



Type of Opportunity Start-Up Service Company

Situation Background

Start-up opportunity with an initial service offering for providing labor and supervision to set up exhibits at tradeshows. The company opened its first office in Atlanta, Georgia and ultimately expanded into the major tradeshhow cities throughout the United States and internationally. The founders recognized an emerging void in the marketplace for a “personalized” service to tradeshhow exhibitors. A company was created to meet this need, and at the same time “birthed” an entire service segment of providers for the tradeshhow industry.

Our Strategy

The initial strategy was to provide a “lead man” who was a skilled project manager to work with customers, regardless of where those customers were exhibiting. The consistency of personality and project understanding provided the personalized service customers needed, given that their exhibit projects were becoming more complex in an exploding industry where corporations worldwide were placing more emphasis on “face to face” marketing. The overall strategy was to create offerings compatible with operational and management systems. These systems would allow the company to be seen as the “expert” management company for all trade show and event marketing needs worldwide.

Key Entrepreneur to Enterprise Accomplishments

This organization experienced many of the requirements to successfully transition from its beginnings in 1979 to a successful enterprise when we sold it to a private equity group in 2001. Some of the key business-building accomplishments in this successful E-to-E journey included:

- Evolving products/services to meet the changing needs of customers.
- Developing a management team to grow the business and manage rapid growth.
- Developing the resources and operational systems to transition from a single service offering to a multi-divisional business operating in a decentralized organization worldwide.
- Utilizing technology and building management and financial systems to effectively operate the “business of the business”.
- Effectively recreating and repositioning the company as the initial offering of the company matured and new competition moved into the market place.
- Providing “pioneering” customer service and business-building processes that not only made the company successful, but were emulated by organizations throughout the industry.
- Implementing an industry-leading labor relations strategy and management that improved the work environments to enhance the service levels required by Customers..
- Implementing industry-leading antitrust legal strategy development and management that paved the way for a broader choice of service providers for customers using the trade show and event marketing arena to sell their products.
- Developing sales process, people and organization to sell the company's services at a time when sales organizations didn't exist for the services the company was selling.
- Acquiring companies to extend the required offerings as the company repositioned itself.
- Creating and managing an internationally recognized brand.
- Developing an HR organization infrastructure to manage more than 350 full-time and permanent part-time staff, along with thousands of employees used on projects throughout the world.
- Successfully developed professional-level investment and exit strategy.

Results

- Successfully started business in 1979, operated it and created value realized when selling business in 2001.
- Recognized industry-wide for innovative approach to servicing customers, Operational planning and workforce training.
- Founding partners successfully managed through many entrepreneurial transitions personally and professionally; partnership objectives were accomplished.