



*'Walk among the employees, make eye contact. Use peoples' names. Again, connect.'*

**Richard McKnight** | Perspective on People | 11

JANET D. FIORE  
THE SIERRA GROUP INC.

**CEO FILE**

## 'Use what you have.'

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Name:** Janet D. Fiore.  
**Age:** Only my mom knows the real answer.  
**Title:** CEO of the The Sierra Group Inc. and co-founder and president of The Sierra Group Foundation.  
**Company:** The Sierra Group.  
**Type of company:** Consulting and training company with offices in King of Prussia and Philadelphia.  
**Number of employees:** 22 employees, 14 of whom are individuals with disabilities.  
**Revenue in last fiscal year:** \$1.6 million.  
**Recent project:** Saved a Center City training school for adults with disabilities from closing!  
**Education:** Gannon University, BA in liberal arts (1981).  
**First job:** Scooping ice cream.  
**Little-known fact about you:** I live with several physical disabilities myself.  
**Home:** King of Prussia.

**BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY**

**Essential business philosophy:** Fail to plan, plan to fail.  
**Best way to keep a competitive edge:** Constant communication combined with constant collaboration.  
**Yardstick of success:** We're successful when we help our customers reach their individual goals!  
**Goal yet to be achieved:** Eliminate workplace discrimination based on disability — reverse the high rate of unemployment for Americans with disabilities.

**JUDGMENT CALLS**

**Best decision:** Deciding to save, acquire and turnaround a Center City training school for people with disabilities. The Sierra Group Academy has turned out to be the most rewarding challenge of my career.  
**Worst decision:** I have no major regrets other than time that I've wasted by looking back or being angry with someone. Those emotions are true time wasters!  
**Toughest decision:** How to communicate with our customers when I was battling breast cancer. I chose to keep my battle private in order to maintain uninterrupted services on a business as usual basis. This was hard to do as my customers are like family to me!  
**Mentor:** Dr. Ralph Pacinelli, a vocational rehab industry icon, and my husband Michael, the most prolific person I know.



CEO Janet Fiore with her dog Timmy at The Sierra Group offices in King of Prussia.

**TRUE CONFESSIONS**

**Word that best describes you:** Tenacious.  
**Like best about your job:** Helping others achieve their goals! This includes staff and customers. I love other people's success.  
**Like least about your job:** Meeting my own standards for corporate growth and personal well-being. It's hard to stop working when you love your job!  
**The most important lesson you've learned:** Love your work, and love those you work with — it allows us all to rise together.  
**Life motto:** Use what you have, rejoice always and pray unceasingly.  
**Greatest fear:** What will I do in retirement? Work is my hobby!  
**Person most interested in meeting:** Cher — she is so talented and her powerful voice inspires me before I give a speech. She's overcome many challenges along her path to success. I'd love to discuss her personal story.  
**Company you respect most:** Amazon.com — they took an idea, perfected it and then diversified without moving away from their core mission and strengths. I always enjoy my experience as their customer. These are qualities I aspire for in my business.  
**First choice for a new career:** Radio or TV talk show host. I love

facilitating conversations ... and I love an audience!  
**Greatest extravagance:** My shoes, there are never enough of them!

**ET CETERA**

**Award/honor most proud of:** Philadelphia Business Journal's Woman of Distinction Award.  
**Most influential book:** The Bible.  
**Favorite movie:** "The Pink Panther."  
**Favorite restaurant:** Morimoto.  
**Favorite vacation spot:** Any tropical beach setting.  
**Favorite room in the house:** Our family room. It's a great place to sit quietly. It's also the spot in our home where we tend to kick back, share laughs, tears, movies or have heartfelt conversations with our family and friends.  
**Favorite way to spend free time:** Swimming, boating or just looking out over a water view!  
**Car you drive:** Red Mercedes convertible. ■

**POWER CALENDAR**



Must-attend events in the week ahead.

**TUESDAY, DEC. 18**

**You be the Judge: A Ratings Tool for Selecting the Best Solar Module Webinar.** 3 to 4 p.m., presented by Principal Solar Institute. Free. Visit [www.principalsolarinstitute.org/webinar/342](http://www.principalsolarinstitute.org/webinar/342).

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 19**

**Interviewing Skills.** 6 to 8 p.m. Parkway Central Library, 1901 Vine St., Director's Room, Room 406, Philadelphia. Presented by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Free. Email [savedowp@freelibrary.org](mailto:savedowp@freelibrary.org).

**THURSDAY, DEC. 20**

**Angel Venture Fair Shark Tank Kick Off—Bring Your Pitch!** 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., Camden Rutgers Business Center, Waterfront Technology Center, 200 Federal St., Camden. Presented by Burlington County Chamber of Commerce and The Private Investor Forum. Cost is \$10. Visit [angelventurefair.ticketleap.com/meeting-funding-sources-for-startups/](http://angelventurefair.ticketleap.com/meeting-funding-sources-for-startups/).

**WEDNESDAY, DEC. 26**

**Library Resources for Job Seekers.** 6 to 8 p.m., Parkway Central Library, 1901 Vine St., Director's Room, Room 406, Philadelphia. Presented by the Free Library of Philadelphia. Free. Email [savedowp@freelibrary.org](mailto:savedowp@freelibrary.org).

**TUESDAY, JAN. 8**

**Monthly Luncheon Annual Review.** 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Downingtown Country Club, 85 Country Club Drive, Downingtown. Presented by Exton Region Chamber of Commerce. Cost is \$25 for members, \$40 for nonmembers. Visit [chamber@ercc.net](mailto:chamber@ercc.net).

**MORE INSIDE**



**ON THE MOVE**  
Margarita Gagliardi has been named vice president of transit planning at Urban Engineers. | 11

**COLUMN**

You might be the reason no one pays attention in your town hall meetings. | 11