



November 2, 2018 FFNF Highlights

A Lancaster Story

Mr. Steve Zuckerman, Principal – OakTree Development

- Mr. Zuckerman is from Bronx NY. His parents were immigrants. His father was a holocaust survivor. His mother was born in Uruguay and is still living.
- He graduated from Franklin and Marshall College. While there he came up with an idea for a business. His idea was to get 18 merchants located around the college to spend \$50 monthly for paid advertisements. He printed a flyer with the advertisements for the local businesses and then placed them in the mail boxes on campus. With the \$900 he earned, he spent \$300 to print the flyer, and the remaining \$600 was his profit. This business eventually became Clipper Magazine.
- Clipper Magazines were circulated around college towns in Philadelphia, Washington DC., New Jersey and New York. They then began mailing the publication to homes. The business grew to be one of the largest of its kind in the US. Currently, there are approximately 1,500 employees, half of whom are employed in Lancaster county as executives, artists and in administration. The remainder is employed around the country in sales departments in their 500 markets located in 33 states.
- Lancaster provided their business with access to reasonably priced office space; the best educated labor force at a reasonable price; and, education institutions (PCAD and Millersville). Curriculums were established to train Clipper artists for jobs right out of school. There is a great need to find honest and established vendors.
- To create a climate for success, there needs to be a way to provide business entrepreneurs with mentors. Steve has been fortunate to have a number of mentors early in his career.
- Lancaster has an old-fashioned sense of morality, where it's important to treat folks like you'd like to be treated. Reputation matters.
- In 2003, they received an offer from Gannet Corporation, publishers of USA Today, to purchase Clipper Magazine. After the sale, he and his partners decided to invest in real estate in Lancaster. In 2013, they explored other opportunities in real estate development. Oaktree Development was created.
- If you're willing to take financial risks, play by the rules, and learn, you can build a good reputation – this is the formula for success.
- Oaktree Development has just completed the Lime Stone Farm project located off Rohrerstown Rd. 15 or more other projects have been completed in the last 14 years. The latest undertakings are the Wilbur Chocolate

Factory in Lititz and City Gate in Lancaster located off Fruitville Pike, across from Belmont.

- Clipper Stadium - The baseball project has been their most challenging business venture. They never did pursue it as a business venture but wanted to give back to the community. When the Barnstormers came to town, Clipper Magazine invested in the naming rights of the stadium. Eventually, the partnership owned 50% of 5 minor league teams. The return on investment was minimal or non-existent and the business ran into financial problems. Eventually they were able to unload their investment in 4 of the teams but retained their investment in Lancaster. At that point in time, the team was losing over \$1M per year. His partner saw the ability to produce an experience which can't be done on any other local basis. He saw the chance to help so many Lancaster non-profits and organizations with their marketing and advertisement space. At this time, they are not yet out of the woods, nor yet breaking even, but they are on the way to success. A little known fact is that the stadium is guaranteed by the county but it is funded primarily with private money due to the wisdom of many public leaders who said not to throw public money around without great accountability.
- After the sale of Clipper Magazine they found the need to create a marketing atmosphere for themselves and for their sponsors, so they made 2 companies, 1) social media company, and 2) a billboard company. They began by operating them as extensions for their sponsors; however they grew too large and are now successful independent businesses. They own Oak Tree Outdoor with about 30 billboards, 15 of which are digital, and Click-Upon Social Media Advertising with about 60 clients - together they employ about a dozen local employees. Later these 2 businesses were combined with another of their businesses which they've had for 35 years - Jackson Promotions. Once again, it was the prosperous, loyal and vibrant business community which helped to ensure their success.
- How do we keep this going and plan for future entrepreneurs who come to Lancaster? One of the most important things to remember in providing a backdrop to encourage entrepreneur success - while it takes many to make a young company successful, it takes as little as one person to do something great that causes a seismic shift in the fortunes of a community. Whatever conditions you put out there while they may seem small can have dramatic effects in our community's future. Entrepreneurs will always bubble up if we keep striving to provide the best infrastructure."I'm seldom able to see an opportunity until it ceased to be one" Mark Twain.
- A vital immigrant community, a strong safety net, education, strong investment in technology infrastructure, making it easier for a small business company to operate to serve the needs of larger employers through favorable zoning, taxes, parking, roads etc. even though they are difficult to do, are the seedlings which will spawn the next generation of job creators.
- A healthy business can give a great return on a small investment through spending money with local vendors and philanthropy, etc. Lancaster seems to strike a healthy balance with all its stakeholders in thinking about the future.