



NEIGHBORS SERVE UP A

Business

A Local Restaurant Supply Company's
Secret-Sauce for Business Partnership

ARTICLE EDDIE STEPHEN | PHOTOGRAPHY ACE CUERVO

IT'S ONE THING TO OWN A BUSINESS. IT'S ANOTHER for a business to “own” you (and not how you might think). Jay Gulick and David Hillin followed a unique path to business partnership. Neither would admit to being particularly equipped to own or run the type of business they have guided to new success milestones in 10 years together.

“IF YOU CAN'T STAND THE HEAT...”

Gulick and Hillin are proving they can take the “heat.” In fact, they’re bringing the “heat” to the restaurant supply industry in a big way. Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company has moved to the

front-burner in the 10 years since Gulick’s and Hillin’s partnership. And their backgrounds are the secret-sauce that’s served up a delicious business model.

Each spent 20 years in large corporate environments before Curtis. Gulick worked on the accounting and operations side of things and Hillin on the management and marketing side.

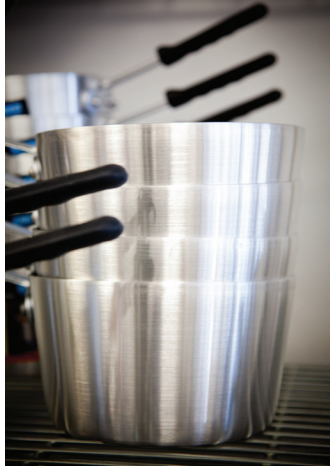
“We were both in the telecommunications business when the Internet bubble burst,” says Gulick. “With the burst also came a huge reduction in the demand for telecommunications services which resulted in our exit from telecom. We were neighbors and

started talking about what we were going to do when we grew up.”

“...GET (INTO) THE KITCHEN.”

According to Gulick, they looked at a number of business ventures. Most were discarded after a quick review. “We could not find a reason to discard Curtis. After multiple reviews we figured it must be the one. So, we made an offer on the business, it was accepted, and we were in the restaurant supply business.”

And “in” they are. Their client list includes heavy-hitters like ONEOK Field—home to the Tulsa Drillers—and stadiums



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across the U.S., the Osage Nation Million Dollar Elm Casinos and the Creek Nation River Spirit Casino, the BOK Center/SMG, The University of Tulsa, Sonic, Taco Bueno, Billy Sims BBQ, Arby's, and countless independent restaurants, churches, and educational venues.

Their healthy client relationships begin with an outstanding team. It's the key reason Gulick and Hillin believe their business is thriving in a down economy.

In fact, it's thriving to the tune of \$100,000,000 in 10 years of cumulative sales as of November 2012. “We have a great group of people who are focused on being successful individually and as a company. Our people work together to service and satisfy our customers who become long term clients,” says Gulick. Company meetings focus on getting better at what they do well. Personal passion flavors everything the company and individual team members accomplish. The synergy between the company, their products, and team members creates satisfied customers. According to Gulick and Hillin, the relatively small and well-connected food service industry – combined with their outstanding staff – leads to referrals and a growing client base.

FAMILY RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Gulick and Hillin feel it is important to create a pleasant as well as productive work environment. Ask the employees why they like working at Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company and you will get

the same answer. They enjoy the camaraderie with their fellow co-workers and the owners truly care about their employees. The employees are treated to company outings, milestone celebrations and holiday parties.

The family atmosphere of the office extends to actual family members who work at Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company. Gulick's wife, Jill Gulick, is the human resources manager, while Hillin's wife, Denise Hillin, is the accounts receivable manager.



Spouses Jill Gulick and Denise Hillin also work at the company

PASSIONATE ABOUT PRODUCTS

Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company has created the perfect blend. They have invested in their staff and surrounded themselves with superb products. All combined, their team represents 265 years of restaurant management or restaurant supply and equipment sales experience.

Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company feature dozens of recognized food

industry leading brands. Browse their Tulsa based showroom or tour their website.

Name brands featured include, Vulcan, Hobart and Traulsen. Unified Brands™ include: Randell, Avtec, and Groen. Featured suppliers also include: Browne-Halco, Beverage-Air, Carlisle Food Service Products, Salvajor, Cambro, Manitowoc, Advance Tabco, American Metalcraft, Inc., Taylor, and Tuxton.

Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company stocks over 2,500 items in their 15,000 square foot Tulsa showroom. The showroom is open to the public so anyone can purchase items direct at competitive prices – select china, flatware, glassware, kitchen gadgets, pots & pans, baking supplies, knives, mixing bowls, and more.

Turn-key solutions and commercial kitchen renovation services are available too. Commercial kitchen arrangement services are also provided.

Get acquainted with Gulick, Hillin, and the other team members passionate about building a business around a leader in the restaurant supply and equipment industry. The Curtis Restaurant Supply and Equipment Company showroom is located at 6577 East 40th Street, Tulsa, and is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to Noon. ●

For more information, call 918.622.7390 or visit their website at CurtisEquipment.com.