

South Jersey Faces: Robert Petcove



Cherry Hill resident Robert Petcove went into business with his father, then decided to open his own company in Philadelphia.

JOHN ZIOMEK/Courier-Post

Robert Petcove, 37, of Cherry Hill last April started Advanced Benefit Advisors Inc., an employee benefits firm that packages health insurance to get the best prices for companies.

ABA, which has eight employees and offices on Walnut Street in Philadelphia, represents companies with 100 to 20,000 workers. Its biggest client is Roger Penske and his automotive empire.

In the past, Petcove has represented nine of the Atlantic City casinos, including Donald Trump's properties, and J&J Snack Foods.

He has a wife, Jill, and a 6-year-old son, Matthew.

Q: When did you know you would go into the family business?

A: "I knew early on that I would go into business with my father," said Petcove, who notes he always has been good with math and spread sheets. "I knew I was always going to be in sales."

After graduation in 1991 from the University of Hartford in Connecticut, he joined his father's company, Benefit Resources Inc. in Mount Laurel. He was the eighth employee.

Within a decade, the firm grew to 65 employees and in 2001 was acquired by First Union Bank. In April 2005, Petcove started his own firm.

"I wanted to go back to the roots of a family-owned company," he said. "We pride ourselves with having national experience without the national price tag."

Q: What do you like about your job?

A: "I personally have five different jobs here," he said. "I work about 80 hours a week. Nights, weekends, it doesn't stop. We don't have 400 people to split up the jobs.

"I love solving problems," he said. "I love negotiating a good deal for my clients. These things really excite me."

Q: Was it scary to go out on your own?

A: "It was a total leap of faith," Petcove said. "All my clients could have stayed with the bank. It was very scary."

Yet, he said he had a good feeling about heading out on his own.

"I knew I was going to make it," he said. "I control my own destiny."

Q: What do you like to do in your free time?

Petcove enjoys golfing with his father, Jack, who is now retired. He also spends time at the Jersey Shore and coaches his son's soccer team.

"I really enjoy meeting people and learning new things," he said.

He also is active in the community as a member of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, The Union League of Philadelphia and as New Jersey president of the Jewish National Fund.

-- Michael T. Burkhart

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