



CLIENT PROFILE: Angelo's Soccer Corner



It was on the Island of Kos, in Greece, that a very young Angelo Zalalas started playing soccer and began his life-long love of the game. As the youngest boy of 13 children there was always some kind of game going on. Fast forward to today, and Angelo, or “Ang,” as he’s affectionately called by friends and colleagues, is still in love with the game and has been a top influencer in the soccer apparel world.

It was 1987 when Angelo started his first store, Angelo's Soccer Corner, in Lancaster by F & M College. Angelo has always been deeply connected to the soccer world in the Lancaster area, having played throughout school and college. In college, at Lock Haven, he and his team won 2 NCAA National Championships and after college he continued to coach at McCaskey High School (his alma mater).

So, it was a natural progression for Angelo to start his first store. Because of his deep roots in the soccer community, the word spread quickly about the store and the

specialty retail store experienced quick success.

Business Model: As the Lancaster store grew and relocated several times, Angelo saw the need for soccer apparel in other markets and started another store in Harrisburg in 2002. But, his idea for growing the business in a meaningful way led him to take in partners for each store that was opened after the Lancaster location.

Angelo's idea was to share the ownership and give young entrepreneurs an opportunity to do what they loved and also have the opportunity to build equity in a business. His entrepreneurial spirit drew in several partners who helped to open and run additional stores in Mechanicsburg, King of Prussia, and in 2007 they built a Prototype store in Huntingdon Valley, PA. They also have a retail shop in the PPL Stadium with the Philadelphia Union professional soccer team.

Growth Mode: “We’ve gone through tremendous growth in the past 7 – 10 years,” said COO Larry Jones. “We have several segments in our business that give us great synergies that we can leverage across the market.”

Those segments include Team business, retail specialty stores and Internet sales. “We are committed

to having everything a soccer player or team needs at all times,” added Jones. “Ang and all of the owners are recognized in the industry as experts in what the market wants. As a result, they are part of the process that Adidas and Nike use in reviewing products in development and are involved in product launches in the US and Germany.”



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The team segment of the business has experienced explosive growth, due in part to the Team Center that was created in their Burle Park location in Lancaster, PA. “To some degree the Team business is like the fashion industry. It’s all about the embellishments and designs of the team outfits and our technology allows us to quickly manufacture team wear for soccer clubs, high school and college teams, as well as recreational teams.” Jones noted that their technology gives them a competitive advantage and drives their ability to respond quickly to team requests.

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A VUCA World: “We certainly experience our share of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity,” said Jones. “We are in the specialty retail business and every season things are changing. Our challenge is the pace of change and how quickly can we change. We want the positive pressure of growth because we certainly don’t want to go backwards.”

Culture: When you visit the Team Center location or hang around the team, you notice that there is a real sense of Esprit de Corps. There seems to be a deep respect for each partner and Angelo is still very tapped into the soccer community. Jones said, “We’re in the communities, at the tournaments and that makes a huge difference. Our customers know that we have a culture that cares deeply about them and that sense of caring shows up in the entire team here.”

Angelo still keeps his office in the Lancaster store so he can “keep his pulse on the consumer.” It’s his intuitive knack for knowing what the consumer wants that has driven the business. He still loves

the game and wants the whole team to win.

Working with RBF: “In our evolution as a company, we felt that we needed to move to a firm like RBF because it really benefits us to have their breadth of services and expertise available to us. They have been very helpful in helping us get our financial house in order.” Jones added that “we really value the Peer Group they provide because it’s a particularly good way to bring back new concepts to the company.”



Flagship store in
Huntingdon Valley, PA



Philadelphia Union Shop in
Philadelphia, PA

