

Atlantic Stonework

Confidence. For owners of small- and medium-sized business, it can make all the difference. Faced with challenges of all sorts – from competition to staffing to cash flow – while constantly considering opportunities with new customers, new products and new business lines, leaders need to make decisions and make good ones if their companies are to thrive. And being confident in those decisions means faster action, stronger follow through and better results.



Troy Hage and Joe Brotzman, owners of Atlantic Stonework CFL, have been making good decisions from the start but thought they could do better. Atlantic Stonework is in the business of offering high quality, turn-key hardscape installations – pavers, coping, travertine, retaining walls – to residential and commercial customers. Hage came to the company after having multiple businesses over the years, but he came with a nagging doubt. “You never know if you’re making the right decision or the wrong decision, until after the fact,” he recalls. “You are always looking for someone to talk to, to ask questions, to help reassure you that you’re making the right choice.”



Troy Hage

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Hage had learned that advisory boards are a great source of guidance and a small business ‘best practice.’ “I was in the process of creating an advisory board on my own when I learned about the Florida SBDC at UCF’s Advisory Board Council program. It was award-winning. There was no cost. Past clients endorsed the program enthusiastically. It was just what I was looking for,” he says now.

An FSBDC at UCF’s Advisory Board Council (ABC) is a no-cost board of experts providing advice and counsel to help businesses grow. The FSBDC acts as a matchmaker between established local businesses like Atlantic Stonework 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.

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“The guidance and direction from our advisory board was invaluable,” Brotzman says. “Just bouncing ideas off them and getting their feedback helped us tremendously. We even did a successful start-up business while they were advising us. That’s a first for the ABC!”

“The number one thing that we got from our advisors was the understanding that a lot of the decisions we were making were the right decisions,” continued Hage. “It boosted our confidence in a big way. Now we’re coming into situations more assured, making better choices and being a lot more successful.”

“In fact, since starting with the FSBDC’s Advisory Board Council program, our revenues have increased 57%. At the same time we were able to reduce our sales territory and become more efficient, yet serve more customers,” concluded Hage. “More confidence is what we got from the FSBDC at UCF’s Advisory Board Council, and it’s been great for Atlantic Stonework.”



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The FSBDC at UCF is a member of the Florida SBDC Network, a statewide partnership program nationally accredited by the Association of America’s SBDCs and funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, State of Florida and other private and public partners, with the University of West Florida serving as the network’s lead host institution. Florida SBDC services are extended to the public on a nondiscriminatory basis. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals.

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