

Santa Fe Brothers SCORE Business Success

It seems you're never too old to listen to your mother – even when it comes to business.

That was the prudent approach in 2000, when brothers Paul and Leonard Roybal decided to launch a transmission repair shop in Santa Fe. The two had grown up in and around the family's service station, and later transmission repair business, which their father ran from 1960 until he passed away in 1991. Their mother, Yolanda, then led the shop until she retired in 1998. When Paul and Leonard wanted to reopen a transmission shop at the same location, they had to first make their case to their own mother.

"We had to present a business plan to our mother in competition with another business that wanted the location," Leonard says. "She told us, 'Go to SCORE and see if they feel it's a viable business.' She wanted us to succeed, of course, and with SCORE's help, she knew we could find out whether the business would work.

In fact, Yolanda herself had received critical guidance from members of Santa Fe SCORE when she took over the business in the early 1990s. Taking their mom's advice to heart, Paul and Leonard also sought guidance from the experienced counselors at SCORE.

The two worked with Bart Jacobs, a volunteer counselor with retail experience, to create a business plan and budget. In the process, they discovered the realities of doing business in the new millennium demanded a new approach to marketing, inventory and many other areas. With their vision for Precision Transmission in hand, the brothers earned their mother's confidence and the right to open the business at the family's location.

Now, five years later, when Yolanda stops by the shop, chances are she'll find a full parking lot. Under the guidance of Paul and Leonard, Precision Transmission now employs six people and has seen ever-increasing sales and profitability. They estimate the business has grown 80% to 100% since the 1990s.

Though business is booming, the brothers still find time to continue their SCORE counseling every month.

SCORE continues to provide counseling for whatever comes up. Early on, counselors offered essential guidance on how to manage inventory costs to ensure the shop didn't tie up cash with too many parts on the shelf. As business grew, SCORE offered insight on hiring and managing employees. More recently, a SCORE counselor advised the brothers as they built a relationship with a local bank – a process made easy because SCORE had helped Precision maintain adequate records.

"I don't know any place where a small business like us can get advice like this for any amount of money," says Leonard. "We couldn't afford this type of knowledge and we couldn't have done it without SCORE."

"Imagine hiring a team of advisors like this," Paul adds.

But Paul and Leonard bring their own strengths to the business as well. Precision prides itself on always keeping the customer's best interest in mind, only recommending repairs when it's necessary and going out of the way to fit in travelers driving through Santa Fe. The shop's forthright approach impressed one tourist so much he wrote the mayor, who officially recognized the business.

However, Paul and Leonard's biggest fan is still their own mother. "It's just amazing to me what the boys did with the business," she says. "I'm just so proud of them."

More than 20,000 volunteer business counselors in 289 SCORE chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small businesses. For more information about starting or operating a small business, or to refer, call Santa Fe SCORE at 505-881-6302.

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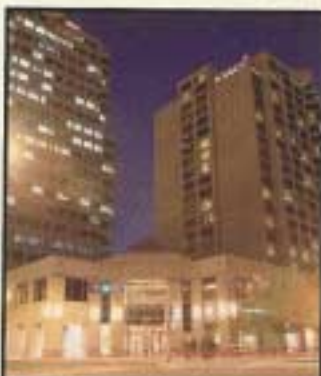
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