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Coffee Break with Seigle's Cabinet Center President Mark Seigle

Q: As a local business, what has been your company's biggest obstacle during the recession?

A: "Remaining profitable in the face of a 90 percent decline in housing starts. We had to reinvent ourselves transitioning from a builder base of customers to a clientele of remodelers and consumers. At the same time adapting to a rapid paradigm shift in marketing from print and broadcast to web-based mediums."

Q: What is one important tip you would give someone just starting a business today?

A: "When facing adversity, quit hoping and start acting. Too often business people, especially entrepreneurs, pour money and energy into products or services that for whatever reason are DOA. Face up to the reality, cut your losses and move on."

Q: Who is your biggest/best customer?

A: "As for customer ranking, size doesn't matter. As for the best customer, as long as they pay their bills on time they are all pretty darn important. All of our clients deserve the same level of service whereby we honor our long standing philosophy of "Keeping Promises, Delivering Value and Being the Best!"

Q: Who has had the most influence in your life, why/how?

A: "I would have to credit Bernie Marcus the founder of Home Depot with having the greatest influence on my business career. Years ago with no more than a dozen stores, Bernie made it clear that it wasn't a matter of "if" Home Depot was coming to town just a matter of "when." Unlike Handy Andy, Courtesy Home Centers, Builder's Square, we had the presence of mind to heed his warning and reinvent ourselves from a consumer-based company to one serving the needs of the professional builder."

Q: What is the key to your company's success?

A: "My employees. From the first point of contact with a receptionist or salesperson to our driver making the delivery, it is imperative the level of service be consistent and unparalleled."

Q: What keeps you up at night?

A: "Aside from caffeine the only thing that keeps me up at night is growth opportunities for my company. Albeit fraught with potential risk, a company that refuses to explore expansion or change is destined to fall behind the competition."

Q: If you could put your company name on any sports venue? Which one would you choose?

A: "To be quite candid, I feel such forms of marketing are a terrible waste of money."

Q: What was your first paying job?

A: "Sweeping the floors at Elgin Lumber Company (a/k/a Seigle's) in downtown Elgin for an astounding 25 cents an hour. Just because I was the boss' kid did not afford me any special privilege and certainly no additional compensation. It taught me the value of hard work and the almighty dollar."



MARK SEIGLE

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Additional locations in Chicago,
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Industry: Housing
Number of employees: 26
Year company started: 1881