

Digging in for a battle

Heavy hitters on both sides of Florence copper mine fight



Agents speculate about office rebound w

Agents speculate about office rebound w



UNLEASHING
THE ENTREPRENEUR
INSIDE YOU



2.0 minutes with...

Tom Murray
President and CEO | Villa La Paws

Villa La Paws is a cage-free dog day care, boarding, grooming and training provider in Phoenix.

What is one of your business goals for the next year?

Have at least one franchise up and running either in Arizona or another state, or have another company-owned store operating in the Valley.

What is a significant goal you've achieved in the past 12 months?

We expanded operations and now offer dog training at our new 12,000-square-foot Canine Academy.

What is the biggest challenge you've overcome in growing your business?

Securing funding for our continual expansion.

How have you changed your business strategy to reflect current economic conditions?

We have implemented "Recession Buster Mondays," offering dog day care at a discount. We realized expendable income has taken a hit for many people, but the need for day care persists, so we wanted to make it more accessible to all.

What resources did you use to help develop your business and marketing plans?

My own background and experience in business, marketing and high tech. I did my due diligence before opening.

How do you use technology to promote your business?

We are very technology-driven. We use webcams throughout our facilities so parents can check in regularly, and we are also very proactive with all social media platforms, our company blog and email newsletter. We are also looking at ways to live-stream our training courses.

In what other ways do you market your business?

We are very involved with animal rescue groups in the Valley. We have a presence at many of their fundraising and adoption events throughout the year. We also regularly partner with area veterinarian offices and neighboring businesses to offer discounts or special deals.

How do you recruit and retain quality employees?

We have a career development program in place. Our commitment to our employees through that program has helped us attract quality people.

What advice do you have for entrepreneurs just starting out? Build a solid business plan initially, but keep it updated. It will become your living bible for business.

Did you ever want to call it quits? Nope! It is the best job I have ever had.

Do you have an exit strategy or a succession plan for when you retire? I do have an exit strategy, which is to sell the business in the 2015-16 time frame.

What mistake have you learned from? Not understanding how to set up a franchise and spending a lot of money unnecessarily.

What's the best piece of business advice you ever received? If you don't love it, leave it.



Murray