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1. What was your major in school? Masters degree? What school? Bachelor of Business Administration with concentrations in Marketing and Management from Southwest Texas State University.
2. How did you decide that you wanted to start your own business? Getting certified? My father had a couple of opportunities to start a business and did not act on it for various reasons. Since then I was intrigued about the prospect of owning my own business.
3. What inspired you to open your own business? I had the opportunity to start this business when I was 24. At the time I only had 2yrs sales experience and did not feel I had the requisite tools to be successful. After 2 more years in the industry managing both a regional sales force and a store, when the opportunity presented itself again I was ready.
4. What are some of the pros and cons of owning your own business? You are your own boss. You are responsible for hiring and training staff, paying bills, making payroll and every other aspect of running the business. You get to work after hours and on weekends. When things don't go well you have to figure out how to fix them. But once the business gets established with trained, reliable employees and a dependable steady cash flow you can start enjoying some of the benefits. There is a kind of freedom you could never have when you worked for someone else. If things go as planned, after taking care of employees and reinvesting in the business, there should be some cash left over for you.
5. What are some tips for success that you would give someone looking to start their own business? First, know every aspect of your business. In my case I had to know billing, customer service, setup and delivery as well as sales and management duties. Second, increase the amount of money you think you need for startup by at least 50% if possible. Undercapitalization has killed or at least stunted the growth of many companies that otherwise would have been successful.
6. How big of a part did location play in starting your business? It was not a factor. We deliver and setup all equipment.
7. How did you begin to get clients for your business? And keep them? Pricing does not play a part in our marketing strategy as it is set by Gov't agencies so we have to rely on the service aspect of our business to generate referrals. I developed relationships with several referral sources that remained loyal to me because of

the level of service I provided over the 4yrs prior to starting my company. We are constantly evaluating and tweaking our service programs with input from these customers so we can keep their business.

8. How do you keep employees motivated? Leadership roles. Managers, supervisors and sales staff set goals with incentives for reaching and exceeding them. The incentives may be as simple as rewarding employees with bringing in lunch or as complicated as putting together formulas for commissions and quarterly and yearly bonuses.
9. What are some of the most important parts of your business that have helped you succeed? People. My employees are what make this company. Hiring, training and getting employees to buy in to the company's mission are the most important things we do.
10. What are some of the important financial issues that come with starting a business? In addition to adequate financing, paying attention to all your expenses. You can find significant savings in the small things. It's your money and every dollar spent unnecessarily is a dollar out of your pocket and they can add up fast.
11. Any other information on running a business: tips, locations, family, clients, financial. Learn to say no. Not all business is good business. Constantly analyze each product category for profit potential. Then make sure your service sets you apart from your competitors.