



1.

- In the early 90's Nu-Idea's gross sales were around \$2 million annually. My predecessor and late President of Nu-Idea (Steve Bond) had the foresight that for our company to grow and compete (as a small company) against large national companies it was imperative that we change our business model and sell all of the resources we had to offer as a higher level of service. This higher level of service was nothing propriety, but the willingness on our part to work harder to earn the customers' business. In short, in our respective market (K-12 education furniture) we have grown from having less than 50% market share to more than 80%, which translated to \$18 million in gross sales for 2018. To really put into perspective, in 2013 (when I became President) our sales were \$8 million.
- I made mention of this briefly, but in the mid 90's it became evident that our business model had to change for the company to survive and to compete against larger companies with deeper pockets and potentially more resources. At that time our company was more passive than being proactive in terms of our selling approach with our customers. Keep in mind that 95% of our business is working with school districts. Twenty-five years ago districts would determine what their needs were and would solicit a line item bid for any items they needed to procure. With this method of procurement your business may be awarded somewhere between nothing and something. In most cases you were awarded very little and at a very low profit margin, which certainly did not define success in capturing market share or a healthy bottom line. In business we would all agree those are two very critical things needed for longevity. As we evaluated our company we realized some things:
 1. We were the only company based in South Carolina that specialized in K-12 education furniture.
 2. That we represented more than 300+ furniture lines, which would allow us to totally outfit a school with classroom, cafeteria, media center, and office furniture.
 3. We had a great organizational structure in terms of office staff for sales support.
 4. We had our own professionally trained in-house installation as well as our own company trucks for delivery.

Basically, we had the resources and ability to become a one stop shop turnkey solution for our customers. At the time our customers were having to do all of the work to determine their needs, then bid these items out, and they would ultimately end up with multiple vendors using third party for delivery and installation. All of which lended itself to poor furniture quality and poor customer service. Around 1997 we were able to convince Beaufort School District to solicit a request for proposal solicitation for a turnkey furniture provider. The "RFP" method of procurement incorporated not only the products needed for the schools, but more importantly included all of the services we were willing to provide as requirements to get the work. We were awarded the entire contract, which consisted of approximately 10 new schools. This was a game changer and a milestone for our small company since it changed the way school districts procured

furniture statewide moving forward. It created a scenario where our company was able to consult with the district on the front end to determine their needs, provide all of their furniture needed to totally outfit the project and lastly included the delivery, installation, and clean up. By virtue of this concept and strategy we exposed our competitors' weakness. The result has allowed us to capture significant market share, which in turn has allowed us to grow our company and become the leader in K-12 educational furniture in our state.

- As far as our customer service practices, we approach every opportunity as a team at Nu-Idea. In 2013 when I became President I felt that we needed to change some things and one included adding staff. In 2012, Steve Bond, who was my good friend, mentor, business partner, and President was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer, which 9 ½ months later took his life. I was spread extremely thin in managing more than half of the state with my sales accounts and the task of running the company. In order for us to properly take care of our customers and continue to manage growth we needed to ramp up our staff. In 6 years we have hired 2 designers, 2 customer service representatives, 1 inside salesperson, 1 vice president of sales, and 5 outside sales people. With any opportunity we are now able to efficiently take care of our customers and provide them with a proposal to easily make decisions. Our installation team is an extension of our office staff and many times are the last face the customer sees as part of the furniture process. Our installers are long term employees that work hard to make sure the customer is happy with their purchase. We consistently receive positive feedback from end users on what a great job we do on the back end of the process.
- We have faced numerous challenges over the years that include:
 1. Evolving from being a manufacturer to a distributor (after the depression in the 20's).
 2. Lack of market share, which forced us to change our business model.
 3. Changes in technology- this applies to many things that include:
 - The internet and our website
 - Social media
 - Software we use in space planning and our proposals
 - Software that we use for our business network
 4. Finding good qualified staff in all areas of our business, which is a "niche" business.
 5. The untimely death of the President of the company, and a majority stockholder
 6. Change of ownership.
 7. Relocation, new building, and expansion.
 8. Growing our presence and footprint outside of South Carolina into Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina.
 9. New suppliers and new products in the marketplace.
- I feel like an area that is really relatively new (in the last 4 years) to our company that offers a unique and innovative approach for our business is our design staff. Julie Coker is our lead designer and she is assisted by Everett Fenno, who also oversees marketing and social media for our company. Since their arrival at Nu-Idea we have purchased and implemented new space planning and quoting software. With this software Julie and Everett can generate a virtual 3D color rendering of a space with the furniture laid out in the colors selected. Our design folks also

