

Florida Small Business Development Center at UCF

PIRTEK Space Coast

Nationwide Franchise Increases Sales to Over \$1 Million



National Sales Manager Jamie Vokes (L) with Roger Greenwald (L) with Owner Morgan Arundel (R).

PIRTEK is a franchise-based company with its corporate headquarters located in Rockledge Florida. In 1999 Morgan Arundel opened a franchise at the same location in Rockledge and named it PIRTEK Space Coast. PIRTEK specializes in providing customers with complete on-site hydraulic hose or pipe repair utilizing a fleet of three mobile workshops. Every service vehicle is operated by a service technician fully trained to fabricate and install high pressure hoses on site day or night.

"I decided to start the PIRTEK business on the Space Coast as I saw a great opportunity to bring a new service to Brevard County which was badly needed. My goal was to become the leading provider of an on-site hose replacement service in Brevard County dedicated to saving customers money through the reduction of equipment downtime. Having a loyal customer base and owning a fully equipped hose service center in Rockledge, supported by three mobile workshops with plans to add a fourth soon, I can safely say that we have established ourselves as the industry's fastest and leading provider of on-site hoses on the Space Coast," says Morgan.

PIRTEK Space Coast customer base was heavily reliant upon the construction industry which was decimated in the 2008 economic downturn. With a total staff of seven people, tough decisions needed to be made to ensure the company's survival. Some of PIRTEK's best customers went out of business and many others remained with their fleets of equipment sitting idle with no work planned. Closed businesses and idle equipment resulted in a decline in revenue which, if not mitigated, would be quite significant and damaging to the company.

PIRTEK's search for a viable solution culminated with their decision to diversify their market and include a focus on doing business with the government which seemed to be least affected by the recession. Being based in Brevard County, Florida they recognized the potential for doing business with two of the largest government agencies in the county, Kennedy Space Center and Port Canaveral. However, the company had no idea how to approach government business opportunities or who to contact. They tried the "knocking on the door" approach but were faced with armed guards and huge wire fences.

At a local business meeting the company learned about the Florida SBDC at UCF's Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC). While there was not much information given about this program at this meeting, PIRTEK was advised to seek and identify their local office to obtain additional information and assistance. Further research by the company's Director of Franchise Support, Jamie Vokes, identified Tony Espinosa as their local PTAC representative. Vokes initial meeting with Espinosa was in a group counseling forum where an overview of the services offered by the PTAC program was explained and a presentation on doing business with the government was given. PIRTEK also took full advantage of the Govern-

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Jamie Vokes,
PIRTEK Space Coast



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ment Contracting series workshops as well as the annual Government Business Opportunities and Matchmaking event at the Florida SBDC at UCF offices in Orlando.

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The interaction with PTAC and attendance at government contracting workshops and events equipped PIRTEK with the knowledge it needed to confidently approach government agencies, conduct research on the web, and to be able to ask the right questions when meeting with government contracting, procurement and small business representatives. The company exercised their newly found confidence in marketing to the government at a matchmaking event hosted by the Department of Defense (DoD) where they had the opportunity to speak with numerous agencies at the federal, state, and local levels as well as a number of prime contractors.

That was the beginning of great things. PIRTEK received a Request for Quote for hydraulic fittings from one of the agencies that participated in the DoD event; however the parts needed to be expedited to Kuwait. PIRTEK had the parts in stock but had no idea how to submit the paperwork, package the parts or transport them overseas. Then came an exhausting 48 hour cycle of sleepless nights, coupled with frequent communications with the PTAC office for additional advice and guidance. Espinosa suggested that PIRTEK visit the local Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) for further assistance with packaging and shipping requirements. Printing and labeling requirements were other concerns that the company had to overcome and after several visits to various printing companies PIRTEK finally submitted their first quote. Within 24 hours of submitting the quote PIRTEK experienced their first government sale of sixty dollars (\$60.00). With the guidance provided by Espinosa, the company was able to comply with all the packaging and shipping requirements and successfully ship the items by parcel post to Kuwait on time. A huge amount of time and effort went into fulfilling a requirement for a paltry \$60.00 procurement, however little did they know that PIRTEK “had saved the day” by providing these parts in a timely manner. The time and effort expended on this small, seemingly insignificant request for quote has led to substantial revenues in the form of contracts and other procurements.

PIRTEK is currently providing products and services to some of the largest government facilities and prime contractors in Central Florida, all of which are attributed to their interaction with the Florida SBDC at UCF’s PTAC.

As PIRTEK Space Coast grew in doing business within the government sector, the news of their successes spread throughout their national network. The company was bombarded with calls from many of the other franchises asking how they could start pursuing government business and the response was always “contact your local PTAC representative and they will help you!!!!”

In 2012, the President of PIRTEK USA requested that Espinosa be invited to attend the PIRTEK National Franchise Owners Conference and to deliver a presentation about the services that PTAC offered. He was also asked to provide a brief discussion on doing business with the government in addition to conducting roundtable discussions with the various franchise owners. Without hesitation Espinosa agreed and delivered an extremely informative presentation to the 40 plus franchise owners. PIRTEK USA received great feedback from these owners who immediately upon their return home started to contact and utilize their local PTAC. As a result of the guidance and assistance provided by Espinosa, PIRTEK franchises nationwide received estimated combined average revenues of just over \$1,000,000 from government agencies and prime contractors. This is a significant number because PIRTEK sales are generally not high dollar in nature.

Espinosa was not only the driving force for significant sales nationwide but also locally and, as of late, PIRTEK Space Coast has won a contract with a prime contractor for \$725,000 over a three year period.

“We are staunch supporters of the PTAC program and the local leadership of Tony Espinosa who has personally provided us with the tools we needed to turn the business around in the worst economy in living history and we are now achieving figures well in excess of the pre-2008 recession,” comments Vokes.

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