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**Four Questions for ARCH® Cutting Tools Segment HR Director Leann Gurley**

Does diversity make a company more productive? In 2019 Harvard Business Review (HBR) research, that is exactly what was found. In a study of 1,069 leading firms across 24 industries, where gender diversity is an important widespread cultural belief. In other words, beliefs in gender diversity creates a self-fulfilling cycle. Organizations that view gender diversity as important capture benefits from it.1

ARCH® Cutting Tools is a company fully committed to a gender-diverse culture that is endorsed and promoted throughout the organization; and it relies on team members like **Leann Gurley**, Segment HR Director-CT/Leave Management leadership team to support and drive its strategy and growth.

Gurley has been with the company for six years, and her HR career began somewhat unconventionally.

“I was more focused on the accounting side of business,” she recalls. “I worked for a smaller company processing payroll and taxes, which led me to a payroll/HR role.”

**How did you manage the transition from accounting to HR?**

She seized that opportunity to expand her HR knowledge in support of her new career turn. Gurley attended Henry Ford Community College, and has continued her HR education through training including, Employment Law, EEO Safety, OSHA Compliance, and others related disciplines. She also is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM).

**Did you face challenges as a woman in management?**

While she encountered challenges as a woman in management, and in manufacturing overall, Gurley says conditions have gotten better throughout the years as her career has developed. She attributes her success, to a great extent, to teamwork.

“The team I work with is amazing,” Gurley says. “I believe that you can be more successful as a team instead of focusing on just yourself. That allows team members to build trust. Creativity thrives when people work together; and sharing any workload makes you feel less stressed. You inspire one another.”

**What about challenges in the industry overall and from COVID-19?**

Manufacturing presents unique HR challenges, and the COVID-19 pandemic has added a new – even more difficult – dimension to those HR challenges, Gurley says.

“We are focusing on recruiting high school students and educating them about opportunities in manufacturing,” she said. “We have successful stories of students getting good jobs directly out of high school and climbing the ladder within our organization. … we hope to inspire young people to want to explore the manufacturing career path.”

The pandemic made 2020 a challenging year, according to Gurley.

“At the beginning, most days were spent helping the various business units with how to handle the situations that came up due to COVID-19. Unfortunately, we did not have a ‘play book’ to reference; but we put together a plan quickly and shared with it our employees.”

**What is your personal philosophy, and any advice for women making a career choice?**
Gurley’s personal philosophy is straightforward. “Deal with each situation that comes up, do not ignore it because it will not go away. Stay calm, and listen do not judge,” she says.

Offering advice to women considering their career decision, Gurley says, “Find a path that you are passionate about. Let’s be honest – we are at work more than home, so you should focus on finding something that you love doing. HR is a challenging career, but it is very rewarding because you know that you have helped someone.”

1 HBR, February 2019 – [Research: When Gender Diversity Makes Firms More Productive (hbr.org)](https://hbr.org/2019/02/research-when-gender-diversity-makes-firms-more-productive)

**About ARCH® Cutting Tools**ARCH Cutting Tools is the recognized world leader in high-performance solid round and indexable cutting tools. With manufacturing facilities located throughout the United States, the company’s engineering and machining facilities are dedicated to the betterment of precision machined parts, products, tools, and related supply chain processes. ARCH Cutting Tools combines the expertise of leading American manufacturing professionals and expanding technologies to serve the medical, aerospace and defense, and industrial markets. [archcuttingtools.com](http://archcuttingtools.com/)

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