



Where Are They Now? ST. ANDREW'S PRODUCTS

By Nick Dmitrovich

To commemorate twenty years in business, the Regional Development Company (RDC) looks back at a few of the most successful borrowers and how the 504 Loan has helped their business evolve.

There are many businesses out there that would love to expand their operations, but are constrained by their financial resources. The Regional Development Company, of Valparaiso, IN, works specifically to solve this problem by helping companies procure SBA 504 Loans – which in turn has spawned growth and job creation across numerous industries. One company that has benefited tremendously from this initiative is St. Andrew's Products, of Michigan City, IN.

St. Andrews Products is an independently owned promotional and apparel supplier, manufacturer and sales company. As a leading wholesaler to the golf industry, and numerous other premier organizations, St. Andrews Prod-

ucts carries the licenses for the PGA of America, the NFL, the University of Notre Dame, and many others. A huge array customized promotional items, including everything from golf gear, to t-shirts and holiday goods can be found across their websites.

Back in 1998, the company took out a 504 small business loan with the help of the RDC. No one at St. Andrews Products was fully aware of what an enormous impact this loan would make on their business. The loan was used to purchase new screening and manufacturing equipment for the embellishment of their many products—but what it really bought the company was independence.

Before the loan, St. Andrews Products had relied heavily on outside

sources to help them screen print, embroider, and embellish their clients' materials. This outsourcing made the company subject to the schedules, and the added costs, of their vendors. But, thanks to Regional Development Company, St. Andrews Products was able to purchase their own manufacturing equipment and gain internal control of all phases of manufacturing and production for their clients.

Almost 15 years after purchasing their equipment, St. Andrews Products has grown exponentially. The business employed 24 workers at the time of their 1998 loan. Today, they have doubled their workforce to 48. The purchase of their manufacturing equipment has also helped their revenue stream increase

from \$5 million to an amazing \$12 million dollars a year. With such a successful business model, it's no wonder that St. Andrews Products has landed lucrative accounts with businesses such as ESPN and the University of North Carolina.

James "Skip" Strzelecki, President of St. Andrews Products, detailed his experiences with Regional Development Company, saying, "I couldn't be happier with the professionals at RDC. They're truly some of my favorite people. They're great for small and medium sized businesses, and they helped us grow. They're easy to work with and understanding."

"Banks tend to be more concerned with the numbers, whereas Regional Development Company is more aware and in tune with small businesses and their needs," Strzelecki said. "They want to help the Northwest Indiana region grow by helping small businesses grow, and they're willing to give businesses a chance. They're like the guardian angels to small businesses

like St. Andrews Products."

"Our 504 loan enabled us to be a full blown manufacturer as opposed to relying on other companies to do the manufacturing," he added.

Erica Dombey, President and Executive Director of the RDC, said, "Our partnership with St. Andrews Products for their 504 loan is a snapshot of everything we're trying to accomplish at the Regional Development Company. They have been able to double their workforce, providing more jobs to the region, and have more than doubled their revenue stream, bringing further economic development to Indiana. Their entire case is very indicative as to what a company can accomplish with the right kind of support behind them, and we feel very fortunate to have been a part of their growth. We couldn't be more proud of St. Andrews Products, and we wish them continued success throughout the coming years."

St. Andrews Products' goal is to be the top supplier of promotional products, branded apparel and golf accesso-

ries and gifts to the corporate and golf markets. Companies like St. Andrews Products, and other Regional Development Company 504 loan borrowers, achieve their goals every day thanks to their constant pursuit of quality, competitive prices, tireless work ethic, and careful attention to all new opportunities.

The Regional Development Company is a Certified Development Company licensed to make loans under the SBA 504 with a focus on assisting small businesses prosper to their full potential. For more information on what RDC can do for your business, visit www.rdc504.org or call 219-476-0504.



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