



5 Questions With In-Home Care Owner Jennifer Bauernfeind

HomeCare sat down with Jennifer Bauernfeind to ask her insights in the homecare industry after working in the corporate retail field

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The HomeCare (HC) team reached out to Jennifer Bauernfeind, the owner of a Minnesota-based in-home senior care company, to ask her insights into and suggestions for the homecare industry after working in the corporate retail field. Comfort Keepers, Bauernfeind's senior homecare franchise, has locations throughout Osseo, Maple Grove, Minnetonka and Minneapolis, Minnesota, metro area. After eight years of working for Target's corporate headquarters, Bauernfeind made the career change to the homecare industry in hopes of becoming both an entrepreneur and an advocate for senior care.

HomeCare: What drew you to the homecare industry, and more specifically, the senior care industry?

Jennifer Bauernfeind: I'm an entrepreneur at heart and had 20 years of experience being an owner and operator in sales, product development and manufacturing with major retailers prior to buying my Comfort Keepers franchises. I was looking for a new opportunity and knew that it had to be my own company again. I drew from my love of my grandparents, great-grandparents and other seniors who had made a big impact on my life. We were fortunate that they all lived independently, in their own homes their entire lives and I knew how important that was to them. In retail, I had been studying the demographic shift with our aging population and was very curious about how our society would address the changes with services and products. The more I researched, the more committed I became to being part of the solution and bringing the best quality of care to seniors that would enable them to stay in their homes. Owning a Comfort Keepers franchise really brought everything together for me.

HC: What has surprised you most about working in homecare?

Bauernfeind: It's much more complex than I thought it would be. In Minnesota, we are a licensure state, and we follow very strict statutes, which gives us a lot of structure. I had a lot to learn in the beginning and am really grateful to be a part of a franchise that gives me a lot of support.

HC: Are there any lessons or tools that you gained from the corporate industry that you find useful or important in the homecare industry?

Bauernfeind: So many! When I started working as a merchant for Target Corporation, my mentors really helped me see that the categories we were managing were like managing our own business within a larger business, and that's always how I looked at it. I learned to build relationships with suppliers and how to negotiate. On the teams I worked with, we developed innovative strategies and what management of teams should look like when done well. I had a very specialized position for a couple of years that allowed me to help build a completely new and unique business and have a hand in every aspect.

HC: In the home health care industry, there has been an increasing shift among patients toward a desire for ease of access and choices regarding health care providers and services. How do you feel your approach to providing care aligns with this shift?

Bauernfeind: In homecare, there are a lot of competitors for clients to choose from. They do value convenience and choice when selecting care providers and services. At Comfort Keepers, we offer personalized, flexible care plans that allow our clients and their families to select the services and schedules that best fit their unique needs. Our team takes a collaborative approach, empowering clients to actively participate in designing their care plan so they feel in control of their health and well-being.