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Pohlar Fabrics - a One-Stop Shop Quilters for the Past 38 Years with their Store in Liberty, Indiana and Online



Megan R. McGuire
Owner

Pohlar Fabrics

Interview conducted by:
Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor
CEOCFO Magazine

CEOCFO: *Ms. McGuire, according to your site, "Pohlar Fabrics is your destination, sewing, quilting and fabric shop." What makes you a destination?*

Ms. McGuire: We are seven miles from this town, so we sit in the middle of the country and have for 38 years. We have a wide selection of quilting items and 8000 bolts of fabric for quilting needs. We carry books and patterns, notions, and we try to be a one-stop place for every quilter that comes through the door.

CEOCFO: *Do quilters get somewhat overwhelmed when they go to your store for the first time?*

Ms. McGuire: Yes. The first-time visitors are taken aback by the quantity of fabric we have. It is a big store.

CEOCFO: *You started quilting as a child; are there newer fabrics and methods today?*

Ms. McGuire: The fabric has changed over the years. The printing has gotten better and with technology, things get better. Screen printing has changed over the years, making the fabric prettier, and more detailed. As far as technique, there is always something new coming along that makes our lives as quilters easier or more enjoyable. Things have changed.

CEOCFO: *Is it easier now for quilters?*

Ms. McGuire: It is easier. Back when we opened, a lot of times you would use templates to cut your pieces to sew together. There are not as many templates now; you use a rotary cutter which is like a sharp pizza cutter, to cut your fabric with a special mat and ruler. It makes it easier and faster. Sewing machines have made things easier. They can do so much more now than they could in the eighties. You can embroider now with a machine and do quilting in the embroidery machine. Technology usually makes life easier.

CEOCFO: *Why is quilting popular and is it gaining in popularity?*

Ms. McGuire: It is, especially since COVID. Quilting and sewing have taken off because people were forced to stay home and they wanted a new hobby. Just like most crafts have picked back up since COVID. The need to finish something, to make something has changed in the last four years. Before that, quilting was a dying art, people thought of it as an old person's hobby and now the younger generation is getting more interested in quilting and sewing, so that helps a lot.

Pohlar Fabrics interview continued on page 3.

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CEOFCO: *Do you still quilt?*

Ms. McGuire: Yes, all the time.

CEOFCO: *How do you choose what fabric should be in the store and where does the fabric come from?*

Ms. McGuire: 8000 bolts is just a portion of what is available for us to buy. We could probably have close to 20 thousand bolts and still not have everything available for us to buy. It is hard to choose what fabrics to carry. We know our clientele so we know what they like and don't like. Most of our fabric comes from Korea or Japan. That is where 95% of the fabric mills are now. They used to be here in the States but they have since gone to Korea and Japan.

CEOFCO: *What do you carry in addition to fabric?*

Ms. McGuire: We carry rulers of all shapes and sizes, mostly from creative grids. They have a non-slick dot on the back of them, so when you put them on the fabric it grips it is sort of like sandpaper but not that rough, to help hold the ruler from moving when you are cutting. We carry zippers for bag-making, purse hardware, clasps, snaps, and all kinds of things to make purses.

We carry the complete line of Isacord embroidery thread to do machine embroidery and machine quilting with; which there are over 400 different colors. We carry BERNINA sewing machines; they are the only family-owned sewing machine left in the world which is an honor. They have been a family-owned company for over 125 years. They are training their son and daughter to take over the business, so it is not going to be bought out by a corporation; it is going to stay in the family. In this business, that means a lot.

We carry rotary cutters, marking pens and pencils, and buttons to embellish things with. We carry a wide variety of patterns, wool fabric and wool patterns. We carry hand embroidery patterns, the full line of Cosmo Embroidery Floss and cross-stitch items.

**"We are a small business, we may look big on the outside but we are a family-owned small business."
Megan R. McGuire**

CEOFCO: *How much of the business is online these days?*

Ms. McGuire: I am going to say a third of it.

CEOFCO: *Is that area growing for you?*

Ms. McGuire: We are trying to grow, yes.

CEOFCO: *In what ways?*

Ms. McGuire: We are advertising for online sales. We are working on the website and getting it easier to navigate and putting more things on it. The internet is a hard language to learn when you do not know the language.

CEOFCO: *We took note of Pohlar Fabrics as you were honored by Marquise for expertise in textiles. Would you tell us about that recognition?*

Ms. McGuire: It was an honor to even be considered for that position. You don't hear of many quilting stores being honored in that field.

CEOFCO: *What have you learned about business and how has that changed over time?*

Ms. McGuire: You have to be nice to people and build a relationship with them. A lot of our customers have become friends over the years because we don't treat them just like a human that walks through the door, we treat them like a friend. We want to know about them and their families.

For anybody new coming in, we don't treat them any differently. They are the same coming through the door as one of our oldest customers that come through the door. Business has changed since COVID. COVID changed the way we do business and it has made business different since COVID has been here and gone and made our whole world different. We learned to adapt to the changing of the time and keep going.

Pohlar Fabrics interview continued on page 5.

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Comfort First Introduction and Installation



CEO CFO: *What if anything might people looking at Pohlar Fabrics, miss that they need to understand about the company?*

Ms. McGuire: We are a small business, we may look big on the outside but we are a family-owned small business. I have children that I have to take care of and sometimes things slip through the cracks. We try our best to do the best we can but we are a family business.

CEO CFO: *Do you think people appreciate that these days?*

Ms. McGuire: With more things that are going on in the crafting community, I think they do.

CEO CFO: *What about patterns are you a pattern designer?*

Ms. McGuire: I am a pattern designer. I have over 100 patterns that I have designed for sale, and that we have here in the store. Other stores do have them across the nation but not many.

CEO CFO: *What is it about your patterns that is special and sets your designs apart from others?*

Ms. McGuire: I try to write my patterns so that they are easy to follow and understand, to make it so anybody can make it whether you are a beginner or a seasoned quilter who just needs something to do and doesn't want to have a lot of thinking involved. I try to make that process easier for them.

CEO CFO: *Is that hard for you since it is intuitive for you and perhaps not for someone new to quilting?*

Ms. McGuire: Sometimes, but then I was helping a customer recently because the pattern did not tell her to watch her fabric direction and she cut it wrong, so the little people were on their sides. Those are the things that I try to note in my patterns, if they are using a directional material, to make sure they watch the direction of cutting. She couldn't use her fabric because it was ruined. That is frustrating for a consumer to spend the money on fabric and then have it ruined because the directions did not tell them to be careful. I try to be mindful of things like that and help make my patterns note those kinds of things so people don't get frustrated.

CEO CFO: *Did you ever imagine that after all these years you would still enjoy what you do so much? Your enthusiasm comes through loud and clear!*

Ms. McGuire: I don't know what else I would do. It is just second nature so I do enjoy what I do. I am hopeful that one day one of my children will take over the business and love it as much as I do. I just love working with fabric.