

Agis Josephides

Bus 495Y

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Interview of an Entrepreneur

For my “entrepreneur interview” I had the privilege of interviewing John Conforti, owner of the company “Job Lot” situated in Rhode Island. Trying to find an entrepreneur involved in a high growth venture my friend referred me to his uncle who has a great business on his hand. I therefore was swift to email him some questions about his business, and himself. He answered my questions very helpfully and detailed, and seeing in my keen interest in his career he set up a phone call whereby he further helped me out with my further inquiries.

I asked him many questions about his job in order to find out how he made it to the top. I asked him questions such as how did he get started, how much capital he initially invested and what plans he had for the future. I even asked him questions about himself, such as did he have a lot of pleasure time to spend with the family, was it very stressful and if he believes it was all worth while. These are only a few examples from the many questions I asked him.

This interview helped me out a lot. It taught me a lot of things of how one creates a business and what consequences it has on his lifestyle. As a college student he took business management classes with the hope of one day owning his own company. At this moment when I asked him if college helped him he responded that it helped him a lot. Not so much as in the material he learned but from experience, getting connections and learning to live by himself (he was also paying his own college tuition). After college he ventured into the business world filled with optimism and hope. At first he was let down, as it wasn't as easy as he had thought it would be. However, in 81 he got various loans and partners to help him out with setting up "Job Lot" a wholesale company, such as Wal-Mart. In my later on interview I asked him how did he compete with companies such as Wal-Mart and other big wholesale companies and he replied due to good service, easily accessed locations and an system that allowed him to never run out of stock. His business started off slowly, and it took him 3 years until he could start receiving a "well off" income. In 1996 he further expanded and opened a 2nd supermarket. At the present time he has 2 supermarkets and is now quite wealthy. He has a large staff working under him and he has a yearly income of around 1.7 million at the moment at age 64. His rise to this level was hard and this made me realize how difficult it is. As he told me it wasn't until 3 years later that he started seeing a profit with his partners.

I definitely learned a lot from this interview mostly on the fact that you have to be determined in setting up a business because it has a lot of drawbacks. I have learned stuff that I could not have learned in books, and this is definitely an eye opening experience.

