Influential Women Spotlights Mary DeRosa: Five Decades Of Beverage Industry Leadership & Lasting Impact



ELIZABETH, NJ, UNITED STATES, September 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From Hospitality and Beverage Sales to Executive Leadership at Allied Beverage Group, Mary has Dedicated Her Career to Helping People Succeed, Navigating Industry Change, and Creating Opportunities for the Next Generation

Elizabeth, New Jersey – Mary DeRosa is celebrating a remarkable professional journey spanning more than five decades, a career defined not simply by advancement or accomplishment, but by relationships, resilience, mentorship, and an enduring commitment to helping others succeed. Although retirement is in her future thoughts, and as she looks towards the next chapter of her life, Mary is still actively marking her path and will leave behind a legacy that reflects the evolution of the beverage industry itself and the growing role of women in positions of leadership.

Today, Mary serves as Vice President of Credit and Collections as well as Customer Service at Allied Beverage Group LLC, where she has spent 34 years building expertise, leading people, and helping guide the organization through periods of significant transformation. Previously serving for many years as Director of Credit & Collections, Mary currently oversees a team of 35 professionals across two departments.

Her responsibilities encompass credit operations, collections, accounts receivable, financial compliance, regulatory oversight, and customer service. Together, these functions represent a critical connection point throughout the organization, requiring constant collaboration among

finance, sales, operations, and executive leadership.

For Mary, leadership has never been limited to a title. It has been about being someone others can rely on.

A Career Built on Purpose and Perseverance

Mary's professional journey began in hospitality. While attending college, she worked in restaurants and steadily progressed through hotel and restaurant management positions. Following college, she remained in the industry, gaining valuable experience in an environment that taught her the importance of communication, service, organization, and understanding people.

Her career took a strategic turn when, as a single mother raising two children, she sought a professional path that would provide opportunities for growth while allowing her to balance her responsibilities as a parent.

She entered the beverage wholesaling industry, beginning in sales and training in New York before eventually returning to New Jersey. From there, Mary steadily progressed through the ranks, developing a reputation for knowledge, dependability, leadership, and an ability to navigate complex situations.

Over the course of more than five decades, she has witnessed extraordinary changes within the alcoholic beverage industry. She has seen new technologies emerge, consumer preferences shift, regulations evolve, businesses consolidate, and leadership opportunities for women expand.

When Mary first entered the wholesale industry, the landscape looked very different.

At one point, she recalls being one of only two women in a room of approximately 200 men during Friday meetings. Today, women are increasingly visible throughout the industry and are taking on influential leadership roles across a wide range of functions.

Mary is proud to have witnessed—and, in her own way, contributed to—that transformation.

Leading Through Change

One of the defining chapters of Mary's career came when she helped manage her department through Allied Beverage Group's fourth merger, an enormous organizational undertaking that consolidated four facilities into one during a period of tremendous change.

The complexity of the merger required strong coordination, adaptability, and communication. Yet just months after the merger was completed, the COVID-19 pandemic brought another unprecedented challenge.

While much of the business world was forced to dramatically change how it operated, Mary's

department remained on-site to help ensure business continuity.

The experience reinforced something Mary had learned throughout her career: leadership is most important when circumstances are uncertain.

Her ability to remain focused, communicate effectively, and help her team navigate difficult circumstances became particularly valuable during this period. Rather than stepping away from challenges, Mary consistently approached them as opportunities to find solutions and support the organization.

Technology also became an important part of her professional evolution. Mary spearheaded the development of the company's first online payment system, a groundbreaking initiative that required nearly a year of planning and implementation.

In 2026, she took another significant step by launching the first online credit card portal in New Jersey for Allied Beverage Group, giving the company's customers another means of making payments within a highly regulated industry.

These accomplishments demonstrate Mary's ability to combine traditional relationship-based leadership with an openness to innovation.

Connecting Customer Service, Compliance, and Business Operations
In her current leadership role, Mary oversees two departments that serve as an important gateway between Allied Beverage Group and its extensive New Jersey customer base.

Her Customer Service Department manages multiple forms of billing and coordinates with other critical areas of the organization. For many customers, the department represents one of their first interactions with the company.

Mary understands the importance of that first impression.

At the same time, her credit and collections responsibilities require careful attention to financial health, accountability, regulatory requirements, and compliance.

Because New Jersey's alcoholic beverage industry is highly regulated, maintaining compliance is an essential component of her work. Mary plays a key role in helping ensure that the organization follows state requirements, helping protect the company from costly penalties while allowing its teams to operate efficiently.

For Mary, compliance does not mean creating barriers for other departments. Instead, she believes it is about educating people, communicating clearly, and helping colleagues understand the rules so they can accomplish their objectives within the appropriate framework.

Her leadership philosophy is rooted in making people feel comfortable asking questions and seeking guidance.

Success Measured by the Success of Others

Mary attributes much of her success to a sense of purpose that began long before she reached a senior leadership position.

She has always believed there is a reason she is here, beyond being a wife and mother. Her adult children, grandchildren, and husband remain among her greatest motivations, but she has also always wanted something she could call her own and feel proud of.

That desire became intertwined with another realization: people naturally sought Mary out for advice.

It started when she was a teenager and continued throughout her 20s, 30s, 40s, and beyond. People came to her for business advice, personal advice, or simply because they needed someone to lean on.

