportunities, trusting that she would learn what she needed to know along the way. This approach only works if you've got the goods to begin with, and Taricco has them all. "I'm a shameless self-promoter," she admits. "But I balance this characteristic by always looking for personal weaknesses and correcting them."

Taricco's career path included stops at R.G. Shakour and the Professional Beauty Association. Since joining Helen of Troy in 2004, she has made a swift climb to her current position. And from the fateful day when she first entered the halls of this traditionally all-male culture, plenty of changes have been afoot, most notably melding the world of new technology with high-camp fashion, including polka dot, flames and smiley skull irons and dryers.

Never one to compromise, Taricco has no intention of changing her full-speed-ahead approach to fit any corporate image. At the 2007 Cosmoprof trade show, Taricco and team introduced the new Beauty Skins' tropical-themed tools by standing under an inflatable palm tree and monkey, and



enthusiastically showing off the new line to attendees. This plastic prop is likely to be the closest thing to a tropical vacation Taricco will have any time soon, but that's just fine with her. "This is definitely the hardest job I've ever taken on," she confesses. "But it's also proving to be the most fun."

—Karen K. Ford

