



RETAIL NETWORK NEWSLETTER 4Q2013

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## Customizing Success: Meet Ryan Gregg (YPO Motor City)

When **Ryan Gregg** (YPO Motor City) started Underground Printing in college, he and his partner had a clear strategy for making their custom apparel business succeed. "Our key to success early on was to over promise and over deliver," explained Gregg. "This commitment to service allowed us to grow quickly, and continues to serve us well today."

Now a national, custom-printed apparel provider with customers ranging from national retailers and Fortune 500 companies to local businesses and college student groups, Underground Printing is the largest vertically integrated custom apparel provider that owns both its own brick and mortar retail locations as well as 100 percent of its production. "On top of that, all of our apparel printing is done in the United States," said Gregg. "We're pretty proud of that."

Gregg was originally attracted to the custom apparel industry because of his own involvement with groups and events that would order specialty items. "I knew the typical customer and product well, and figured I could sell it better," he explained. "It was much more about sales and service than the product itself, and ultimately we became very focused on solving problems for people. I really enjoyed custom printed apparel because most everyone has a need for it at some point and it is fun to talk about. Not many people are going to turn you away from talking about T-shirts!"



As he has seen his business evolve from a "dorm room start-up to 20 locations and 150 employees," Gregg has also enjoyed his own development as an entrepreneur. "Our growth allows me to get involved in new areas of the business constantly, from sales to production, operations, human resources, information technology," he said. "I love not only being able to work within each of these areas, but also the ability to synthesize them into growth."

Recognizing the importance of his own growth was one reason Gregg became a member of the Retail Network. "Originally I joined the Retail Network to get an idea of what other retailers were doing to solve some of the most common issues," said Gregg. "The network has provided a great barometer to what others are doing and focusing on. It is a great community of like-minded business leaders that are fighting the same battles every day. I appreciate being able to talk to someone in a different segment or part of the world and hear their solutions and goals as they grow and build their businesses."

One particularly valuable resource for Gregg has been the Retail Roundtable. "The Network Roundtable is absolutely fantastic and the best YPO-WPO experience I've been a part of. From the other YPOers and WPOers to speakers, it's the most impactful part of the network."

Now Gregg is getting involved at a new level, serving as the network's education officer. "One of the most important goals is to increase network participation in our events, MiMs, and forum so we can build an unparalleled community of networking and idea sharing," he said.

Make sure you are getting the same value from the Retail Network by being as involved and active as Gregg. Success like his comes from taking steps to achieve greatness — congratulations, Ryan!

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