Mary sometimes joked that perhaps the word “information” was written across her forehead.

Over time, however, she realized that being someone others trusted might be part of her purpose.

Maybe, she thought, this was her thing. Maybe she was meant to help people reach a better place in their lives.

That realization became a foundation for how she approaches both leadership and mentorship.

Today, Mary continues to lend an ear and offer advice to anyone who asks, whether they are family members, friends, colleagues, or even people she barely knows.

For Mary, success is not defined by formal recognition.

She is not someone who needs or seeks awards. Instead, she feels most accomplished when she sees another person grow, overcome an obstacle, become more confident, or achieve something they once thought was beyond their reach.

Knowing that she influenced someone in a positive way is its own reward.

The Power of Making a Presence

One of Mary’s most consistent pieces of advice to those she mentors is simple: make a presence.

She encourages people, particularly those who may be shy or uncertain, to show up, smile, acknowledge others, and be willing to engage.

When Mary enters a room, she says hello to everyone. If she knows someone well and has not seen them for a while, she may greet them with a hug. At the same time, she understands the importance of personal space and social etiquette, so she first reads the room.

If a hug is not appropriate, she smiles and acknowledges people by name.

The point, she believes, is not to be the loudest person in the room. It is to be present.

That philosophy has become an important part of the advice Mary shares with emerging professionals.

A “Be a Sponge” Philosophy for the Next Generation
When asked about the best career advice she has received, Mary points not to a single individual, but to the many leaders, colleagues, and industry professionals who have influenced her over the years.

Each relationship taught her something different about leadership, resilience, collaboration, and continuous learning.

One of the most important lessons she took away is that success is never achieved alone.

Strong careers are built through relationships, teamwork, shared knowledge, and a willingness to help others grow.

That lesson is also at the heart of Mary’s advice to young women entering the beverage industry.

She tells them to make a presence, smile, and keep learning.

Most importantly, she tells them to “be a sponge.”

Mary encourages emerging professionals to absorb knowledge, remain curious, develop new goals, and continue striving toward them regardless of how long they remain in a particular role.

She also emphasizes humility.

Always be humble, she believes, because humility can take a person further in business and, more importantly, in life.

Navigating a Changing Beverage Industry

The beverage industry Mary entered more than 50 years ago is dramatically different from the one she is leaving behind.

Consumer preferences have shifted, particularly among younger generations. Gen X and Gen Z consumers do not necessarily consume beverages in the same ways as previous generations, creating challenges for established brands while opening doors for new products and approaches.

Sales professionals must remain educated about emerging trends and continually adapt to a changing marketplace.

At Allied Beverage Group, Mary has witnessed the portfolio expand to include products such as ready-to-drink canned cocktails, non-alcoholic mocktails, and canned THC products, creating new opportunities for marketing and sales.

Credit and collections have also become increasingly important in a challenging buying environment. Mary believes continuous training for credit collectors must remain a priority so teams can help maintain the financial health of both the retailer and the company.

At the same time, she identifies talent development as one of the industry's most important opportunities.

Attracting and retaining diverse talent, preparing future leaders, and creating meaningful opportunities for advancement will be essential to the industry's continued growth.

Advancing Opportunities for Women

Mary's commitment to women in the beverage industry extends beyond her own career.

She has actively participated in mentoring initiatives at Allied Beverage Group, leadership programs through the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America, and diversity and inclusion efforts through the company's RISE organization.

She also regularly participates in panels and industry events focused on women's leadership.

For Mary, these activities are a natural extension of the role she has played throughout her career.

Long before formal mentoring programs became common, people came to her for guidance. She embraced that responsibility because she understood the value of having someone willing to listen, encourage, and provide perspective.

She hopes to continue that work well beyond retirement.

Mary plans to remain involved in mentoring emerging professionals, recruiting more women into the beverage industry, and partnering with educational institutions and organizations to help develop future leaders.

A Legacy Defined by Integrity and Service
At the heart of Mary's professional and personal philosophy are values that have remained consistent throughout her career: integrity, leadership, service, mentorship, accountability, authenticity, and continuous growth.

She believes leadership should be measured not only by individual accomplishments, but by the ability to create an environment where other people can succeed.

Her personal values are equally grounded in relationships. Mary places importance on honesty, humor, family, friendship, time well spent, and unconditional love.

As she prepares for retirement, Mary can look back on a career that has encompassed far more than job titles and responsibilities.

She helped navigate mergers, supported her organization through a global pandemic, introduced new payment technology, guided teams through regulatory complexities, developed professionals, and witnessed the transformation of an industry that once had very few women in leadership.

Most importantly, she built a reputation as someone people could count on.

Mary's greatest measure of success may therefore be found not on a résumé or in an award, but in the people whose careers and lives she has influenced.

After more than five decades in the beverage industry, her passion for people remains as strong as ever. As she looks towards her future at Allied Beverage Group as well as retirement and the opportunities ahead, Mary DeRosa intends to continue doing what has always come naturally to her: listening, encouraging, mentoring, learning, and helping others find their way forward. Her career stands as a testament to what can happen when professional ambition is paired with humility, resilience, service, and a genuine desire to see others succeed.

Learn More about Mary DeRosa:

Through her Influential Women profile, https://influentialwomen.com/connect/mary-derosa

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