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### From Merchant to Manufacturer

Tara Marling Abraham  
*Accel, Inc.*

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## TARA MARLING ABRAHAM

Tara Marling Abraham, Chairman and Co-CEO of Accel, Inc., is one of the nation's leading experts in contract packaging. A strategist and experienced entrepreneur, Ms. Abraham advances innovation throughout the businesses she has established and grown, as well as professional and industry groups to which she dedicates time. Her combined expertise in finance, marketing, relationship management, supplier diversity, and mergers & acquisitions has made her a leader within the retail and consumer packaged goods industries.

Ms. Abraham creates solutions, following personal experience with inferior packaged goods produced outside of the U.S., she established Accel in 1995 to provide quality controlled, domestic contract packaging services to the health, beauty, food, fashion, and technology industries. Accel a \$25M company producing \$480M wholesale value of goods with 1,100 associates at its 517,000 sq. ft. facility, has become known for its diversity and supplier best practices. Selected clients include Abbott Nutrition, Bath & Body Works, Beechnut, Express, Honeywell, NetJets (a Berkshire Hathaway company), Tween Brands and Victoria's Secret, among others. Prior to Accel, she was a Brand Manager for Biolage Haircare at Bristol Myers Squibb and earlier a Brand Manager and Assistant Buyer of Fine and Home Fragrances for Bath & Body Works a division of Limited Brands.

As staffing needs grew at Accel and the other companies located within Columbus's Personal Care & Beauty Innovation Campus; Ms. Abraham founded LGS Preferred a temporary agency supplying short and long-term staff. LGS recruits and trains a workforce to be multi-skilled in the personal care and beauty manufacturing industries. In addition, the company provides transportation for the workers removing a significant obstacle in securing adequate staff. Since 2012, it has built a 2,000 labor associate base and \$18M in revenue. Ms. Abraham's dedication to innovation in business led to the establishment of Accel Business Solutions LLC, the only WBENC (Women's Business Enterprise National Council) certified reseller and female national distributor of Cinsay Inc. Smart Store Video Technology. The patented software is the world's first technology enabling viewers to watch, transact and share information on social media, all within a video.

In recognition of her effectiveness as an industry leader and business owner, Ms. Abraham serves as a member of the Board of Director of Peoples Bancorp Inc. (NASDAQ: PEBO) and Peoples Bank, National Association based in Marietta, Ohio. Currently, she is a member of the Audit and Risk Committees as well as a Trustee of the Peoples Bancorp Foundation.

For many years she has been actively involved with the WBENC, serving on the Board of Directors, as Chair of the WBENC Forum, and Co-Chair of the 2012 National Conference & Business Fair. The Women's Business Enterprise National Council, which represents 11,000 certified women-owned businesses and over 250 Fortune 1000 corporations, appointed Ms.

Abraham to the National Women's Business Council in 2011. She is also a WBENC Woman of Distinction.

The Council reports to the President of the United States, U.S. Congress, and the Small Business Administration on women's business issues and policies. Ms. Abraham is also the Chair of the College of Fashion & Retail Studies Advisory Board at The Ohio State University.

Ms. Abraham has been actively involved in professional organizations throughout her career. She is a member of Young Presidents Organization and the first woman to be the Columbus Ohio Chapter Chair, and the second Women's International Network Chair, she is also a member of the Women President's Organization, NAWBO (National Association of Women Business Owners), Cosmetic Executive Women, Women Impacting Public Policy, and Chair of the New Albany Chamber of Commerce. As well, she is a member of NACD (National Association of Corporate Directors), Women Corporate Directors, IWF (International Women's Forum). For Ernst & Young in Columbus, she served as a Judge for the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2001.

In recognition of her leadership, management expertise, and dedication to women's business, Ms. Abraham has received numerous awards including: the 2014 Trailblazer Women of the Year by the Ohio River Valley Women's Business Council, WBENC Applause Award in 2013 and in 2007 she was named a Women's Business Enterprises (WBE) Star by the WBENC. Accel's commitment to unsurpassed quality and creative problem solving has resulted in numerous awards including the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2000 and eight Fast Fifty Awards, given to the fastest growing companies in Central Ohio. And in 2017 she was recognized as one of the 2017 Women of Achievement by the YWCA.

Ms. Abraham's commitment to diversity at Accel has been acknowledged with both the 2010 and 2011 Ohio Diversity Council Ohio's Most Powerful and Influential Women Award and from 2005 through 2011 the company was named to the Top 500 Diversity Owned Businesses in the U.S. by Diversity Business. Additionally, Accel received Limited Brands' Partners in Supplier Diversity Award, the Direct Ship Excellence Award both in 2009, the Championing Diversity and Supplier Excellence Award in 2007, and in 2010 received the Columbus *Business First* Corporate Caring Award among others. Within the community, Ms. Abraham was named the Red Cross Fundraiser and Volunteer of the Year.

She serves her community on several non-profits and is passionate about raising funds to meet critical needs. Recently, she was the Co-Chair of two capital campaigns for organizations upon whose boards she serves. She was instrumental in raising \$17M for Ohio Health's Kobacker Hospice and \$1M through the 2014 Go Red Luncheon for the American Heart Association, which was #1 in the country for Circle of Red membership.

She has also chaired the Ohio State University College of Education/Human Ecology Advisory Board and served on the boards of the American Red Cross of Greater Columbus, United Way of Central Ohio, St. Stephen's Community House, and as a member of the Action for Children Advisory Board.

A skilled communicator, Ms. Abraham has spoken extensively on women business issues relating to business strategy, public policy, and supplier diversity at multiple WBENC Conferences, The Ohio State University, WELD, NAWBO, ORV-BC and other Diversity Events over a 10 year span. She also spoke at the Otterbein Community Impact Summit in April of 2013. In addition, she speaks to students at The Ohio State University School of Business on Entrepreneurism, Leadership and Strategy as well as to the School of Fashion Merchandising.

She earned a BS in Fashion Merchandising and Marketing from The Ohio State University in Columbus and continued her education receiving executive education certifications from The Ohio State University, the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, as well as corporate board directors' programs. Ms. Abraham and her husband have 2 children and live in greater Columbus, Ohio.