

The Entrepreneurial Formula for Success

Although he has received numerous awards over the years, Bob Luddy says the real award for entrepreneurs is the “satisfaction of seeing your vision move from concept to reality.” A mentor to small business owners, and advisor to politicians about laws affecting business owners, he is passionate about entrepreneurship. He regularly gives speeches to business and civic groups, as well as business students, where he shares his formula for success, developed over his lifetime:

Vision

Be a risk taker. Develop a picture of what you want to happen and then go for it.

Informed Decision Making

Develop market savvy. Study other companies and what they do right and wrong. Read about new trends in business, leadership, management, government policies related to your industry and employee issues.

State Goals and Measure Performance

Write a clear company mission statement and follow through. Regularly set new goals and work toward them. Develop several “initiatives” for meeting goals; usually one or two will pan out.

Aggressive Sales and Marketing Efforts

Figure out what your competitive edge is and be relentless in your sales efforts. Strive for higher sales per employee than other companies.

Creative Thinking

Don't be satisfied with the status quo. Be innovative and think outside the box.

Fiscal Responsibility

Manage your finances prudently. Take pride in being a “no-frills” operation. Hire an effective CFO and reinvest your profits in the company.

Streamlined Operations

Limit red tape and bureaucracy in all areas of the company, especially with respect to time and materials.

Commitment from Employees

Have high expectations for your employees and spend time developing them to meet those expectations. Explain the big picture and where they fit in. Treat your employees well, encourage and challenge them. Develop a “culture” which includes customer focus, teamwork, working to win, continuous improvement, productivity and independence.

Proper Values

Make ethics the cornerstone of all business transactions.

Goodwill Towards the Community

Make social responsibility an integral part of your business. Donate time and money to charitable organizations and public projects. Encourage your employees to do the same.

Who is Bob Luddy?

Robert Luddy is a lifelong entrepreneur. At the age of 20, while attending LaSalle University in Philadelphia, Bob opened a fiberglass manufacturing business and worked at night. In 1967, Bob sold his company and was drafted into the military.

In 1976, Bob settled in Raleigh, and with \$1,300 capital, he opened Atlantic Fire Systems in

a one-room facility. Recognizing the demand for high-quality kitchen ventilation equipment, Bob purchased a sheet metal shop in 1981 and transformed it into CaptiveAire Systems, Inc. CaptiveAire is now the nation's largest and most well-respected manufacturer of commercial kitchen ventilation systems, with sales reaching \$180 million in 2006. CaptiveAire employs 650 people in four plants and 60 offices in the U.S. and Canada. Its clients include independent restaurants, national chains, and other public and private institutions.

CaptiveAire is continually voted "Best In Class" by industry dealers and consultants, according to *Foodservice Equipment & Supplies* magazine. *INC.* magazine has repeatedly named CaptiveAire one of the 500 fastest growing private companies in the nation. In its home base of North Carolina, CaptiveAire is among the 100 largest private companies (*Business North Carolina* magazine), and it is the 10th fastest growing private company in the Raleigh Triangle (*Triangle Business Journal*).

In addition to CaptiveAire, Bob Luddy drives other economic development in the area. Bob founded and developed the Franklin Park Industrial Center, which has drawn over 15 entrepreneurial businesses and hundreds of jobs to Franklin and Wake counties.

A strong advocate of excellent education, Bob founds schools which help youth develop good character and reasoning skills. In 1998, Bob established the Franklin Academy, an award-winning public charter school in Wake Forest, which now serves over 1,000 K-12 students. In 2001, Bob founded St. Thomas More Academy in Raleigh, a classical, college preparatory high school. In 2006, the academy was named one of the 50 best Catholic high schools in the country (and one of the top 25 for academic excellence, alone). In 2007, Bob opened Thales Academy in Raleigh, the first in a network of private community schools offering a high-quality K-8 education at low-cost tuition.

In 2006, Bob won the Ludwig von Mises economic research institute's first ever "Mises Entrepreneurship Award" for three decades of leadership at CaptiveAire and for exemplary "dedication to learning, prosperity, and freedom."