

WOODLAND WINDOWS & DOORS TESTIMONIAL

"In these trying economic times, our people feel an air of hope. They see us investing with Score, trying to adapt and to improve. It is refreshing to see," says Ralph Mariotti.



Woodland Windows and Doors knows tough times. The business, founded by John Mariotti 35 years ago, was born out of hardship. It is now run by Mariotti's sons, Rano, Ralph, and Ken. They've successfully built a multi-million dollar company that competes in residential and commercial sales, custom finishes, and installation. Their investment in a new showroom, offices, trucks and equipment, is as impressive as the quality and commitment of their employees.

The company is well positioned to compete in multiple markets with an array of products and solutions. After years of steady growth, sales began to level off. They began to question how they could better deploy their assets and core capabilities to address slumping sales and declining profitability. How could they compete more effectively in this

tough economy?

Searching for new ideas, one of the brothers had a chance meeting with a SCORE counselor who told him about SCORE's consulting services. Their application was accepted and the business evaluation with the SCORE consultants began.

SCORE gathered information from throughout the company and a diagnostic meeting was convened with the Woodland management. Even though the brothers were anxious about opening up the company and their leadership to scrutiny, they persevered, keenly aware that business was flat and it was up to them to turn that around.

For Ken Mariotti, Woodland's President, that meeting was a turning point. "SCORE showed us how to look at the numbers by business segments. That was when I began to see new growth opportunities," explains Ken. "In the numbers, I saw businesses within the business - that was when things came alive."

The SCORE Team recognized Woodland's core strengths, which had led to their success thus far. However, the evaluation and diagnostics work revealed several process weaknesses across the company, which needed to be addressed. With a sense of urgency and the knowledge that comes from experience, SCORE put the spotlight on operational improvements.

By the time the SCORE team and Woodland completed a company wide 2009 business plan, many of the plan recommendations were already underway. Ralph Mariotti tells countless stories about the results they are seeing from changes in their processes. "At one point delivery times were inconsistent and fluctuated significantly," said Ralph. "We were very reactive and the work wasn't specialized." Sales people used to sell, measure, and write orders. They were in the office more than they were with customers. And they lacked a technician's know how to make the proper allowances for non-standard measurements. "SCORE showed us how to organize the work and to set objectives in order to drive more efficient use of our time, equipment, and people."

Speaking of objectives, the three brothers laugh when they reminisce about the time SCORE asked Ken to review the objectives and prioritize them before their next meeting. Ken said to himself, "yea, yea, there are five priorities, how hard could it be?" Then he realized that every objective represented a long list of specific activities that each of them would have to commit to doing. "Put it this way," Ken said,

“SCORE helped us to acquire the necessary discipline it takes, to define specific objectives that align and focus the entire company on the priorities.”

SCORE extracted useful data from Woodland’s accounting records that helped the brothers to understand the state of their business. Further, it formed the basis for the creation of actionable pricing modeling tools.

“With SCORE’s pricing approach, our sales force sees that they can win deals, not just be the highest priced,” said Ralph.

“A big part of what kept us going was how the SCORE consulting team was so selfless with their time..... SCORE is committed,” Ken explains. “They put no restraint on time. The SCORE guys have an owners passion to get this right.”

What do their parents, John and Ann, think of all of this? According to Rano, Vice President and General Manager, “they are very happy to see that we’re going outside ourselves.” Today Woodland is a 3rd generation business with Rano’s two sons working full time in rotational assignments to learn different business functions. Ken’s daughters work part time.

“Our parents are 87 years old and seeing that the business they started will continue to thrive because of how SCORE helped us grow as business leaders. Mom, Ann Mariotti, brought meatballs to one of our lunch meetings with SCORE. Now, she asks regularly if we’re meeting that day with the guys from SCORE,” Ken says. “Dad and mom are happy about the results.” What about Rano, Ralph, and Ken, who have worked so hard over the past nine months to steer the ship in a new direction? The resounding reply, “fun and phenomenal.”
