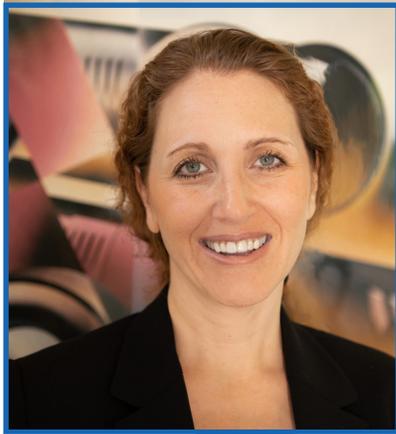




# THE PFS FAMILY ALBUM

*Milestones and Stories of the People at Premier*

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**"I believe in the power of the individual. Every single person at Premier is what makes Premier successful."**

**- Alexis Chacchia,**  
Vice President  
of Operations

## We Recognize Alexis Chacchia: Connecting the Dots at Premier over the Past 20 Years

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Albert Einstein once said, "The definition of genius is taking the complex and making it simple." Premier's "Simple Lease" was designed to be the easiest and quickest way to put a dream car in your driveway. However, behind the apparent simplicity of the application process and the servicing of every Simple Lease, there's a labyrinth of procedures, technologies, internal communication and staff coordination. Over the past 20 years, Alexis Chacchia is the person who has ensured that all of those operational dots are connected, to produce a smooth, seamless experience for every Premier client. And there is nothing simple about that.

When Alexis Chacchia slipped her resume under Premier's front door in 2000, the company had been in business for less than 3 years, and she was looking for a part-time position to accommodate her schedule as a young mother. In what turned out to be "Job Kismet" – perhaps because she had worked in her family's small business, or because she had already held managerial positions with national companies – Alexis and Premier were both in the right place at the right time.

Before she answered her first phone call at Premier, there were indications that Alexis' hard-wired work ethic would likely be a factor. After her

initial job interview, the report given to Premier's CEO, Mitch Katz, was that "Alexis will end up running everything." When her former boss was called for a recommendation, he asked, "What position are you hiring her for?" He was told "receptionist," and his response was, "Not for long." Alexis still answers the phone on occasion, but his prediction was accurate, as the scope of her responsibilities at the firm grew quickly.



Alexis with CEO Mitch Katz, and VP of Sales, Doug Ewing

## Growing Up in a Family That "Just Got it Done"

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Alexis grew up in Carmel, New York, where her father owned an industrial tool supply company – long before the era of Home Depot and Lowe's – that sold everything from nails and sandpaper to hydraulic equipment. The business was a family affair, and Alexis went from counting out 500 screws to put into boxes at age 5, to showing contractors how to operate a hydraulic drill press at age 10. She recalls, "We were a 3M supplier, and 40-foot container trucks filled with cases of tape would pull up to our warehouse. I can still see my mom, wearing heels, in the back of the truck offloading tape to my uncle or my brother. We always did whatever was necessary to get the job done."



**Premier Financial Services**

*Vintage and Exotic Motorcar Leasing since 1997*

Although her family eventually closed that business, Alexis was “always working” even as a teenager, and during her college years she worked at various jobs for 30 to 40 hours a week. As a student at Western Connecticut State University, for example, she worked two jobs at the same time: in a B. Dalton bookstore at the mall, and in the university’s library, where her work in the Acquisitions Department prompted Alexis to briefly consider a career path as a librarian.

Following graduation, Alexis held a series of jobs of increasing responsibility at retail firms - including Pottery Barn and Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS) - that provided her with a broad range of experience in managing business processes, motivating employees and shaping the customer experience. As Operations Manager at EMS, for example, she did everything from working with contractors and building inspectors, to overseeing shipments of goods, and training staff on how to demonstrate and sell the products all before the location ever opened its doors. True to her family tradition, Alexis got stuff done.

### **Talking to People Who Are Passionate About Their Work**

Prior to joining Premier, Alexis managed the Connecticut division of Successories, a leading retailer and direct marketer of motivational and self-improvement products for individuals and corporations. She was well-suited for that position in several ways; notably, it applied her operational skills, and provided direct contact with clients who were passionate about their work. As

she puts it, “I was helping people figure out how to make their work environment better, how to motivate or reward staff, or how to show appreciation to their customers. There’s no better reason to be talking to someone, and I loved it.”

