

# SHARON CHONTOS

CO-OWNER



Sharon's journey began with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. Armed with curiosity and drive, she ventured into the oil and gas industry where she spent over a decade wearing many hats—from process engineer to economist and process safety manager to leading operations across Northern Plains oil properties for Amoco Production.

Eventually, advocacy for her parents brought her back to South Dakota where she stepped into the role of Director of Research Operations for a major ethanol company. There, she was part of a team managing a \$100 million Department of Energy grant.

In 2009, Sharon turned a new page. Drawing on her technical background and strategic mindset, she began helping nonprofits, universities, and state agencies write stronger grants, track outcomes, and plan for the future. To sharpen her skills even further, she returned to school—this time earning a master's degree in program evaluation from Michigan State University. Today, she specializes in helping organizations understand what's working, what's not, and how to improve, using tools like surveys, interviews, focus groups, and cost-benefit analyses.

Sharon brings not just expertise, but an engineer's practicality, a consultant's insight, and a storyteller's knack for connecting the dots.

## Notable Achievements

- Facilitated over 60 strategic plans for corporations, nonprofits, state agencies, and universities
- Implemented five strategic plans for industries and nonprofits
- Evaluated over 100 programs and grant projects using qualitative and quantitative methods
- Reviewer for the National Science Foundation providing insight on commercial potential and project evaluation

## Interests & Hobbies

Sharon's happiest moments are the ones spent with her three children and their partners. Though she proudly calls herself a workaholic, she still carves out time to travel, hop on her bike whenever the weather allows, and take long walks with her loyal dog, Stella. She dreams of one day diving into the world of scrapbooking, but for now, that hobby remains on her retirement project list.

