A Legacy Continued: Apogee Industries Acquires The De Leone Corporation

After nearly 55 years as a respected name in the label industry, The De Leone Corporation has entered an exciting new chapter. The company has been acquired by Apogee Industries, creating new opportunities for growth while preserving the values, customer relationships, and reputation that have defined the De Leone name for generations.

Founded by Samuel De Leone in Cupertino, California, the company began as many Silicon Valley success stories did—in a family garage. In fact, the business predates another famous garage startup just a few miles away: Apple. Initially operating as a print brokerage specializing in tickets and labels, The De Leone Corporation steadily expanded, first relocating to Santa Clara before establishing its long-term home in Redmond, Oregon in the early 1980s.

Over the decades, the company evolved into a highly respected manufacturer and distributor of pressure-sensitive labels, serving customers across North America with both custom-printed labels and one of the industry's most comprehensive stock label programs.

Samuel's daughter, Theresa De Leone McGrath, carried forward her father's entrepreneurial vision as President, leading the company through years of growth while maintaining its reputation for exceptional customer service and product quality.

"As my brother and I began thinking about the future of the company, it became clear that there wasn't another family member prepared to lead the next generation," Theresa explained. "Rather than simply retiring, we wanted to find the right organization—one that would continue building on what my father started and create new opportunities for our employees and customers."

To help navigate the succession process, Theresa turned to New Direction Partners after previously meeting Managing Director Jim Russell through an industry association.

"What impressed me most was their deep understanding of the printing, packaging and label industry," she said. "They weren't simply focused on completing a transaction—they understood the unique challenges and opportunities our business represented. Throughout the process, I always felt I was receiving objective advice that was in the best interests of our company."

The search for the right buyer ultimately led to Apogee Industries and its President, Brian West.

West had originally connected with New Direction Partners in 2020 while exploring opportunities to expand into the label industry. After acquiring Apogee Industries in 2021 and adding a second Missouri operation in 2023, he continued looking for strategic acquisitions that complemented the company's long-term vision.

"Jim understood exactly what we were trying to build," West said. "He didn't bring us every opportunity that came along. He brought us the right opportunity."

For West, The De Leone Corporation represented far more than an acquisition. It added an established brand, experienced employees, new manufacturing capabilities, and one of the industry's most extensive stock label programs, including approximately 800 warehouse and shipping label SKUs.

“I don’t think we’ve ever printed a ‘Fragile’ label,” West said with a smile. “This immediately expands what we can offer our customers and creates new opportunities to strengthen existing relationships while opening doors to new markets.”

The acquisition also brings advanced digital production capabilities through De Leone’s Durst hybrid flexographic and digital press, further supporting Apogee’s commitment to investing in technologies that position the company for future growth.

Operational integration is already underway, including implementation of LabelTraxx across all three facilities to create a consistent platform for production, customer service, and business management.

While ownership has changed, continuity remains a central theme of the transition. Theresa has chosen to remain with the company during the integration period, helping ensure a seamless experience for employees, distributors, and customers.

“As long as I continue providing value to the organization, I’m happy to help,” she said. “Maintaining the relationships we’ve built over the years is important to me.”

Looking ahead, West sees significant opportunity.

“Our philosophy has always been to build upon the strengths of the companies we acquire,” he said. “We want to provide additional value through our network, purchasing power, technology, and resources while preserving what made these businesses successful in the first place.”

His long-term vision is ambitious, with a goal of growing Apogee Industries to $50 million in annual sales over the next decade through a combination of organic growth and strategic acquisitions.

Reflecting on the experience, Theresa encourages other family business owners to begin succession planning earlier than they may think.

“My father taught me to surround yourself with people who are smarter than you,” she said. “Selling a business is one of the most important decisions an owner will ever make, and having experienced advisors made all the difference. New Direction Partners gave us honest, objective guidance throughout the process. If we hadn’t been ready, they would have told us—and they would have helped us prepare.”

West offers similar advice to buyers.

“These transactions require patience,” he said. “They rarely happen overnight. But when you find the right company, the right people, and the right fit, the results are well worth the time invested.”

For both organizations, the acquisition represents not an ending, but the continuation of a legacy—one built on entrepreneurship, innovation, and long-term relationships. With The De Leone Corporation now part of the Apogee Industries family, that legacy is positioned to continue for many years to come.