



Executive Profile

Gary Phillips

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Resume

Name: Gary Phillips.

Title: President.

Organization: Gary's Vacuflo.

Background: Grew up in Hillsboro. Enlisted in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War era. Got married on my Boot Camp leave and went to ATC School (Air Traffic Control) in Brunswick, Ga. Worked at Anchorage International Airport rotating through over 20 positions. Ended up working a total of 12 years as a controller until 1981 when President Reagan fired over 11,000 of the 14,000 air traffic controllers in 1981. Went to work for some friends who were in construction for a few months and then started my own business selling and installing Vacuflo Central Vacuum Systems as a sub-dealer to Alfred Krieter. I purchased my product from him and developed a profitable one-man operation in Anchorage for five years. Eventually, the winter darkness got to me and I decided to return home to the Northwest which was a very hard decision to make due to the amount of work it took me to build the business. I started another Gary's Vacuflo in Portland in 1988 in a rental home with money I borrowed from my 85-year-old grandmother's boyfriend. Grew to an operation of 12 people still working out of the home when I realized that I had to do something to keep the number of people in my 1,300-square-foot home from destroying my marriage. Purchased a 5,300-square-foot commercial building 12 blocks away from my home and am operating here to this day along with two other locations in Beaverton and Bend.

Education: Oregon State for two years where I worked on a major in business administration, joined the Navy, and then received an associate's degree in applied science in air traffic control from the University of Alaska. Business Philosophy

Essential business philosophy: Entrepreneurs must have the ability to change with the times.

Best way to keep competitive: Do what you say you are going to do, do it in an exceptional manner and when you say you are going to do it.

Guiding principle: Honesty and fairness should be at the forefront of every decision.

Yardstick of success: Employees who enjoy coming to work every day and customers and employees who can express that we are delightfully exceeding their expectations.

Goal yet to be achieved: Implementation of a company profit-sharing program.

Judgment Calls

Best business decision: Growing the business.

Worst business decision: An attempt I made to have custom software developed when we could no longer continue operations with our DOS software.

Toughest business decision: Hiring my first operations manager.

Biggest missed opportunity: None --new opportunities are continually visible every day.

Mentors: Jim Goodrich, Michael Gerber, Jerry Arnold and many more. There is no one that I do not learn something important and beneficial to myself from. I am a people person and see the good in everyone around me.

Word that best describes you: Focused.
True Confessions

Like best about the job: Ability to provide a product that so many people love, appreciate and benefit from the health and convenience aspects.

Like least about the job: The need to sometimes have to replace employees as the business grows and changes.

Pet peeves: Negativity.

Most important lesson learned: The world is changing faster and faster every day in every way. It is important to know that we, as individuals and businesses, will need to change faster and faster as well to keep up and to stay in business.

Person most interested in meeting: Pat Croce who is the author of "Lead or Get Off the Pot."

Most respected competitor: One who is no longer in business in the Portland area but was, in my mind, the best, most professional competitor I had: Westphal Distributing, Gary Westphal.

First choice for a new career: Work for Bill Gates in any endeavor.

Predilections

Favorite quote: "Attitude is everything."

Most influential book: "Good to Great."

Favorite cause: Doernbecher Children's Hospital.

Favorite movie: No idea, there are so many good ones.

Favorite music/musician: Any artist who displays talent. All types of music and musicians ... jazz or blues would be at the top of this list.

Most treasured possession: My Cessna 182.

Favorite restaurant: Adobe Rose in Sellwood.

Favorite vacation spot: Playa Del Carmen, Mexico.

Favorite way to spend free time: Flying, reading, bicycling, hiking, time at the beach.