

Caskey's Lawn and Garden Center

Business owners have many choices when it comes to growing their company. Among the many available options, they can choose sales and marketing initiatives, adding to their product or service line or even strategic partnerships. For Jason West, owner of JWO Land Management Inc., the choices were few; results from the marketing of his lawn care business seemed to have plateaued, he had extended his line of services as far as he could and he didn't see strategic partnership opportunities that would materially contribute to growing his business.

What to do? In Jason's case, he decided that diversification of his business beyond lawn care was his best route to growing his company. And, as luck would have it, an opportunity arose for him to acquire a lawn and landscape equipment dealership and repair facility, Caskey's Mower and Garden. It had all the elements he was looking for: a business in his industry that is an established Lake County company which is both profitable and has a strong reputation locally. Now Jason's challenge was to find the financial resources to buy the business.

"When I decided I wanted to get into this new business, I wanted to make sure I did it right," Jason says. To do that, he went to the Florida SBDC at UCF's Lake County office to understand the steps necessary to purchase the business and get the assistance he needed to make the right decisions in this purchase. At the FSBDC, Jason enrolled in several workshops and connected with Stan Austin, an FSBDC consultant and the area manager. He helped Jason get his arms around the financial side of the business, prepare a business plan and approach lenders with the best application possible.

"It was amazing. Stan was a lifesaver. He spent countless hours guiding me through the purchase process, helping me pull together the necessary financial information and then establish the decision criteria for making the purchase or not," commented Jason. "And once I made the decision, Stan was there to help me obtain the financing I needed to close the transaction."

Today, JWO Land Management Inc. is a thriving lawn and landscape service business with a full service equipment dealership and repair facility for all makes and models of small engines. He has two separate sources of revenue that compliment themselves in good markets and bad. And he has his consultant Stan Austin and the FSBDC behind him for future support and consultation.

"The FSBDC is probably one of the best kept secrets in Lake County," says Jason. "If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be standing here. My whole experience with them has been excellent. Anyone who owns a business is crazy not to take advantage of what they offer. Almost anything you can think of, they can help you with – all at no charge!"



MEET JASON WEST

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