recommend color finishes on the furniture that coordinate with the wall and floor finishes being used by the customer. The virtual 3D color renderings provide the customer with an experience that allows them to see exactly how the furniture will be configured in the space as well as more importantly how it will look before it is delivered and installed. This takes much of the guess work and error out of the equation. In addition to the work our designers do, we have one particular manufacturer that offers a web ex meeting. This manufacturer has a software program that is interactive via the internet, and allows the end user the ability to custom create furniture specific for their need. Lastly, with our new facility we have a large showroom that displays the most current 21st century educational furniture. In just two years we have had more than 20 school districts make a site visit to see the latest and greatest products available and spend the day working on their new school.

- Nu-Idea School Supply Company Inc. has been in business 98 years. In 2021 we will celebrate our 100-year anniversary. The company was established by Mr. Roy Tucker (a former educator). The name Nu-Idea comes from the wooden student desk and its unique design (in the 20's) developed by Mr. Tucker. He was a pioneer in creating a desk with its features at this time and an entrepreneur in starting a company that would grow and become a brand name in the South Carolina educational furniture market.

2.

- Our company is involved in community events as well as non-profit organizations. Nu-Idea helps sponsor and donate money to the Sumter Derby Day Event. Those proceeds from Derby Day go to the United Way of Sumter, Clarendon and Lee counties in their efforts to support the needs of the community in the areas of education, income, and health. In the past (and thru the Chamber) we have helped sponsor the Golden Apple Award, which recognizes students for having integrity and strong moral character. We have also supported many of the local schools with fundraising events. In the last 3 years we have been actively involved with the local American Heart Association. I personally have served on the local committee and was the chair in 2018. Our company sponsored a team and also ran the obstacle course on the day of the heart walk event. We also have several employees who are actively involved and volunteer their time helping children affected by cancer at camp chemo. We all have causes that are near and dear to our heart whether that may be heart disease, cancer, or something else. It has been our mission to serve and give to those organizations that work to help support these causes.
- In the last several years I was fortunate to be asked by Mr. Paul Robbins to serve on the board of the chamber. I am on the executive committee and also work with government relations. It has been a great experience for me as well as my company to see how much work our local Chamber of Commerce does to support local business and issues important to the community. Nu-Idea experienced their support first hand when the Chamber held the ribbon cutting at our new facility several years ago. It was great exposure for our company and presented professionally on behalf of the Sumter Chamber of Commerce. Shortly thereafter, we hosted the after-hours business card social in our new showroom. It was a great event and well attended by other businesses and folks in the community. This year marks our 27th year of being a chamber member.

3.

- In regard to environmental impact, most if not all of the furniture we provide is Greenguard certified. There was an initiative 10-15 years ago to make furniture more environmentally friendly so the Greenguard certification process was established. The program itself identifies low emitting materials, finishes, and products for indoor environments. All products are tested annually for harmful compounds. Basically, this standard gives everyone a peace of mind that you are purchasing environmentally safe products.
- Our company works with a local recycling company to deal with the packaging and debris left behind after delivery and installations. In our case, packaging consists of shrink wrap, cardboard, and wood. All of which can easily be recycled. We keep on site at all times two 53 ft trailers to manage the debris created in result. We separate the cardboard, wood, and shrink wrap. Each of which are loaded in separate containers to be picked up by the recycling company we contract with to remove that for us.

4.

- See separate power point presentation in binder.