

BUSINESS

RISING STAR

Scott Wenclewicz

Ensuring success

By Jill Phillips

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Scott Wenclewicz and his brother, Mark Wenclewicz Jr., understood the risks of opening a business in a down economy. However, the duo felt the advantages were worth it.



In 2009, they embraced the risks and opened their own office, Wenclewicz Insurance.

"Everyone needs insurance," Scott Wenclewicz said.

"It's not like we are selling something that people can scale back on during a recession."

Wenclewicz, who majored in business at Ball State University, knew he wanted to run his own business. While his family has a strong background in the insurance industry, he wasn't sure he would enter the field until he took a course taught by Steve Avila.

"Everyone thinks I did it because my family did," Wenclewicz said. "Dr. Avila was one of the bigger influences to my career."

After that class, Wenclewicz pursued certifications to sell several classes of insurance, including life, homeowners and auto.

An internship for the Hylant Group, a large commercial agency, convinced him that a smaller company would be more his style. He then joined a firm co-owned by his grandfather, Weaver, Sokol & Wenclewicz, where he worked six months before partnering with his brother.

Since then, the risks of launching

Wenclewicz Insurance have proved to be worth it. This year the brothers hope to add about 600 more families to their portfolio, bringing their total number of households to 2,000.

"Our main goal is to continue taking care of our current clients, and by focusing on them, naturally we will get more clients by referral," he said.

» How did you manage to stand out in a crowd and advance quickly in your career?

I think it's always being creative and trying new and different things.

A lot of agent owners are getting older. Their systems and technology aren't modern. When we opened the agency, I focused on having the proper systems in place to help our growth. We really focus on investing in our business to make it better for our clients.

» What was your first job or entrepreneurial experience? How did it affect your future?

My first job was at Best Express Car Wash when I was 16 years old. At Best Express, they gave us bonuses when we reached goals of selling carwash books or wash upgrades. I worked really hard to sell the books and upgrades for the bonus.

In elementary school, I would have lemonade stands, and I treated school fundraisers as business building, even though I didn't realize it then.

» What's the toughest mistake you ever made, and what did you learn from it?

If you aren't making mistakes, you aren't working hard enough or learning. That's where the problem lies typically.

» How important is it to have

» AGE: 27.

» HOMETOWN: Indianapolis.

» OCCUPATION: Partner and agent at Wenclewicz Insurance.

» EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in risk management and insurance from Ball State University.

» FAMILY: He and fiancée Jessica Largent are planning a June wedding.

» FAVORITE AUTHORS: Bill Glazer and Dan S. Kennedy.

a mentor? Did anyone in particular help you advance in your career?

I have a lot of experienced agents I lean on. You can learn from anyone. Anyone that's been there and done that can help share valuable information, even if they did it in a totally separate industry. Businesses are a lot more alike than people think.

Dr. Avila was one of the bigger influences to my career. He always talked about internships.

» What advice would you give to other young people trying to get started in the insurance industry?

I think internships are huge, paid or unpaid. It's an eye-opening experience. I wish I had more experiences like that. Not just for resume-building, but to find out what you do and don't like. I also wish someone had talked about taking the bad days as well as good.

One of the best pieces of advice I got, and I think about often, is, "You can't always control what happens to you in life, but you can control how you react to it." No one in particular gave me that advice, but many have made reference to it.

★ Call Star reporter Jill Phillips at (317) 444-6246.