In addition to running three retail brick - and - mortar Successories locations and a warehouse facility, Alexis worked directly with HR and sales and marketing executives from well-known companies located in Connecticut – including Pitney-Bowes, IBM, Georgia Pacific and Gartner Group – to help design and implement corporate motivational and recognition programs.

In fact, Alexis received several job offers from those large client companies. She claims, “It’s all because I liked to talk to people, and was interested in their work.” We suspect, however, that her enthusiasm also delivered great service for those clients.

### **What “Connecting the Dots” Means at Premier**

The range and depth of experience Alexis accumulated provided her with management insights she immediately applied at Premier, which in turn, established the company’s reputation for exceeding customer expectations. Examples include:

**- Creating Policies and Procedures:** When Alexis joined Premier, the young company needed to define nearly every process in its complex business model to foster best practices and ensure consistency.

Those internal disciplines now serve as a cornerstone of its industry leadership.

**- Building Technological Efficiency:** When Doug Ewing, now Premier’s VP of Sales, handed Alexis a FileMaker software box, she started from scratch to build the company’s database. That initial task has evolved into a powerful, proprietary system that integrates leading edge technologies – such as electronic signatures – designed to deliver fast and secure transactions for Premier’s customers and business partners.

**- Making Client Service the Priority:** Working in retail taught Alexis the importance of treating people well, and she teaches Premier’s staff that, “Your job is to help people.” To achieve that goal, Alexis launched Premier’s Continuous Improvement program that provides both industry knowledge and interpersonal skill development for staff on their way to becoming leasing professionals. She says, “That’s why our mid- and upper-level staff are so good at what they do; regardless of whatever area of the company they work in.”



Alexis with Operations Manager Suzanne deBary, who’s been with PFS for 14 years

### **Belief in the Power of the Individual**

Alexis believes strongly in the power of the individual, and has faith in every person’s ability to make a



difference in the world. She notes that, "It doesn't really matter what you're doing. If you find meaning and purpose in it, you're going to do well, and in turn, you'll lift up those around you, and help them to find meaning and purpose as well. It's begins a cascading effect."

She said, "Premier has allowed me to use my passion for helping people, whether they be staff, customers or vendors. I enjoy helping people to achieve things. For a team member, that might mean learning a new skill or taking on greater responsibility. For a customer, that means helping them drive the car of their dreams. That may sound like an advertisement, but it's very rewarding to help clients achieve that goal."

## A Busy Life Outside of the Office

The first time she met her future husband, Marchello, Alexis went home and told her mother that she had met the man she would marry... and she was correct. Marchello and Alexis did marry, and have two children: Annachiara, who is finishing up her BFA in painting; and Cayman, a high school junior who aspires to be a physical therapist, and "is NOT

named after the Porsche Cayman," according to Alexis. (Though she refused to succumb to pressure from Ferrari dealer colleagues to name her son "Enzo.")

Alexis is a bona fide history buff, with particular interest in the Ancient Near East, Early American history and World War II. She's a voracious reader (with more than 80 books read this year alone), loves to travel, and is a self-described "health nut," who walks an average of 40 miles a week. Alexis also enjoys organic homemade cooking, learning about nutrition and essential oils and "all that hocus pocus that keeps the whole family healthy." (She notes that her Italian-born husband is the chef in the family.)

Combining her interests in history, world religions and teaching, for the past 7 years Alexis has taught biblical studies to undergraduates at St. Thomas Seminary. She has also actively participated in a range of volunteer roles in her local parish and at the diocesan level.

As a family, the Chacchias keep things in perspective by giving back. For the past 12 years, they have supported the local homeless shelter by coordinating a "Sandwich



Alexis with her children, Cayman and Annachiara, on vacation

Saturday" program, which makes between 80 and 100 sandwiches for shelter residents every weekend. There are 160 beds at the shelter, which are full all the time, and more than half of the residents are in their teens. Feeding the hungry is a passion for Alexis, who believes that, "If people don't have to worry about what to eat, then they are more likely to reach out to family members, or to look for a job to support themselves."

When it comes to the power of the individual to make a difference in the world, Alexis walks the talk, in both her professional and personal life.



The Chacchia family leans into a selfie in Italy

**Celebrating its 23rd anniversary in 2020, Premier continues to grow and succeed for one simple reason: great people like Alexis Chacchia work here...and they stay here.**

