

Sharing, caring and giving back

ARA Foundation's Rental Advisory Program volunteers help others

Joe McKenney, retired rental business owner, has been a Rental Advisory Program volunteer advisor for many years. He and his fellow advisors have shared stories of what has worked for them, listened to concerns and questions, and provided insight from years of experience.

"As rental advisors, we share what we have learned and what has worked for us. Members can take from that experience and adapt it to their situations. We aren't going to tell anyone what to do with their business, but we will offer insights based on our experiences," McKenney says.

"We do this because we care and want to give back to the industry that has provided for us. Many who came before us shared their insights with us. That valuable information helped our businesses succeed. We want to do the same for others who are in the industry now," he says.

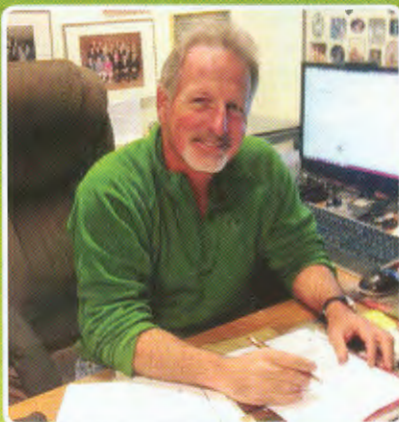
Fellow advisor Steve Kohn, owner of Miller's Rentals & Sales in Edison, N.J., agrees. "That is the value of this program. It teams up people who are seeking advice with a rental operator who has a wealth of knowledge gained from living through and dealing with these same types of issues," Kohn says.

Throughout the years, the Rental Advisory Program has served as a rental consultation resource that has benefited many rental operators. Here's just a sampling:

■ Stan Perry Jr., president of Perry's Tents & Events in Pontiac, Mich., who needed help in valuing his business for tax purposes: "It was a very successful consultation. I think it was a very sensible and reasonable step for us to take. It gave everyone a sense of reality," he says.

■ Adizat Animashaun, owner of Klassy Kreations in Upper Marlboro, Md., who had questions about moving her business into a full-time rental operation: "It has helped me to better plan as I work to grow my business. I definitely recommend it to others because you can gain invaluable insights that will save you money rather than make expensive mistakes," she says.

■ Alan Wismer, owner of George's Tool Rental, based in Hatfield, Pa., who was seeking advice after he and his wife, Marty, purchased the business from Marty's father: "To get help from those



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who have been in your industry, well, that is almost unheard of today. The ARA Foundation does an excellent job of choosing advisors. They are there to help," he says.

■ Jerry and Cathy Kortesmaki, co-owners of London Road Rental Center and London Road Party Express in Duluth, Minn., who wanted advice on whether to lease a warehouse to ease their party and event store's storage and access issues: "To me, it was very easy and comfortable because you are talking with other rental guys. Here we were struggling with trying to reinvent the wheel. Through a few phone calls and emails, we were able to access this fantastic resource, this wealth of information that helped us look at this situation in an entirely new way. It's been a very cost-effective way to make

decisions. They did a good job of helping to steer us in the right direction," he says.

■ Nancy Snell, CERP, owner of NJS Design Event & Party Rentals in Clinton, Ontario, Canada, who wanted to learn from a fellow rental operator who already had been through some of the challenges and opportunities that she was facing:

"This was a completely worthwhile experience. I have managed to assemble my team: my insurance agent, banker, accountant and now my Rental Advisory Program advisor. I have the best of everything — people I can call up in a flash who can offer their help," she says.

Consultations can assist with a variety of situations:

Operational issues:

■ Thinking of revamping your store layout for a better flow?

■ Need help regarding your transportation and deliveries?

■ Not sure whether it is best to maintain equipment or buy new?

Marketing your business questions:

■ Need help in figuring out an effective marketing strategy?

■ Not sure where to spend your marketing dollars?

Personnel issues:

■ Have questions regarding hiring and firing and/or motivating an employee?

■ Want to review compensation and benefits options with another rental operator who is not a competitor?

■ Not sure of the best way to train your employees?

Financial concerns:

■ Thinking of selling a business, buying or opening a business?

■ Need help creating a business plan or securing capital?

■ Don't know how to proceed regarding transferring your business to your children or an employee?

Consultations can be done via email, phone or in person. The cost for a consultation is a tax-deductible donation to the ARA Foundation. For more information or to arrange a consultation, contact Jenni Venema, ARA Foundation director of development, at 800-334-2177, ext. 236, or jennifer.venema@ararental.org. **RM**