

JK2 Construction and Scenic

At the height of the recession, Paul Holmes had a choice to make about his construction company: sit by and ride out the downturn or use the time to move his business forward. He chose to move his business forward.



MEET PAUL HOLMES

"We've had great success by taking advantage of the FSBDC's CEO XChange, SBI® and Advisory Board Council. Our business results have been phenomenal; we've doubled our revenues, our Scenic Division facilities and our work force, and are on plan to achieve another year of 20% growth."

JK2 Construction & Scenic describes themselves as "One Company. Two Divisions." The Construction Division of the company was founded 27 years ago and is a classic general contracting, design-build, and construction management company serving commercial clients, residential and time share developments, and the theme park industry. Five years ago the Scenic Division was launched to expand the construction services by self-performing themed and specialty items. The Scenic Division specializes in architectural millwork, custom props/specialty items, and scenic/theme painting for the Construction Division as well as serving clients in the retail, theme park, entertainment, hospitality, and restaurant industries.

Prior to the great recession Paul, like many entrepreneurs, believed he was too busy to seek outside resources to assist him. When the economy put the construction industry into a decline and he had some available time, he took the opportunity to look around and find out if there were services available to help him focus "on" the business and the best strategies for growth rather than simply working "in" the business and managing its day-to-day operations.

That's when Paul found the Florida SBDC at UCF and its CEO XChange, a facilitated peer-to-peer executive roundtable program serving business leaders and owners that offers a confidential setting to discuss the challenges, threats and opportunities they face as managers and leaders. "The CEO XChange has been and still is a great experience," Paul says. "It enables a group of chief executives to collaborate and work through the issues we all face as small and medium-sized businesses."

CEO XChange was just the beginning of the services offered by the FSBDC that Paul took advantage of. He went on to enroll in its Small Business Institute® (SBI®) which connect FSBDC clients with the resources and management expertise of UCF's College of Business Administration. In the program, a team of students, supervised by UCF faculty, provide management consulting services tailored to the needs of the client. In Paul's case, the UCF students analyzed JK2's business and came back with recommendations on business strategy and ways to improve its marketing effort.

Paul followed up on the SBI® program by having the FSBDC put together an advisory board through the Advisory Board Council (ABC), a no-cost board of experts providing advice and council to help businesses grow. It acts as a matchmaker between established businesses and area professionals who volunteer their expertise as members of an advisory board, with the volunteers selected to address the specific needs of the FSBDC client. "The ABC has been a great asset for us," commented Paul. "They have helped us determine the right moves and the right ways to expand our business, and at the same time have challenged us to exceed our goals."

"We've had great success by taking advantage of the FSBDC's CEO XChange, SBI® and Advisory Board Council. Our business results have been phenomenal; we've doubled our revenues, our Scenic Division facilities and our work force, and are on plan to achieve another year of 20% growth" Paul states. "I would highly encourage any entrepreneur to seek the services of the FSBDC. I only wish I had sought their services much earlier in the company's development. They have consistently helped us make those tough-to-make decisions that every entrepreneur faces. The FSBDC at UCF is an outstanding resource to have and depend on."

Providing the tools, strategies, and expertise to help Florida's business community thrive.

State Designated as Florida's Principal Provider of Business Assistance [288.001, Fla. Stat.]

The Florida SBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide service network funded in part through cooperative agreements with the U.S. SBA, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida, and other private and public partners; hosted by the University of West Florida; and nationally accredited by the Association of SBDCs.

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