



Landscaper Returns to Roots

Company comes full circle, back to original owner

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Signal Business Editor

August 25th, 2013

While most people are vacationing or enjoying the summer months, Santa Clarita resident Dan Blumel has had his hands full acquiring a division of a multi-national corporation.

And just as “for everything there is a season,” in the case of Santa Clarita-based Four Seasons Landscape and Property Services – a commercial business that Blumel began in 1987, and sold in 2000, has now come full circle.

Blumel, a long time resident, first began Sunset Landscaping in 1987.

“I started it out of my parent’s garage when I was 18,” Blumel said.

Even though Blumel never put his company up for sale, he was later approached by a national, Texas-based Sanitors Inc., who wanted to acquire the company, he said.

That offer resulted in a sale in March 2000 where Blumel sold his company to Sanitors, which offered cleaning, building maintenance and landscaping services. They had 15,000 employees at the time, Blumel said.

By May 2007 multinational corporation ISS Group, based in Denmark, acquired Sanitors as a means of entering the U.S. market where it launched a division called Grounds Control.

At the time, ISS had some 500,000 employees globally and they were in 50 countries.

Throughout these transitions, Blumel was asked to stay on to manage the daily operations where he remained for 12 years.



Brian Daly, left, and Dan Blumel formed Four Seasons Landscape and Property Services in 2012, with gross sales now reaching \$10 million a year.

“One thing that remained constant through all the changes was that I was there the whole time,” he said.

Fast forward to late last summer when Blumel, longing to have more local influence and day to day hands-on operations management with clients he’d long worked with, went out and started a new company.

Blumel, a 26-year licensed landscape contractor, joined with Brian Daly of Santa Clarita to form Four Seasons Landscape and Property Services of Santa Clarita in August 2012. The two partners had formerly managed the California Grounds Control division of ISS together.

Within a year of leaving Grounds Control, however, CEO Sean Bond called Blumel offering to sell the California division — essentially at one time a company that Blumel started in his garage — back to him.

“When I got the phone call in June from Sean nobody was more floored than me,” Blumel said.

The deal to buy the company “back” closed escrow late on July 31 and was an all cash purchase, he said.

Gross sales for the combined businesses — Four Seasons and Grounds Control — are \$10 million a year, Blumel said.

“Dan has been the heart and soul of that business out here,” said Carl Kanowsky, his long time attorney and friend. “When they sold, he stayed on with the buyers and the reason the business was successful was because of Dan.” Kanowsky, who didn’t handle the last deal, said he wasn’t surprised when ISS called Blumel and offered to sell the business back to him, he said.

“Dan built up such a long-term reputation and relationship with customers that I think when he left ISS they realized ‘why compete against the guy?’”

Now the entire portfolio of business — commercial landscaping maintenance, design and installation, and tree care and janitorial services — operates under the name Four Seasons Landscape and Property Services. Blumel also acquired the employees — many of whom he has worked with for over 20 years now, he said.

Combined, he and Daly went from managing 60 to 200 employees overnight with operations in Santa Clarita as well as Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura and San Diego counties. The office is located in Newhall. Having purchased ISS Grounds Control outright, Blumel said the business is now 100 percent locally owned and operated — right where he started at age 18 back in 1987 — only a little bigger now.

“Since starting in this business 26 years ago our employees and clients have always been like family,” Blumel said. “It is very rewarding to have us all together again under a local operation.”